RESTORING ACTIVE SPIRITUAL OVERSIGHT TO THE ELDERS

OF ANCHORAGE GRACE CHURCH

ANCHORAGE, ALASKA

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A Project

Presented to

the Faculty of

The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

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In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Ministry

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by

Leo Bryan Alan Masters

December 2012

APPROVAL SHEET

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Read and Approved by:

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Donald S. Whitney (Faculty Supervisor)

_____
Adam W. Greenway

Date: _____

To my dad,

who has always challenged me

to achieve a higher degree of excellence.

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PREFACE

No one has sacrificially supported me in the completion of this project more than my resplendent wife, Heather. In addition to the many encouragements, she has faithfully and proficiently proof-read my work. I appreciate her critical eye and respectful heart. More than that, she has faithfully stood with me through times of joy and moments of despair as we persevered under the weight of completing this program. She will be happy to have me back.

Many other people had a hand in this project, for each of whom my gratitude extends beyond words. Members of the elder board and school board, as well as teachers and students, for example, contributed to the project by thoughtfully answering before-and-after questions. I appreciate and honor them for their willingness to be transparent with me. Pastor Jeff Crotts was instrumental in helping me formulate the idea of this project in its early stages, and provided sharpening feedback and direction as I progressed. In addition, many school and church leaders across the country provided invaluable insights that went into chapter 3. I am deeply thankful for their collaboration and their wisdom, which is in the process of being incorporated into the ministry here.

Other friends, such as Cecil and Trina White and Jeremy Godwin, encouraged me in this task through housing and feeding me as I journeyed so far away from home. The little things make a big difference. I enjoyed their company and commend their hospitality.

The entire program of Biblical Spirituality at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary has deepened my faith and enriched my spiritual life. God has used Donald Whitney to establish a healthier understanding of the spiritual disciplines through his

relentlessly biblical perspective and non-legalistic approach. Also, his ministry as my faculty supervisor can never be repaid—he went the extra mile for me. Michael Haykin deepened my appreciation of our rich Christian heritage through his emphasis on the life and writings of the saints of old. Jeff Walters helped guide the entire process and patiently answered an unending litany of questions. I am also thankful for 5th and Broadway for printing and delivering thousands of pages of papers to the D.Min. office.

God alone is worthy to be praised, and he alone receives the credit for any good in me or any of the people mentioned here. He has sustained me when exhausted, calmed me when overwhelmed, and strengthened me when weak. This experience has been a vivid example of Jesus' words in John 15:5, "Apart from me you can do nothing."

Leo Bryan Alan Masters

Anchorage, Alaska

December 2012

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Purpose

The purpose of this project was to help the elders of Anchorage Grace Church (AGC) regain active spiritual oversight of Grace Christian School (GCS) through doctrinal accountability and direct spiritual leadership.

Goals

The overarching objective was to begin to transform the relationship between AGC and GCS such that the elders would have more active spiritual oversight of the school, in order to make both organizations healthier in their pursuit and display of the glory of God. This ultimate end was measured based on the accomplishment of the following five goals. The first was to affirm the elders in their responsibility to have active spiritual oversight of the school. The second goal was to create and implement a theological matrix describing primary and secondary doctrines, and to have that document be a grid for the theological integrity of the school. The third goal was to utilize the Dean of Spiritual Life role to work toward developing a more effective discipleship and mentoring culture at the school. The fourth goal was to help the faculty and staff understand the biblical foundation for the elders having spiritual oversight of its ministries, in order to minimize the fears and mistrust they may have in the transition process. The fifth goal, a personal one, was both to strengthen my ability to facilitate church leadership of the school, and to improve my skill at shepherding youth at the organizational level. These goals are thoroughly evaluated in chapter 5.

Context of the Ministry Project

Anchorage Grace Church is located in a suburban part of Anchorage, about 10 miles south of downtown. It is in a neighborhood composed mostly of middle to upper-middle class families, though the church attracts people from all over town. Currently there are over 400 regular attenders.

According to the 2010 Census, the Municipality of Anchorage is Alaska's largest city with a population of 291,826; the entire state's population is 710,231.[1] In 2000, Anchorage had a population of 260,283, giving Anchorage about a 12 percent increase over the last decade.[2] Of the 92 percent of the people in the city who claim one race only, 72 percent are Caucasian, 5.6 percent African-American, 8 percent Alaskan Native, 8 percent Asian, and of the total population 7.6 percent are Hispanic.[3] Statistics for two nearby elementary schools, one public and one private, reveal that there are slightly more white people in the area surrounding the church and school than there are in the rest of the city.[4] The church and school do not keep race statistics, but in my observation the ministries roughly resemble these more local statistics, with the church being slightly more homogenous. In the church's zip code, the 2010 median household income was $125,729,[5] compared to the city median of $73,864, the state median of $67,659, and the United States median of $55,970.[6] These incomes may seem high, but

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[1]"Population and Housing Occupancy Status: 2010" [on-line]; accessed 25 April 2011; available from http://factfinder2.census.gov; Internet.

[2]"Census 2000 Demographic Profile Highlights: Anchorage Municipality, Alaska" [on-line]; accessed 25 April 2011; available from http://factfinder.census.gov; Internet.

[3]"Race, Hispanic or Latino, Age, and Housing Occupancy: 2010" [on-line]; accessed 25 April 2011; available from http://factfinder2.census.gov; Internet.

[4]"School Comparison Tool" [on-line]; accessed 25 April 2011; available from http://www.greatschools.org/school-comparison-tool/studentTeacher.page?schools=AK524%2CAK515%2CAK142%2CAK160%2CAK206&source=spreviewsAK524; Internet.

[5]"Anchorage, AK 99516 Household Income Statistics" [on-line]; accessed 25 April 2011; available from http://www.clrsearch.com/Anchorage_Demographics/AK/99516/Household-Income; Internet.

not when Anchorage's higher cost of living is taken into consideration (27 percent higher than the national average).[7]

Anchorage Grace Brethren Church began as a home Bible study in 1977 under the leadership of Pastor Larry Smithwick. In a letter to another pastor after the first weeks of beginning the meetings, he wrote that Anchorage is a "well churched" city, but that "there could easily be several thriving Brethren churches." He continues, "Along with San Jose, Ca., Anchorage is the fastest growing major city in the U.S."[8] Anchorage failed to meet his expectations for population growth, but God still richly blessed the ministry of the church. Within five years (1982) there were over 400 attenders, and they had started Grace Christian School (in 1980) which now had 141 students and 6 teachers.[9] By 1984 there were 500 in weekly attendance.[10] The original dream was to have 2000 attenders by the end of the decade, but it never quite came to fruition.[11] By 1990 attendance reached a peak of about 900.[12]

The church began as a ministry of the Brethren denomination, and there was an initial controversy over whether members could be admitted if they had not been trine immersed—that is, immersed three times forward, once each in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Smithwick corresponded much over this issue in his desire

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[6]"Anchorage Demographics Summary" [on-line]; accessed 25 April 2011; available from http://www.clrsearch.com/Anchorage_Demographics/AK; Internet.

[7]"Cost of Living Calculator" [on-line]; accessed 25 April 2011; available from http://www.payscale.com/cost-of-living-calculator/Alaska-Anchorage; Internet.

[8]Larry Smithwick to Snives, August 31, 1977, archives, Anchorage Grace Church, Anchorage, AK.

[9]Larry Smithwick to Earl Rademacher, September 2, 1982, archives, Anchorage Grace Church, Anchorage, AK.

[10]Church archives, 1984, Anchorage Grace Church, Anchorage, AK.

[11]Church archives, October, 1982, Anchorage Grace Church, Anchorage, AK.

[12]Steve Pauls (Associate Pastor of Anchorage Grace Church, Anchorage, AK), personal interview with the author, 26 April 2011.

not to burden the flock with what he considered secondary, denominational issues. Though fully convinced himself that the trine immersion was the correct way, he saw no need to re-baptize believers who had been immersed in other denominations. He wrote to another pastor, "My concern . . . is to build a biblical church. That priority must supersede building a Brethren church if and when the two are in conflict. . . . This church may well become 'pivotal' in Alaska."[13] In 1998, the church decided to withdraw its affiliation with the Brethren denomination and removed "Brethren" from the title of the church—the process was done carefully and peacefully.[14] It is now non-denominational.

One significant way that the church has indeed been pivotal is in its education ministry represented by Grace Christian School, started as a ministry of the church in 1980. Since then, the K-12 college preparatory school has grown to be one of the most well-respected schools in Anchorage. Currently there about 70 churches represented by the school's 600 students. Enrollment is down slightly from the recent past due to current economic struggles affecting our nation. The largest single contributor of students is a non-denominational megachurch about ten minutes away, which actually started in 1989 as a church plant from Anchorage Grace.[15] Until recently, AGC had always been the largest contributor of students, and is currently the second largest contributor of students.

Students are from many different denominations, such as Baptist, Church of Christ, Nazarene, Pentecostal, and there are quite a few Catholic families as well. The school is advertised as non-denominational, but in practice has almost become multi-denominational. For example, teachers are trained not to teach one particular stance on controversial issues, even Bible teachers. They are to defer to the teaching they receive at

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[13]Larry Smithwick to Jim Custer, January 23, 1978, archives, Anchorage Grace Church, Anchorage, AK.

[14]Pauls, interview.

[15]Brian Chronister to The Elders of Anchorage Grace, August 16, 1989, archives, Anchorage Grace Church, Anchorage, AK.

home and in their home church. This atmosphere of theological looseness has been in place since before I started teaching Bible in 2004. When the school was founded, the church had more direct input into what was taught in the Bible classes, and the doctrinal statement of the church was taught. People do not always realize that "non-denominational" actually is a denomination with a set of beliefs, having the right and responsibility to teach doctrinal distinctives like any other denomination.

The relationship between the church and school has a fascinating history of its own. When the school was founded, it did not have a school board, but an advisory board, made up entirely of AGC members. In 1984 the elders gave the advisory board the authority to become a fully functioning school board. According to the original structure, all school board members were to be active members of AGC, one being an elder. Unfortunately, in its first year there were conflicts both within the school board and between the school board and the school administration, along with apparent poor leadership overall. The elders intervened in January and within one month restructured the school board, then suspended it, and finally dissolved it.[16] Reading the elders' minutes from that time period, it seems as though they handled the situation well. In May they appointed six men to be on the "School Committee,"[17] and an elder was confirmed as the chair in June.[18] Apparently there were no more problems with the school board after this date. This story serves as an illustration of effective elder leadership, restoring the school to a place of health during a stormy period in its history.

In 1991 the founding pastor of the church and school left under good terms, and his position was replaced in 1993. Speaking with people who were at AGC during the two-year ministry of his successor, it is apparent that this second pastor did much

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[16]Church Archives, Jan-Feb 1985, Anchorage Grace Church, Anchorage, AK.

[17]Elder Board Meeting Minutes, May 16, 1985, archives, Anchorage Grace Church, Anchorage, AK.

[18]Ibid., June 6, 1985.

damage to the church and school. People do not give many specifics, but the consensus is clear that he was a poor leader and had integrity issues. The elders ended up firing him in 1995, and the church split when he left, with about 200 people leaving to various churches in the area.[19] Of course, his poor leadership also affected the school. Specifics, again, are unclear, but serious damage was done to the relationship between church and school. It seems as though the school realized that its success was intricately linked to the church, and because of this took steps to protect itself.

In August of 1996, the school board proposed to the elder board that the school should become its own 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation, though still operating as a ministry of the church.[20] By this time, the school had done quite well, and was starting to grow out from under the direct oversight of the elders. With the problems caused by the recent events, the school wanted to protect itself from the possibility of church failure, and to gain some independence. The school was growing and the church, "healthy, but recovering . . . , [was] unable to take the lead and carry the financial weight."[21] The other main reason for requesting to become its own 501(c)(3) was to be able to accept donations directly. The school had grown so much that Anchorage Grace Church, though still the largest single contributor of students to the school, only represented 18 percent of the families.[22] The school wanted donors to be assured that they were donating to the school, and that the money would be used as intended. The school believed being a separate corporation was the best way to accomplish this objective. The school board clearly stated that it had no intention of leaving the church, and that the elders were to

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[19]Scott Grant (Chairman of the Elder Board, Anchorage Grace Church, Anchorage, AK), personal interview by the author, 20 April 2011.

[20]"GCS School Board Proposal to Elder Board of AGBC," August 26, 1996, archives, Anchorage Grace Church, Anchorage, AK.

[21]Ibid.

[22]Ibid. In 1987, by comparison, 43 percent of the families were from AGBC (Church Archives, June 15, 1987, Anchorage Grace Church, Anchorage, AK).

maintain their full authority. The school was soon granted its request to become its own 501(c)(3)corporation.

Unbeknownst at the time, this request would contribute to the functional distancing of the ministries of the church and the school from each other. When I started working at the school in 2004, it was clearly communicated that the school was a ministry of the church, but in practice it did not seem to be the case other than by shared facility use. From a Bible teacher's perspective, it seemed as though the elders had almost entirely delegated their responsibility to the school board. Of course, approval was sought for major decisions, but from all outward appearances it looked like the school board was entirely in charge of all aspects of the school. Having realized the situation, the elders are taking steps to fulfill their calling, knowing they need to navigate carefully through the political nature of such a transition.

The church started in 1977 with 25 people in a home Bible study, and within the first five years attendance went up to almost 400. Now, almost 35 years since its founding, it still has about 400 in weekly attendance. After the church split in 1995, the pastor they called next was a good man but did not have the leadership skill set necessary to guide the church through its recovery process. He left under favorable, though stressed, conditions in 1999.[23] In 2001 the church called another pastor who was a strong leader. The church was growing under his ministry, and attendance almost doubled from just under 300 when he came to almost 600 in 2008 when God called him elsewhere. He never mastered the relationship between church and school, however, and some of the inherited tension remained unresolved.[24] When he left, the church's attendance settled back down closer to 400. The current senior pastor Jeff Crotts has been here since June, 2009. He continues to gain positive momentum in both the church and the school, and

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[23]Grant and Pauls, interview.

[24]Ibid.

many believe the church is healthier now than it has been in a long time. Leaders in both church and school believe that under his leadership they will be able to coexist as originally intended, with trust and leadership restored to the church.

The elders have hired me (as of November, 2010) on a part-time basis as the Dean of Spiritual Life for the school, both to help them restore active spiritual oversight to the elders and to strengthen the spiritual climate of the school. I have been a Bible teacher at the school for eight years and have poured my life into the ministry, earning a high degree of trust from the people at the school. The pastor and some of the elders know me well, too, and they trust me and my theology. In God's providence, he has placed me here to help the elders in this transition. This project was one of my major responsibilities as the Dean. There is a likelihood that the Dean role will expand in its responsibilities for the next school year, which would further increase the elders' active spiritual oversight of the school. The job description of the Dean is still being worked out, but at its core is doctrinal integrity and spiritual leadership. The Dean is directly responsible to the elders, and is in constant communication with the senior pastor and the superintendent of the school, along with a lay elder (as a committee appointed by the elders). Most of the work of the Dean had been behind the scenes before the launch of this project, but, according to the senior pastor, a paradigmatic shift was already beginning.

Rationale for the Project

The rationale for this project flowed directly from the historical context. The Bible is clear (1 Pet 5:1-7; Acts 20:17-35; Pastoral Epistles) that the elders are directly responsible for the spiritual oversight of the church entrusted to their care. Since the school is indeed a ministry of the church, it is essential that the elders exercise this God-given responsibility with intentionality and active spiritual leadership, rather than delegating it to an otherwise capable school board. The parallel comes to mind of a father

having delegated primary spiritual oversight of the children to the mother. Though the mother may be perfectly capable, this situation ought not be. The elders realized this had happened, and desired to correct it. This project was an integral part of that restoration process.

One of the top priorities of the elders was to tighten up the theological stance of the school. Doctrinal integrity had been less than ideal for over a decade. Instead of immediately deferring to the home and home church on denominational issues, the elders wanted the teachers to teach doctrine according to what the church teaches, and to teach that doctrine as truth. Respect will always be shown for various views, and students will not be unduly coerced into believing what they are taught—educational freedom still exists—but it will be known what the church's position is. When secondary or controversial doctrines are addressed in class, the elders would still have the teacher teach what the church believes, though they are free personally to disagree and to present varying viewpoints. Personal and educational integrity are necessities in such cases, so that doctrines are adequately taught. Which doctrines are primary or secondary were addressed in a Theological Matrix document (see appendix 2) that puts the church statement of faith and some controversial doctrines into a grid which will act as both a hiring guide and teaching guide.

One extremely practical way that the elders already began to take active spiritual leadership is in creating (and financing) the position of Dean of Spiritual Life for the school. Through that position they have had a hand directly involved in the school's spiritual life. The Dean, immediately accountable to and guided by the elders, has been charged with helping to increase the doctrinal integrity of the school, and with promoting a deeper biblical spirituality on the campus. The school is already spiritually strong, but not as strong as it could be with more active elder leadership through the Dean position.

Definitions

For the purpose of this project, *active spiritual oversight* and *spiritual leadership* will be used interchangeably when referring to elder responsibility. It is described when Peter tells the elders, "Shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight" (1 Pet 5:2). It is defined when Paul tells the Ephesian elders, "Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God," (Acts 20:28) and to "be alert" to the danger of false teachings creeping into the church (Acts 20:31). In both descriptions, the elders are to be intentional in their responsibilities of caring for God's flock entrusted to their care. The best working definition of "active" in this context is "making a determined effort and not leaving something to happen by itself."[25] Whether or not it would happen well by itself is irrelevant.

Though all things are spiritual in one sense, the elders do not want to be actively involved in the daily operations of the school, curriculum choice, general budget, etc., though they still desire to maintain broad oversight in these areas. When it comes to doctrinal issues in the curriculum or other spiritual life issues, however, the elders would like to exercise active leadership. When it involves hiring new faculty and staff, for example, the elders do not want to be directly involved unless it is a Bible teacher. In weekly chapels, the elders will use the functionality of the Dean role to oversee and actively lead those who have been appointed as chapel coordinators.

As previously mentioned, the elders would like to see a more deeply rooted biblical spirituality in the school. *Biblical spirituality* is another term for *spiritual formation*, but the emphasis is more appropriately focused in what the Bible says about spirituality. Eastern mysticism is pervasive in our culture and has crept into the church. It

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[25]Albert Sydney Hornby, ed., *The Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), s.v. "Active" [on-line]; accessed 25 April 2011; available from http://www.oxfordadvancedlearnersdictionary.com/dictionary/active_1; Internet.

is important to distinguish what the Bible says about spirituality and what the world says about it. Donald Whitney's definition for "spiritual formation," or "biblical spirituality," is "the biblical process of being conformed inwardly and outwardly to the character of Christ."[26] It is biblically informed sanctification, using the means God has ordained to grow his children.

Limitations and Delimitations

The limitation of this project was its confinement to a fifteen-week time period. Long term effects of this project cannot reasonably be measured in fifteen weeks. However, change in trajectory was evident and measurable in this amount of time (see chapter 5).

There were a number of delimitations on this project. First, the elders were only looking at one ministry of the church. This project will be a model for them to tighten up the doctrinal stance of all the church's ministries in the near future. Second, the measurability was determined by interviewing and surveying the elders, the school board, the school administrators, and a select group of the teachers. Due to the sheer number of them, not all teachers were given the option to be interviewed. Also, neither parents nor the church congregation were given the opportunity to provide input. Third, though the entire school was involved in the doctrinal strengthening, only the students in grades nine through twelve were directly affected by the discipleship ministries that were implemented as part of this project.

Research Methodology

The project participants involved three groups of people: the elders, the school leadership (board, administration, faculty) and the students. Within this set, my focus was on the elders as leaders and the students as the ones most greatly affected. The school

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[26]Donald S. Whitney, "Christian Life FAQ" [on-line]; accessed 24 April 2011; available from http:// biblicalspirituality.org/resources/christian-life-faq

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leadership provided input regarding the big picture and their support is an essential component of spiritual growth for the students—both in their acceptance of the elders' leadership and in their support of any ministry initiatives that the elders promote through the Dean of Spiritual Life.

The elders were interviewed regarding exactly how they wanted their active spiritual oversight to be realized. I determined their impression of the current state of their leadership of the school, their desires for the spiritual life of the school, and how they planned to implement the improvements. I also asked them questions about the church and school relationship, both past and present, and their plan for the future. After the project's completion, follow up questions determined whether they believed they had restored themselves in their responsibility to exercise active spiritual leadership of the school, and whether they perceived the school leadership to have responded well.

The school leadership is multi-faceted. I interviewed the school board members along the same lines as the elders. I determined their impression of the elders' leadership in the past and the present, potential fears, and their desire for the future of the school. There had been an air of mistrust between the two boards in the past, and the interview process confirmed that the school leadership did not understand why the elders wanted to take on a more active role. I also asked them for their desires regarding the spiritual life of the school, and how they would like to see them accomplished. Being on the front lines, teachers provided an important perspective. Instead of interviewing all teachers, I interviewed a select few whom I believed to be a representative cross-section.

During the first week of school, all high-school students attended a three-day retreat with the teachers and administration. During this time I surveyed the students regarding their practice of spiritual disciplines and their understanding of biblical spirituality. Nine weeks into the school year, after a series of chapel messages and discipleship group meetings, I sent out the same survey to measure their growth in practice and understanding.

To measure my personal goal I interviewed the senior pastor after the project's completion. He was involved in the project from the very beginning, helping me shape it while I was still determining its focus. I was able to determine whether I have accomplished my personal goal by a post-project interview with the senior pastor and, of course, by the success of the project as a whole.

The first four weeks of the fifteen-week project took place before the school year started. I interacted with the elders and the school leadership (board, administration, select teachers) both individually and in their respective groups. Weeks 5-14 related directly to the students, implementing a new discipleship ministry designed to deepen biblical spirituality at the school. For this aspect of the project, I was given the weekly chapel pulpit to teach a four-part series on discipleship and biblical spirituality, including the topics of the lordship of Christ, personal and corporate spiritual disciplines, and the biblical principles of confrontation and restoration. In the eleventh week a new small group ministry was launched. The success of this project was measured by comparing the responses from the pre-project interviews and surveys to the responses in the post-project interviews and surveys, along with student feedback from week 15.

Conclusion

Understanding the history of both AGC and GCS provides a context which underscores the importance of this project. As a ministry of the church, the elders desire to be faithful to their calling to shepherd the flock of God. The next two chapters provide both biblical support (chapter 2) and extra-biblical strategies (chapter 3) to aid the AGC elder board in exercising active spiritual oversight of the school ministry. Chapter 4 details each of the fifteen weeks of the project, and chapter 5 gives a thorough evaluation of the project.

CHAPTER 2

BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL EXHORTATION
FOR ELDERS EXERCISING ACTIVE
SPIRITUAL OVERSIGHT

Introduction

As stated in chapter 1, the elders of Anchorage Grace Church (AGC) have

realized that they need to be more proactive in their role of spiritual oversight of Grace

Christian School (GCS). In the bylaws of GCS, it specifically states in the preamble that

the school "is a ministry of Anchorage Grace Brethren Church."[1] In the document, it also

states that "[the Elder Board] shall provide spiritual leadership and oversight of this

ministry."[2] Written into the founding documents of the school is the acknowledgement of

the Elder Board's responsibility to lead and oversee the spiritual life of the school.

Realizing that they have neglected the full force of their calling, the elders have

determined to take the necessary steps to reestablish the biblical oversight to which God

has called them.

This chapter examines the biblical foundation for the AGC elders having active

spiritual oversight of GCS. Paul (Acts 20:17-38) and Peter (1 Pet 5:1-5) are both clear in

their description of the elders' responsibility and why their role is so crucial. One way the

elders are taking active spiritual oversight is that they are enlisting help by establishing a

Dean of Spiritual Life. Paul's words to Timothy (1 Tim 4:6-16) are especially appropriate

for me as I fill the Dean role, since the elders will expect me to carry out their leadership

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[1]"Bylaws of Grace Christian School," n.d., Anchorage Grace Church, Anchorage, AK. Note: the former Anchorage Grace Brethren Church is now Anchorage Grace Church.

[2]Ibid., Article IV.1.

in the day-to-day spiritual life of the school. In each text, the overarching question will be, what does the text teach specifically about the role and responsibility of the elders to take active spiritual oversight of the people entrusted to their care? Or, what does active spiritual leadership look like, and why is it so important?

<div align="center">

Paul's Charge to the Elders
(Acts 20:17-38)

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In Acts 20:17-38—Paul's farewell address to the Ephesian elders—he speaks about eldership in a way that is particularly relevant to this project. He speaks not only of the elders' responsibility to protect the flock from doctrinal error, but he also describes by example the heart that the elders must have towards those under their care.

In a hurry to get to Jerusalem by the day of Pentecost, Paul takes a ship that bypasses Ephesus (Acts 20:16). From Miletus he calls for the elders to join him for one last good-bye, fully expecting never to see them again (20:25). There is an overarching theme of encouragement in this chapter, evidenced by Luke's mention of the verb for "encourage" explicitly in verses 1, 2, and 12. Paul's farewell address serves as an illustration of what may have been said in the other encounters of encouragement.[3]

Paul's Example of Active
Spiritual Leadership

Connectedness. Paul begins by appealing to the elders' knowledge of how he "lived among" (ESV) them, being "with" (NASB) them from the very first day he was in Asia (20:18).[4] One of the foremost aspects of Paul's leadership is that he "identified with the people, living among them (v. 18), serving God with humility and tears (v. 19), and going from house to house (v. 20). This enabled him," writes Ajith Fernando, "to know what they needed to hear, so that he was able to preach everything that was helpful to

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[3]Ajith Fernando, *Acts*, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1998), 529.

[4]Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture is from the English Standard Version.

them (v. 20a)."[5] Active spiritual oversight requires the elders to know people and be known by them. Do the elders of AGC live among those invested in GCS? To some degree, yes, but how can they do so more? Perhaps each elder can make it a point to "live among" at least one teacher of GCS, and/or at least one school family, if they do not already. Since many churches are represented at the school, perhaps the elders could make it a point to target one family that is a member of AGC, and one that is not. As the elders work toward restoring active spiritual oversight, a mutual sense of community between the elders and the school (staff and families) would immensely aid the transition.

Service. After expressing his connectedness to the elders, Paul then proceeds to explain exactly how he lived among them. His life was characterized by "serving the Lord with all humility and with tears and with trials" (v. 19). He was serving the Lord, not himself, and not the Ephesians. As I. H. Marshall writes, "This thought of service stands prior to any thought of the status that may belong to the servant."[6] Even though Paul carried the authority of Christ, he thought of himself as the slave of God (Rom 1:1; Titus 1:1; Phil 1:1), and served him faithfully. The first characteristic of his Godward service, essential to effective leadership, is humility. Elders cannot lead like Christ without humility (Matt 20:25-28). The second characteristic is deep affection, exhibited by Paul's tears. Were these tears of pleading? Tears of pain? Tears of joy? From this text alone one cannot know, but Paul's service to God stirred up a profoundly affectionate response. The third characteristic is suffering. These trials were brought about by persecution from the Jews. Although there is no true persecution of AGC or GCS, suffering is still pervasive. Do the people of the school see the elders reaching out to those in need? Is the church one that offers healing to families who are suffering

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[5]Fernando, *Acts*, 532-33.

[6]I. Howard Marshall, *The Acts of the Apostles*, Tyndale New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), 330.

financially, maritally, or parentally, for example? Unquestionably, the most important of the three characteristics for the purpose of this project is humility. The elders must lead in such a way that everybody knows—the way the Ephesian elders knew Paul's humility—that they are not self-seeking in their endeavor to take a more active role in the leadership of the school.

Sound teaching. Paul elaborates upon his ministry with the Ephesians by describing not just his heart, but his actions. He devoted his life ("did not shrink back") to declaring to them all that was profitable, not only publicly, but also from house to house (v. 20). He repeats himself again in verse 27: "I did not shrink back from declaring to you the whole purpose of God." Paul obviously did not have time to take them line by line through the Old Testament in the three and a half years he spent in Ephesus. According to D. A. Carson, Paul means that he taught them "the burden of the whole of God's revelation, the balance of things, leaving nothing out that was of primary importance, never ducking the hard bits, helping believers to grasp the whole counsel of God that they themselves would become better equipped to read their Bibles intelligently, comprehensively. This doubtless included not only what to believe but how to act."[7] If the elders are to model Paul's ministry, doctrinal integrity must be a priority, making sure that everyone under their care knows all that there is to know in order to be in line with God's will.

In verse 26, Paul's faithfulness to sound teaching rendered him "innocent of the blood of all men." If people rejected Paul's teaching, it was not because of a deficiency in his ministry. He did not inoculate them with a less powerful version of gospel truth. If they had been, their condemnation would be partly Paul's fault. As F. F.

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[7]D. A. Carson, "Challenges for the Twenty-first-century Pulpit," in *Preach the Word: Essays on Expository Preaching: In Honor of R. Kent Hughes*, ed. Leland Ryken and Todd Wilson (Wheaton: Crossway, 2007), 178.

Bruce observes, "Like Ezekiel's trustworthy watchman [see Ezek 3:16-21, 33:1-9], he had sounded the trumpet so that all the province of Asia had heard. If there were any who paid no heed, their blood would be on their own heads: Paul was free from responsibility for their doom."[8] Active spiritual overseers feel the weight of responsibility to be faithful to boldly proclaim the whole of God's truth, lest they have a hand in the condemnation of those under their teaching.

Getting even more specific, Paul reminds the elders that his teaching consisted of "testifying both to Jews and to Greeks of repentance toward God and of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ" (v. 21). Paul taught them the gospel. The elders of AGC are the guardians of the gospel. They need to remember their highest calling, and not get distracted with lesser things. In one sense all things are spiritual, but the elders must remember that their primary responsibility is in matters pertaining to the gospel, "to prayer and to the ministry of the word" (Acts 6:4).

Focus. Paul ends the section about his example with a narrative of how he is planning to go to Jerusalem, not knowing exactly what will happen to him there, but fully expecting "bonds and affliction" (v. 23). Knowing that his life would be in danger, he says, "But I do not account my life of any value nor as precious to myself, if only I may finish my course and the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God" (v. 24). Paul's humility is again evident in that he does not care what happens to him, so long as he accomplishes the task God has for him. This perspective must dominate the minds of the elders. The ultimate concern is that they fulfill their calling. What happens to them is secondary. Like Paul, they must think of their own lives as having no value compared to the task at hand.

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[8]F. F. Bruce, *The Book of Acts,* New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 392.

**Paul's Exhortation to Active
Spiritual Leadership**

      Pay attention to yourselves. After speaking from his own life as the example for the elders to follow, Paul transitions to exhortation (v. 28). He knows that spiritual dangers abound, using the imagery of "fierce wolves . . . not sparing the flock," and that even people from within the flock will arise and destructively teach false doctrine (vv. 29-30). Herein lies the primary reason why this text was chosen for this project. It highlights the responsibility of the elders to "pay careful attention" because of the spiritual danger that abounds. Before Paul speaks about false teachers, though, and before he speaks about the elders' responsibility to lead others, he speaks of the elders' need to "pay careful attention to [themselves]" (v. 28). It is beyond the bounds of this project to study the qualifications for eldership (cf. 1 Tim 3:2-7; Titus 1:7-11), but here Paul maintains that their personal life before God is of utmost importance before they attempt to lead others.

      Pay attention to the flock. Once the elders' own souls are carefully attended, Paul charges them with exercising that same attention to the flock. Paul's use of the word "flock" is intentional and instructional. He is using the shepherd metaphor that Jesus himself used. How are these undershepherds to lead? Like Christ did. Why? Because this flock was purchased by the blood of Christ (v. 28). Bruce asserts, "Their responsibility was the greater in that the flock which they were commissioned to tend was no other than the church of God which he had purchased for himself," and not only that, but "the purchase price was nothing less than the life-blood of the beloved Son."[9] As elders lead, they must remember that it is God's flock, not their own. As they seek to provide leadership to the school, it is God's ministry, not theirs. Paul uses the image of himself as "one who 'slaves for the Lord,'" notes Beverly Roberts Gaventa, "[which is] a figure

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      [9]Ibid., 392-93.

seldom understood to be the initiator of events or one empowered to bring them about."[10] Slaves do not run things. They do what they are told, operating according to their master's will. Shepherd-slaves, likewise, have no agenda of their own, other than faithfulness to the Master. This truth harkens back to the first characteristic in Paul's example of service—that of humility. An elder cannot lead like Christ if he thinks of himself as Christ. Humility recognizes that it is God's church, God's flock, God's ministry. How much more diligent should these elders be, since this flock was bought with the blood of Christ! Humility and faithfulness must abound for elders to accomplish their mission.

Remember the Holy Spirit. Another lesson on eldership one sees in this passage is that the Holy Spirit himself has appointed them to this ministry, "[making them] overseers" (v. 28). The word for "overseer" is ἐπίσκοπος. Marshall describes the word as "[conveying] the idea of spiritual oversight and pastoral care. Such people owed their appointment to God's choice of them by the Spirit."[11] They did not make themselves into leaders. The congregation did not make them leaders. Paul's appointment of them did not make them leaders. The Holy Spirit made them leaders. This truth not only touches on humility again, but also confidence. The elder is to lead with humble confidence. Humility because they did not put themselves there, and confidence because God did.

Watch for wolves. In verse 29 Paul uses the same imagery that Jesus used in Matthew 7:15 to describe false teachers as wolves among sheep. It is the job of the elders to watch out for such people, and "to shepherd the church of God" accordingly (v. 28),

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[10]Beverly Roberts Gaventa, "Theology and Ecclesiology in the Miletus Speech: Reflections on Content and Context," *New Testament Studies* 50, no. 1 (2004): 45.

[11]Marshall, *Acts*, 333.

"[referring] to all the care that must be exercised in relation to the flock."[12] Part of the job requirement for the elders is to teach doctrinal integrity. How else will the flock be prepared to fight the tendency of these false teachers "to draw away the disciples after them" (v. 30)? They must be trained in doctrine. Active spiritual oversight means guarding the truth of the Word of God from those who would twist it. Bruce elaborates, "The sheep will have to be guarded with unceasing vigilance, for ferocious wolves will try to force their way among them and ravage them. . . . But it is not only from intruders from outside that false teaching will proceed: from their own ranks some will arise to seduce their followers into heretical by-paths."[13] Understanding this danger, the elders of AGC have awakened to the need for heightened doctrinal integrity at the school.

After speaking of the danger that lurks, Paul repeats the exhortation to careful shepherding: "Therefore be alert" (v. 31). Marshall likens this attention to "shepherds keeping awake to watch for marauding wolves at night."[14] His command is bolstered by his own example, saying, "Night and day for a period of three years I did not cease to admonish [νουθετέω] each one with tears" (v. 31). Once more one can see Paul's earnest diligence as the spiritual leader. Each phrase in this sentence deserves attention. Night and day, for three years, he never stopped intensely admonishing them. Admonish means "to warn or notify of a fault; to reprove with mildness," or "to counsel against wrong practices; to caution or advise," or simply, "To instruct or direct."[15] Paul did not just teach doctrine. He taught life, pressing that doctrine into the fabric of their being.

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[12]Ibid., 334.

[13]Bruce, *Acts*, 393.

[14]Marshall, *Acts*, 335.

[15]*Noah Webster's First Edition of An American Dictionary of the English Language* (1967; reprint, 2005), s.v. "admonish." Also available online; accessed 25 June 2011; available from http://1828.mshaffer.com/d/ search/word,admonish; Internet.

Paul's teaching was not detached from the elders' lives. It directly affected how they lived, and he admonished them accordingly. It is the responsibility of the elders not only to teach sound doctrine, but also to see to it that people are living according to the truth.

**Paul's Expectation of the
Spirit's Leadership**

Paul is fully expecting never to see these beloved people again. He knows that ravenous wolves will enter and attempt to destroy the flock, and that he will not be around to help. Instead of that fact causing fear or panic in the heart of Paul, in his humility he commends them to God, knowing that God through his Word will build them up to ensure they will receive their inheritance (v. 32). Taking on such an oversight role would be overwhelming, except for the truth that it is in God's hands. Confidence comes from being in the will of God, serving according to the strength that God supplies. It does not come from being able, but from knowing that God is able. Even though tremendous weight is placed upon the elders to oversee the flock, ultimately it is in God's hands.

Interestingly, the final words before the parting prayer have to do with money. Paul worked hard to provide for himself and his companions even though they had the right to receive pay for their spiritual work (vv. 33-35). As the elders of AGC seek to lead the school, perhaps they could initiate a scholarship program as a fulfillment of this passage that "we must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he himself said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive'" (v. 35). The church continues to sacrifice significantly for the school. What more appropriate way to do so than to help those students who are financially struggling? The school has its own scholarship program, but the church could come alongside the school and help them in this way. Such an act would multiply reward in helping more students attend, helping the school know the church loves them, and receiving the promised blessing of which Jesus speaks.

In the final scene of this passage, Paul and the elders pray and weep together and embrace for one last time. The sense of strong mutual affection is clear from this passage. There was a deep love that Paul had for these people, and they loved him just as deeply. This scene exemplifies the type of affection that should exist between the leadership of the church and school. This strong bond will flourish as the elders follow Paul's example of connectedness, service, and sound teaching.

Peter's Charge to the Elders
1 Peter 5:1-5

Peter also gives elders specific instructions that are significant for the context of this project. After repeated exhortations to submit to God's will in the midst of suffering, Peter tells the elders to shepherd the flock of God in such a way as to maximize current effectiveness and future reward (1 Pet 5:1-5). The similarities between Peter's words and Paul's are remarkable.

Peter's Exhortation to
Active Leadership

Realize the need. As Peter begins to draw his epistle to a close, he turns his attention to the elders. "So I exhort the elders among you" (1 Pet 5:1). This new section connects the previous sections on suffering with the particle οὖν ("so," "therefore"). This section to the leadership of the church, as Peter H. Davids establishes, "is a logically necessary explanation of the intra-church solidarity that is required in the face of persecution."[16] It is not an excursus on church leadership structure having nothing to do with the context of suffering. On the contrary, in the face of expected persecution, Paul J. Achtemeier affirms that "effective pastoral leadership is indispensable if the community

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[16]Peter H. Davids, *The First Epistle of Peter*, New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 174.

is to survive."[17] Peter gives this group of people the same designation as Paul does in the Acts passage above. Given the details of the exhortation in verses 2-4, it is clear that he means the elders who are the leaders of the church.[18] Though such persecution is not imminent for the elders of AGC, the principles of pastoral care still apply since the enemy Satan is always seeking to destroy God's work (v. 8).

Create camaraderie. Peter leads into his exhortation ($\pi\alpha\rho\alpha\kappa\alpha\lambda\acute{\epsilon}\omega$) with a series of three facts about himself that helps him identify with the elders and motivate them in their task. His first self-designation is that of a fellow-elder ($\sigma\upsilon\mu\pi\rho\epsilon\sigma\beta\acute{\upsilon}\tau\epsilon\rho\sigma\varsigma$). Even though he has authoritatively called himself an apostle at the beginning of his letter, he is speaking to them as a fellow-elder, "[stressing] his empathy with the elders in their task"[19] and "[underlining] the *collegiality* that the author wishes to establish between the elders he addresses and himself."[20] Second, having walked with Jesus in his earthly ministry, Peter claims to be "a witness of the sufferings of Christ" (v. 1). A repeated theme in Peter is expected suffering, and what better example of receiving suffering at the hand of God than Christ himself—and Peter was an eyewitness.

Peter's final point of identification with them is that he is "a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed" (v. 1). Given Peter's use of the term "glory" already in his letter, he is clearly pointing their attention to the end, at "the revelation of Jesus Christ" (1:7), in which their "joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory" (1:8) will be fulfilled when "his glory is revealed" (4:13). Peter is in the trenches, suffering with them,

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[17]Paul J. Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1996), 322.

[18]Thomas R. Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, New American Commentary, vol. 37 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2003), 231; Davids, *First Peter*, 175; Achtemeier, *1 Peter,* 321-22; John Hall Elliot, "Elders as Leaders in 1 Peter and the Early Church," *Currents in Theology and Mission* 28, no. 6 (2001): 552.

[19]Davids, *First Peter*, 176.

[20]Elliot, "Elders as Leaders," 552, emphasis in the original.

with his "[hope set] fully on the grace that will be brought to [them] at the revelation of Jesus Christ" (1:13). Peter can be trusted, not only because he is an apostle, but because he is one with the people to whom he writes. With these identifying marks, Peter begins his authoritative encouragement.

Shepherd the flock. Peter's exhortation to the elders is simply stated, "Shepherd the flock of God" (v. 2). According to Michaels, the aorist imperative "establishes a pattern of behavior to be maintained until the end of the age."[21] Using the same imagery as Paul, Peter encapsulates the function of the elders in one word: shepherd. Perhaps emblazoned in Peter's mind and coming out in this exhortation, are Jesus' words during his restoration when he thrice told Peter, "Feed my lambs . . . . Tend my sheep . . . . Feed my sheep" (John 21:15-17). The grammar Peter uses is especially appropriate for the purpose of this project: Davids point out that "by using the ingressive aorist he indicates that this is something that needs to be done with ever new vigor rather than as a routine undertaking."[22] It is not the sleepy scene of shepherds watching their flock by night, carefree and enjoying the night sky. It is the image of watchful shepherds who know that there are ravenous wolves lurking just on the other side of those rocks. This vigilance is the model that the AGC elders desire to embrace in their ministry towards the school.

Independently echoing Paul's emphasis, Peter affirms that this flock which they are to shepherd is God's own flock. Though not in the immediate context, Peter has already referenced the truth that "the elect" (1:1) who comprise the flock have been "ransomed . . . with the precious blood of Christ" (1:18-19). The church is God's, bought

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[21]Michaels, *1 Peter*, 282.

[22]Davids, *First Peter*, 178.

with the blood of Christ. The elders of AGC are God's servants, sent to faithfully shepherd the sheep under their care.

Exercise oversight. Peter continues his exhortation with the participle ἐπισκοποῦντες ("exercising oversight"), further detailing the expectation upon the elders. "Both places [1 Pet 5 and Acts 20:28-29] significantly connect shepherding with 'watching over it,'" observes Davids, "showing that shepherding is a job of oversight."[23] Like Paul, Peter assumes that elders oversee, and he gives three contrasts which further elaborate upon that oversight. The first is "not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you" (v. 2). An elder cannot lead the flock the way God intends if the motivation is sheer obligation. With keen insight, Michaels expounds, "Peter knows that the human ego is a severe and unhealthy taskmaster and that ministry all too often becomes a compulsive act of self-gratification."[24] Whether it is time and energy or money, God does not want people to be giving "under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver" (2 Cor 9:7). Paul and Peter both use a similar word to describe unacceptable motivation. The difficult yet rewarding task should only be undertaken by those not just able, but willing, gladly knowing that it is God's will.

The second contrast of right oversight is "not for shameful gain, but eagerly" (v. 2). Αἰσχροκερδῶς ("shameful gain") "does necessarily imply embezzlement of funds or theft. The term implies illegitimate profit," writes Davids.[25] Ministry is not a business designed to maximize financial profit, even if done legally. This oversight is not to be done for money, but with eagerness, which "indicates zeal, energy, and enthusiasm for the job [itself] . . . , and such enthusiasm is the opposite of the calculating spirit that is

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[23]Ibid.

[24]Michaels, *1 Peter*, 284.

[25]Davids, *First Peter*, 179 n. 15.

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concerned mainly with how to make money.”[26] Thankfully neither the school board nor the elder board receive compensation. The application still remains, in a broader sense, not to seek personal gain of any sort in the ministry—such as prestige, favors, or power—but to eagerly seek after God's will as revealed in the Scripture.

In the third set of contrasts, Peter further defines the elders' role as "not domineering [κατακυριεύοντες] over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock" (v. 3). Again the words of Jesus resonate in Peter's. Jesus said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them [κατακυριεύουσιν], and their great ones exercise authority over them. It shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be your slave" (Matt 20:25-27). For shepherds, this mindset of leading through example must pervade. Though they have God-given authority as under-shepherds in the church, Achtemeier wisely underscores, "Christians are not the subjects of the elders."[27] The elders must remember Peter's own example of humility in coming alongside these elders to which he writes. "Being an example fits well with the image of 'flock,'" Davids illustrates, "for the ancient shepherd did not drive his sheep, but walked in front of them and called them to follow."[28] The leadership model is one of example, not authoritarianism.

Look to the reward. Like Paul, Peter ends his exhortation to the elders with a promise of great future reward: "When the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory" (v. 4). In the New Testament, the "crown" imagery is "a regular symbol . . . of divine eschatological recognition," explains Achtemeier. "It is the divine, unfading crown emblematic of God's approval and reward, that awaits those

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[26]Ibid., 180.

[27]Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 329.

[28]Davids, *First Peter*, 181.

elders/shepherds who bear their responsibilities appropriately and effectively."[29] At times shepherding the flock might seem overwhelming. The comfort and accountability of the chief Shepherd's return should keep the elders focused on their calling. In this reminder, Peter restates in different terms that the church is God's church. The flock is God's, and Christ is the Shepherd.

The elders are like servants to whom the master entrusted his property before leaving on a long journey (Matt 25:14-19). To the servants who "shepherded" their talents well the master says, "Well done, good and faithful servant . . . . Enter into the joy of your master" (Matt 25:21). With this eagerness of anticipation of the chief Shepherd's return the elders must oversee. The promise of reward inclines the heart toward eager willingness. Domineering tendencies and false motives melt away when foreshadowed by the return of the King. May the elders of AGC feel the weight and the glory of the task God has given them, looking to the reward they will receive when Christ returns.

Peter's Exhortation to Active Submission

"Likewise," focusing now on those "who are younger," Peter tells them simply to "be subject to the elders" (v. 5a). No elaboration is given. Peter is probably using the term literally,[30] rather than trying to make a distinction between the elders and non-elders (i.e., everybody else), though that interpretation is possible.[31] If Peter's understanding of "young" is influenced by his Jewish heritage, he probably means around 30 or younger.[32] Perhaps Peter singles out the younger people because, as Thomas R. Schreiner suggests, they "tend to be more independent and less inclined to submit to those in authority . . .

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[29]Achtemeier, *1 Peter,* 329-30.

[30]Davids, *First Peter*, 183-84; Schreiner, *1 Peter*, 237.

[31]Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 332; J. Ramsey Michaels, *1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 49 (Waco: Word Books, 1988), 289.

[32]Davids, *First Peter*, 184.

[and are] more apt to act rebelliously."[33] Or, to put a positive spin on it, as Davids

observes, it is often "their very readiness for service and commitment can make them

impatient with the leaders."[34] In the context of GCS, this verse applies to those students

or young teachers who might object to the spiritual authority of the elders. What if the

elders "act like old people" and "just don't get it"? The instructions are clear. There are

layers of authority, and each layer warrants the respect that God demands. Even if the

elders do not shepherd according to the satisfaction of the sheep, the sheep are still to

submit gladly because the chief Shepherd expects it.

Peter's Exhortation to Active Humility

Having addressed the elders and those who are younger, Peter now broadens

his exhortation to all: "Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another"

(v. 5b). The imagery Peter uses conveys wrapping oneself in a garment of humility,

covering over the ugliness of unchecked personal preference and selfish interest.

According to Davids, "It is a strong term, the root of which referred to the apron that a

slave or herdsman tied on over his tunic to keep it from being soiled."[35] Peter exhorts

them to array themselves with humility, or, defined more literally by Achtemeier,

"humblemindedness (ταπεινοφροσύνη), a word whose root in the Greek world meant an

attitude expected of slaves but unworthy of free people."[36] The New Testament demands

it not only of Christian "free people," but all the more of leaders within the Christian

community. Though perhaps not intentionally alluding to Jesus wrapping himself with a

towel to wash the disciples' feet, the image stands as a prime example. The humility

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[33]Schreiner, *1 Peter*, 237.

[34]Davids, *First Peter*, 184.

[35]Ibid., 185.

[36]Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 333.

Jesus exhibited even to the one who would betray him—Judas was in the room that night—is the humility with which Peter tells all of the church of God to clothe themselves toward each other. Like Jesus the Great Shepherd, the elders are to lead by their example of humble service.

Can the flock submit to mere men if not for humility? Herein lies the key both to proper submission for the flock, and to a healthy functioning body of believers. How, then, does the flock know how to humble themselves? Do they not look to the elders, and follow their example? If those under the elders rebel or refuse to submit, it provides opportunity for the elders to examine themselves to see how they could be more proactive in their exemplification of humility.

To support his charge of humility, Peter quotes Proverbs 3:34. Beware of pride, or else you will find yourself in direct opposition to God, "for 'God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble'" (v. 5). The words for "oppose" and "submit" have the same root (ταγ-, or τάσσω, "to arrange"[37]) but a different prefix. Instead of "arranging oneself under" (ὑπο-τάσσω[38]) the word "oppose" literally means to "arrange oneself against" (ἀντι-τάσσομαι[39]). Who would want the "mighty hand of God" (v. 6) arranged against them? The consequence for ignoring this exhortation to humility is severe. Though the imagery contains a fearful warning, it quickly moves from threat to promise, for God "lavishes his grace upon the humble."[40] Everybody wants to see both AGC and GCS thrive. A charge to all is to find God's blessing on the ministry through humility. As the spiritual leaders, the elders of AGC need to take the lead in humility. May they be the

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[37]"Primarily, in military sense, then generally, *to draw up in order, arrange* in place, *assign, appoint, order*" (G. Abbott-Smith, *A Manual Greek Lexicon of the New Testament*, 3rd ed. [Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1937; reprint, Edinburgh: St Edmundsbury Press, 1994], 440).

[38]"As a military term, *to place* or *rank under*" (ibid., 463).

[39]"*To range in battle against*; mid. *to set oneself against, resist*" (ibid., 42).

[40]Schreiner, *1 Peter*, 238.

first to clothe themselves with humility, and may they not recoil if perhaps they are treated like the slaves they aspire to be.

Paul's Charge to Timothy
1 Timothy 4:6-16

In this section of Paul's personal letter to Timothy, he provides, in the words of William D. Mounce, a "paradigm of Christian ministry, directed specifically to Timothy but applicable to ministers of all times."[41] The application of this text will have two prongs. The first, and most direct, is its application to the Dean of Spiritual Life, who is acting in conjunction with the elders similarly as Timothy was for Paul. Second, the principles apply to the elders themselves, as Paul would have been faithful to keep his own exhortations to Timothy.

The Importance of Right Doctrine

False teaching was the impetus for Paul writing this epistle. He was "[seeking] to encourage Timothy," writes George W. Knight III, "in regard to his responsibility over against the false teaching and his responsibility as the church's leader/teacher."[42] Immediately after the opening greeting, Paul urges Timothy to "remain at Ephesus [to] charge certain persons not to teach any different doctrine" (1:3-4). These people "have wandered away into vain discussion, desiring to be teachers of the law, without understanding either what they are saying or the things about which they make confident assertions" (1:6-7). In the five verses immediately preceding this context, Paul speaks against the doctrinal problem the Ephesians were encountering, that is, people "devoting themselves to deceitful spirits and teachings of demons, through the insincerity of liars

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[41]William D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 46 (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2000), 266-67.

[42]George W. Knight III, *The Pastoral Epistles*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992), 10.

whose consciences are seared" (4:1-2). Whatever heresy had invaded the Ephesian church, Paul was adamant that Timothy stay there to correct it by teaching sound doctrine. The vigilance to which Paul exhorts Timothy is similar to that of the exhortation Paul gave the Ephesian elders at his farewell address to protect the flock (Acts 20:17ff.). Apparently, Paul was released from prison and was able to return to Ephesus, even though he had not expected to see them ever again when he left them in Miletus.[43] Perhaps they failed to carry out his exhortations in Acts 20, or perhaps the doctrinal danger was so severe that it required apostolic attention.

Thankfully, there is no outbreak of heresy at GCS. However, theological laxity pervades the Christian subculture, and that has a tendency to creep into the school, especially since seventy different churches from multiple denominations are represented. Increased vigilance in doctrinal integrity will keep the ministry on the right path.

Paul begins this section (1 Tim 4:6-16) with a reference to what has preceded and an encouragement to teach it to the believers in Ephesus (v. 6). Whether he is referring to the previous five verses,[44] the material back to 2:1,[45] or the entire epistle,[46] the point is clear. Especially in light of the false teaching that has invaded the Ephesian church (1:3-17; 4:1-5; 6:3-10), Paul tells Timothy to "put before," or "teach,"[47] these things to believers in Ephesus as an apostolic delegate. The sound doctrine and sound manner of life that Paul promotes should be embraced by all who desire, like Timothy, to be "a good servant of Christ Jesus" (v. 6). Good service is dependent upon good doctrine.

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[43]Ibid., 17.

[44]Philip H. Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus,* New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 302 n. 1. See also Knight, *Pastoral Epistles*, 193.

[45]Gordon D. Fee, *1 and 2 Timothy, Titus*, New International Biblical Commentary (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1988; reprint, 1995), 110.

[46]Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 248.

[47]Knight, *Pastoral Epistles*,193.

To specify what a good servant is (recall the above discussion of leaders being servant examples), Paul uses the participle ἐντρεφόμενος (ESV "being trained," NASB "constantly nourished"). The purpose, according to Philip H. Towner, is to "emphasize the fundamental importance of saturation in and continuity with the apostolic teaching."[48] The NIV rendering "being brought up" misses the linear aspect of the participle which, Mounce argues, "describes not Timothy's past upbringing but his day-to-day habits."[49] In order to be a good servant, then, Timothy must continually be training "in the words of the faith and of the good doctrine" (v. 6). When Paul speaks of "the faith," he means "Christianity itself and the sum of its message,"[50] or "a body of tradition articulated in teachable doctrine."[51] The gospel message has distinct boundaries, and a good servant must stay inside those doctrinal boundaries. The mandate for the AGC elders is clear. Doctrinal precision is a high priority, and though difficult to promote at times, it is not negotiable.

Paul describes the false teaching in Ephesus as "irreverent, silly myths" (v. 7). As Mounce explains, "The theology of the opponents is vacuous, no better than prattle. It also explains why Paul does not spend more time arguing against the heresy itself; a person cannot argue against prattle."[52] Rather than get entangled with speculations (1:4), Mounce continues, "Timothy is to stay away from, actively 'reject,' the opponents' interpretation of the gospel. The linear aspect of the tense underlines the continual need for Timothy's attention at this point."[53] He is not to ignore the false teaching, nor is he to

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[48]Towner, *Letters to Timothy*, 303-04.

[49]Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 249.

[50]Knight, *Pastoral Epistles*, 194.

[51]Towner, *Letters to Timothy*, 304.

[52]Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 251.

[53]Ibid., 250.

entertain it as a valid option in a discussion group. Due to the nature of this heresy, he is to reject it outright.

The Importance of Right Living

  The contrast to such foolishness is godliness which comes from sound doctrine. Right doctrine promotes right living, and that is the point Paul repeatedly makes in this section. He tells Timothy to teach what is right, and by his example of right living to show that the false doctrine is bankrupt. "Train yourself for godliness" (v. 7b) is the theme through verse 16. The rigorous effort necessary for athletic success is the imagery Paul employs in his encouragement to Timothy. The word γυμνάζω, from which we get the English word "gymnasium," was "typical of Greco-Roman ethical teaching," explains Towner. "It was first applied to the effort and exercise involved in physical contexts, and transferred naturally to describe the work of progressing toward virtue in the moral and spiritual sphere."[54] Timothy should exercise this extreme effort toward his own progressive godliness. Paul uses εὐσέβεια ("godliness") in the Pastoral Epistles as "a technical term for a life totally consecrated to God," Mounce stresses, "carrying an emphasis on the observable aspects of this type of life (cf. 1 Tim 2:2; 3:16)."[55] In the context of refuting error, Gordon D. Fee asserts this godliness consists of "both the content of the truth and its visible expression in correct behavior."[56] It is not asceticism based in a false gospel. It is doctrine-based godliness, achieved by exercising oneself in the truth.

  Not only does Paul spur Timothy on toward increased godliness, he also tells him why it is so important. "For while bodily training is of some value, godliness is of

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[54]Towner, *Letters to Timothy*, 305.

[55]Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 251.

[56]Fee, *1 Timothy*, 103.

value in every way" (v. 8). Paul understands the value of physical exercise, and uses its temporal value, as Mounce describes, as "a poetic creation to balance the real emphasis: godliness."[57] This godliness is valuable "in every way" (ESV) or "for all things" (NASB).[58] Further explication of the value of godliness prompts Paul to speak of the promise contained therein, "as it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come" (v. 8). The ultimate value of godliness is the fullness of life (ζωή) that it brings. Towner elaborates, "The phrase 'promise of life' is almost technical, identifying this 'life' as that which is specifically associated with the salvific pledge of God (2 Tim 1:1; Titus 1:2). . . . The point is . . . that the practice of godliness will lead the believer into the experience of God's promise of eternal life in the present age that carries on into the 'age to come.'"[59] The purpose of godliness is life in fellowship with God.

As the Good Shepherd of his sheep, Jesus said, "I came that they may have life [ζωή] and have it abundantly" (John 10:10). This ζωή is the life that was in Jesus the Word (John 1:4), that he himself is (John 11:25; 14:6), the eternal life that Jesus came into the world to offer (John 3:15-16, 36; 5:24; 10:28; 17:2), that can be experienced now (John 6:35, 47-48), and is defined by Jesus as knowing God and his Son (John 17:3). The promise of "the life" Jesus offers is experienced now through godliness. What connects Timothy to "the life" is godliness. This life is not earned through godliness, but it is experienced through godliness. Therefore, as Knight explains, "since the εὐσέβεια of which Christ is the revealed truth and power (see 1 Tim 3:16), to exercise in εὐσέβεια is to work out one's salvation according to the power of Christ who works within."[60] The

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[57]Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 253.

[58]The parallelism of this saying is worth noting:
γὰρ   σωματικὴ γυμνασία   πρὸς ὀλίγον   ἐστὶν ὠφέλιμος,
ἡ δὲ   εὐσέβεια   πρὸς πάντα   ὠφέλιμός ἐστιν

[59]Towner, *Letters to Timothy*, 307-08.

[60]Knight, *Pastoral Epistles*, 200. See also Phil 2:12-13.

experience of this life comes through godliness, or right living, which comes through right doctrine. Again, the importance of doctrine is highlighted in Paul's words. How can we promote this life in the context of GCS? Train ourselves in godliness and train our students in godliness, rooted in the truth. As Paul exhorts the Colossians, "Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving" (Col 2:6-7).

Why do the church and school leaders work so hard to have a Christian educational institution? Paul would answer, speaking of the abundant life God promises through godliness: "For to *this* end we toil and strive" (v. 10, emphasis added). "Toil" (κοπιάω) means "grow weary," or "work with effort,"[61] and is used in contexts of hard, manual labor.[62] "Strive" (ἀγωνίζομαι), though initially an athletic term from which we get our English word "agonize," was commonly used regarding the pursuit of moral excellence in both Greek and Jewish culture.[63] Ralph Earle writes, "Just as athletes exert what seems to be their last ounce of energy to win a race, so Paul was giving the ministry all he had."[64] Philosophy of education aside, mission statements and institutional objectives aside, what is the purpose of the ministry of both AGC and GCS? Is not "life" a worthy contender for a one-word answer? Training in godliness is the path to experience the promise of life, and it spreads to others through correctly teaching right doctrine and consistently living it out in their presence.

As is typical of Paul, he grounds the truth even more deeply, this time directly in God. It is not enough to toil and strive for the sake of life. The ultimate motivation for

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[61]Ralph Earle, *1 Timothy*, in vol. 11 of *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelein and J. D. Douglas (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, Regency Reference Library, 1978), 373.

[62]Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 255.

[63]Towner, *Letters to Timothy*, 311.

[64]Earle, *1 Timothy*, 373.

their strenuous exertion is hope in the living God himself (v. 10). Mounce adds, "The perfect tense [of ἐλπίζω, "to hope"] emphasizes the continuing assurance that a believer has, that his hope will be actualized; Paul does not mind toiling for the gospel because he knows that God is alive."[65] Humanly speaking, the reason they do ministry is for the life of their hearers—a strong motivation indeed. Why is hope in God a deeper motivation? Because even if they worked tirelessly, if God did not have the sovereign power to "grant them repentance leading to a knowledge of the truth" (2 Tim 2:25), what hope would they have that their labor would be of any use?[66] Their hope is not in their hearers' ability to respond, but in God who "gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist" (Rom 4:17; see 2 Cor 4:6; Eph 2:1-5). Of course, they might still serve out of obligation, but their vitality would be drained.

Hope in God motivates life-giving ministry because the living God opens people's eyes as a result, like Lydia in Acts 16:14. The results are in God's hands. Just as the church is God's church (Acts 20; 1 Pet 5), so is the ministry God's ministry, and the life God's life. He is the living God, the source of life, and saves believers to the utmost (v. 10).[67] The hope for the students of GCS is life. Life comes through godliness, rooted in sound doctrine. It is the responsibility of the elders to ensure that the students are taught to build their lives upon the bedrock of sound doctrine rather than the shifting sand of perceived cultural relevance.

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[65]Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 256.

[66]See also Acts 11:18, "God has granted repentance that leads to life [ζωή]."

[67]The debate over the phrase "Savior of all people, especially those who believe" is beyond the bounds of this project. Steven M. Baugh argues convincingly from the immediate context and from inscriptional evidence that Paul's use of σωτήρ corresponds uniquely in this verse to the Greek concept of "beneficiary." He concludes, "1 Tim 4:10 is revealed to be a polemical aside aimed at the false veneration of men who were no longer living, yet who were publicly honored as gods and saviors upon the Ephesian inscriptions" ("'Savior of All People': 1 Tim 4:10 in Context," *Westminster Theological Journal* 54, no. 2 [1992]: 338).

The Importance of Perseverance

In the next section (4:11-16), Paul transitions to an even more personal address to Timothy. The directives he gives, though appropriate to all in ministry, are especially fitting for the Dean role. According to Knight, "This subsection intertwines the necessity for faithfulness in Timothy's public ministry with faithfulness in personal life. In distinction from the previous section, it is more of a personal directive to Timothy."[68] In it, as Mounce confirms, Paul tells Timothy "to be commanding the opponents to cease teaching their heresy, and [that] he must continue to teach true doctrine. Paul uses similar phrases throughout the [Pastoral Epistles] to sum up what he has been saying and to call Timothy to continued action (1 Tim 5:7; 2 Tim 2:14; Titus 3:8b)."[69] According to Towner, παραγγέλλω ("command") "describes the authoritative activities of 'ordering, exhorting, and instructing' . . . and here envisions apostolic insistence on the implementation of the preceding discussions."[70] In Timothy's ministry, he faced opposition. In the midst of discouragement, fear, or self-awareness, these words from Paul would be a comfort and a solid reminder of the importance of his task. In the role as Dean at GCS, there may be some who would like a softer doctrinal stance. Such opposition, though slight in comparison to the heresy Timothy was battling, must be gently and firmly cast aside in pursuit of obedience to this passage.

Apparently, there were some who were disregarding Timothy because of his youthfulness. Most commentators place Timothy's age at the lower thirties.[71] In the context of a community of people ranging in age from newborn to almost dead, some having been in leadership positions longer than Timothy had been alive, it is not hard to

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[68]Knight, *Pastoral Epistles*, 204.

[69]Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 257.

[70]Towner, *Letters to Timothy*, 313.

[71]Knight, *Pastoral Epistles*, 205.

understand why some would despise this young man having apostolic authority behind his directives. Since Timothy has limited control of how others feel about him, Paul's injunction seems to be multifaceted. Timothy should not be discouraged by such opposition, but through his humble service should do all he can to remove opportunity for them to despise him (v. 12). He should not only remove opportunity for them to despise him, but he should also lead the believers in such a way as to be their example. In addition, since the letter was probably read in the church, Fee claims it is "very likely two-edged . . . [being] likewise a word to the community, to let them know that, despite his youth, he has Paul's own authority to command and teach these things."[72] The elders of AGC have entrusted me, who still qualifies as a young man at thirty-five, with a tremendous amount of responsibility. In the unexpected case of opposition, or the more likely case of simple skepticism, this verse is a preemptive strike against discouragement. My age prevents me neither from fulfilling the ministry nor from setting the example.

Not only was Timothy to disregard their disregard, he was also expected to set himself as "an example [τύπος] in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity" (v. 12b). Similarly, 1 Peter 5:3 also uses the word τύπος as an expectation of the elders. Mounce clarifies, "The word picture it paints is not so much that Timothy is an example that others can emulate but that he is a mold that should be pressed into the lives of others so that they attain the same shape."[73] Leadership is a high calling because those who follow will be shaped and molded by the leader. Therefore, Timothy must be on high alert to watch his life carefully, not only for his sake, but also for the sake of his hearers (4:16).

Until Paul is able to be in Ephesus himself, he urges Timothy to devote himself "to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation, to teaching" (v. 13). According to

[72]Fee, *1 Timothy*, 106-07.

[73]Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 259.

Knight, this public reading of Scripture "would be of those writings that were regarded as authoritative, and, in addition to the OT, would include extant NT writings."[74] The exhortation (παράκλησις) involves coming alongside the hearers, urging them to internalize and act upon what was read, and as Mounce says, "to follow the message of the text."[75] The "teaching" Paul expects is designed to further unfold the truths being read and pressed into the hearers. Towner defines it as "instruction in the authoritative doctrine, which stands over and against the competing views of the opponents (4:1)."[76] The purpose is "fuller awareness of the text's meaning that is gained through study, reflection, and devotion," describes Mounce.[77] It is hard work, but Paul has already spoken of the agonizing labor involved in being a good servant of Christ. For me as the Dean, these words are a reminder to keep the Scripture at the center of the ministry. In Bible classes and chapels especially, as well as all discipleship opportunities, the Word of God is the shaping force and must be read, taught, and pressed into the lives of students.

Simultaneously Paul both encourages Timothy and rebukes his opposition, this time by reminding Timothy (and the others) that Timothy's gift (χάρισμα) was confirmed by prophecy and by the council of elders when they laid their hands on him (v. 14). This sentence is an encouragement to Timothy, a mandate for Timothy, and a rebuke to those in opposition. To "not neglect" his gift means to be reminded constantly that he is there because of the will of God, and that he was officially confirmed in this ministry. It also serves as a mandate to be faithful to that high calling. As this letter would be read in the congregation, it would also rebuke any who opposed Timothy's ministry, since it clearly

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[74]Knight, *Pastoral Epistles*, 207, cites the following passages as evidence that the extant NT writings were considered authoritative: 1 Thess 5:27; Col 4:16; and 1 Tim 5:18, which quotes Matt 10:10 and Luke 10:7 as "Scripture."

[75]Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 261.

[76]Towner, *Letters to Timothy*, 321.

[77]Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 261.

establishes him in the leadership position. God gave him the necessary giftedness to empower him for ministry, his gifting was confirmed through prophetic utterances, and the council of elders publicly recognized that gift and commissioned him for service.[78] Being an apostolic delegate carries with it a heavy weight of responsibility. Paul is reaffirming Timothy in his ministry, reminding him that he is there by God's choice. What an encouragement Timothy must have felt to know that Paul believed in him—rather, that Paul believed in God, that his Spirit was visibly-to-all empowering him for this particular task. It will be essential for the Dean of Spiritual Life to have this type of affirmation behind his ministry. Some people get uncomfortable when doctrinal precision is advocated. As the elders promote a more clearly defined doctrinal stance, there will be those who object. Since I will be in the forefront of the discussion, I must remember my calling and the full support I have from the elders.

Paul closes the section with four more directives for Timothy: "Practice these things," "devote yourself to them," "keep a close watch," and "persist in this" (vv. 15-16). The urgency of the occasion warrants such firm repetition. Mounce emphasizes it well: "The continuous aspect of all four imperatives expresses Paul's urgency and concern: Timothy must continually, constantly, follow these instructions."[79] Paul tells him again, picking up the athletic theme, "Practice these things" (v. 15; NASB "Take pains," NIV "Be diligent," NKJV "Meditate").[80] Going deeper he says, "Immerse yourself in them" (NASB "be absorbed in them"). To be a good servant of Christ, Timothy must "be all in." As one popular slogan puts it, "Go hard or go home." This mindset must pervade, especially for Timothy, so that all will see his progress—not just

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[78]Towner, *Letters to Timothy*, 321-23; Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 261-62; Knight, *Pastoral Epistles*, 208-09.

[79]Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 263.

[80]"Meditation should always lead to action, and since an immediate goal is people seeing Timothy's spiritual progress, 'practice' is the preferable translation" (ibid., 264).

the believers who desire to follow, but also the opposition who would rather resist his leadership. It is possible, Fee suggests, that "progress was one of the slogans of the false teachers, perhaps as a kind of elitist appeal to those who wanted to 'advance' into 'deeper truths' by engaging in their speculative nonsense. . . . By Timothy's being a faithful minister of the word of the gospel, the people will be able to see the real thing."[81] For those who naysay a strong doctrinal stance, the most convincing polemic will be visible progress in true virtue, rooted in that strong doctrine, passionately taught by those rigorously growing in godliness.

Summarizing the above exhortations, Paul tells Timothy plainly, "Keep a close watch on yourself and on the teaching" (v. 16a). Σεαυτοῦ ("yourself") refers to all that has been said about Timothy's progressing in godliness; ἡ διδασκαλία ("the teaching") refers to the body of doctrine Paul has been referencing throughout. Timothy not only needs to watch out for his own doctrinal understanding, but there also needs to be "a constant urging of it upon his hearers."[82] His life has the potential to negate the teaching, so he must keep vigilant watch (2 Tim 3:8; 1 Cor 9:27).

In Paul's final exhortation, he charges Timothy to "persist in this" (ἐπίμενε), that is, in watching his life and doctrine. With this last word, concludes Knight, "comes the reason why Paul is so persistent and so concerned, because what is at stake is salvation for Timothy and his hearers."[83] The "for" (γάρ) "introduces the ultimate conclusion of the section and affords the reason for such exhortation."[84] Reaching back to the "life" that godliness offers (v. 8) as well as the salvation of believers (v. 10), Paul says that those who embrace this teaching and live out its godliness will be saved. More

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[81]Fee, *1 Timothy*, 109.

[82]Knight, *Pastoral Epistles*, 211.

[83]Ibid., 210.

[84]Ibid., 211.

specifically, if Timothy holds fast to the doctrine and teaches it well, Paul writes, "You will save yourself" and "You will save . . . your hearers." Paul is not teaching that by his godliness he can work his way into salvation. Rather, as above in the discussion with godliness leading to life, one's godliness is the working out or exercising of that salvation with fear and trembling (Phil 2:12-13). Paul uses this same word ἐπιμένω ("persist") in the context of salvation two other times (Rom 11:22; Col 1:22-23), and a similar phrase, "hold fast to the word I preached," in another (1 Cor 15:2). He is teaching the doctrine that "perseverance is essential to salvation."[85] Timothy's part in their salvation, in the sovereign plan of God, is his faithfulness to his own life and doctrine. As the Dean, this high calling applies to me as well. May I take to heart Paul's exhortations.

Conclusion

Scripture clearly establishes that the elders carry a tremendous weight of responsibility both for themselves and the people entrusted to their care. As a ministry of AGC, GCS is under the shepherding mandate that God has placed upon the elders. Life itself is at stake for every student who walks through the doors. It is with this life-or-death mindset that the elders must keep watch over the doctrinal life of the school and its training regimen in godliness. The elders must champion humility and blaze a trail for the rest to follow. The Dean especially must follow their lead in being an example, constantly setting the Word of God before the students, being motivated by hope in the living God, and training himself in godliness. May the living God grant the elders the grace to faithfully shepherd the students entrusted to them through humble service, increased doctrinal integrity, and absolute dependence upon God through his Word.

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[85]Ibid.

CHAPTER 3

THEORETICAL AND SOCIOLOGICAL SUPPORT
FOR SUCCESSFUL ELDER OVERSIGHT

Introduction

This chapter has a twofold purpose. The first is to analyze the church-school relationship through personal interviews with church and school leaders. Through personal interviews and other sources in the field, various insights have been gleaned on how Anchorage Grace Church (AGC) can most effectively provide active spiritual oversight to Grace Christian School (GCS). The second purpose of this chapter is to take a step toward utilizing the Dean of Spiritual Life role to promote doctrinal integrity and develop a strategy for discipleship of the GCS students.

Church and School Leadership

This first section of the chapter focuses on other churches and schools, in order to compare our own situation to theirs and to gain wisdom from those with experience in the fields of church leadership and school administration. Two types of schools are in view. The first concerns schools that are ministries of churches. The second operates independently of any direct church oversight. The purpose of this chapter is not to debate which structure is better.[1] The purpose is simply to gather wisdom and insight from successful schools of both types, in order to help the elders of AGC know how to most effectively and peacefully exercise spiritual oversight.

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[1] For a brief discussion, see Jeff Woodcock, "Advantages of Independent Christian Schools," *Christian School Education* 1, no. 2 (1997): 9; and David A. Wells, "Advantages of Church Related Schools," *Christian School Education* 1, no. 2 (1997): 10.

Schools as Ministries of Churches

Many churches have understood the need to educate children according to the Christian worldview, and to protect them from the secularization of government schools. According to author Glen Schultz, "There can be no doubt that God cares how our children are educated. He makes it abundantly clear that the two most important things in life for an adult are to love God with his or her whole heart and to teach his children to do the same."[2] Christian schools provide opportunity for the church to partner with the home in the education and discipleship process. "If the church is going to be the agent of spiritual transformation that God intends it to be, it must become much more active in the everyday lives of its members, especially parents."[3] Charles Clayton Morrison, former editor of *The Christian Century*, said in a 1940 speech to 10,000 public school teachers, "Protestant children in public schools are under an influence which the churches cannot counteract. The public school presents the church with a generation of youth whose minds have been cast in a secular [mold]."[4] Many churches have indeed counteracted this influence by creating their own school, as Richard J. Edlin says, "out of the conviction that the path they wish to follow is a faithful and obedient response to the calling of the Word of God" to educate their children in a Christian worldview (Deut 6:4-9).[5]

According to a recent case study involving spirituality in the public school, "All the [public school] teachers were concerned that we understand that they were not allowed to promote religious values in schools and argued that it was possible and desirable that spirituality should be divorced from any religious framework in public

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[2]Glen Schultz, *Kingdom Education: God's Plan for Educating Future Generations*, 2nd ed. (Nashville: LifeWay, 1998), 29.

[3]Ibid., 100.

[4]Quoted in Shultz, *Kingdom Education*, 108. Correction on the last word comes from the "National Catholic Educational Association Bulletin, Report of the Proceedings and Addresses—Fifty-Eighth Annual Meeting," Atlantic City, NJ, April 4-7, 1961 [on-line]; accessed 19 July 2011; available from http://www.archive.org/stream/nationalcatholic1961bett/nationalcatholic1961bett_djvu.txt; Internet.

[5]Richard J. Edlin, *The Cause of Christian Education*, 3rd ed. (Colorado Springs: Association of Christian Schools, International, 1999), 37.

schools."[6] Thus they claim to teach spirituality without religion. Evangelical theologian David F. Wells would argue that the spirituality they espouse is indeed a religion of "the god within, the god who is found within the self and in whom the self is rooted."[7] What they are teaching is a religion of the world, a religion of the self, a religion in which God is unnecessary for spiritual formation. Is it not the core of atheism?

Some may object to Christian education as overprotecting children, or sheltering them from "the real world." A helpful analogy is to think of the purpose of a greenhouse. As Edlin explains, "It is to nurture plants while they are young so that when they are removed from the glass house they are strong and vigorous and thus *more* (not less) able to stand against the ferocity of the elements."[8] Of course, it is possible to over-shelter, or not to expose them at all to the world around them. With service projects, mission trips, and the fact that most of the students at GCS are fairly well plugged into the world as it is, however, this greenhouse effect is quite desirable to protect students during this formative stage of their lives from the harsh environment of a wicked world. Being in a good Christian school, argues Christian philosopher J. P. Moreland, helps them "[integrate] a Christian worldview into every course of study."[9] Consider the alternative posited by Albert E. Greene in his book on Christian education: "Can we afford to leave [our children] for twelve and more years under the daily influence of a postmodernist consciousness? . . . If we seriously intend to reawaken as a church to the

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[6]Lynn Revell, "Spiritual Development in Public and Religious Schools: A Case Study," *Religious Education* 103 (2008): 106.

[7]David F. Wells, *Above All Earthly Powers: Christ in a Postmodern World* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 128.

[8]Edlin, *The Cause of Christian Education,* 36; emphasis original.

[9]J. P. Moreland, "Filling the Empty Self: Understanding the Surrounding Culture," in *Called to Lead: Understanding and Fulfilling Your Role as an Educational Leader*, ed. Kenneth O. Gangel (Colorado Springs: Purposeful Design, 2002), 186.

biblical view of life and reality, we dare not fail to train our children."[10] Such is the

reason why churches (should) start Christian schools.

When a church starts an organization, such as a school, it is vital for the entire

church, from the leadership to the congregation, to understand that it is a part of the

church—a ministry of the church.[11] In his book on pastoral ministry, Jay E. Adams

emphasizes, "These organizations are not separate entities answerable only to God and

themselves, but a portion of the congregational effort subject to the oversight and

discipline of the elders of the congregation."[12] If that principle is not clearly

communicated and is not the functional reality, "growing disunity, conflict, inability to

check heresy, inefficiency and ineffectiveness will result."[13] Below are four examples of

schools founded as church ministries which model this principle well. From each one the

elders of AGC will be able to gain insight into how they can best exercise active spiritual

oversight of GCS.

Heritage Christian Academy. The first example is Heritage Christian

Academy, which is a ministry of Grace Free Lutheran Church in Maple Grove,

Minnesota, pastored by Peter Franz. The history of that school is similar to that of GCS.

Heritage was started in 1981 with 13 students as a ministry of the church and quickly

grew into a well-respected educational institution. I taught at this school from 2002-2004,

and appreciate their biblical philosophy of ministry. The following information comes

from a personal interview with one of the founders of the school, Beverly Enderlein, who

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[10]Albert E. Greene, *Reclaiming the Future of Christian Education: A Transforming Vision* (Colorado Springs: Association of Christian Schools, International, 1998), 29.

[11]Jay E. Adams, *Shepherding God's Flock: A Handbook on Pastoral Ministry, Counseling, and Leadership* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1975), 417.

[12]Ibid. It is probably an overstatement for Adams to say, "On no other basis can such organizations be justified biblically" (417 n. 1). Regardless, independent schools would do well to ensure their founding and continued existence is biblically justifiable, operates according to biblical principles, and promotes local church involvement.

[13]Ibid.

retired in 2006 after twenty-five years of service as the school's president. She was quite gracious to spend a considerable amount of time on the phone to answer questions.[14]

In the leadership structure of HCA, the church leadership has taken the philosophy of "delegate and trust," and there is a long history of mutual trust and respect between the church and school. The school board and administration are closely tied to the church leadership, but direct oversight of the teachers and students is delegated to the administration. According to Enderlein, the church leadership has completely delegated the leadership of the school, taking on the role of encourager as they turned the school over to the school board and president. Enderlein believes the church "should have been" more involved, but in retrospect the church leaders sincerely did not see the need.

When Enderlein retired in 2006, the enrollment was up to 574 students (PreK-12), and the church membership was about 200. She estimates that less than 5 percent of the students at the school are from the church. As the size of the school and its reach grew far beyond the membership of the church, they eventually let non-members be on the school board. Currently all but three of the school board members are members of the church. No adverse effects have been detected from this decision, and it gave non-Lutheran parents some ownership of the school leadership.

When asked if there is a sense that the school is more important than the church, or at least its most important ministry, Enderlein answered that there is some of that sentiment, but it is not dominant. She attributes it to the humility of the pastor, who understands that ministry is not about popularity. As John MacArthur instructs, "Pay the price of self-effacement and set yourself below others. . . . If the people of a church are fighting for the positions of authority, they are going to have . . . chaos."[15] Pastor Franz is

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[14]Beverly Enderlein (President Emeritus of Heritage Christian Academy, Maple Grove, MN), telephone interview with the author, 6 July 2011.

[15]John MacArthur, *Shepherdology: A Master Plan for Church Leadership* (Panorama City, CA: The Master's Fellowship, n.d.), 23-34.

a humble man who does not see the school's growth in size, relative to the church's lack thereof, as a negative commentary on himself or the church—nor should he. The church leaders who started the school thought perhaps the school might help the church grow in number, but it did not. They are content with the growth of the school, even though it did not make the church grow. They are humble.

Regarding doctrinal accountability, Enderlein stresses the importance of the interview and hiring process. Teacher candidates are thoroughly examined regarding their life and doctrine. Teachers must be sensitive to doctrinal issues which may not be listed in the official statement of faith. For example, there is a Bible teacher who is part of the Assemblies of God denomination, who is not allowed to teach or even express his opinion on tongues. He understood this restriction when he was hired, agreed to submit, and has been quite happy there for nearly a decade. The church's influence is definitely felt in this case, exercised through the president's role both in the hiring process and in keeping the teacher accountable to the original agreement. No teachers are allowed to teach against what the church believes, and on some issues are not even allowed to express their own views.

Enderlein brought up an excellent point regarding church oversight when she commented that the school board is not always aware of the latest cultural trends that affect doctrine. If a popular author and speaker promotes an unorthodox position on an essential doctrine like hell, for example, church leadership would probably be more in tune with such a controversy than a typical board member. Ideally, "Christian school board members are people of the Book. They hold to Scripture as their final rule of faith and practice."[16] The church leadership, however, is often better equipped to keep such influences out of the school by alerting the school to its dangers, and shepherding the

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[16]Roy W. Lowrie, Jr., and Roy L. Lowrie, *Serving God on the Christian School Board*, 3rd ed. (Colorado Springs: Purposeful Design, 2004), 9.

school in its doctrine. "When heresy is stalking the flock like a hungry wolf," Adams illustrates, "[the pastor] should be aware of its presence and guard the sheep from its every attack."[17]

In email correspondence with Bruce Kuehl, a school board member who is not affiliated with the Lutheran church, he gives a similar impression of the harmony between church and school.[18] He concurred that the school does ultimately answer to the church, but also acknowledges that they have a fairly hands-off approach. He speaks highly of the church's value as "a spiritual plumb line" to keep the school grounded in the Bible, and appreciates the "rich history and spiritual foundation" it provides. In his opinion, the school is healthier because of the church's oversight, and the pastoral presence on campus is a valuable resource. He attributes the healthy relationship to common spiritual alignment, attitude in sharing resources, and oversight without micromanagement.

What can Anchorage Grace learn from Grace Free Lutheran? Humility is key. Enderlein repeatedly attributed the success of the relationship to the humility of the pastor. Trust is also essential, as is togetherness in the mission of discipling young people. The church leadership needs to be supportive of the school ministry, and to keep the school ministry bathed in prayer and grounded in biblical principles. The church delegates almost completely, yet still holds tight reins over classroom doctrine. It is also essential that every member of the school board is fully supportive of the church leadership and their oversight. There is harmony in humility.

Christian Unified Schools of San Diego. For the second example I chose Christian Unified Schools of San Diego (CUSSD), which consists of two elementary

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[17]Adams, *Shepherding God's Flock*, 99.

[18]Bruce Kuehl (School Board Member of Heritage Christian Academy, Maple Grove, MN), email correspondence with the author, 11 July 2011.

schools, a junior high, and a high school, with a total enrollment of just over 800 students. The school ministry was founded in 1965 by Tim LaHaye, and is currently a ministry of Shadow Mountain Community Church, pastored by David Jeremiah. Having grown up in the area, I am somewhat familiar with the church and its ministries. According to the junior high and high school principal Scott Meadows, the relationship between the church and school is quite strong, and there are no negative tensions between them.[19] The school board members are required to be members of the church, and the pastor or a pastoral representative is a permanent member of the school board. The school has the same doctrinal statement as the church, and incoming students agree to be taught accordingly. Although they try to avoid controversial topics in the classroom, they do not compromise on the church's doctrine in order to accommodate other denominations.

In addition to the principal, I was privileged to interview George Cuff, who is part of the Senior Pastoral Staff at the church.[20] He is the pastor-representative on the school board, sitting in for Jeremiah. Cuff has forty years of experience with Christian education, having built three schools and having been the superintendent of one. He is now a full-time pastor who has a significant presence in the leadership of the school, offering himself also as the unofficial chaplain of the faculty.

According to Cuff, it is absolutely essential for the pastor of the church and the superintendent of the school to have a close relationship, both personally and professionally. The superintendent then leads the principals and the rest of the faculty, and through them the students. He repeatedly stressed how key this relationship is. He insisted that he would never hire any administrator who was not or would not become a member of the sponsor church. He gives room for rare exceptions in extreme

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[19]Scott Meadows (Principal of Christian High School and Junior High, El Cajon, CA), email correspondence with the author, 8 July 2011.

[20]George Cuff (Pastor of Pastoral Care and School Board Member, Shadow Mountain Community Church and Christian Unified Schools of San Diego, El Cajon, CA), telephone interview with the author, 11 July 11.

circumstances, but he marshaled his forty years of experience to convince me of its extreme importance for unity of the mission of the church and school.

As a testimony to the cohesion between church and school, the school board members are nominated by the church leadership and voted in by the congregation. The whole church is involved in selecting the school board, which is directly under the authority of the church leadership. Of all the schools interviewed, only this one had such church-wide involvement.

Regarding theological integrity in the classroom, they are careful in the hiring process to know the teachers and discover what they believe. Cuff believes the preemptive approach solves most problems before they exist. Since the school is a ministry of the church, Cuff considers it consistent that the teachers should be members of the church, as well. However, it is not mandatory. His preference is not law for the teachers as it is for administrators.

With Bible teachers there is another consideration. Because they specifically teach doctrine, the church steps up their normal degree of carefulness in the hiring process. In addition to the normal interview process, Cuff himself interviews the Bible teachers, along with Jeremiah. This policy is partially due to a recent incident in which a Bible teacher was a little too liberal in his openness toward understanding homosexuality. Cuff offered this teacher a mentoring-type relationship to work through his thinking on this issue, but the offer was declined and the teacher was eventually dismissed. Usually the school administration takes care of most issues without church involvement, but the church leadership is there for the bigger issues, such as this one, or if the administration needs doctrinal or pastoral assistance.

Bible teachers are simply held to a higher doctrinal standard than other teachers. To illustrate, Cuff said that a teacher from a Charismatic denomination would be able to teach there, but would not be able to teach Bible. That teacher would be free to express his or her beliefs, but could not promote them or in any way speak against the

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doctrinal position of the church. The Bible teachers are strongly encouraged to be members of the church, though it is not mandatory. Cuff would prefer it to be mandatory.

What can Anchorage Grace learn from Shadow Mountain? It is good for the church to exercise strong leadership of the school, and for the school to respond well to such leadership. In the case of Shadow Mountain, the church is very active in the spiritual life of the school, and the school has a profound respect for the church's leadership. If it is true that "the relationship between the administrator and the [school] board bears the heaviest brunt of satanic opposition against the school,"[21] how much more does Satan oppose the relationship between the church and school? There must be a tight knit bond between the leaders of both organizations and their boards.

According to both Cuff and Meadows, there is no bitterness or rivalry between church and school. That statement deserves some attention. Both ministries are large, vibrant ministries, occupying the same space. The church actively leads the school at the top level, even to the point of dismissing a Bible teacher over a doctrinal issue. A Bible teacher will not be hired without interviewing with the senior pastor and another senior staff pastor. And yet, harmony exists between the two organizations—not to say the relationship is perfect, but it is healthy.

In addition, the elders of AGC should consider Cuff's advice regarding the administrative team being members of the church. Currently, only the superintendent is required to be a member, of necessity because he also bears the title of an associate pastor of the church. The other administrators do not have the same membership requirement.

Because of the extreme importance Cuff places on the administrative team, it will be helpful to focus briefly on the role of the chief administrator—in the case of GCS it is the superintendent. In his article on school board dynamics, John Schimmer writes, "To empower an administrator means to recognize this person as the leader, the one in

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[21]Lowrie, *Serving God*, 37.

whom the [school] board has vested the authority to make decisions. . . . Very competent administrators have been released, often because of fractured relationships or because of the lack of clearly defined roles."[22] At GCS, the superintendent's dual role is especially hard to define since he is both a pastor whose job it is to "provide spiritual leadership to the board," and at the same time as their employee who must "submit fully to the board's authority."[23] He should be empowered and clearly informed regarding his role, and fully supported by the leadership of the church.

According to one study, "successful superintendents ultimately [were able to help the board understand] their role as board members."[24] Likewise, the board "articulated a definitive need to trust their superintendent . . . fostered and nurtured [by] high performance, strong communicative skills, and likeability."[25] Once trust is established, "Superintendents . . . develop appropriate board member role understanding that focused board member attention and energy on policy objectives and away from administrative and managerial functions."[26]

Few would disagree that the superintendent is the single most important person for the success of the school, and he must be supported in this role by both the elder board and school board, even as he seeks to lead the school board. He must lead in humility. According J. Oswald Sanders in his book *Spiritual Leadership*, "Humility is the hallmark of the spiritual leader."[27] The superintendent must also beware of pride; for

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[22]John Schimmer, "Who's in Charge Here? Working with the Board" in *Called to Lead: Understanding and Fulfilling Your Role as an Educational Leader*, ed. Kenneth O. Gangel (Colorado Springs: Purposeful Design, 2002), 25.

[23]Ibid., 31.

[24]Nathan T. McCann, "Factors Contributing to Positive and Productive Superintendent-Governing Board Relationships" (D.Ed. diss., University of Arizona, 2011), 13.

[25]Ibid., 13-14.

[26]Ibid., 14.

[27]J. Oswald Sanders, *Spiritual Leadership*, rev. ed. (Chicago: Moody, 1994), 61.

"nothing aggravates God more than conceit, the sin that aims at setting the self upon a throne, making of God a secondary figure."[28]

At GCS, the superintendent is worthy of such trust, and the elders need to realize their duty to support him in his task and clearly communicate their expectations. According to D. Bruce Lockerbie, "The single greatest threat to a Christian school [is] broken relations between the head-of-school and the governing board or pastor of a sponsoring church."[29] Therefore, each person must take extreme care to build trusting relationships with the other. As James V. Schwarz observes in his doctoral dissertation, "When trusting relationships pervade an organization, more energy is placed into the output of instruction and student achievement versus spending energy on conflicts, power struggles, and control issues."[30] It is clear that the excellence of any school depends largely on harmony within the leadership.

In the previous example of Heritage Christian Academy, one might argue that there is harmony because the church has completely delegated the school to its board. One cannot make that case with CUSSD. There is both peace and active church leadership. Though the details will be different in our context, this philosophy of leadership is what the elders of Anchorage Grace Church desire for the ministry of Grace Christian School—strong oversight without micromanaging. At Shadow Mountain doctrinal accountability, though delegated to the school leadership, is ultimately the church's responsibility, and the oversight the church provides is vital. The administration and the church leadership work together as a team, with the church exercising active spiritual leadership.

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[28]Ibid., 153.

[29]D. Bruce Lockerbie, *A Christian Paideia: The Habitual Vision of Greatness* (Colorado Springs: Purposeful Design, 2005), 158.

[30]James V. Schwarz, "Superintendent and School Board Relational Trust" (D.Ed. diss., Oakland University, 2010), 3.

Grace Christian Academy. The third school that contributes to this project is Grace Christian Academy in Knoxville, Tennessee, a ministry of Grace Baptist Church, pastored by Ron Stewart. The following information comes from correspondence with Tony Pointer, a high school Bible teacher at the academy, who is pursuing a Doctor of Educational Ministry degree at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.[31] Through a fellow student I heard of this school and its spiritual strength, and considered it a healthy example to be consulted.

According to Pointer, the relationship between the church and school is quite strong. The church leadership generally does not get involved with the daily operations of the school, but does provide significant oversight and promotes unity. The main connection between the church and school is the through the headmaster, who sits on the school board and also attends the church's weekly pastoral staff meetings.

The school board is composed of members of the church, and it is free to operate the school without much involvement from the church leadership. One example of the church's active oversight is that they specifically have to approve the hiring of any administrator or Bible teacher. They leave the basic doctrinal integrity of the school up to the administration, but will intervene if they hear about doctrinal issues that need attention. Otherwise the church trusts the leadership of the school. Pointer repeatedly stressed the importance of the headmaster in the church-school relationship, and the success of the school. The only conflict he mentions is regarding the use of facilities, but again the solution that brings peace comes through the leadership of the headmaster.

Last year, the school created the position of Campus Pastor and hired Matthew Mercer for the job. In an interview with Mercer, he said Stewart thought it was a good idea to have a person specifically designated to build relationships with the students and

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[31]Tony Pointer (Bible Teacher at Grace Christian Academy, Knoxville, TN), email correspondence with the author, 11 July 11.

their families.[32] The campus pastor must also be a member of the church. He is in charge of weekly chapels and their spiritual emphasis week, speaks often in chapels and staff devotions, and overall promotes the spiritual life of the students on campus. Since he has the title of "pastor," at the church's request he attends a weekly devotional with the pastors in order to stay more closely connected to the church leadership. Though in his daily job he answers to the administration, ultimately he is accountable to the church leadership. His role is designed to be a link, in addition to the headmaster, between the church and school. Furthermore, the executive pastor, Stewart's right hand man, attends the school's administration meetings and board meetings both to be available to speak into an issue and to keep the church leadership informed on school matters. He is another avenue for the church connecting with the school. The church takes their relationship with the school seriously. Mercer commented that ever since the beginning, Stewart has been adamant that the two ministries would never be in competition with an "us versus them" mentality. So far it looks like his desire has come to fruition due to intentional strategies that promote unity, and continual reminders and encouragements from the top of the church leadership.

The school has hired Dean of Students Jared Clark to be in charge of student life and to handle all the discipline issues in the middle school.[33] According to Clark, the church leadership is not directly involved in overseeing his ministry. As part of the administration, though, he is required to be a member of the church but says he would be even if it was not a requirement. He said that though each person on the school board is required to be a member of the church, the church leadership is careful not to micromanage. According to Mercer, Stewart requires all of the administration to be

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[32]Matthew Mercer (Campus Pastor at Grace Christian Academy, Knoxville, TN), telephone interview with the author 14 July 2011.

[33]Jared Clark (Middle School Dean of Students at Grace Christian Academy, Knoxville, TN), email correspondence with the author, 14 July 2011.

members of the church to promote mutual understanding of the direction and philosophies of the church. Here Stewart and Cuff agree on the essential nature of having the administration being united in membership with the sponsoring church. Unity must be strategically planned.

What can Anchorage Grace learn from Grace Baptist Church? Due to the pastor's foresight and strong leadership, there is a deep sense of camaraderie between the church and school leadership. Multiple connection points provide a cohesive bond between key leaders in both church and school. Unity will not happen automatically, but must be shepherded continuously and protected with vigilance. The church leadership has taken responsibility for the relationship, actively and faithfully promoting peace.

Grace Community School. Grace Community School in Sun Valley, California, is a ministry of Grace Community Church, pastored by John MacArthur, who is also the president of The Master's College and Seminary. Having attended both the college and seminary, as well as having been involved with the youth ministry at the church, I am well aware of MacArthur's strong leadership and the doctrinal integrity of all his ministries. The following information comes from an interview with Vice Principal Ryan Joki, who also teaches junior high Bible.[34] Of the schools I contacted, this one is probably the most directly under the authority of a church. They have had a school board previously in their thirty-year history, but currently do not have one. They are in the process of forming a School Advisory Board for the parents to have some input. The principals meet with Bill Shannon, a staff elder and pastor, who has been involved in leadership at the church since 1989. In this meeting they communicate thoroughly regarding major issues. Shannon gives his pastoral perspective without micromanagement and provides a healthy check-and-balance to the school leadership. He

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[34]Ryan Joki (Vice Principal at Grace Community School, Sun Valley, CA), telephone interview with the author, 15 July 2011.

then reports to the elders on a regular basis. The church delegates, trusts, and actively oversees the school through their elder representative. According to Joki, the relationship between the church and school is healthy and there are no problems.

Regarding doctrinal issues in the classroom, the policy and practice is fairly straightforward. They unapologetically teach the doctrine of the church. Since the school has an open enrollment policy, they are careful to be upfront with new families. In the interview process they clearly communicate what is going to be taught. If the members of the family are unbelievers, it is made clear to them that they will be actively evangelized. With MacArthur being so well known in the area, most incoming families are aware of the doctrinal stance the church takes and would not be applying if they were opposed to the church's doctrine being taught to their children. The administration is careful in the interview process to explore the spiritual background of each family to determine areas of potential conflict before it happens. Exposing parents and students to the doctrine and philosophy of the school from the very beginning has accomplished the goal of promoting peace among the constituents.

What can Anchorage Grace learn from Grace Community? Strict adherence to doctrinal precision is possible in a Christian school, even while maintaining peaceful relations with unbelievers. Although GCS does not have open enrollment, we do have a broad base of denominational backgrounds. Clearly communicating expectations is the key. Also noteworthy is that even in this situation, where the school's doctrine is the church's doctrine and the church is significantly larger than the school, the church does not micromanage. Elder oversight is welcome and appreciated because of the mutual trust and respect, but the church leaves running the school to like-minded administrators.

Schools as Independent Institutions

In this next section, schools with no sponsor church were consulted to examine how they maintain doctrinal integrity and spiritual focus. The purpose is to be fair in

acknowledging that church oversight is not essential for a spiritually healthy school. In this context, however, Schultz gives an important reminder: "We must never forget that the church is the expression of God's Kingdom to the lost world. The church is the instrument through which God desires Christians to carry out the Great Commission. Therefore, schools must relate closely to the church. This is true for any Christian school, whether it is church-sponsored or independent board-operated."[35] Even independently governed schools must recognize the need to partner with and support local churches in their area. Because many independent Christian schools are exhibiting biblical leadership principles, the elders of AGC can learn from these schools how better to provide active spiritual oversight, even if these schools are not under such oversight themselves.

Hope Academy. Representing a school that is not under a church, Hope Academy is a private, K-12, Christian school that has served inner-city families in downtown Minneapolis, Minnesota, since its beginning in 2000. According to Jeff Bird, Chairman of the Board of Directors and one of the school's founders, there was not necessarily an ideological reason for starting the school without church oversight.[36] Head of School Russ Greg, another founder, was in dialogue with the leadership of one nearby church about taking on an oversight role. The church decided not to join in the process, although they were very supportive. The reason why they started without church sponsorship was, according to Bird, "No one took up the mantle." He attributes the lack of involvement by area churches to the reality that churches are already financially burdened and were probably not willing to take responsibility for this ministry. A tuition-based private school ministering to the inner-city is certainly a formidable risk.

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[35]Schultz, *Kingdom Education*, 115.

[36]Jeff Bird (Chairman of the Board of Directors of Hope Academy, Minneapolis, MN), telephone interview with the author, 14 July 2011.

When asked how the school maintains its doctrinal standards and spiritual focus, Bird said that who they hire is the key: "Students will be like the teachers, and that's what you want." He stressed the point that the board of directors needs to realize that sometimes they are going to make hiring mistakes. They need courage and freedom to fire people if they are not a good fit. Of course, every administrator knows this, but in the context of doctrinal integrity and school mission, no one else spoke so freely of the need to exercise this option. He said that most situations are redeemable, but they have had to let at least one teacher go. The one he mentioned was in response to how that person handled doctrinal differences in the classroom—a testimony of the board's commitment to doctrinal integrity. Teachers must be like-minded with the mission and vision of the school leadership, especially in the doctrinal distinctives. According to Bird, the key to spiritual strength ultimately is in following the Holy Spirit. Included in that, he said, is making sure that all involved in the academy sense a strong calling to this particular ministry. It is not just a job. It is a calling.

Bird was quick to acknowledge the worldly influences that are always creeping into the ministry. Constant vigilance is required to ensure that all things are done to the glory of God, even how athletes celebrate a victory. The glory of God must be in focus for all of life, not just for Bible class. Bird sees athletics and other social events as opportunities to live life with each other in sanctifying relationships.

Early on, before the founding of the school, they were asked how they knew they would stay on track. Bird was honest to answer that they had no assurance within themselves: "If it is man's working, you are not going to do it." According to Bird, it is up to the Holy Spirit, not any person or organization. Trust in God is the key, not trust in man. As a testimony to the effectiveness of the board's leadership, Principal Nathan

Ziegler spoke of how well Bird challenged him and the Head of School to maintain the Christian distinctives of the school.[37]

What can Anchorage Grace Church learn from Hope Academy? Strong leadership is necessary to ward off worldliness and doctrinal waywardness. Bird's comment that students will be like their teachers echoes Jesus' own words that a "fully trained" student will be like his master (Luke 6:40). Edlin agrees, "Christ did not say that the student, when he is fully trained, will be like his curriculum. No. What he claimed was that the student, when he is fully trained will be like his teacher."[38] More important than the programs a school may implement are the teachers they hire to "fully train" the students. Teachers and administrators must feel the weight of their calling. "Our service," confirms Lockerbie, "is not first and foremost to students or their parents. . . . Rather, through our service to all of them we are, in fact, serving the God who calls us, because the way we serve others is the way we serve God."[39] This mindset must be prevalent for a school to accomplish its mission.

Also, here is a perfectly healthy Christian school accomplishing a strategic ministry in inner-city Minneapolis without direct church oversight. The protectorate of the doctrinal integrity at Hope is the board and the administration. The leadership of AGC must realize that though they are responsible before God for the spiritual oversight of Grace Christian School, the school can function without them. Let that fact be a humbling reminder. It is the Holy Spirit who accomplishes the work of the ministry, and he may do it however he wishes. At AGC, it is through an elder board. At Hope, it is through the board of directors. In the repeated calls to humility, the success of this non-church school is a reminder that God runs the universe—not us.

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[37]Nathan Ziegler (Principal of Hope Academy, Minneapolis, MN), email correspondence with the author, 13 July 2011.

[38]Edlin, *The Cause of Christian Education,* 121.

[39]Lockerbie, *A Christian Paideia*, 87.

Nampa Christian Schools. Superintendent Eric Forseth gave me the following information about Nampa Christian Schools in Nampa, Idaho, which is a PreK-12 school that is not a ministry of a church.[40] This school was recommended by Ken Townsend, the Northwest Regional Director of the Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI), as an independent school with strong leadership and enduring doctrinal integrity. Like Hope, there is not necessarily a specific reason why the school is independent. It was started over fifty years ago as a ministry of a nearby Christian college, and later split from the college to merge with two other nearby Christian schools. Their goal is to be non-denominational. Interestingly, they have the most detailed statement of faith of any other Christian school that I am aware of. They have a shorter version for all who are part of the school to sign, with a note at the bottom to reference the fuller one.[41] Forseth attributes their long-term strength to the their adherence to their doctrinal statement, which has not been challenged during his time there.

According to Forseth, not being under a church has allowed the school to partner more closely with the 100 churches represented by the students. Their music group, for example, visits churches each month, and he does not think that would happen without the school's close partnership with other churches in the area.

When asked what are the key factors in the spiritual success of the school, he replied that it is the commitment of the board to the school and their strong stance on biblical authority. He also listed the centrality of the mission for over fifty years, teachers who are role models, prayers of many, the commitment of alumni, and a commitment to have a school chaplain. All of these factors happen without church oversight.

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[40]Eric Forseth (Superintendent of Nampa Christian Schools, Nampa, ID), email correspondence with the author, 14 July 2011.

[41]"Statement of Faith" [on-line]; accessed 15 July 2011; available from http://www.nampachristianschools.com/About%20NCS/Statement%20of%20Faith.html; Internet.

What can Anchorage Grace learn from Nampa? A strong doctrinal statement is a benefit to a school, and does not necessarily cause division. Rather, for Nampa it has been what keeps them strong and united. Forseth was clear that there is no division over their lengthy doctrinal statement.

Schools and Churches in Conflict

Unfortunately, friction between church and school can cause division. "Unity is an important part of church life. That's why," warns MacArthur, "Satan constantly attacks it."[42] Townsend of ACSI has much experience in church-school relations, though his focus has been primarily on the school side. In his research, he found about 20 percent of church-schools had relational difficulties.[43] Usually the conflict centered on shared use of the facilities. Not surprisingly, each blamed the other for the problems, and not one of them that he knew of attempted to work through the issues. This observation is a sad commentary on the very people who are training up leaders to influence the world for Christ. In the words of Greene, "It is no good telling children to love one another if they cannot see that their teachers love each other."[44]

Regarding the church-schools with healthy relationships, based on twenty-five years of experience in Christian education, Townsend says, "The greatest asset of those with harmonious church-school relationship was the relationship between pastor and principal—exemplified by humility, mutual respect, commitment to mission, and friendship."[45] Repeated here again are the themes of humility and of the leadership setting the tone. "Unity brings God glory," says MacArthur, "[Therefore,] Satan is

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[42]MacArthur, *Shepherdology,* 25.

[43]Ken Townsend (Northwest Regional Director of the Association of Christian Schools International, Vancouver, WA), email correspondence with the author, 6 July 2011.

[44]Greene, *Reclaiming the Future*, 264.

[45]Townsend, email.

incessantly trying to divide churches."[46] Townsend's observation resonates with the examples given thus far of healthy church-school relations.

According to Townsend, the overall strength of a school is ultimately dependent upon the strength of its board and leadership—whether the school is a ministry of a church or not has minimal effect. He agreed that Christian organizations have a tendency to drift into secularism, citing especially once-Christian universities, but also points out that it is often due to their dual purpose. If schools see themselves as both "educational and Christian," they are more likely to drift than if they primarily focused on "their spiritual roots and God's glory."[47] He also points out that when financial difficulties arise, organizations often trade money for influence, and eventually they are influenced to depart from their original mission. Commitment to the mission is key to the survival of a Christian school, even more vital than commitment to survival.

In ACSI's quarterly publication, they devoted an entire issue to "The Marriage of the Church and School."[48] In it, Paul Young, with twenty years of experience in Christian School Administration, directly addressed the conflict that commonly exists between church and school, often accompanied with "an attitude of distrust, disloyalty, and in many cases open rebellion."[49] He was the administrator of the Southern Baptist Educational Center in Southaven, Mississippi, a ministry of Broadway Baptist Church. He maintains, "Two individuals living in the same house but having different goals, different expectations, and different directions should expect conflict rather than harmony."[50] It is essential, therefore, that unity in mission and vision exist. "If there is a

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[46]MacArthur, *Shepherdology*, 26.

[47]Townsend, email.

[48]*Christian School Education* 1, no. 2 (1997).

[49]Paul Young, "Marriage of the Church and Christian School: Why Do They Struggle?" *Christian School Education* 1, no. 2 (1997): 5-8.

[50]Ibid.

problem . . . we must look for root causes and attack the problem there rather than on the surface."[51] In the article, he lists seven principles that Bobby Moore, the pastor of the church, gave him. They are as follows:

1. The need for a Christian school must be birthed in the heart of the pastor by the Spirit of God. The reason for the Christian school must be to fulfill the Great Commission and to cooperate with the home and the church in the total development of boys and girls.
2. The church's marriage to the Christian school must be exemplified, cultivated, and guarded by the pastor.
3. The Christian school must be an extension of the church.
4. The pastor and staff must be vitally involved in the school but must not seek to run or manage it.
5. The pastor must lead the church staff, church leaders, and church members to have a servant's heart toward the school.
6. The pastor must develop wholesome, edifying relationships with the school staff.
7. The pastor must pray personally, continually, and earnestly for the school staff and administrators, students, student families, and school decisions.[52]

Another author, whose name was withheld by request, writes that in most church-schools, "the administrator [is] subordinate to the pastor but also directly responsible to the school board. . . . If there is confusion over the responsibilities of the pastor, school board, and administrator, the stage is set for conflict."[53] Effective communication can eliminate much of this conflict before it happens. This author also emphasizes the necessity for the pastor to understand the organizational structure of the school. "The school board exists to set policy and deal with major issues. The school board is a protective umbrella over both the school and the school administrator. If the pastor gets frustrated with the school board in making a decision, . . . he may try to circumvent the role and responsibility of the school board. This often leads the pastor into

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[51]Ibid.

[52]Ibid.

[53]"Challenges in the Pastor-Administrator Relationship," *Christian School Education* 1, no. 2 (1997): 12-15.

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conflict."[54] This conflict can be avoided by practicing humility, fostering a healthy relationship with the school leadership, and applying biblical principles of conflict resolution when conflicts do arise.

What can Anchorage Grace learn from Townsend? Vigilance in biblical conflict resolution principles is essential to the health of the relationship between church and school. Schultz laments, "Unfortunately today, many schools and churches do not have the harmonious relationships that are needed for kingdom education to be effective."[55] Between Anchorage Grace Church and Grace Christian School, there have been some underlying issues, and the sun has set far too many times on unresolved conflicts. Most of these conflicts, not surprisingly, are regarding facilities. As the elders take a more active role in the spiritual leadership of the school, there is potential for more conflict if the transition is not navigated carefully. In his book on peacemaking in the church, Alfred Poirier writes, "If we truly confess and believe that God ordains conflict, instead of cursing it, we can consecrate it . . . . We can accept it as a God-given assignment for our good and his ultimate glory. Most importantly, rather than perceiving conflict as an obstacle to our ministry, we can welcome it as an opportunity to minister."[56] If indeed all things work together for good in the sanctifying process (Rom 8:28-29), as one author put it, "pastors as servant leaders must exercise care concerning how they handle church conflicts in order to maximize the benefits and minimize the destructions."[57] Perhaps God brings conflict to remind us of our need for him.

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[54]Ibid.

[55]Schultz, *Kingdom Education*, 115.

[56]Alfred Poirier, *The Peacemaking Pastor: A Biblical Guide to Resolving Church Conflict* (Grand Rapids: BakerBooks, 2006), 76.

[57]Raymond Iao-Man Chu, "Conflict Management Styles of Pastors and Organizational Servant Leadership: A Descriptive Study" (Ph.D. diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2011), 3.

Conflict is a heart issue, and must not be ignored. Although every employee at AGC and GCS must sign the "Peacemaker Pledge" as part of their yearly contract,[58] there has been little accountability to root out all bitterness—especially the type that lies beneath the surface. This discord is not fitting for the family of God. "According to Matthew 5:23-24," writes Poirier, "an unreconciled conflict with a brother is reason to stop worshiping the *Father*. If *sons and daughters* are to worship their *Father* rightly, they must first put down their gift at their *Father's* altar and go and be reconciled to their *brother*."[59] May each look inward in confession before looking at any fault in the other.

At AGC, the relationship between the church and school is currently the best it has been in a long time. The pastor and superintendent are like-minded, equally yoked and pulling a straight line. Those who follow each are walking the trail their leaders are making. Most believe that final resolution of the underlying conflict is attainable in the near future.

Developing a Community of Discipleship

The second section of the chapter focuses on developing a strategy for a community of discipleship at Grace Christian School. Anchorage Grace Church has hired me as the Dean of Spiritual Life as a first step in taking a more active spiritual leadership role of the school. One of my responsibilities as the Dean is to develop a strategy for deepening the discipleship atmosphere at the school. Much discipleship happens at the school in various settings both in and out of the classroom. Music groups, athletic teams, drama productions, mission trips, and various small group meetings provide an opportunity to live life together in discipleship relationships. Although there are pockets

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[58]"Peacemaker's Pledge: A Commitment to Biblical Conflict Resolution" [on-line]; accessed 18 July 2011; available from http://www.peacemaker.net/site/c.aqKFLTOBIpH/b.958159/k.A440/Peacemakers_Pledge.htm; Internet.

[59]Poirier, *The Peacemaking Pastor*, 106; emphasis original.

of discipleship, it is my aim to unite those pockets such that discipleship is the defining fabric of the school.

As a Christian school attempts to take on a discipling role, there is one consideration that must be addressed. We "must never attempt to replace the church in a young person's life," states Schultz. "If schools are involved in kingdom education, one of their primary goals should be to strengthen the local churches in their community."[60] Jesus never said he would build para-church organizations, as important as they may be. He said he would build his church (Matt 16:18). Greene concurs, "The church is the Body of Christ on earth. It is the appointed community responsible to declare the truth of God to an unbelieving world."[61] The Christian school is merely one way the people of the church have sought to fulfill the Great Commission to disciple the nations. In his book on the philosophy of Christian education, Richard A. Riesen writes, "A school is not a church, but clearly there are points at which the purposes of Christian school and church overlap."[62] Discipleship is one of those points, but as the school seeks to disciple its students, it must not displace the priority of the church.

The administration at GCS does an excellent job of promoting a discipleship and mentoring mindset to the faculty and staff. It is even written into every employee's contract. However, more could be done to help the adult leaders apply the principles of discipleship in their context, and to keep them encouraged and accountable to follow through. "While academic excellence is critical in theological education, the Christian campus must not ignore the essential core values of spiritual formation and community," writes Gordon Johntson. "The fact is that spiritual growth is best cultivated outside the

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[60]Schultz, *Kingdom Education*, 117.

[61]Greene, *Reclaiming the Future*, 28.

[62]Richard A. Riesen, *Piety and Philosophy: A Primer for Christian Schools* (Phoenix: ACW Press, 2002), 128.

classroom."[63] It is through life-on-life interactions, both in and out of the classroom, that teachers and administrators can fulfill their calling, which "is concerned primarily with helping students become true disciples of Jesus Christ."[64] Whether in math or missions, every area of life is to be brought under the lordship of Jesus.

The Master's College Distinctives

My primary source for helping GCS develop a discipleship community is the Student Life Department at The Master's College (TMC) in Santa Clarita, California. I graduated from the college in 1997, and was deeply influenced by the intentional discipleship atmosphere. It is hard to describe to someone who has not experienced it, but the environment most closely resembles what I picture an authentic, biblical community should be, and I have not experienced it to the same degree anywhere else. The truth and authority of the Scriptures are held high, the lordship of Christ is taken seriously, and each person is devoted to the other in pursuing authentic Christian community. The principles from the Student Life Department will give valuable insights as the church leadership seeks to enhance the community life at GCS.

Joe Keller, Vice President of Student Life at TMC, is currently in the writing phase of a Doctor of Ministry program at Westminster Theological Seminary. Having been on staff at the college for the last fifteen years, he is well-suited to document as much as possible what "the Master's experience" is all about. He was kind enough to give me a copy of his unfinished work on the theological foundations of The Master's Distinctives and to speak with me extensively about the philosophy and practice of ministry at the college. Though a resident college ministry is very different than a non-resident K-12 school, the principles of life-on-life discipleship still apply. As a

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[63]Gordon Johnston, "Old Testament Community and Spiritual Formation," in *Foundations of Spiritual Formation: A Community Approach to Becoming Like Christ*, ed. Paul Pettit (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2008), 87.

[64]Greene, *Reclaiming the Future*, 269.

community GCS needs to consider these principles and together discern how God would have it implement strategies that will help disciple students.

Life at TMC is an outflow of "[cultivating] a comprehensive biblical worldview that translates into distinctive Christian living—actively living differently."[65] Part of Keller's dissertation is to rewrite the distinctives of TMC to more accurately capture what indeed makes TMC unique. Stated most simply, it is the lordship of Jesus Christ and the sufficiency of Scripture worked out in all of life as they love God and love others.[66] At the completion of his project, the four distinctives will be, "Divine Authority, Heart Transformation, Sanctifying Relationships, and Gospel Witness."[67] Each of the four distinctives has three subcategories to further explain them. Rather than go into detail for all twelve of the subcategories, I will focus on the first distinctive—being the foundation for the rest—and then summarize the other three briefly.

Divine Authority. Divine Authority is defined by the sovereign lordship of Christ, the sufficiency of Scripture, and our dependence on the Spirit to submit. "Jesus is Lord," writes MacArthur in the opening lines of *The Gospel According to Jesus*, "is the single, central, foundational, and distinguishing article of Christianity."[68] It is the heart of the gospel confession in Romans 10:9, "because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved." MacArthur elaborates, "The gospel according to Jesus calls sinners to give up their independence, deny themselves, submit to an alien will, and abandon all rights in order to be owned and controlled by the Lord. By confessing Jesus as Lord (*Kurios*), we

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[65]Joe Keller (Vice President of Student Life at The Master's College, Santa Clarita, CA), telephone interview with the author, 7 July 2011.

[66]Ibid.

[67]Ibid.

[68]John MacArthur, *The Gospel According to Jesus: What is Authentic Faith*, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008), 25.

automatically confess that we are his slaves (*douloi*)."[69] This truth is key at TMC. The overarching question is, how does everything in my life relate to the lordship of Christ?

Related to the lordship of Christ is the sufficiency of his Word for all of life. According to Wayne Grudem, "The sufficiency of Scripture means that Scripture contained all the words of God he intended his people to have at each stage of redemptive history, and that it now contains all the words of God we need for salvation, for trusting him perfectly, and for obeying him perfectly. . . . It is in Scripture alone that we are to search for God's words to us."[70] Even as a biology major at the college, this emphasis was instilled in me. In the classroom, in chapels, on mission teams, and in personal friendships, the Word of God was regarded as sufficient for "all things that pertain to life and godliness" (2 Pet 1:3). That comprehensive biblical worldview is not something that can be tacked on to an otherwise secular education. As Lesli DeAnn Welch states in her dissertation on the integration of faith and learning, "Christian education is more than sharing a devotional thought and Scripture passage at the beginning of class."[71] Scripture is authoritative in all areas of life, and the biblical community cannot think too deeply without relating all thoughts to God and the truth of the Bible. This principle would not be debated among the teachers at GCS. They understand that "the responsibility of Christian educators is to take the Word of God and imprint it upon the hearts and lives of the students."[72] The task before the leadership of GCS is to ingrain this principle into the fiber of each student's being.

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[69]Ibid., 35.

[70]Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 127.

[71]Lesli DeAnn Welch, "An Analysis of the Integration of Faith and Learning in Evangelical Secondary Schools" (Ph.D. diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2008), 33.

[72]Ibid., 19.

The lordship of Christ and the sufficiency of Scripture only have meaning in believers' lives because the Holy Spirit has enabled them to hear his voice in the Scriptures and to obey the Lord from the heart. The third subcategory under Divine Authority is Dependent Submission. As Bryan Chapell writes in his book *Holiness by Grace*, "God has regenerated us by his Spirit so that we now have Christ's presence and power in us. With this new nature we have new desires, new goals, new priorities, and new abilities (Rom. 8:5-11)."[73] When we fight against our flesh to submit to the lordship of Christ, "our power does not come from mere mental resolve. Through Christ a true supernatural force is at work in us that makes otherwise impossible changes occur. . . . We progress in sanctification as we humbly and prayerfully depend upon the Holy Spirit to mature our wills and transform our affections."[74] No believers would obey the sovereign Christ or submit to his sufficient Word without the sovereign Spirit.

Heart Transformation. The second distinctive of TMC, according to Keller, is Heart Transformation, in which they focus not on the actions, but on the heart. It is not enough to teach them how to live, "we are after their heart—their affections."[75] The goal of discipleship is not behavior modification, but heart transformation, in which, as discipleship expert Bill Hull explains, "we move [*trans*] from the person we are and continue to change [*formation*] by degree into the image of Christ."[76] All of life is worship, and repentance happens when we fail to love God and love others as we ought. When the Apostle John says that we "ought to love each other" (1 John 4:11), John Piper writes, "he means ought in the way that fish ought to swim in water and birds ought to fly

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[73]Bryan Chapell, *Holiness by Grace: Delighting in the Joy That Is Our Strength* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2001), 59.

[74]Ibid.

[75]Keller, interview.

[76]Bill Hull, *The Complete Book of Discipleship: On Being and Making Followers of Christ* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2006), 188.

in the air and living creatures ought to breathe and peaches ought to be sweet and lemons ought to be sour and hyenas ought to laugh. And born-again people ought to love. It's who we are."[77] Love from the heart is a defining characteristic of a Christian community, and the battle against sin is so much deeper than battle against external actions and attitudes. "The battle with sin," writes Piper, "is no superficial technique of behavior modification. It is a profound dealing with what was accomplished on the cross in relation to the supernatural working of the Holy Spirit through the deep and wonderful mysteries of faith."[78] As GCS disciples students it must remember that the battle is supernatural and focused on the heart.

Sanctifying Relationships. The third distinctive, one from which I greatly benefited, is Sanctifying Relationships.[79] Keller asks a good question regarding social events and other school-sponsored activities in which "fun" is a major part. "What is the 'fun-ness' of having fun? It is doing it under the lordship of Christ."[80] Sanctified fun is an opportunity to build into the life of another. Friendships at TMC are considered discipleship relationships. When one friend violates the lordship of Christ, another is there to help restore that person in love. Principles of confrontation and restoration are taught repeatedly, and practiced consistently. This distinctive is the key to putting the others into practice. As Mark Dever and Paul Alexander articulate in their book, "Growing Christians welcome other Christians into their lives for the purposes of confessing their sins to one another (James 5:16; 1 John 1:5-10). That [fellowship] is, in

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[77]John Piper, *Finally Alive: What Happens When We Are Born Again* (Fearn, Scotland: Christian Focus, 2009), 156.

[78]John Piper, "Foreword," in *Overcoming Sin and Temptation: Three Classic Works by John Owen*, ed. Kelly M. Kapic and Justin Taylor (Wheaton: Crossway, 2006), 13.

[79]Keller, interview.

[80]Ibid.

large part, how spiritual growth happens—by accepting biblical correction."[81] As people live life together, ample opportunities will arise to speak the truth in love as part of a healthy discipleship lifestyle. The question is, will we follow through with the command to restore a brother caught in sin (Gal 6:1), or will we turn a selfish, blind eye? Paul David Tripp offers convicting insight: "We confront unbiblically (or not at all) because we love something else more than God. Perhaps we love our relationship with this person so much that we don't want to risk it. Perhaps we prefer to avoid the personal sacrifice and complications that confrontation may involve. Perhaps we love peace, respect, and appreciation more than we should."[82] In order to maximize submission to the lordship of Christ, a Christian community must follow the principles of biblical restoration.

Gospel Witness. Flowing from the first two distinctives of Divine Authority and Heart Transformation, is an outward focus toward others. First, to those closest to us in Sanctifying Relationships, and then to others in the fourth distinctive, Gospel Witness. According to Keller, the Local Church and Global Mission are subcategories of Gospel Witness. As excellent as TMC is in fostering a discipleship community, God has given priority to the local church. As stated earlier, Jesus said he would build his church (Matt 16:18), not his para-church organizations. Since TMC is not a church, they strive in all they do "to support and serve the efforts of the local church."[83] They understand Schultz's point that "the school must never see itself as being more important than the church—that philosophy is completely contrary to God's Word."[84] When I was at TMC, the leadership was always encouraging the students to be actively involved in their local

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[81]Mark Dever and Paul Alexander, *The Deliberate Church: Building Your Ministry on the Gospel* (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 2005), 68.

[82]Paul David Tripp, *Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands: People in Need of Change Helping People in Need of Change* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2002), 201.

[83]Keller, interview.

[84]Schultz, *Kingdom Education*, 119.

churches. Keller says the most significant factor in helping students understand the priority of the local church is for the leadership of the school to set the example.[85] It is a constant battle in successful schools to convince the students that the school is not their church. At GCS, many of the students are involved in their churches, and we need to be careful not to impinge upon that relationship as we seek to join in discipling them.

Global outreach is another part of gospel witness, as believers in the process of sanctification look outward to help others experience the same joy of salvation they have. As Piper has concisely proclaimed, "Missions exists because worship doesn't."[86] Those who have tasted full fellowship with God want to share that worship-experience with others. At TMC there are multiple mission trips and local service projects not only to do the work of the ministry, but also to implant in the students this global mindset, giving them an opportunity to see a world full of people in need.

These four distinctives really do characterize life at The Master's College. Though not perfect by any standard, the spiritual ethos of the community reflects a high view of God and Scripture, a focus on the heart, genuine relationships, and a service mindset. These principles are repeated in chapels, in classes, in the dorms, and on the intramural ball field.

Implementation at GCS. How can Grace Christian School implement these same distinctives? One option is through our weekly chapel venue. Keller said that speakers often address the distinctives topically in chapels, so that students hear the same truths from different perspectives, all from people who are like-minded. If the theme of the message is the lordship of Christ, for example, the speaker will help the students understand how it relates to them in their specific context. As one author writes, "The

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[85]Keller, interview.

[86]John Piper, *Let the Nations Be Glad: The Supremacy of God in Missions*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003), 17.

Christian school exists to proclaim the lordship of Christ in all areas of life and to challenge students with God's claim to their hearts and lives."[87] Chapel is one highly effective platform to help the students see how truth impacts their daily lives, though Keller cautions against making it seem to the students like another class, or even church, or to be too content-heavy. Chapels should be application heavy, focusing on how to apply truth to their lives.[88]

David Gundersen, former Associate Dean of Men at The Master's College and currently the Director of Student Life Programs for Boyce College and Southern Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky, also has some helpful insights regarding chapel. He concurs with Keller, saying that the focus should be on celebrating our connection in Christ together—"a natural rhythm of fellowship and reflection."[89] He says that speakers need to be coached through the exposition/application balance appropriate to the context of the Christian school. It is not a seminary class, nor is it entertainment. Even Phil Johnson, Executive Director of Grace to You, a ministry of John MacArthur, sees the need for topical expository messages in a chapel context.[90] Last year, in an effort to model verse-by-verse exposition, chapel speakers preached through 1 and 2 Peter. Though initially received well by students, about halfway through 1 Peter, most were respectfully ready for some variety. This testimony supports the idea that chapels should be a time for students to hear what is directly applicable to their lives, grounded in rich theological truth.[91] Having chapels creatively connect doctrine to the students' lives will help shift the culture in a Godward direction.

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[87]Lowrie, *Serving God*, 9.

[88]Keller, interview.

[89]David Gundersen (Director of Student Life Programs for Boyce College and Southern Seminary, Louisville, KY), telephone interview with the author, 13 July 2011.

[90]Phil Johnson (Executive Director of Grace to You, Panorama City, CA), Skype interview with the author, 18 July 2011.

[91]Gundersen, interview.

Having laid the foundation for the spiritual environment we would like to cultivate at GCS, I will now address two schools who are actively pursuing this discipleship mindset in remarkable ways.

Building Community

Hope Academy, revisited. Of all the schools I researched, Hope Academy is unique in that it requires participation in a weekly mentor-group ministry. Principal Ziegler said that each staff member and some volunteers are assigned a group of four to five students which meet during lunch once a week, and are encouraged to meet outside of school on occasion.[92] For those students who do not want to participate, he coaches them on a heart level, probing them as to why they object. He is convinced that these groups are essential to the educational process of his students, therefore, students are not allowed to opt out. In rare occasions, he may let a student switch to another group. He acknowledges that some groups have been more successful than others, but strongly believes the connection it provides is worth the extra effort it takes to organize and sustain it.

Judy Austin, Dean of Student Activities, is the one who is in charge of organizing the groups. She added that the typical lunch period is not long enough to go as deep as the mentors would like, but it does allow them to "check in" and let the students know they care.[93] Over the course of the year, these brief encounters are enough to develop a meaningful relationship. Some of the mentors take their groups on activities outside of school, such as camping, shopping, and to the movies, concerts, or sports games. She said that the head of school "invested heavily in relationship building during

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[92]Ziegler, email.

[93]Judy Austin (Dean of Student Activities at Hope Academy, Minneapolis, MN), email correspondence with the author, 19 July 2011.

the early years of the school. That culture still exists."[94] Again the importance of leadership affecting the community is evident.

What can Grace Christian learn from Hope? A vibrant small group ministry would greatly add to the spiritual dynamics of the school. Although there are some groups at GCS already, there is not a cultural expectation that being part of a small group is an important (enough) part of a student's spiritual life. In the word picture of Donald S. Whitney, "Some Christians are tempted to think that they can remain spiritually healthy apart from breathing the fresh air of biblical fellowship."[95] These small groups allow for people to connect on a heart level, beyond mere socializing, which is no substitute for true fellowship.[96] In these groups, individuals can keep each other accountable regarding faithfulness to the spiritual disciplines. In a recent study on spirituality, Brad J. Waggoner "discovered" a very simple truth: "Statistically, *the number one issue* correlated to higher maturity scores was the discipline of *daily Bible reading*."[97] Small groups are an excellent format to discuss daily habits of spiritual discipline, as well as to find encouragement (and rebuke, if necessary[98]) in daily battles with besetting sins. Encouraging a more vibrant small group ministry with adult mentors is one way to transform the culture at Grace.

Hinkson Christian Academy. A student of mine attended Hinkson Christian Academy in Moscow, Russia, and speaks highly of the discipleship atmosphere that permeated the school. It is an independent school that operates under a board set up by

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[94]Ibid.

[95]Donald S. Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines within the Church: Participating Fully in the Body of Christ* (Chicago: Moody, 1996), 148.

[96]Ibid., 150. See pp. 149-51, where Whitney distinguishes biblical fellowship from socializing.

[97]Brad J. Waggoner, *The Shape of Faith to Come: Spiritual Formation and the Future of Discipleship* (Nashville: B&H, 2008), 296; emphasis original.

[98]Tripp, *Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands*, 200.

sponsoring missionary organizations.[99] It is unique, not because of its leadership structure, but because of its perceived spiritual vibrancy on campus. Having talked with a student, the chaplain, and the director of the school, its testimony is uncommon among schools. Director Jeff McGuire said that the administration and staff constantly stress that they are a school of grace, and that they focus on heart change.[100] They provide many opportunities for spiritual interaction with each other outside of the classroom (retreats, Bible studies, small groups), and the teachers sense a clear call to the ministry (they have to raise their own support!).[101]

Chaplain Russell Thomas devotes all of his time to the spiritual life of the students, most importantly helping people see the high character of God.[102] He views all the school's activities as opportunities for discipleship. The informal times he considers opportunities to build relationships so that more formal discipleship opportunities, such as small groups, will be more meaningful. Hinkson is not necessarily unique in its philosophy, although not many schools have full-time staff devoted entirely to spiritual formation outside of the classroom. What, then, sets Hinkson apart? In addition to clearly biblical principles being followed, the context of the school as a foreign school probably has a lot to do with the cohesiveness of the community. It started out as a school for missionary children, but recently expanded to serve Christian business and embassy families, as well.[103] Though it is not a boarding school, there is a unique sense of community that the students and faculty have—a bond they share as foreigners. With all

[99]Jeff McGuire (Director of Hinkson Christian Academy, Moscow, Russia), email correspondence with the author, 21 July 2011.

[100]Ibid.

[101]Ibid.

[102]Russell Thomas (Chaplain at Hinkson Christian Academy, Moscow, Russia), email correspondence with the author, 9 July 2011 and 17 July 2011.

[103]"History of Hinkson Christian Academy" [on-line]; accessed 21 July 2011; available at http://www.hinkson.ru/about-hca/history.cfm; Internet.

the other factors in place as a foundation, my hypothesis is that their context in a foreign country is the key.

What can Grace learn from Hinkson? On a practical level, much can be said for having a chaplain who is singularly devoted to the spiritual life of the students on campus. Perhaps this component is what is lacking at GCS. There are many spiritual activities happening, but no one is specifically assigned to promote the spiritual health of the campus holistically. Of course, in one sense, it is the job of every administrator, faculty, and staff member. It is often the case, however, that a job which is everybody's often becomes nobody's. Such is not the case at GCS, but there remains an underlying principle that if someone was distinctly commissioned to the task that it would become a greater emphasis on campus. Given the realities of budgets and a weak economy, it may not be economically feasible to create a new staff position. If GCS did follow Hinkson's example, perhaps a chaplain could raise support for himself as all Hinkson employees do. A more realistic possibility is for the Dean of Spiritual Life position, which is currently in place at a minimal level, to develop into something more substantial. The church is currently willing to consider this option.

If indeed the key to the community life at Hinkson is their context in a foreign land, we might not be able to replicate it fully. However, it is worth exploring the spiritual parallels. Are we not all foreigners in this world (Phil 3:10)? Perhaps a problem at GCS is that we all—teachers and administrators, as well as students and their families—feel so at home in this world, that we miss the immeasurable value of the community we share. Even greater than our unity due to the fact that we are sojourners and exiles in this land (1 Pet 2:11), is our unity in Christ (Rom 6:3-6). GCS must follow Hinkson's example of intentionally building their community not around sports or hobbies, but around Christ. As Whitney aptly writes, "The basis for our fellowship with

other Christians is the fellowship we have with God through Christ."[104] Fellowship with God should set students apart so distinctly from the world as to make them a little strange to their unbelieving friends, such that GCS is a welcome refuge from the harsh existence in a wicked world.

Can GCS become this refuge? According to Greene, "The development of true community is an extremely important part of a Christian school program."[105] GCS can indeed follow Hinkson's lead in their deliberate strategy to make their school a place where the students feel like a family. To neglect this opportunity is to miss a vital part of the discipleship process. As one author stated, a community committed to the lordship of Christ and the sufficiency of Scripture, committed to loving God and each other "cannot help but stand in sharp contrast with the world—for a people formed in the likeness of God cannot be anything less than a community of character."[106] GCS stands out already as a community of character, but we have much to learn in implementing a full-orbed discipleship community.

Conclusion

Through studying other institutions and literature in the field, many insights have been gained in accomplishing the primary purpose of helping the elders of Anchorage Grace Church take a more active role in the spiritual leadership of Grace Christian School. As they proceed humbly, respecting the role of the school board and superintendent, avoiding micromanagement, a smooth transition can be achieved. With much prayer and by the grace of God alone, the elders can restore their active spiritual oversight.

[104]Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines within the Church*, 149.

[105]Greene, *Reclaiming the Future*, 263.

[106]Stanley Hauerwas, "The Gesture of a Truthful Story: The Church and 'Religious Education,'" *Encounter* 43 (1982): 322.

Through contact with organizations that do discipleship well, strategies have emerged to develop a stronger discipleship community at GCS. Having discussed distinctives that should characterize the school, two strategies were proposed to accomplish them. Increased intentionality with chapels, and a more organized small group ministry are two practical steps that can be taken to help the students form a comprehensive worldview and practice spiritual disciplines with accountability and encouragement. By God's grace and with the help of his Spirit, implementing the principles in this project will help Grace Christian School grow in their disciple-making ministry.

Ultimately, as the elders are faithful to humbly fulfill their God-ordained role of spiritual oversight and active leadership, the end result will be students who more closely resemble the disciples they should be. As the church and school strive together in this common task, may their hearts be united in the common bond of fellowship with the Father, through Son, in the Spirit. The church is God's church, and this school ministry is his ministry.

CHAPTER 4

IMPLEMENTING ACTIVE SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP

Introduction

The ministry project was designed to accomplish the five goals mentioned in chapter 1. The first goal was to affirm the elders of Anchorage Grace Church (AGC) in their responsibility to have active spiritual oversight of Grace Christian School (GCS). The second goal was to create a theological matrix describing primary and secondary doctrines, and to have that document be a grid for the theological integrity of the school. The third goal was to utilize the Dean of Spiritual Life role to work toward developing a more effective discipleship and mentoring culture at the school. The fourth goal was to help the faculty and staff understand the biblical foundation for the elders having spiritual oversight of its ministries, in order to minimize the fears and mistrust they have in the transition process. The fifth goal, a personal one, was both to strengthen my ability to facilitate church leadership of the school, and to improve my skill at shepherding youth at the organizational level.

Because of the breadth of this project, it was divided into three phases. The first phase was focused at the leadership level for both the church and school. I presented at an elder meeting, a teacher meeting, and a school board meeting, specifically targeting goals 1, 2, and 4. In addition, I collected survey information from each of these groups as well as the high school students. The second phase was aimed at accomplishing the third goal through direct contact with secondary students. This phase included a four-part chapel series and the launch of a new small group ministry. The final phase was to collect feedback from the elder board, school board, teachers, and students, in order to measure the effectiveness of the project.

Leadership Phase—Church and School (Weeks 1-6)

Interview Church and School Leadership
(Weeks 1-2)

During the first two weeks of the project, I interviewed the elders of

Anchorage Grace Church (AGC) and the school board members of Grace Christian

School (GCS), along with a selection of twelve teachers from the school (see appendix 1

for all questionnaires). Though initially I had intended to interview each one in person,

they preferred to email the responses to my questions. The end of summer in Alaska is a

difficult time to organize meetings, since so many are soaking in the last days of warmth

before the long winter. Many were out of town. It was extremely difficult to get a

response from most of them. Only 5 of the 9 elder board members, 5 of the 13 school

board members, and 5 of the 12 selected teachers provided initial feedback.

Elder Board Meeting (Week 3)

Concurrent with the third week of the project was an elder board meeting

(8/11/11) in which they gave me the floor for two hours. I had previously shared with

them my project proposal (chapter 1), and had received input from the Senior Pastor

regarding the direction of my project. This meeting was extremely fruitful and warrants

some specific attention.

Biblical affirmation. The first item on the agenda was to share the research

from chapter 2, which was the biblical support for the elders exercising active spiritual

oversight over the school. The purpose was to accomplish project goal number 1, which

was to affirm them in their role as the spiritual leaders of the church and all its ministries.

Though nobody is debating whether the elders have the spiritual authority, neither is there

consensus as to what degree exactly that authority should be exercised or how much

involvement there should be. Before figuring out all the details, this first step was to

acknowledge that the Bible is quite clear regarding the expectations placed upon the

leadership of God's church. The emphasis was on their responsibility before God and the absolute necessity for humility in leadership. They admitted in general terms that they had made mistakes in the past, and were eager to renew their efforts to take an active role in the spiritual leadership of the school. Most of the material presented was not new to them as experienced elders, but served as an opportunity to discuss the weighty responsibility they carry.

Extra-biblical insights. The second item on the agenda was to share with the elders the information I had gained from my discussions with the leadership of other schools, which is the first part of chapter 3. Four of the schools were ministries of a sponsoring church, and three were independent of any church oversight. None of the examples were authoritative in the sense of being *the* model to follow, but each contributed at least one principle or best-practice that the elders would like to consider implementing to improve their spiritual leadership of GCS. For example, rather than the current policy of requiring AGC membership of the superintendent only, they would like to have the same requirement for the elementary and secondary principals. Also, a repeated theme in most of the church-school models was the vital importance of a healthy relationship between the senior pastor and the head of the school. This leadership duo will set the standard of unity for both organizations. The elders were highly encouraged to find out that they are not far from where they want to be, and were very thankful to hear of a few specific and practical adjustments they can make to increase their effectiveness in leadership.

TMC Distinctives. After discussing the results from K-12 schools in the first half of chapter 3, I shared with the elders the second half of chapter 3, which focuses on discipleship models of other schools, especially The Master's College (TMC). Though the college setting is significantly different than K-12, there are biblical principles of student discipleship that transcend both contexts. The principles shared from this section

are not directly related to their leadership as elders. Rather, it is more of what they could accomplish through the Dean of Spiritual Life position that has been created and is in development. At TMC, they have "Distinctives" that capture the heart of what their school is all about. The four categories are "Divine Authority, Heart Transformation, Sanctifying Relationships, and Gospel Witness."[1] Rather than copying them directly, there was a discussion about what GCS Distinctives could be. The preliminary discussion focused on the lordship of Christ and the sufficiency of Scripture (subcategories of Divine Authority). Another item discussed was TMC's philosophy of student chapels, and how we can help make GCS chapels even better. From personal experience I can say that chapels have become more expositional in nature over the last few years and speakers are more carefully chosen who are doctrinally sound, but considerable growth still needs to happen in the area of connecting with the students in a way that is meaningful to them while still being theologically rich. If the GCS Distinctives were treated as chapel themes, and all speakers referenced at least one of them in their messages, that would help shape the ethos of the student community.

The Theological Matrix document. The third agenda item at this elder meeting flowed from the strategies discussed in chapter 3. As the Dean of Spiritual Life, I had been working on developing a Theological Matrix document (see appendix 2), which arranges an annotated AGC Statement of Faith into a grid of primary and secondary doctrines, along with columns for determining which jobs at GCS require full alignment with the church's doctrine. For example, all teachers must believe in the authority and inerrancy of Scripture. A high school English teacher, however, does not have to believe in the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints, but must not teach against it. A Bible teacher would be held to a higher doctrinal standard, and would need to agree fully with

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[1]Joe Keller (Vice President of Student Life at The Master's College, Santa Clarita, CA), telephone interview with the author, 7 July 2011.

the church's position on the perseverance of the saints. Different staff positions have different doctrinal standards, and this chart clearly delineates the expectations. As a step toward the completion of this project's second goal, the elders officially approved this document as the hiring standard for GCS at this meeting, and it was scheduled to be presented at the next school board meeting (see below, week 6).

Small group ministry. Another strategy raised in chapter 3 was to develop a more robust small group ministry at the school. There were already many discipleship opportunities outside the classroom—the two most dominant being athletic teams and mission trips—but the goal is to transform the culture at GCS such that it is not just optional to be in discipleship relationships, but the expectation. We discussed different models of school-wide discipleship groups, such as whether to make it mandatory for teachers and students. After discussing some of the options, they commissioned me as the Dean of Spiritual Life to start a small group ministry on a volunteer basis, with the goal of eventually within the next few years making it mandatory for all teachers and students. A new small group ministry was initiated in week 11 (see below).

ESV translation. One final topic discussed at this elder board meeting was the issue of the school's preferred Bible translation. For many years the standard translation for the school has been the NIV. With the introduction of a new gender-neutral NIV in 2011, however, the church is exercising leadership by spearheading the transition to the ESV as the school's preferred translation. The senior pastor preaches from the ESV, and the elders would like all of the church's ministries to prefer the ESV in their curriculum, given the option. Since I teach Bible at GCS, I was able to provide background information and insights regarding the best method to make the change in the school. They commissioned me as the Dean to present a formal proposal to the elder board at their next meeting (see appendix 3).

Teacher In-service Training (Week 4)

Coinciding with the fourth week of the project was a teacher in-service meeting before the start of the new school year. I was given time to present the Theological Matrix document to the teachers (appendix 2). The administration had already seen it, but this was the first time the teachers were exposed to it. I spent some time explaining what it is and what prompted it, in an effort to accomplish the fourth goal of this project. The chart lists the doctrines from the AGC statement of faith and categorizes them as primary or secondary doctrines. Primary doctrines must be embraced (such as inerrancy of Scripture), and secondary ones must not be taught against (such as the pre-tribulation rapture). The current requirement is that teachers are not to teach against the church's doctrine, and they must wholeheartedly embrace the fairly broad statement of faith of the Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI). The Theological Matrix document takes the requirement a step further by adding a set of primary doctrines beyond the ACSI statement of faith. The chart particularly raises the bar for secondary Bible teachers (the strictest category on the chart), since they are actively teaching doctrine every day. Since it applies to all teachers, the Matrix document effectively tightens up the doctrinal stance of the school.

The teachers seemed to understand that this was just a more explicit version of what they had previously agreed to in their contract. After a few clarifying questions were answered, no major objections were stated. Following my presentation one science teacher expressed concerns, wondering if the debate over the age of the earth was ever going to make it into a document like this one. The answer is that it has been brought up, but no action has been taken, nor will it for a long time. There is a list of controversial topics that the elders may address in the future, such as the age of the earth, women's roles in the church and home, and the debate between Calvinism and Arminianism to name a few. The current matrix document does not address those topics, and the church has no official stance on any doctrine not listed in the statement of faith. The school will

not be required to embrace anything the church has not thoroughly investigated and embraced. As the church grows in its doctrinal strength, the elders will humbly shepherd the school along with all the church's ministries to cultivate growth along the same path.

In the teachers' meeting, one other disclaimer was made. All employees were hired under a contract with certain doctrinal expectations. As mentioned, this document raises the doctrinal standard, especially Bible teachers and administrators. Since they were hired under a previous contract, anyone who does not embrace a primary doctrine will not be automatically fired. The elders would view this condition as an occasion for building a discipleship relationship with that employee. The document was put in place to be a hiring guide for the future and a discipleship guide for the present. It was not introduced nor will it be used as a warrant for the firing of dissenting teachers.

GCS Student Retreat (Week 5)

Each year the GCS high school students and teachers go on a three-day retreat for the first week of school. On the second day of the retreat I explained to the students that I was working on a doctorate to help improve the church's leadership in the spiritual health of the school and was requesting their participation. The students were then asked to complete a survey about basic spiritual life issues at the school (see appendix 1). Conveniently, each grade level already had teacher advisers, and each class needed to meet as a group. The survey was given during the class meetings before they discussed their retreat activities, and the advisers supervised and collected the paperwork for me. The students had an overwhelmingly positive attitude toward helping me in this project.

School Board Meeting (Week 6)

The sixth week of my project coincided with a regularly scheduled school board meeting. They gave me some time to explain briefly my project and the elders' desire to take a more active role in the spiritual leadership of the school. At the advice of the superintendent, I did not spend time sharing the biblical basis for elder leadership. He

thought it would look as if I were trying to prove something that did not need proving, since no one disagrees that the elders are responsible for the spiritual leadership of the school. Instead, I simply explained that it was a requirement for my project to devote a chapter to providing biblical support for elder leadership, but did not go into any details. Again at the advice of the superintendent, I focused the time summarizing my findings from chapter 3.

Other school models. As with the elders, I explained how the church and school leadership could learn at least one significant principle from each school in that chapter. With each church-school I emphasized the active leadership of the church and how harmony was maintained through mutual love and respect. The churches did not micro-manage, but they were certainly vigilant over any doctrinal issues that surfaced. There were multiple connection points between church and school, and the relationship between the senior pastor and the superintendent was repeatedly mentioned as the single most important factor. The school board was encouraged by the current health of this relationship between the respective leaders of AGC and GCS—it is stronger than it has been in many years. With the independent schools, I emphasized their strong doctrinal integrity and focus on discipleship. The school board seemed to receive the information well and there were no major questions.

GCS distinctives. In addition to church-school leadership matters, I also shared a plan as Dean of Spiritual Life to follow the example of The Master's College in developing GCS Distinctives. I suggested the following four: Lordship of Christ, Sufficiency of Scripture, Discipling Relationships, and Global Mission. One of the school board members suggested we change the "Global Mission" to "Alaska and Global Mission" because we have a unique mission opportunity in our state with the Native Alaskan villages. I was thankful for the suggestion and immediately made the change, seeing the wisdom in his emphasis. Establishing official GCS Distinctives—perhaps even

using TMC's unmodified—is one of the initiatives that will require more planning to implement fully.

Theological Matrix document. Since the school board had seen the Theological Matrix document previously in draft form, I did not spend much time explaining what it was. However, this meeting was the first one since the elders had officially approved it, and the final step toward completion of this project's second goal. I submitted it to them as elder-approved, and they said they would discuss it in future meetings. In one of the first drafts of the document, many controversial topics (mentioned above) were listed on an addendum. They were relieved that those items were not addressed in the elder-approved version. Those items may reappear once the church's active leadership role is firmly established and embraced by the leadership of the school. Most, if not all, of those issues will be considered secondary doctrines for all teachers except Bible teachers.

Student Discipleship Phase (Weeks 7-14)

During this phase of the project, the attention turned directly to the students. Through the position of the Dean of Spiritual Life, the elders were able to have direct input into the spiritual life of the students through a chapel series and the introduction of a new teacher-student small group ministry. These initiatives, aimed at accomplishing the third goal of the project, were discussed in the elder board meeting of week 3 (above), and the senior pastor gave periodic counsel throughout the process.

Chapel: The Dean's Series (Weeks 7-10)

The Lordship of Christ, Part 1. The next four weeks of my project were devoted to four chapel messages related to the GCS Distinctives discussed at the board meetings. The first chapel message was entitled "The Lordship of Christ as Gospel

Slavery."[2] There are many relationship designations in the Bible for God and his people. God is our Father, Jesus our Brother. Jesus says he is our friend. The church is the bride of Christ and the body of Christ. He is the Good Shepherd and we are his sheep. So many people talk about relationship with God, and so often Christian youth today primarily think of Jesus as their best friend. They believe they are being spiritual to feel this way towards Jesus. The challenge of the message is that genuine *biblical* spirituality sees Jesus primarily as Lord—a slave master. It is not wrong to think of Jesus as your friend, but the context for that friendship is the lordship of Christ in which he demands complete obedience. Parallels were drawn between the Roman slavery system and the Bible's use of the slavery imagery. Caution was exercised to prevent them from getting confused by what is assumed about the historical American version of slavery. The message ended with an unintended heaviness, but students resonated with the message and were deeply convicted. I told them in the next week I would explain why slavery to Jesus is indeed good news. Many students told me they were eager to hear the rest of the story.

The Lordship of Christ, Part 2. The second message in the series was the follow-up to the previous week. It was intended to take the heaviness of the previous week's message and turn it into joy. Slavery to Christ is good news for two reasons: it abolishes slavery to sin (Rom 6), and ultimately because it is *Jesus* who is our slave master—and he is supremely good. Jesus redeems all the negative aspects of slavery and turns them into gospel-powered realities. His sovereign goodness abounds to his slaves: rewarding them inordinately (Matt 25:21), granting them eternal life (Rom 6:23), dying so they can be adopted into his family (Eph 1:3-6), lavishing grace upon them (Eph 1:7-8), and buying at full price even the broken slave (Matt 12:20; Deut 7:6-8; 1Cor 1:26-29). The closing application was a call to all those who are broken to surrender themselves to

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[2]Much of the material for this message came from John MacArthur, *Slave* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2010).

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the one Master who will buy them at full price—the price of his own blood—even though they may think they are beyond the reach of his grace.

Confrontation and restoration. The third chapel message transitioned from the lordship of Christ to the biblical principles of confrontation and restoration, corresponding to the proposed GCS Distinctive of Discipling Relationships. In order for there to be a biblical community at GCS, the students must learn how to restore each other when they are caught up in sin. Teachers can disciple students, but until the students learn how to daily keep each other accountable, the discipleship atmosphere of the school will not be maximized. To connect this message with the previous weeks' focus on the lordship of Christ, it began with Jesus' command to love each other (John 13:34-35, 15:11-13). One of the ways to love each other, perhaps the hardest way, is to practice the biblical principles of confrontation and restoration. Key texts were Galatians 6:1-2 and its preceding context, Matthew 18:15-17 and its context, and 1 Corinthians 5. After highlighting these passages, much time was spent on answering common objections, such as what to do if they are rejected or accused of judgmentalism. One of the most common objections is "What if I am their only connection to God?" The direct language of 1 Corinthians 5:11-13 was especially helpful to answer this question. Unrepentant sin in a community of believers is not to be tolerated, and on this truth the Bible is clear. Strategies to remain humble when leading someone through the restoration process were also addressed. After the message, quite a few students told me it was exactly what they needed to hear. Some came for individual counsel about how to navigate through their particular situation. The message was well-received, and these principles need to be woven into the fabric of the GCS environment.

Spiritual disciplines: Bible intake. The previous three chapels addressed the GCS distinctives, and this fourth and final one was devoted to something even more foundational and basic, "The Necessity for Spiritual Disciplines: Bible Intake." Where

does one get the daily strength to submit to the lordship of Christ and walk in love for one another? It is through intentional Bible intake and the practice of the other spiritual disciplines. Since GCS has many state championship banners hanging in the gym, the students understand sports metaphors. Athletics is a virtue in the culture of GCS, and the Bible abounds with athletic metaphors for spirituality. When Paul told Timothy, "Train yourself for godliness," he used the word for vigorous exercise (1 Tim 4:7-8). No team trains for the state championship by eating junk food and being lazy. Time was spent examining the relationship between discipline, desire, and direction, which in a properly proportioned whole is the basic building block for true discipleship. As an added bonus I had two students share a brief testimony of how enjoying regular Bible intake has helped them grow closer to God.

Small Group Ministry (Weeks 11-14)

The next step in my project was to work towards developing more of a discipleship community at GCS. One of the strategies developed in chapter 3 was to focus on building a small group ministry at the school. Many students were already involved in sports, drama, music, missions, etc., and there were a handful of lunch-time small groups already meeting. The current culture at GCS toward these discipleship opportunities is that they are a healthy option for spiritual growth. My desire through this project is to help shift the mindset from "optional" to "essential." The goal is for a transformation to take place such that it is the norm to be an active participant in a discipleship and accountability group.

The first week (week 11) was devoted to collecting and organizing teachers and students who wanted to be part of this new movement. I emailed all the teachers and administrators, promoting the new ministry and asking for volunteers. Nine teachers and one administrator decided to join. In a form given during Bible classes, the students were allowed to rank their top three choices for the enlisted teachers (of the same gender), and

most of the students were able to have their top choice (see appendix 4). About 70 high school students (50-50 male-female ratio) and 4 junior high boys committed. Since there was no intentional dividing of the groups by age (except the junior high group), most of them were a mixture of grades. There are advantages and disadvantages of age segregation, and in the context of GCS non-segregation was preferred. As the ministry grows it will be constantly evaluated, and it may change in the future.

According to the original plan, each group was going to go through an assigned curriculum to help the students develop consistent habits of meaningful spiritual disciplines. However, given that the Dean of Spiritual Life role is a new position and carries hardly any weight of authority, the set-curriculum idea was flatly vetoed by the teachers and students from whom I received input. Rather than imposing my plan on them, I listened to the people who were volunteering for this ministry, and decided not to enforce a curriculum. I encouraged the teachers to be keep the students in their group accountable to be faithful in the spiritual disciplines as one of the top priorities of these groups, but let them decide how they wanted to lead their groups. Some teachers asked for direction and some did not. I talked with each one about what they were planning to do, and gave some insight as to the purpose of these groups.

During the next week (week 12), only two groups were able to meet due to logistical complications. Scheduling teachers and students for lunch meetings is a daunting task. These two groups had more flexibility in their schedule and actually met before school. By the next week (week 13), all ten groups were in progress, including the one I was leading. Some students joined various groups after the meeting times were established, and one teacher even invited a student to join her group. During the fourteenth week I continued to lead a group and to speak with the teachers of the other groups to get a sense of how they were doing. All were firmly established and beginning to build the relationships intended by this new ministry initiative.

Final Phase: Closing Survey (Week 15)

In the last week of the project, I asked the elder board, the school board, teachers, and students the same questions I asked them at the beginning of the project. The purpose was to measure the effectiveness of my project in helping the church take a more active role in the spiritual oversight of the school. I sent an email to all the adult participants of the first survey, and the high school Bible teachers were gracious enough to give me class time for the students to retake the survey they took the first week of school. The results are analyzed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 5

PROJECT EVALUATION

Introduction

Contained in this chapter is a thorough evaluation of the project. The first step

is to analyze the results of the interviews and surveys in order to ascertain whether the

project fulfilled its purpose. The second step is to determine if each of the five goals

stated in chapter 1 has been accomplished. Third, an examination of the project's

strengths and weaknesses leads into the next section, which is a reflection on what I

would do differently if I were to repeat the project. The next two sections consist of a

theological and personal reflection. The final section is a view to the future regarding

what still needs to be done as the elders of Anchorage Grace Church (AGC) continue to

improve their active spiritual oversight of Grace Christian School (GCS).

Evaluation of the Project's Purpose

The stated purpose of this project was to help the elders of AGC regain active

spiritual oversight of GCS through doctrinal accountability and direct spiritual leadership.

The first step in evaluating the fulfillment of this objective is to analyze the results from

the interview and survey participants. The second step in measuring the success of this

project is to look at each of the goals specifically, which will be done in the next section.

Since there were four different groups this project affected, the analysis of the data will

correspond with each of these groups: elder board members, school board members,

teachers, and students. After the responses from each of these groups are examined, an

overall evaluation of the purpose will be made.

Elder Board Members

Although the elder board was unanimously behind this project, only 5 of the 9 contributed answers to my questions (see appendix 1). Each of the 5 had similar sentiments, so it is not unreasonable to assume that they speak for the entire elder board since it is a body that typically manifests a high degree of unity on almost all issues. Since elder leadership was the primary focus of the project, the comments in this section carry the most weight in determining its overall success.

Elder board member 1. The first elder marked measurable improvement in elder leadership during the fifteen weeks of the project. His primary measurable reference was the implementation of the Theological Matrix document (see appendix 2), which makes the elders "better postured to ensure sound theology and doctrine" (question 6). He repeatedly talked of the importance of having this tool in place, and also commented on the need to develop more tools and to continuously look to improve them (questions 3-7). With this tool, he said, the elders are better able "to engage with the school board and administrators, and to target specific change" (question 3). Another major factor he noted in the success of this project is that it gave the elders "a better understanding of the key areas [they] need to focus on. [It] has provided clarity in terms of defining the elders' role and function in spiritual oversight of the school " (question 2). He spoke highly of the success of the Dean of Spiritual Life (question 8). Commenting on the nature of change and how wary people are of it, his final remark was that he did not think "this experiment has had any negative outcomes" (question 10).

Elder board member 2. The second elder was not quite as enthusiastic, but still gave valuable insight. He did not notice as much progress as the first elder, but acknowledged there was "more unity between school and church staff" (question 8). Even though he said there was no change for questions 2-7, he did note an improvement in the school leadership's trust of the eldership (question 9).

Elder board member 3. The third elder's responses more closely resembled the first. Over the course of the fifteen weeks, he stated, "The elders have been more proactive" (question 5), and he sensed "that there is greater acceptance of elder oversight than there was previously" (question 2). Even though there is room for improvement, "there has been progress" (question 5). In response to question 3 he said that "the elders have a more direct spiritual oversight role," evidenced by the Theological Matrix document and the elder-directed Dean of Spiritual Life. In reference to the Dean, he says, "There have been some important first steps made and there is momentum for going in the right direction" (question 8). In reference to the perceived level of trust by the school leadership, he believes there is "even more movement in the right direction" and that there is a more congenial attitude between the two boards (question 9). His final comments involved the godly leadership of the elders, which has promoted a more teachable response by those being led (question 10).

Elder board member 4. The fourth elder also spoke highly of the success of the project. In answering question 2, he said that one benefit of the project is that it "increased awareness on the part of the elders as to their responsibility." He spoke of the "hands-off" approach the church had taken over the past ten to fifteen years, mainly because enrollment was high, students and parents seemed happy, and everything seemed to be functioning acceptably. With this project he believes the elders are "getting more hands on," and are beginning to define and implement true spiritual leadership. As measurables in their leadership progress, he cites the Theological Matrix document and the role of the Dean of Spiritual Life, both of which give the elders a direct hand in the strategic spiritual leadership of the school. For questions 3 and 4, "heightened awareness" is the key change that happened over the course of the project. The elders "were not totally aware of what they should be doing." Everybody acknowledged the bylaws clearly stated that the elder board has spiritual oversight, but the elders have never defined what

that meant. He said this project has made some significant improvements in that regard. He did want to see more elder oversight of the school's budget, and there was no change over the course of the project. It was not in the design of the project, however, to address such issues, but to set the elders up as active spiritual leaders who will be in a position to address such issues in the future.

In his answer to question 6, he said that the church has always supported the school wholeheartedly both in word and deed. For example, the first half of the current facility was completely funded by the church, and the church has financially supported the school occasionally in years past when there has been a budget shortfall. As a result of the project, he said the elders are "leading much better" regarding spiritual oversight and "the Matrix is huge [in defining] who we are doctrinally and theologically." It has forced people to ask themselves what they believe about certain doctrines, which in itself promotes doctrinal integrity (question 7). His desire for the Dean of Spiritual Life was threefold: to oversee and enhance the chapel ministry, to strategically reach the students who are not "fired up" in their relationship with God, and to ensure consistent doctrinal integrity and depth throughout the Bible curriculum (question 8). By the end of the project, he said "we have made strides on all of these," and is confident that progress will continue.

He had profound insight regarding the school leadership's (school board, administration, teachers) trust level of the elder board (question 9). He did not believe there was mistrust. He believed the school leadership has the mentality, "Everyone is happy, so why do we need you?" He attributed this sentiment to the hands-off approach of the past, and had the sense that the school board was wondering what the elders were up to. By the completion of the fifteen weeks, he did not sense a change in this area. He believes there is still confusion, and attributes it to the elder board "not being clear." At the project commencement, he had no fear of failure, but assumed "as the elders figure [spiritual leadership] out that there would be some push back" (question 10). He said they

were "in it for the long-haul" and would accomplish the transition relationally even though "it will take longer than we would like." After the project he commented, "Change comes hard." He did sense some pushback, "largely due to misunderstanding the relationship," which he previously owned as the responsibility of the elder board.

Elder board member 5. The fifth elder was able to answer the questions only before the project and not after, but his assessment of the situation and his encouragement toward the task were valuable. He had a strong understanding of the history of the relationship between the two institutions, and provided important insights. He gave his full support to the project and thought it would be instrumental to effect the desired changes. Since he moved to another state after the beginning of the project, he was not able to comment on its progress. However, he did say that he and the fourth elder, above, were like-minded regarding such issues, and that his answers would in all practicality be the same.

Elder board summary. Before the project began, the elder board understood the weight of responsibility to exercise more spiritual oversight of the school, but was unclear on exactly how it would look or how to implement it effectively and winsomely. As stated repeatedly above, this project has helped them not only clarify in their own minds what direct elder leadership should look like, but it also has given them specific steps for a successful transition. Another success is that doctrinal accountability is being implemented through the Theological Matrix document and the Dean of Spiritual Life. According to the elder input received, this project fulfilled its purpose by helping them take significant steps of active spiritual leadership.

School Board Members

The second group of people this project addressed was the school board members. Five of the 13 board members participated in the project by completing the

questionnaire (see appendix 1) at the beginning of the project, but only 4 filled it out at the end. As a board, they have direct interaction with the elder board, so they have a valuable perspective on any changes in elder leadership. Since the increase in church leadership was the church's initiative, the changes will naturally be more difficult for the school board members to embrace.

School board member 1. The first school board member had a favorable view of the elder leadership throughout the project. He[1] appreciated the policies and procedures that have been "effective to accomplish their mission of Christian education" (question 3). He did comment during week 1 that the elders needed to communicate better "when there is dissatisfaction with the school" (question 4). As of week 15, he responded that the communication was "good," and that steps had been taken "that promise to improve in-step leadership" (question 4). He admitted some fear or concern as the elders take a more active role, but then clarified, "Only fear of the unknown. Change is usually difficult even when it is good" (question 7). In the post-project questionnaire, he noted that not all the teachers supported the idea of the Theological Matrix document, and at least one teacher considered resigning because of it. Regarding the Dean of Spiritual Life, before the project he said that "the elders will have more spiritual oversight over the school" (question 10). After the project he wisely noted that the role of the Dean needs to be "more clearly defined and communicated to both church and school staff," and that "no one is sure of what he will really do or where the lines of authority and responsibility will lie" (question 10). His concern is valid and is being addressed, though it is outside of the scope of the project to address here.

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[1]Although not all members of the school board are male, I have used the generic he in the following paragraphs in order to maintain confidentiality. In their responses, school board members are speaking as individuals, not on behalf of the school board.

School board member 2. In the pre-project questionnaire, the second school board member vaguely referenced the school bylaws to answer the question about the elder board's role, and according to his understanding it was the role of the school board to lead the school (question 2). In the post-project questionnaire for the same question, in reference to the elders' initiative to adopt the ESV as the preferred Bible translation, he commented that the school board did not find the ESV to offer suitable age-specific editions for younger children and did not agree that it should be adopted. From the beginning of the project to the end, he noticed in the elders a desire for a stronger role in the leadership and decision-making process of the school (question 3). Whether this change was positive or negative could not be discerned from the answer given. No comments were given as to how the elders could improve their leadership (question 4), but in the post-project answer, he acknowledged that "a constructive relationship with AGC is vital to the health and function of GCS." This relationship is defined in the bylaws, which, in his understanding, "give AGC spiritual oversight of the school to support the school board in their assigned task of leading the school" (question 4).

School board member 3. The third school board member said the elders should have "a presence at the school and school functions so they are known throughout the school. Then it is much easier for them to lead by example" (question 1). He did not notice a difference in elder presence by the end of the fifteen weeks. The general sense from this school board member is that the elder board has not actively led the school for some time, and they have grown "stagnant and non-productive with the school" (question 3). He did not notice a change during the project. Regarding the spiritual life of the school, he said, "I truly see a more positive atmosphere amongst fellow students. I sense they have the freedom to express who they are in Christ without [negative] peer pressure" (question 5). He also noticed "more camaraderie amongst the students" (question 6). He had a favorable view of the elders taking on a more active role, "as long as the elders'

position does not supercede what the school board or school administration is trying to achieve within the school. Their role should be to come alongside the school and support the school in ways the school would like to see" (question 7). There was also concern in the answer to this question about showing sensitivity to the other denominations represented by students at the school. By the end of the project, these concerns had not been realized. Regarding the Dean of Spiritual Life, at the beginning of the project he had the view that the position would be unnecessary in this context, but by the end of the project was "more open to this position, especially if [he] is building relations within the school, as well as the church" (question 10).

School board member 4. In the pre-project questionnaire, the fourth school board member said the elder leadership was "generally adequate" and "fairly passive, . . . but clearly a friend [of the school]" (question 3). By the end of the project, he noted "no change in their role, except for their participation in this project" (question 2). He also believes the elder board "has an increased appreciation and respect for the school, perhaps enhanced because of this project" (question 3). Although he would like to see more church-school joint board meetings (question 4), it was not within the scope of this project to arrange those meetings. In response to his initial desire for the spiritual life of the students—genuine, growing Christians in an environment that embrace those who pursue Christ wholeheartedly—he mentioned the chapels and small group ministry that were part of this project in his description of the progress he had observed (question 5).

When questioned about fears or concerns in question 7, this school board member said he does not have such fears because of the men who are elders, whom he believes do not want to "impose themselves on the school." His only concern was regarding the other churches represented: "We need to respect and cultivate those church relationships as well." At the completion of the project, he believed the elder board's "engagement has been healthy and respectful." When asked about the Dean of Spiritual

Life, his initial comments were positive as long as it would be a person who would be the "right fit." After the fifteen weeks, he said he "was glad it would be Leo Masters and [he has] been impressed with the caliber of his leadership so far" (question 10). He did not agree with the "awkward" way the ESV proposal was handled, and that the discussion could have been "engaged in more constructively and interactively," but it was not a major deal for him (question 10).

School board summary. As expected, the school board was not as enthusiastic about the elders taking on a more active role. All comments were respectful and each board member believed the best of the elders, but there was not a sense of embracing the change. The general sentiment is that they do not see a need, and they have a general fear of micro-managing and offending students and families from other denominations. Although it appears they still do not understand why the elders feel the need to be more involved, their stated fears and concerns did not come to fruition during the project. Even though the change was not embraced fully, the response of the school board members supports the conclusion that they are aware of changes being made in that the elders are being more active in their spiritual oversight. This awareness points to the fulfillment of the project's purpose.

Teachers

Teachers comprised the third group of people to contribute to this project. Of the 12 teachers I asked for feedback, 4 filled out the questionnaire (see appendix 1). Although the teachers typically have virtually no contact with the elders, their opinions are important because they are on the front lines of discipleship with the students and have a unique perspective worthy of consideration.

Teacher 1. The first teacher had an extremely positive outlook toward increased elder involvement. In the pre-project questionnaire, he[2] said the elders should "hold teachers and staff accountable, especially the Bible department, pray, and ensure opportunities for discipleship among students" (question 2), but was "unaware of their involvement in spiritual oversight" (question 3). In his post-project answers, he said the Theological Matrix "is a start to providing spiritual oversight for the school," stating the importance for all staff to be in agreement with the doctrines of the church. He also appreciated that the elders realized there was a need for more spiritual influence, evidenced by their hiring a Dean of Spiritual Life to devote time an energy to initiatives like the new small group ministry and the chapel series. He understood both the Theological Matrix and the Dean role as a change brought about by more church involvement.

At the beginning of this project, this teacher said the elders' leadership could be improved through "their vision and interaction with key staff *communicated* with [the rest of the] staff" (question 4, emphasis added). The presentation of the Theological Matrix during teacher in-service was mentioned as a start. Regarding environmental changes of the spiritual life at GCS, he pointed to the new small group ministry as a success, and one factor that has contributed to him seeing changes in the culture at GCS (question 5). When asked about fears or concerns, he initially replied, "I have placed myself under their authority by teaching here, so I welcome and need their leadership" (question 7). There were no added concerns by the end of week 15. His opinion of the church hiring a Dean of Spiritual Life for the school is that it was "long overdue" (question 10). He still agreed at the end of the project.

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[2]As with the school board members, I have used the generic he for all teachers for the sake of confidentiality.

Teacher 2. The second teacher also had a positive view of church involvement, although not as enthusiastic as the first teacher. At the beginning of the project he had a firm understanding of the elder board's role as spiritual overseers of the vision and mission of the school (question 2), had a highly favorable impression of their leadership (question 3), and would like them to have a deeper connection with the teachers, perhaps by periodically attending or leading the weekly faculty devotion meeting (question 4). By the end of the fifteen weeks, he did not notice a change in their leadership, but he was one of the teachers to start a small group under the initiative of the elder board's Dean of Spiritual Life. Perhaps it was not clearly communicated how this new ministry was a direct result of elder input.

This teacher's initial fear was that the elders might try "to micro-manage the classroom and curriculum instead of being confident in the people they hired to do the job," and that they might slip into the temptation to have an "ivory-tower approach to the classroom and curriculum," or make decisions without faculty input (question 7). During the course of the fifteen weeks, he said that none of his fears were realized. When asked about the Dean of Spiritual Life, initially there were more questions given than answers—appropriately so, since the role is in the process of being defined and refined— but by the end of the project he was grateful for me "taking the lead on arranging small groups and teaching in chapel." He continued, "The students and faculty have benefited from both!" (question 10).

Teacher 3. The third teacher, though respectful, did not share the same positive thoughts about the elders taking a more active role in spiritual oversight. He believed their role should be "a minimal one, limited to enforcing the GCS statement of faith." In his view, with so many Spirit-filled people devoted to the Lord, "to insist upon a more rigid doctrinal approach would be to damage the work of the Holy Spirit at Grace" (question 2). There was no perceived change in their role by the end of the

project. He had a "mixed" impression of their leadership, with an understanding of their spiritual oversight but disappointment by some of their past decisions which give the impression "more of a need to control than to nurture" (question 3). The primary objection to more church involvement, repeated in both answers above as well as in question 7 about fears, is that "the elders are not educators." He appreciated the changes I have made, but did not see any changes in the elder board. Again, as with the previous teacher, perhaps it was not communicated clearly enough that the changes I made were a result of changes in the board.

In the spiritual life of the student body this teacher did notice a change over the course of the fifteen weeks. He specifically referenced the small group ministry and the chapels, leading to the conclusion, "The atmosphere is more Christ-centered! . . . I see a heightened sensitivity to the subtleties of sin and love of righteousness" (question 5). He is one of the teachers who started a new small group as a result of this project (question 8). Although fears exist since the elders are not educators, the fears have not been realized since the elders were not perceived to be getting involved in the curriculum decisions (question 7). The initial response to the church hiring a Dean of Spiritual Life was dependent on why he was hired. If the purpose was to "strengthen students in drawing closer to the Lord," then he was firmly supportive. However, if the purpose was for him to be an instrument of control, then he opposed it. After the fifteen weeks, he still stood by his "if" statements, but said none of the negatives happened, and there had been many positives (question 10).

Teacher 4. The fourth teacher had an unfavorable impression of the church-school relationship, but did not accuse the elders. He understood the elders' role to be basic spiritual oversight (question 2), but said they were "transparent and silent to me as a teacher" (question 3). No change in the elder board was observed over the course of the fifteen weeks, but he did notice an attitude improvement with the church workers

(probably meaning custodial staff) which, he said, "may be a result of the direction of church leadership" (question 3). Regarding the overall spiritual life at GCS, at the end of the fifteen weeks he commented, "The progress primarily appears to be recognition that we need to do better, rather than a true heart change" (question 5). Although this may seem like a negative statement at first glance, it is actually quite encouraging. Admitting a need for change is often the most difficult step to "true heart change." The negativity expressed by this teacher was not directed at the elder board, but at the friction caused by the shared use of the facilities between church and school. In a conversation prior to the project, he actually expressed hope that more church involvement would bring the desired harmony. As the elders take on a more active role, they will be better suited to address the concerns this teacher has.

According to this teacher, what hinders spiritual growth at GCS were "poor relationships within school and between church and school, focus on teaching content rather than equal focus on relationships, and difficult work environments" (question 6). "Very little change" was noticed at the end of the fifteen weeks, however, in the context of this project, only little changes were possible. Massive changes were not immediately attainable, but are part of the long-term goal not measurable for this project. This teacher did start a small group as part of the project, but his group had a difficult time with consistency, through no fault of his own.

Teacher summary. Teacher input represented the full spectrum of opinions, from giving enthusiastic support to having major concerns. These teachers did sense spiritual growth this year, at least some of which they attributed to the chapels and small group ministry that were part of this project. These initiatives were received with full support, even though they were not completely understood to be directed by the spiritual leading of the elders. Outside of this project the teachers did not seem to be aware of how the elders are leading the school, but this project has given measurable entities of spiritual

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growth that the teachers noticed, though not necessarily attributed to elder leadership. From the teacher feedback, it can be ascertained that the project did complete its purpose, but that elder involvement was not sufficiently communicated.

Students

The student survey was different than the questionnaires used for the other participants. Since there were so many students, open-ended questions would have been impossible to synthesize in a reasonable amount of time. Instead, a survey was given with multiple choice questions, most of which were on a five-point Likert scale (see appendix 1). In the following paragraphs, I will highlight certain questions that contribute noteworthy information regarding the spiritual life of the school, giving special attention to those that had a statistically significant change between the two surveys. The results to each question are included in appendix 1 after the blank student survey form. Even though the mean is not the best measure of central tendency for a Likert-style survey, it is still included as a helpful indicator to demonstrate how the student body leans on any given question. The mode, commonly given as the best measure of central tendency in this type of survey, is easily determined by looking at which answer had the highest percent in the table. To test for statistical significance between the pre-project survey and the post-project survey, I used a chi-squared test and included the p-value for each question in the upper left cell of each chart. For the pre-project survey, 192 students were surveyed, and the post-project survey included 188 students.

Question 1. The first question was the only free-response question, and it was graded according to the students' understanding of biblical spirituality. A correct answer is one that complied with the definition of biblical spirituality given in chapter 1, "the biblical process of being conformed inwardly and outwardly to the character of Christ."[3]

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[3] Donald S. Whitney, "Christian Life FAQ" [on-line]; accessed 24 April 2011; available from http:// biblicalspirituality.org/resources/christian-life-faq.

A correct answer had both a definition of spirituality and a reference to it being defined according to the Bible. A close answer, though technically incorrect, was a good answer for one who was not aware of the level of specificity required for a correct answer. A typical answer in this category would be, "Wholeheartedly seeking God." Though true, it is not complete, because many people attempt to seek God in ways that are not biblical, or do not seek the God of the Bible. An incorrect answer was either blank or completely missed the point. "Believing in God" and "Having a relationship with God" were common answers that were considered incorrect.

During each of the four chapel messages, I included a brief discussion of what biblical spirituality is. For example, in the first two messages on the lordship of Christ, I mentioned how so many people use the phrase, "relationship with God," but few realize that the relationship to Jesus as Lord means that we are his slaves. As a teacher, I most often hear students define their spirituality in terms of Jesus being their best friend. While not incorrect, they use one verse to define their relationship (John 15:14-15), instead of the 700 references to Jesus as Lord. The third message was on the restoration of a brother or sister caught in sin (Gal 6:1). There is much in the preceding context about what it biblically means to be spiritual, and part of that definition is restoring those who stray. Loving one's neighbor needs to be biblically defined, not sentimentalized to mean that anything they do is acceptable lest one be accused of judgmentalism. The fourth chapel message was on the importance of Bible intake for spiritual health, again defining spirituality according to the Bible.

Before these chapel messages, 34 percent answered correctly. At the end of the fifteen weeks, 54 percent answered correctly. This difference translates into 36 more students answering correctly, a 59 percent increase. The conclusion can be drawn that the series of chapel messages significantly increased student understanding of biblical spirituality ($p = 0.0004$).

Question 3. Though there was not a statistical difference between the two surveys, it is an interesting fact to learn that approximately half of the students do not attend a youth group at their church. This result warrants further investigation to understand the dynamics of the GCS student body's relation to their home churches.

Question 4. At the beginning of the project, 45 percent of the students were involved in a weekly Bible study or fellowship group outside of their youth group meeting. By the end of the project that number rose to 65 percent, a statistically significant 44 percent increase. For the launch of the small group ministry, seventy students signed up. Unfortunately, no data was taken to determine whether they were previously in a discipleship group.

Question 5. Even though I referenced church involvement through my role as Dean of Spiritual Life in each chapel and at the induction of the small group ministry, there was no statistical difference in the student body's opinion of it. Students are the ones who would naturally feel the church's active spiritual leadership the least, so this result is not surprising, nor does it take away from the effectiveness of this project.

Question 10. Although the change is not statistically significant, it is interesting to note that the high score changed from "moderately" to "very" regarding the question about the level of willingness to meet during the school day in a discipleship group. As mentioned previously, seventy students joined the small group ministry, but it was not measured how many of them were in other discipleship groups. The percent of students who were "extremely" willing dropped from 21 percent to 16 percent. A reasonable explanation is that during retreat, before school starts, students under-estimate their schedule and their work load. Of the ten fewer students who did not answer "extremely," eight of them were seniors. Perhaps they underestimated the task of applying for colleges and scholarships.

Question 12. More students agreed that adult leadership in a small group was important. Not only was the difference statistically significant (p=0.032), but the high score also moved from "moderately" to "very." GCS has a history of students starting groups that fizzle out fairly quickly. With seventy students consistently meeting in teacher-led small groups, perhaps they are beginning to see the need for more accountability in leadership. It shows growth in the student body that they realize the importance of a mentoring relationship.

Questions 13-14. Even though the student body had a favorable view of both the administration and teachers encouraging them in their walk with Christ, both of these questions had a significant increase. The teachers gained points in both the "very" and "extremely" category, and the administration moved over a column from "moderately" to "very." Though it is impossible to determine how much of this increase came from the project, it is encouraging to see that a strength of the school grew even stronger. Nine teachers and one administrator started new small groups, so it is reasonable to conclude that this project had a role in the increase.

Questions 15-16. Similar to the previous two questions, there was a difference in how students viewed peer-to-peer discipleship. Even though most students marked "moderately" both for how much other students encouraged them and how much they encouraged other students, there was a statistically significant shift in the positive direction. Students perceived that they were encouraging others more, and that they were being encouraged by other students more than they were at the beginning of the school year. Through looking at the numbers in the charts alone it may not be easy to tell that there was much of a change. This case is an example of how looking at the mean helps visualize that there was a shift to the right in the scale for both questions.

Questions 17-18. These two questions relate to how those who pursue Christ wholeheartedly are perceived. Sometimes those who are most active are mildly persecuted because they stand out spiritually. To varying degrees each year it has been a major weakness of the group dynamic of the school. These two questions seem to contradict each other. Question 17 indicates that those who actively pursue Christ are less judged, yet question 18 shows that students see themselves as being more judgmental toward others. Both of these questions had statistically significant changes. Perhaps since more people were pursuing Christ, it gave them more people to judge. Maybe because students were pursuing Christ more, they were more sensitive to their own pride, and had to mark themselves down in the post-project survey. It could be that as students exert more spiritual effort, there enters an unholy competition in the spiritual realm. An observation not readily apparent from the chart is that only 96 percent of the students answered this question in the pre-project survey, whereas 100 percent answered it in the second one. If those 4 percent would have been negative responses, that could also contribute to the explanation of this apparent anomaly.

Questions 19-20. Although both of these questions had p-values indicating statistically significant changes, it is again difficult to interpret the findings. Most students thought it would be "very" valuable to be in a discipleship group with students in their own grade, and "moderately" valuable to be in a discipleship group with students in grades 7-12. Both of these questions have the potential to be confusing. The students may have thought I was asking which they would rather have. I should have asked clarifying questions surrounding these two, or reworded them to be more clear. A better question would have been, "Would you rather be in a group of students your own age, or with students of grades 7-12?" I also should have included a question about grades 9-12. Junior high students are unfortunately not always welcome around many high school students. Interestingly, looking at the results of these questions by grade level (not in the

appendix), it appears as though the twelfth grade students are more likely to want to meet with younger students. For example, in the post-project survey 34 percent of them were "very" likely, whereas the rest of the group was at 19 percent.

Questions 21-22. Although there was not a significant difference in the students' "moderate" willingness to open up to students older than themselves, there was a shift away from willingness to open up to students who are younger. As with the previous set of data, the seniors remained "very" willing to open up to younger grades, but the younger grades were less willing to open up to grades younger than themselves. The seniors remained at 38 percent in the "very" willing category for both surveys, even though some in their "moderately" category shifted toward not as willing. The rest of the classes without the seniors had 14 percent in the "very" category. The juniors had 17 percent in the "very" category, and increased from 7 percent to 17 percent in the "extremely" category. The upper classes are more willing to open up to the younger classes, although the underclassmen are not quite ready to reach back into junior high. An obvious discipleship strategy emerges from this information. Instead of focusing too much energy getting the ninth and tenth graders to reach out to the junior high, it would be best to give them time to mature before asking them to do so. The juniors and seniors can reach out to younger students who are still their peers in high school. The difference between grades 11 and 10 is far less significant than between 9 and 8.

Student summary. The most obvious factor showing that this project fulfilled its purpose is the number of students who joined the small group ministry. Although it was not effectively communicated that it was due to increased church involvement, there was a 44 percent increase in the number of students attending a small group discipleship group. There was also a significant increase in the students' understanding of how important adult mentoring is for such groups, and the adult leaders on campus were perceived to be more actively encouraging them in their walk with God during the course

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of the project. The perception of students encouraging other students increased during this time as well. The students also significantly increased in their understanding of biblical spirituality as a result of the chapel messages, for which I received much positive feedback from students. Due to the responses in the student surveys, one can conclude that church involvement was implemented effectively in the school through the Dean of Spiritual Life, and that the school benefited from increased elder oversight.

Purpose Evaluation: Concluding Remarks

Having examined all the input from the above participants, I conclude that the project fulfilled its purpose. Doctrinal accountability has been increased through the Theological Matrix document, and direct spiritual oversight was achieved through the role of the Dean. Though not always fully embraced or even adequately communicated, the elders did become more active in their spiritual oversight and have made concrete changes that have brought about measurable change.

Evaluation of the Project's Goals

Restated here as in chapter 1, the overarching objective of this project was to transform the relationship between Anchorage Grace Church and Grace Christian School such that the elders have active spiritual oversight of the school, which will make both organizations healthier in their pursuit and display of the glory of God. The following five goals were developed as specific markers to measure the degree of accomplishment.

Goal 1: Elder Affirmation

The first goal was to affirm the elders in their responsibility to have active spiritual oversight of the school. The initial avenue to directly accomplish this goal was in the August, 2011, elder meeting during week 3 of my project and referenced in chapter 4. Chapter 2 of this project was devoted to the biblical basis for elder oversight and gave a thorough treatment to what active spiritual leadership is. Sharing this information with

them was meant to affirm them in their role. The information in chapter 3 gave them some specific ideas to consider as they form their own strategy to exercise more active spiritual leadership. Though this elder meeting was one of the first actions of this project, the entire project was an outflow of this first goal. A rehearsal of the elder comments above will substantiate that the elders were indeed affirmed in their role, not solely due to this initial meeting, but due to the entire project.

Although this goal was aimed directly at the elders, I had originally intended to affirm them publicly in other settings as well. The original plan was to share the information from chapter 2 in both the teacher in-service meeting (week 4) and the school board meeting (week 6), but I was not given the necessary time in either meeting to do so. In addition, as mentioned in chapter 4, the superintendent advised against it since elder oversight is already assumed by all parties. Though I agree it is assumed, I am not convinced it is embraced, especially after the comments by some of the school board members and teachers. The senior pastor commented that elder leadership was indirectly affirmed in the school board meeting when I spoke of active spiritual oversight involving the Theological Matrix document and as I shared insights from other church-school partnerships. He said the air was heavy in the room when I was talking so freely about specifics of elder oversight, even though I was not directly affirming it. Primarily because this goal was aimed directly at the elders and because of the nature of their feedback regarding the project as a whole, I conclude that the first goal was met.

Goal 2: Theological Matrix

The second goal was to create and implement a Theological Matrix document describing primary and secondary doctrines, and to have it be a grid for the theological integrity of the school. As explained in chapter 4, this document was approved at the elder meeting during week 3, and officially presented at the August school board meeting during week 6 (see appendix 2). From personal conversations since the completion of the

project I have learned that there are some teachers who rejoice that the school is gaining some theological traction, and there are some who dislike that the school is tightening its doctrinal stance. Opinions will vary as to how doctrinally precise the school should be, but this document will nevertheless help the school be at least as consistent as its sponsor church. Even though it happened after the fifteen weeks of this project, the fact that the Theological Matrix document was incorporated into the teacher contracts for the 2012-13 school year is a firm indication that this goal has been accomplished.

Goal 3: Student Discipleship

The third goal was to utilize the Dean of Spiritual Life's role to work toward developing a more effective discipleship and mentoring culture at the school. The most easily measurable factor regarding this goal was the establishment of the new small group ministry, in which 70 students and 10 school employees (9 teachers and 1 administrator) were in a new small group because of this project. It gave students an avenue for discipleship relationships that previously did not exist. Teachers opened themselves up to being more intentional mentors of their students. So often discipleship opportunities are passed by because nobody has the time and energy to organize and promote them. Due to the church involvement through the Dean, this obstacle was overcome.

The teachers surveyed mentioned that the chapel messages I delivered were effective tools to enhance the spiritual atmosphere of the school. Their comments provided measurable documentation that the chapels contributed to accomplishing the third goal. Undocumented were the many conversations I had with students about the content of those chapels and how they applied to life. My Bible classes gave me strong feedback when we discussed the messages in class, and a few students approached me for advice on how to confront and restore wayward friends. Many other hallway conversations with various students and teachers also gave the strong impression that God used these messages to make an impact in the spiritual environment of the school.

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Through the small group ministry and the chapel messages, the third goal was accomplished.

Goal 4: Teacher Understanding

    The fourth goal was to help the faculty and staff understand the biblical foundation for the elders having spiritual oversight of its ministries, in order to minimize the fears and mistrust they may have in the transition process. During week 4 of my project I addressed the teachers, explaining the Theological Matrix document (appendix 2). Due to the tight schedule of the teacher in-service, I was not able to adequately address the foundation of elder responsibility. I was clear that it was a church initiative, and was sensitive to the fact that not all teachers support increased church involvement. I had discussions with some of the teachers after my presentation as to the specifics of the document, but did not adequately address the foundation of elder leadership. One teacher who initially reacted against it later apologized to me and admitted that overreaction is sometimes his response because of fear. He encouraged me that those fears, though perhaps warranted to some degree, were not realized.

    This goal was the most difficult to measure, since I only had one opportunity to address all the teachers publicly. For the teachers who embrace the transition, no further explanation was needed, and this goal was adequately accomplished during my presentation. For those who opposed the transition, it is doubtful whether going through chapter 2 would have helped. It would probably take more discussion and more time to convince those teachers. For those in the middle who are unconvinced either way, what I said at the meeting served at least as an introduction to the concept of more active elder leadership and increased doctrinal accountability. Because of the limited attention it received, this goal was only partially met. A before and after survey of all the teachers would have been a useful tool to provide a more precise measurement.

Goal 5: Personal Growth

The fifth goal was a personal one both to strengthen my ability to facilitate church leadership of the school, and to improve my skill at shepherding youth at the organizational level. The primary tool to measure this goal was my interaction with the senior pastor before, during, and after the project. He is the one who encouraged me to take on the breadth and weight of this project, walked with me through many of the details before and during, and observed me implementing the initiatives of the project. He was well-suited to provide insights into the accomplishment of my personal goal. The following comments come from a post-project debrief session with the senior pastor.

The first aspect of my personal goal was mainly behind the scenes, interacting with both boards and the teachers. As the pastor observed, before this project I had not interacted at that level before. I started with no experience, yet had "high marks" and grew in the areas of clearly presenting material with excellence, providing effective documentation during meetings, and efficiently accomplishing tasks. He also said that I was "spiritually gifted as one who can discern the context of my audience." For example, when addressing the school board about elder board initiatives, my demeanor would be appropriately different than when discussing those same initiatives with the elder board.

In addition, when I submitted the elder-approved Theological Matrix document for the approval of the school board, he said I was "able to take the threat out of the document . . . [and] to present it without lording it over them." He understood that the document brings a new level of applied doctrine, and that "my sensitivity was helpful." He told me I "created a natural bridge from the church's doctrinal statement to its application [in the document]." According to the pastor's perception and my own, there was significant growth in my ability to facilitate church leadership of the school.

To measure whether I accomplished the second aspect of my personal goal—to improve my skill at shepherding youth at the organizational level—the pastor pointed to the chapel series and the new small group ministry. He agreed that the messages

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coincided with the GCS Distinctives discussed in chapter 3. He observed one full message, and part of another. His observation that the message on the lordship of Christ was simple and direct, with "a sober tone establishing the authority of Christ for the school." He said that I "comfortably and naturally gave an authoritative message that was well-received."

The senior pastor picked up on my strategy that the last two messages (on restoration and on spiritual disciplines) provided the context for initiating the small group ministry. Teachers who were present at the chapels were also shepherded during these messages regarding some essentials of community interaction. Correspondence to teachers via email and personal conversations, promoting the ministry to students in chapels and in Bible classes, and organizing the teachers and students into small groups were evidences that I was growing at this level. The teachers responded extremely well to having these mentor groups. Students I spoke with also were appreciative.

The pastor noticed a deficit. Though I followed up with most of the small group leaders informally and relationally, I did not connect with all of them on a regular basis. One received no follow up. To improve my leadership even more, the pastor recommended a more formal system to monitor the progress of the groups. It could still be conversational and relational, but there needs to be consistent accountability. Although the teachers wanted to be free of a curriculum requirement, another area of growth for the future is to provide them with more tools to lead their groups. Both teachers and students flatly (and respectfully) rejected my initial plan to have a set curriculum. My strategy was to listen to their hearts and give them the freedom to lead as they see fit. Given all of the above, I agree with the senior pastor that my fifth goal was effectively accomplished.

Strengths of the Project

In addition to the information gained from the interviews and surveys, there are a number of other strengths of this project. The first is that it addresses a major area of

weakness in both the church regarding spiritual leadership and the school regarding doctrinal strength. Ever since 1997, the school and church have been drifting apart, and this project was a way for the elders to take specific steps to be more active in their leadership. The project had the full support of the elder board, including the senior pastor. They were extremely grateful for the effort and effectiveness of this project.

Another strength, related to the first, was the unity of the elders and their resolve to more actively fulfill their responsibility to lead the school. They exercised deep wisdom as they navigated the potentially explosive transition, due to the political nature of organizational leadership. They were patient and understood the complexities of the situation, yet were persistent in taking steps to reclaim spiritual leadership. Much of the success of this project has hinged on the humility and godly leadership of the elders.

The third strength involves the relationship between the senior pastor and the superintendent. As emphasized in chapter 3, this relationship is the single most important factor in the success of the church-school dynamic. The senior pastor's skill in building relationships and the superintendent's extreme humility have combined to form a strong, mutual bond. This factor is not only a strength, but also a determining factor as the project would have either been impossible or destructive without this linchpin in place. The previous senior pastors in recent history have either not fully understood the church-school dynamic, or did not want to deal with it—which was a major factor contributing to the need for this project. To the current senior pastor's credit, he also has a positive relationship with the school board members. They are not eager for the kind of leadership the elders want to provide, but they do understand to some degree that the elders bear the primary responsibility for the spiritual life of the school. The pastor's relational style has won the respect of the school leadership.

Another strength is the unique position in which God has placed me in order to accomplish what this project requires. I had been working at the school for seven years when the project started, led dozens of mission trips with students and teachers, spoke in

chapels, attended countless sporting events, and had poured my life into the students and families of this ministry. Many fears were alleviated because of my involvement in the process, since I had developed a degree of trust and camaraderie within the school leadership. I appreciated the favorable attitude toward me, even from people who disagreed with the direction the church leadership is going. People who were doctrinally like-minded were happy with me helping the church increase involvement in the spiritual and doctrinal life of the school. The superintendent and I also have a strong relationship, and I trust him completely as the leader of the school. Similarly, students were supportive of me in this project, specifically in taking the time to fill out the surveys, and with their positive response to my chapel series. They are not aware of the issues behind the scenes involving doctrine and leadership, but they appreciated the message of biblical spirituality that I brought in the chapels.

The final strength of this project is that it addresses a common issue among church-schools. As I was doing my research, it was extremely helpful to speak with other church and school leaders throughout the country, and my hope is that this project will help others as they seek to grow. I have not yet discovered the perfect model that will fit all contexts, but as leaders work together and collaborate, each church-school can find the best model that works within its own context.

Weaknesses of the Project

Perhaps the most significant weakness of this project is that it had to be conducted within the limitations of organizational change. Such change is often slow and dangerous. Interacting with two separate boards prevents efficiency in accomplishing objectives, and many fears accompany change, especially when people are happy with the status quo. Not everyone agrees that the church should be more active in the spiritual oversight of the school. Potential for misunderstanding and disagreement abounds when one group attempts to take on a more active role in leading the other. Because it involved

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so many people, including elders, pastors, school board members, administrators, teachers, and students, there was much potential for conflict. Because of the size of the organizations involved and the slow progress, measurement of the overall project's effectiveness is difficult. There are measurable factors which support the success of this project, such as the doctrinal matrix document, the small group ministry and chapel messages, and positive comments from some of the participants. However, the long-term effects of a fifteen-week project of this nature are impossible to predict with certainty.

Related to the first weakness was the limited discussion and input received from the school board throughout the course of the project. Some of the school board members commented that they would have liked to have been more involved in the process of hiring the Dean of Spiritual Life, for example. Though none objected to the church's choice, they just wanted to be involved in the process. However, due to the fact that this was a church-driven project, and there were significant time constraints in effect, some of these conditions were unavoidable. In addition, feedback from both boards indicated they would like to see changes that were outside the scope of this project, which may have reflected negatively upon it. For example, better communication between the boards is a legitimate concern that would greatly help the church lead the school, but scheduling meetings between the boards is outside of my ability to influence.

The third most noticeable weakness was the effect of the busyness of the adult participants (and non-participants). A very small number of people I asked to answer questions were willing to make the time. My first assumption is that they were just too busy. It is possible that some did not approve of increased elder leadership and did not participate for that reason. Since they did not answer the questions, I cannot know their motives. I do know that the elders were fully behind the project, yet not all of them participated, either. Even though there was minimal participation among the adult leaders, there was still enough to adequately measure the project's effectiveness within the fifteen-week timeframe.

Although the general principles of this project will be useful and repeatable in other contexts, a fourth weakness in that regard arises. There were many specifics of this project that will likely not be repeatable elsewhere. For example, to reproduce the exact timing of elder board and school board meetings coinciding with the beginning of the project, as well as the four chapel messages, might not be possible in otherwise similar settings. However, the basic format will be reproducible. Another factor impossible to artificially manufacture is the relationship between the senior pastor and superintendent. If that relationship was not strong, this project would have been foolish to attempt. If the elder board had not been united, it could have been disastrous. If the school board were not willing to let the elders be more active in their leadership, the whole thing could have exploded. Other factors specific to this context, though a strength in one sense, become a weakness if another church-school were to expect the same output results without having the same input factors. Perhaps this weakness is more of a caution to those who attempt to benefit from this project in their own context.

What I Would Do Differently

Though the weaknesses above were largely unavoidable due to the context of the project, there are some improvements which could have been made. Given the opportunity to redo the project, this section describes the changes I would make. The first improvement would be the data collection process. The questionnaire for both the church and school leadership consisted of open-ended questions. In addition to these questions, I should have had a series of up to twenty questions using a five-point Likert scale. In these questions I could have targeted specific issues related to the church and school relationship, and the free response questions could have added any information they deemed pertinent. The open-ended questions did provide valuable information, but a Likert-style questionnaire would have been even more useful as a measuring implement.

Another consideration that could have improved the project relates to the sheer size of the organizations. Many people were left out of the survey and interview process, such as parents and the church congregation. Parents were not consulted, although that was the original plan, because of mid-project changes and underestimating the scope of the project. The original intention was to ask them for feedback regarding the small group ministry. Since the small groups got a late start, this plan was not possible. A better plan would have been to survey them at the beginning and end of the project like the other participants, with questions specific to them.

In order to limit the sample size, I asked only about a dozen of the teachers who I thought would provide a variety of perspectives. Again I used open-ended questions, but a Likert-style survey would have been easier to fill out and process. It may have elicited a greater response, since filling out a scale of 1-5 is much easier and quicker than having to write answers to free-response questions. In hindsight, I should have sent out a survey to all the teachers to get a larger sample size. The wider church congregation was also left out of the study. The school is a ministry of the church, but only the church leaders were consulted. It would have added another perspective to the project if church members were surveyed as well.

Probably the best strategy to solve all of the above issues would have been to use online survey technology, which would have allowed hundreds more people to participate. Also, with online survey services, it would not have been too difficult to process the large amount of information. Getting people to participate would still have been a challenge, but at least more people would have had the opportunity.

Given the extreme busyness of the church and school leaders, as mentioned in the weaknesses section above, I should have sought counsel regarding how to pursue people who did not respond. Being more assertive would have helped with the number of responses, but I also had to be careful not to be belligerent. This project dominated much of my time and energy—to them it was just one more thing for which they had no time.

Perhaps in the presentation of the survey a better incentive to participate could have been given. If the questions were not open-ended but multiple choice, people may have been more willing to give me their time.

One practical change that could have enhanced the success of the new small group ministry would have been to promote it more heavily before sending out the sign-up sheets—not only among students, but teachers as well. I could have talked about it more in the weekly student chapels, as well as at the weekly teacher meetings. The launch of the small group ministry was quite successful, but there is always room for improvement. I would also like to have had the administration declare one day of the week as set aside for small groups. With many opportunities to divide their lunch time, it would be helpful to sanction a day in which no other meetings are allowed. I could not have made this rule myself, but I could have given more effort to convince the administration of the need.

Theological Reflection

As I reflect on what I learned during the course of this project, what stands out most is that I have gained a deeper appreciation for the heavy weight of responsibility the elders bear in shepherding God's flock. This realization was impressed upon me during my study of Acts 20:17-38 and 1 Peter 5:1-5, and even more when I presented it to the elders. They already understood it, having been elders for many years, but for me it was an awakening. My respect both for the office and for the men who hold it grew profoundly—mainly from God's words on the topic, but also from observing just how difficult organizational leadership can be. In the context of both passages, the author speaks of God's church being bought with the blood of Christ as motivation for proper leadership (Acts 20:28; 1 Pet 1:18-19). The imagery of prowling wolves (Acts 20:29) adds weight to the importance of vigilant spiritual protection for the flock entrusted to their care (1 Pet 5:2, 4).

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Another personal revival occurred while studying for chapter 3. Being reminded of the lordship of Christ as a doctrinal distinctive struck me in a new way. It was a truth that I had not specifically meditated upon recently, and it convicted me to think deeply about this truth and how my life aligned with it. This meditation became the theme for the first two chapel messages. I spoke to myself as much as to the student body when I exhorted them to embrace Christ as Lord. Studying what it means to be a slave of Christ was a sanctifying exercise in biblical spirituality. Defining "relationship with Christ" in the context of how Christ defines it is a healthy corrective to our Christian subculture's overemphasis on Jesus as one's best friend (who does not necessarily demand complete allegiance).

As the elders seek to tighten the doctrinal stance of the school, there has been some difference of opinion as to the wisdom of doing so. This project has given me the opportunity to experience firsthand how people who love God whole-heartedly can disagree over important doctrines, and over how precisely doctrinal standards should be applied. In the church of God there is sincere disagreement over some deep issues. Sometimes it is not even theological but methodological. Peter's charge for everyone to clothe themselves with humility (1 Pet 5:5) is especially appropriate in this context. The elders, school board members, senior pastor and superintendent have all been examples to me of this extreme humility in a potentially explosive situation. They have conducted themselves and treated each other with grace and brotherly love. I have grown just by watching them.

Personal Reflection

Personally I have benefited greatly from researching the information in this project and putting it into practice. On a professional level, it has given me tools and training to be a more effective servant of Christ. I have gained knowledge and experience

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that will continue to assist and support both the church and school as they continue to travel this road together.

Most people live within their comfort zones. I am one of those people who would rather be comfortable, given the option. This project removed that option from me. Through this experience God has stretched me more than I thought possible. He has provided opportunities for me to interact with people in new ways, such as leading board meetings (or portions thereof), collecting and being entrusted with personal opinions about sensitive topics such as the church-school relationship, and organizing adults and youth into discipleship groups. Through these experiences I have learned that God is faithful, and will carry me through whatever task he places before me.

Also uncomfortable was the feeling of immense stress as I was racing to meet deadlines preparing chapters 2 and 3, and leading up to the first of the fifteen weeks. I was uncharacteristically overwhelmed on several occasions, being brought to the end of myself, during which I was forced to stop—and pray, again. God was faithful every time to calm my nerves and give me the focus and energy to complete the task. Attempting this project was beyond my comfort zone, and there I found God eager to help me.

As I was processing various responses to my questions, it was impressed upon me how vulnerable some of the respondents were being, trusting me with the information they were giving. I was deeply honored. Related to this point is that I am learning how important it is to be extremely careful when dealing with people, especially when they have a deep investment in the ministry as well. Miscommunication is so easy, and misunderstanding can cause unnecessary strife. I learned through my interaction with others that I need to be extremely careful in what I say and how I say it. Humility is not a one-time event. There is a desperate need for the members of the body of Christ to be humble again and again, throughout their lives.

The final personal reflection comes from the entire Doctor of Ministry program. I chose the Biblical Spirituality track because it was in line with what I was

doing discipling youth as a Bible teacher and missions leader in a Christian school. Though I expected spiritual enrichment, I did not realize God placed me in the exact program that addressed some of my major weaknesses. Consistency in spiritual disciplines has always been a shortfall in my life, and the program has contributed to setting me on a better path. My professor and advisor Donald S. Whitney's influence has brought a deep corrective to my understanding of spiritual disciplines. His rigorous, yet non-legalistic approach has helped me sort through some personal baggage I brought into the program. His influence has adjusted my discipline paradigm to what I now believe is more healthy and biblical.

A Future Look

The primary success of this project was that it took a long awaited step in the right direction. Degrees of correction were made, but in order for long-term success, the momentum must keep going. One of the biggest concerns is to more clearly define the role of the Dean of Spiritual Life. It is still a work in progress, but to avoid confusion among teachers and staff, it must be clearly communicated what this person's job is, and what are the lines of accountability and responsibility. One aspect of his job will be to oversee the chapel program, ensuring biblically sound teaching that reaches the heart of the students. Having themed chapels that rehearse GCS distinctives will help deepen students' understanding of core truths. The small group ministry now needs to be promoted, expanded, and refined. The ministry was launched during the project, and now it must be nurtured into a movement that will continue to shape the spiritual ethos.

Another major job of the Dean will be to examine the Bible curriculum in all grade levels (K-12) to ensure consistency and doctrinal integrity. The system is not necessarily broken, but it could be improved. Theological training for teachers is also on the list of priorities. Educational advancement opportunities abound, but doctrinal depth is not always prized. In addition, the Theological Matrix document is not sufficient for

high school Bible teachers. Controversial doctrines that are commonly addressed in Bible classes need to be added as an auxiliary document. Witnessing the range of opinions expressed in participant feedback has revealed a need for teachers and other staff to have a person to serve as an advocate or liaison for people who have complaints or who are dissatisfied with the leadership. The Dean or another pastor could serve this role, and it should be promoted and advertised that the church wants to listen to the leaders of the school.

Conclusion

As a result of this project, the elders of AGC have been made aware of areas where they need to grow and have been given strategies to implement long-term change. They have exercised active spiritual oversight by applying the church's doctrinal statement to the school and by providing a Dean of Spiritual Life to contribute to the discipleship process. Even though one of the goals was only partially met, the other four were demonstrated to be sufficiently met to call this project a success. The purpose of this project being fulfilled, I rejoice yet again in God's faithfulness.

APPENDIX 1

PRE AND POST-SURVEY INSTRUMENTS

Each of the following questionnaires were given to the corresponding group at the beginning and the end of the fifteen-week project. In the elder, school board, and teacher surveys the italicized portion after each question was added to the post-project survey (except for the first question which did not have a follow-up). Also, each person's response was copied into the questionnaire for their reference. The same student survey was given both before and after the project.

Elder Agreement to Participate

The research in which you are about to participate is designed to help the elders of Anchorage Grace Church have a more active role in the spiritual oversight of Grace Christian School. This research is being conducted by Leo Masters for the purpose of his project research for the Doctor of Ministry degree requirements at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. In this research, you will be asked a series of interview questions. Any information you provide will be held *strictly confidential*, and at no time will your name be reported, or your name identified with your responses. *Participation in this study is totally voluntary and you are free to withdraw from the study at any time.*

By your completion of this interview, you are giving informed consent for the use of your responses in this research.

Interview Questions for Elders

1. How long have you been a member of AGC? An elder? Other ministry involvement?

2. In the first interview I asked what the current state of elder involvement is at Grace Christian School. *You responded: ___.*

   Has elder involvement changed since week 1? If so, how?

3. In the first interview I asked what role the elders should play in the spiritual leadership at GCS. *You responded: ___.*

    Has there been a change in the elders' role since week 1? If so, what change?

4. In the first interview I asked how you envision ideal "active spiritual oversight" by the elders over the ministry of the school. *You responded: ___.*

    What change, if any, have you seen since week 1 in the elders' active spiritual oversight?

5. In the first interview I asked where the elders have not led the school sufficiently. *You responded: ___.*

    What change, if any, have you seen since week 1 in the elders' leadership in the area(s) mentioned?

6. In the first interview I asked in what areas the elders are leading the school well. *You responded: ___.*

    What change, if any, have you seen since week 1 in the elders' leadership in the area(s) mentioned?

7. In the first interview I asked what changes should happen at GCS, and what should stay the same. *You responded: ___.*

    What change, if any, have you seen since week 1? What changes, if any, do you think still need to be made?

8. In the first interview I asked what you are hoping to accomplish through hiring a Dean of Spiritual Life. *You responded: ___.*

    To what degree, if any, have those hopes been accomplished?

9. In the first interview I asked if the school leadership (board, administration, teachers) trusts the eldership, why or why not, and if it was different in the past. *You responded: ___.*

    What change, if any, have you seen since week 1 in the school leadership's trust level in the eldership?

10. In the first interview I asked whether you have any fears or concerns in the transition process? *You responded: ___.*

    To what degree, if any, have those fears or concerns been realized?

Agreement to Participate, School Board

The research in which you are about to participate is designed to help the elders of Anchorage Grace Church have a more active role in the spiritual oversight of Grace Christian School. This research is being conducted by Leo Masters for the purpose of his project research for the Doctor of Ministry degree requirements at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. In this research, you will be asked a series of interview questions. Any information you provide will be held *strictly confidential*, and at no time will your name be reported, or your name identified with your responses. *Participation in this study is totally voluntary and you are free to withdraw from the study at any time.*

By your completion of this interview, you are giving informed consent for the use of your responses in this research.

Questions for GCS School Board Members

1. How long have you been in your current ministry with the school? Past experience?

2. In the first interview I asked what role the elders should play in the spiritual leadership at Grace Christian School? *You responded: ___.*

   Has there been a change in their role since week 1? If so, what change?

3. In the first interview I asked about your impression of their leadership during your time here at GCS? *You responded: ___.*

   Has their leadership changed since week 1? If so, how?

4. In the first interview I asked how their leadership could it be improved. *You responded: ___.*

   Have any of the improvements you mentioned in the first interview occurred since week 1? If so, how?

5. In the first interview I asked what dreams you have for the spiritual life of GCS (environmental, atmospheric, big-picture). *You responded: ___.*

   To what degree, if any, have those dreams been accomplished since week 1? To what degree, if any, has progress been made since week 1?

6. In the first interview I asked what hinders spiritual growth at Grace and what can be done about it. *You responded: ___.*

To what degree, if any, has what you mentioned in the first interview been done to promote spiritual growth? To what degree, if any, have the hindrances been addressed?

7. In the first interview I asked whether you have fears or concerns about the elders taking a more active role in the spiritual leadership of the school. *You responded: ____.*

   To what degree, if any, have those fears or concerns been realized?

8. In the first interview I asked if you are personally involved in ministering to Grace students outside of the normal school day. *You responded: ____.*

   What change, if any, has there been in your involvement since week 1?

9. In the first interview I asked what ideas you have for teachers to be more actively discipling Grace students during the school day. *You responded: ____.*

   To what degree, if any, have your ideas been accomplished? To what degree, if any, have teachers become more active in discipling students?

10. In the first interview I asked about your thoughts regarding the church hiring a Dean of Spiritual Life. *You responded: ____.*

    Have your thoughts changed since week 1? If so, how?

Agreement to Participate, GCS Teachers

The research in which you are about to participate is designed to help the elders of Anchorage Grace Church have a more active role in the spiritual oversight of Grace Christian School. This research is being conducted by Leo Masters for the purpose of his project research for the Doctor of Ministry degree requirements at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. In this research, you will be asked a series of interview questions. Any information you provide will be held *strictly confidential*, and at no time will your name be reported, or your name identified with your responses. *Participation in this study is totally voluntary and you are free to withdraw from the study at any time.*

By your completion of this interview, you are giving informed consent for the use of your responses in this research.

Interview with GCS Teachers

1. How long have you been in your current ministry with the school? Past experience?

2. In the first interview I asked what role the elders should play in the spiritual leadership at Grace Christian School? *You responded: ___.*

   Has there been a change in their role since week 1? If so, what change?

3. In the first interview I asked about your impression of their leadership during your time here at GCS? *You responded: ___.*

   Has their leadership changed since week 1? If so, how?

4. In the first interview I asked how their leadership could it be improved. *You responded: ___.*

   Have any of the improvements you mentioned in the first interview occurred since week 1? If so, how?

5. In the first interview I asked what dreams you have for the spiritual life of GCS (environmental, atmospheric, big-picture). *You responded: ___.*

   To what degree, if any, have those dreams been accomplished since week 1? To what degree, if any, has progress been made since week 1?

6. In the first interview I asked what hinders spiritual growth at Grace and what can be done about it. *You responded: ___.*

To what degree, if any, has what you mentioned in the first interview been done to promote spiritual growth? To what degree, if any, have the hindrances been addressed?

7. In the first interview I asked whether you have fears or concerns about the elders taking a more active role in the spiritual leadership of the school. *You responded: ___.*

   To what degree, if any, have those fears or concerns been realized?

8. In the first interview I asked if you are personally involved in ministering to Grace students outside of the normal school day. *You responded: ___.*

   What change, if any, has there been in your involvement since week 1?

9. In the first interview I asked how willing you would be to more actively disciple students if it could be incorporated into your school day. *You responded: ___.*

   What change, if any, has there been in your involvement with discipling students since week 1? What ideas do you have for teachers to be more actively discipling Grace students during the school day?

10. In the first interview I asked about your thoughts regarding the church hiring a Dean of Spiritual Life. *You responded: ___.*

    Have your thoughts changed since week 1? If so, how?

Student Agreement to Participate

The research in which you are about to participate is designed to assess the spiritual life at Grace Christian School and aid in improving the spiritual life of each student. This research is being conducted by Leo Masters for purposes of his project research for the Doctor of Ministry degree at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. In this research, you will be asked to answer basic questions regarding your practice of basic spiritual disciplines, your interest in discipleship groups, and your opinions of the spiritual life at Grace. Any information you provide will be held *strictly confidential*, and at no time will your name be reported, or your name identified with your responses. *Participation in this study is totally voluntary and you are free to withdraw from the study at any time.*

By your completion of this survey, you are giving informed consent for the use of your responses in this research.

Student Survey Questions

1. How would you define Biblical Spirituality?

2. Are you involved in an accountability relationship in which you are asked tough questions regarding your spiritual life?
   a. Yes   b. No

3. Do you regularly attend youth group at your church? ("regularly" is 3-5 times per month)
   a. Yes   b. No

4. Are you involved in a weekly Bible study or fellowship group outside of your weekly youth group meeting?
   a. Yes   b. No

5. On a scale of 1-5, how involved do you think Anchorage Grace Church is in the spiritual life of students at Grace Christian School? (1 = not at all; 5 = very much)
   a. 1   b. 2   c. 3   d. 4   e. 5

6. How favorable is your overall view of the administration's spiritual leadership of the students?
   a. Very favorable   b. Favorable   c. Neither   d. Unfavorable   e. Very unfavorable

7. How favorable is your overall view of the teachers' spiritual leadership of the students?
   a. Very favorable   b. Favorable   c. Neither   d. Unfavorable   e. Very unfavorable

8. How favorable is your overall view of student-to-student leadership?
   a. Very favorable   b. Favorable   c. Neither   d. Unfavorable   e. Very unfavorable

9. How willing are you to meet outside of school in a discipleship group?
   a. Not at all   b. Slightly   c. Moderately (in the middle)   d. Very   e. Extremely

10. How willing are you to meet during the school day in a discipleship group?
    a. Not at all   b. Slightly   c. Moderately   d. Very   e. Extremely

11. How do you rank your understanding of personal spiritual disciplines such as Bible
    reading and prayer?
    a. Very Low   b. Below Average   c. Average   d. Above average   e. Very high

12. How important is it that there is an adult leader to coordinate discipleship groups?
    a. Not at all   b. Slightly   c. Moderately   d. Very   e. Extremely

13. How much do the teachers at Grace encourage you in your walk with Christ?
    a. Not at all   b. Slightly   c. Moderately   d. Very   e. Extremely

14. How much does the administration at Grace encourage you in your walk with Christ?
    a. Not at all   b. Slightly   c. Moderately   d. Very   e. Extremely

15. How much do other students at Grace encourage you in your walk with Christ?
    a. Not at all   b. Slightly   c. Moderately   d. Very   e. Extremely

16. How much do you encourage other students in their walk with Christ?
    a. Not at all   b. Slightly   c. Moderately   d. Very   e. Extremely

17. Are you judged when you actively pursue Christ at school?
    a. Never   b. Once or twice   c. Sometimes   d. Regularly   e. Very often

18. Do you judge others who actively pursue Christ at school?
    a. Never   b. Once or twice   c. Sometimes   d. Regularly   e. Very often

19. How valuable would it be to participate in a small discipleship group with students in
    your own grade?
    a. Not at all   b. Slightly   c. Moderately   d. Very   e. Extremely

20. How valuable would it be to participate in a small discipleship group with students
    from grades 7-12?
    a. Not at all   b. Slightly   c. Moderately   d. Very   e. Extremely

21. How comfortable would you be to open up to students a few grades older than
    yourself?
    a. Not at all   b. Slightly   c. Moderately   d. Very   e. Extremely

22. How comfortable would you be to open up to students a few grades younger than yourself?
    a. Not at all   b. Slightly   c. Moderately   d. Very   e. Extremely

23. On a scale of 9-12, what grade are you in?
    a. 9   b. 10   c. 11   d. 12

Student Survey Results

The numbers in the charts corresponding to answer choices are give in percent of the student body giving that response. If row totals do not add up to 100 percent it is due to the fact that some students left some answers blank. P-values are given in the upper left cell of each chart. Values less that 0.05 are considered statistically significant. The highest score in each row for questions 5-22 is bold for ease of reference. The mean is given to describe how the student body "leans" on the question. A score less than 2.5 means that it leans to the left of the scale, and a score greater than 2.5 leans to the right of the scale.

1. How would you define Biblical Spirituality?

p=0.0004	Correct	Close	Incorrect
Aug 18 – Retreat:	33.9%	17.7%	48.4%
Oct 31 – Week 15:	53.7%	14.4%	31.9%
Difference	+19.8%	-3.3%	-16.5%
Percent Change:	+59%	-18.9%	-34%
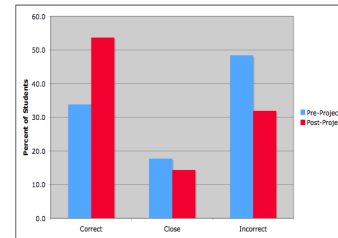
2. Are you involved in an accountability relationship in which you are asked tough questions regarding your spiritual life?
   a. Yes   b. No

p=0.58	a.	b.
Aug 18 (Retreat)	49.74	46.11
Oct 31 (Week 15)	48.90	50.00
Difference	-0.8	+3.9
Percent Change:	-1.7	+8.4

3. Do you regularly attend youth group at your church? ("regularly" is 3-5 times per month)
   a. Yes   b. No

p=0.53	a.	b.
Aug 18 (Retreat)	54.4	44.1
Oct 31 (Week 15)	52.1	47.9
Difference	-2.2	3.8
Percent Change:	-4.1	8.5

4. Are you involved in a weekly Bible study or fellowship group outside of your weekly youth group meeting?
      a. Yes   b. No

p=0.0002	a.	b.
Aug 18 (Retreat)	45.0	52.4
Oct 31 (Week 15)	64.9	34.6
Difference	19.9	-17.8
Percent Change:	44.3	-34.0

5. On a scale of 1-5, how involved do you think Anchorage Grace Church is in the spiritual life of students at Grace Christian School? (1 = not at all; 5 = very much)
      a. 1   b. 2   c. 3   d. 4   e. 5

p=0.17	a.	b.	c.	d.	e.	Mean	StdDev
Aug 18 (Retreat)	9.0	22.8	**38.6**	18.5	4.8	2.86	1.00
Oct 31 (Week 15)	10.6	25.9	**39.2**	18.5	4.8	2.81	1.02
Difference	1.6	3.2	0.5	0.0	0.0	-0.06	0.01
Percent Change:	17.6	14.0	1.4	0.0	0.0	-1.99	1.11

6. How favorable is your overall view of the administration's spiritual leadership of the students?
      a. Very favorable   b. Favorable   c. Neither   d. Unfavorable   e. Very unfavorable

p=0.19	a.	b.	c.	d.	e.	Mean	StdDev
Aug 18 (Retreat)	14.1	**52.6**	20.3	6.8	3.1	2.30	0.91
Oct 31 (Week 15)	15.8	**52.6**	24.2	5.3	2.1	2.25	0.86
Difference	1.7	0.0	3.9	-1.5	-1.02	-0.05	-0.06
Percent Change:	12.3	0.1	19.2	-22.3	-32.6	-2.11	-6.05

7. How favorable is your overall view of the teachers' spiritual leadership of the students?
      a. Very favorable   b. Favorable   c. Neither   d. Unfavorable   e. Very unfavorable

p=0.25	a.	b.	c.	d.	e.	Mean	StdDev
Aug 18 (Retreat)	23.6	**50.3**	16.2	3.7	2.1	2.07	0.87
Oct 31 (Week 15)	26.7	**51.8**	16.8	3.1	1.0	1.99	0.81
Difference	3.1	1.6	0.5	-0.5	-1.0	-0.07	-0.06
Percent Change:	13.3	3.1	3.2	-14.3	-50.0	-3.43	-7.01

8. How favorable is your overall view of student-to-student leadership?
   a. Very favorable   b. Favorable   c. Neither   d. Unfavorable   e. Very unfavorable

p=0.052	a.	b.	c.	d.	e.	Mean	StdDev
Aug 18 (Retreat)	4.8	**37.0**	33.9	16.4	4.2	2.77	0.94
Oct 31 (Week 15)	8.3	**45.3**	32.3	10.4	3.1	2.54	0.90
Difference	3.6	8.3	-1.6	-6.0	-1.1	-0.23	-0.03
Percent Change:	75.0	22.3	-4.6	-36.5	-26.2	-8.30	-3.74

9. How willing are you to meet outside of school in a discipleship group?
   a. Not at all   b. Slightly   c. Moderately (in the middle)   d. Very   e. Extremely

p=0.27	a.	b.	c.	d.	e.	Mean	StdDev
Aug 18 (Retreat)	2.6	13.6	**34.0**	30.4	17.8	3.48	1.02
Oct 31 (Week 15)	4.2	14.7	**40.3**	27.7	13.1	3.31	1.01
Difference	1.6	1.0	6.3	-2.6	-4.7	-0.17	-0.01
Percent Change:	60.0	7.7	18.5	-8.6	-26.5	-4.88	-1.33

10. How willing are you to meet during the school day in a discipleship group?
    a. Not at all   b. Slightly   c. Moderately   d. Very   e. Extremely

p=0.13	a.	b.	c.	d.	e.	Mean	StdDev
Aug 18 (Retreat)	4.2	15.9	**33.3**	24.3	21.2	3.43	1.12
Oct 31 (Week 15)	3.2	11.4	34.1	**35.1**	16.2	3.50	1.00
Difference	-1.0	-4.5	0.7	10.8	-4.9	0.07	-0.12
Percent Change:	-23.4	-28.5	2.2	44.4	-23.4	2.03	-10.74

11. How do you rank your understanding of personal spiritual disciplines such as Bible
    reading and prayer?
    a. Very Low   b. Below Average   c. Average   d. Above average   e. Very high

p=0.24	a.	b.	c.	d.	e.	Mean	StdDev
Aug 18 (Retreat)	1.6	4.2	**42.1**	35.8	13.2	3.57	0.84
Oct 31 (Week 15)	0.5	8.7	**43.7**	36.1	9.8	3.46	0.81
Difference	-1.0	4.5	1.6	0.3	-3.3	-0.10	-0.03
Percent Change:	-65.4	107.7	3.8	0.8	-25.2	-2.84	-3.24

12. How important is it that there is an adult leader to coordinate discipleship groups?
    a. Not at all   b. Slightly   c. Moderately   d. Very   e. Extremely

p=0.032	a.	b.	c.	d.	e.	Mean	StdDev
Aug 18 (Retreat)	5.2	18.8	**29.3**	27.2	16.8	3.32	1.13
Oct 31 (Week 15)	4.1	12.4	33.2	**37.3**	13.0	3.42	1.00
Difference	-1.1	-6.4	3.8	10.1	-3.8	0.10	-0.13
Percent Change:	-20.8	-34.0	13.1	37.0	-22.7	3.08	-11.31

13. How much do the teachers at Grace encourage you in your walk with Christ?
    a. Not at all   b. Slightly   c. Moderately   d. Very   e. Extremely

p=0.025	a.	b.	c.	d.	e.	Mean	StdDev
Aug 18 (Retreat)	3.1	9.9	26.7	**38.2**	16.2	3.58	1.00
Oct 31 (Week 15)	1.7	10.6	24.4	**42.8**	20.6	3.70	0.97
Difference	-1.5	0.6	-2.3	4.6	4.3	0.12	-0.03
Percent Change:	-46.9	6.1	-8.5	11.9	26.6	3.42	-3.42

14. How much does the administration at Grace encourage you in your walk with Christ?
    a. Not at all   b. Slightly   c. Moderately   d. Very   e. Extremely

p=0.010	a.	b.	c.	d.	e.	Mean	StdDev
Aug 18 (Retreat)	4.9	14.1	27.0	**34.1**	14.1	3.41	1.07
Oct 31 (Week 15)	5.7	19.6	**32.5**	29.9	12.4	3.24	1.08
Difference	0.8	5.5	5.4	-4.2	-1.7	-0.17	0.00
Percent Change:	16.6	39.4	20.2	-12.2	-12.0	-5.02	0.46

15. How much do other students at Grace encourage you in your walk with Christ?
    a. Not at all   b. Slightly   c. Moderately   d. Very   e. Extremely

p=0.0095	a.	b.	c.	d.	e.	Mean	StdDev
Aug 18 (Retreat)	8.4	26.7	**39.8**	17.3	2.1	2.77	0.93
Oct 31 (Week 15)	7.7	23.8	**39.2**	24.3	5.0	2.95	0.99
Difference	-0.6	-2.9	-0.6	7.0	2.9	0.18	0.07
Percent Change:	-7.7	-11.0	-1.4	40.7	137.4	6.64	7.31

16. How much do you encourage other students in their walk with Christ?
   a. Not at all   b. Slightly   c. Moderately   d. Very   e. Extremely

p=0.018	a.	b.	c.	d.	e.	Mean	StdDev
Aug 18 (Retreat)	8.2	21.1	**47.9**	13.4	4.1	2.83	0.93
Oct 31 (Week 15)	7.0	18.8	**52.7**	19.4	2.2	2.91	0.86
Difference	-1.3	-2.3	4.8	6.0	-2.0	0.08	-0.07
Percent Change:	-15.3	-11.0	9.9	44.4	-47.8	2.72	-7.17

17. Are you judged when you actively pursue Christ at school?
   a. Never   b. Once or twice   c. Sometimes   d. Regularly   e. Very often

p=0.017	a.	b.	c.	d.	e.	Mean	StdDev
Aug 18 (Retreat)	25.1	26.7	**31.4**	5.8	5.2	2.36	1.10
Oct 31 (Week 15)	28.3	**38.5**	25.7	3.2	3.2	2.14	0.97
Difference	3.2	11.8	-5.7	-2.6	-2.0	-0.22	-0.13
Percent Change:	12.8	44.2	-18.3	-44.3	-38.7	-9.36	-11.72

18. Do you judge others who actively pursue Christ at school?
   a. Never   b. Once or twice   c. Sometimes   d. Regularly   e. Very often

p=0.0045	a.	b.	c.	d.	e.	Mean	StdDev
Aug 18 (Retreat)	**52.9**	24.6	13.9	4.8	0.0	1.69	0.90
Oct 31 (Week 15)	**50.3**	30.3	9.2	7.2	3.1	1.83	1.06
Difference	-2.7	5.7	-4.7	2.4	3.1	0.13	0.17
Percent Change:	-5.1	23.0	-33.6	49.2	-	7.74	18.69

19. How valuable would it be to participate in a small discipleship group with students in your own grade?
   a. Not at all   b. Slightly   c. Moderately   d. Very   e. Extremely

p=0.0099	a.	b.	c.	d.	e.	Mean	StdDev
Aug 18 (Retreat)	3.2	9.5	26.3	**31.6**	25.8	3.70	1.07
Oct 31 (Week 15)	6.1	14.8	30.6	**31.1**	17.3	3.39	1.12
Difference	3.0	5.3	4.3	-0.5	-8.4	-0.31	0.05
Percent Change:	93.9	56.2	16.3	-1.4	-32.7	-8.43	4.65

20. How valuable would it be to participate in a small discipleship group with students from grades 7-12?
    a. Not at all   b. Slightly   c. Moderately   d. Very   e. Extremely

p=0.019	a.	b.	c.	d.	e.	Mean	StdDev
Aug 18 (Retreat)	2.6	22.8	**31.7**	18.5	20.6	3.33	1.13
Oct 31 (Week 15)	6.4	18.1	**30.3**	26.1	19.1	3.34	1.16
Difference	3.7	-4.7	-1.4	7.5	-1.5	0.01	0.03
Percent Change:	141.3	-20.5	-4.5	40.7	-7.2	0.16	2.44

21. How comfortable would you be to open up to students a few grades older than yourself?
    a. Not at all   b. Slightly   c. Moderately   d. Very   e. Extremely

p=0.195	a.	b.	c.	d.	e.	Mean	StdDev
Aug 18 (Retreat)	6.8	19.8	**30.7**	23.4	13.0	3.17	1.13
Oct 31 (Week 15)	7.3	21.2	**29.6**	27.9	12.8	3.18	1.13
Difference	0.5	1.4	-1.1	4.5	-0.2	0.01	0.00
Percent Change:	7.3	7.3	-3.6	19.2	-1.3	0.27	0.08

22. How comfortable would you be to open up to students a few grades younger than yourself?
    a. Not at all   b. Slightly   c. Moderately   d. Very   e. Extremely

p=0.055	a.	b.	c.	d.	e.	Mean	StdDev
Aug 18 (Retreat)	12.2	21.8	**29.3**	22.3	10.1	2.96	1.18
Oct 31 (Week 15)	16.4	**26.8**	24.0	22.4	10.4	2.84	1.24
Difference	4.2	5.0	-5.2	0.1	0.3	-0.13	0.06
Percent Change:	34.0	22.8	-17.8	0.3	2.7	-4.22	5.01

23. On a scale of 9-12, what grade are you in?
    a. 9   b. 10   c. 11   d. 12

p=0.83	a.	b.	c.	d.	Mean	StdDev
Aug 18 (Retreat)	24.5	23.9	21.3	23.4	2.50	1.16
Oct 31 (Week 15)	25.7	24.0	22.4	23.0	2.52	1.19
Difference	1.2	0.1	1.1	-0.5	0.02	0.03
Percent Change:	5.0	0.4	5.3	-1.9	0.90	2.84

APPENDIX 2

THE THEOLOGICAL MATRIX DOCUMENT

In order to retain the format of the Theological Matrix document, it is reproduced after this page. The information below accompanies the chart on a separate sheet when given out. It explains the purpose of the document and describes what is meant by primary and secondary doctrines.

Theological Matrix Document

The purpose of this document:
- To free faculty and staff from feeling pressured to believe a certain secondary doctrine.
- To allow parents and students to know exactly what is going to be taught at GCS. They are free to disagree, but this document allows them to know the position of the school (especially the Bible teachers).
- To act as a guide in the hiring process (e.g., no person for any position listed will be hired who does not firmly believe in the verbal, plenary inspiration of the Scripture.)
- To aid faculty and staff in teaching primary doctrines with confidence.

1 = Primary doctrine (must embrace as truth)
A primary doctrine is one that is essential to be believed and embraced in order to fulfill the responsibilities of the job. If a potential employee does not embrace a doctrine deemed primary for that role, that person should not be hired for that job (including lateral hire). For example, a person who does not believe in eternal security can be hired as a coach, but cannot be hired as a Bible teacher.

2 = Secondary doctrine (must not teach against)
A secondary doctrine is one that faculty/staff do not have to hold themselves, but they must be willing to teach it correctly and to communicate that it is in line with the doctrinal statement of the church and school. The employee is allowed to express their point of view with students. If they are teaching such a doctrine, it might be a good idea to have someone guest teach (a period or two) who does believe according to the doctrinal statement.

Functionality of the AGC Doctrinal Statement for GCS

Doctrine	Doctrinal Subcategory	Elder	Sch Bd	Admin	Bib Tch	Sec Tch	Elem Tch	Coach	Staff	
	Anchorage Grace, believing the Bible, the whole Bible, and nothing but the Bible to be our infallible rule of faith and of practice, and feeling our responsibility to make known the divine message of the Bible, present the following articles as a statement of those basic truths taught in the Bible which are common to our Christian faith and practice:									**Important:** If you are unsure of any of the doctrines listed here, see Jeff Crotts, Nate Davis, Leo Masters, or an elder.
1. The Bible	**The Word of God, the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments, verbally inspired in all parts, and therefore wholly without error as originally given of God (II Tim. 3:16; II Peter 1:21)**	1	1	1	1	1	1	1		2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:21; 1 Corinthians 2:13; John 5:39
	We believe in the verbal, plenary inspiration of the Scriptures, and that they are inerrant and authoritative.									
2. The One True God	**Existing eternally as three persons—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit (Luke 3:22; Matt. 28:19; II Cor. 13:14).**	1	1	1	1	1	1	1		
	and that these three are one God equal in attributes and nature.	1	1	1	1	1	1	1		Mark 12:29; John 1:1-4; 10:30; 14:9-12; Luke 3:21, 22
3. The Lord Jesus Christ	**His preexistence and deity (John 1:1-3), incarnation by virgin birth (John 1:14; Matt. 1:18-23), sinless life (Heb. 4:15), substitutionary death (II Cor. 5:21), bodily resurrection (Luke 24:36-43), ascension into heaven and present ministry (Heb. 4:14-16), and coming again (Acts 1:11).**									
	We believe that the eternal Son of God came into this world as purposed by God and prophesied in the Scriptures to fulfill the plan of salvation for a lost world.									John 3:16; 2 Corinthians 5:21
	We believe that, while not divesting Himself of His absolute deity, He took upon Himself a perfect, sinless, human nature being born of the virgin Mary and conceived by the Holy Spirit.	1	1	1	1	1	1	1		Luke 1:35
	We believe that Christ voluntarily became sin for us; and that by His death, as the sinless lamb of God, He bore the righteous judgment of a holy God and tasted death for every man.									Hebrews 10:5-14; 2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 Peter 3:18
	We believe that Christ rose from the grave having the same body but glorified.									John 20:9, 20; Philippians 3:21; Romans 6:4
	We believe in the bodily ascension of Christ to the right hand of the throne of God, and that He has become Head over all things to the church which is His body.									John 20:17; Acts 1:9; Ephesians 1:22, 23
	We believe that Jesus Christ is now intercessor and advocate for all those who are saved and that He will return for His bride, the church, at the rapture.									Hebrews 7:25; 1 Thessalonians 4:17

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Doctrine	Doctrinal Subcategory	Elder	Sch Bd	Admin	Bib Tch	Sec Tch	Elem Tch	Coach	Staff	Reference
4. The Holy Spirit	**His personality (John 16:7-15) and deity (Acts 5:3-4); and His work in each believer: baptism and indwelling at the moment of regeneration (I Cor. 12:13; Rom. 8:9), and filling (Eph. 5:18) to empower for Christian life and service (Eph. 3:16; Acts 1:8; Gal. 5:22-23).**									
	We believe that the Holy Spirit was and is present in all the plan and work of God and that His ministries to this age of grace are:	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	
	Convicting the world of sin, righteousness and judgment									John 16:7-11
	Regenerating all believers									John 3:6
	Indwelling all saved									Romans 8:9
	Baptizing all the saved into the body of Christ									1 Corinthians 12:13
	Anointing all believers to teach them truth									John 16:13
	Sealing all believers until the day of redemption									Ephesians 4:30
	Filling and empowering for service									Eph 5:18; 1 Cor 12:7; Acts 1:8
5. Man	**His direct creation in the image of God (Gen. 1:26-28), his subsequent fall into sin resulting in spiritual death (Gen. 3:1-24; Rom. 5:12), and the necessity of the new birth for his salvation (John 3:3-5).**									
	We believe that man was created in the image and likeness of God but that through willful sin he became dead in trespasses and sin and subjected himself and creation to the authority of Satan.	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	Gen 1:26; 2:17; 6:6; Eph 2:1-3
	We believe that this total depravity in man has been transmitted to every child born of man.									Romans 3:10-19
6. Salvation	**A complete and eternal salvation by God's grace alone, received as the gift of God through personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and His finished work (Eph. 2:8-9; Titus 3:5-7; I Peter 1:18-19).**									
	We believe that salvation is wrought by God alone and is free to everyone without human merit or attainment. It is by grace alone through faith alone.	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	Ephesians 2:8-9
	We believe that to every believer has been committed the ministry of reconciliation and that no one can be saved without hearing and accepting the gospel.									2 Cor 5:18-19; 1 Cor 1:21; Romans 10:14, 15
	We believe that the atoning work of Christ is the only basis for our redemption, and entrance into the Kingdom of God is by the new birth alone.									John 3:5; 2 Corinthians 5:17

Doctrine	Doctrinal Subcategory	Elder	Sch Bd	Admin	Bib Tch	Sec Tch	Elem Tch	Coach	Staff	Scripture
6. Salvation (cont.)	We believe that salvation is eternally secure to all believers, and that this assurance is their portion from the very day they trust Jesus Christ.	1	2	1	1	2	1	2	2	John 3:16; 10:28, 29; Hebrews 10:22; Romans 8:28-39
	We believe that this salvation will be fully realized when Christ comes back to take us to Himself - this is the Christian's blessed hope.	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	John 14:1-3; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; Titus 2:11-13
7. The Church	**One true Church, the body and bride of Christ (Eph. 1:22-23; 5:25-32), composed of all true believers of the present age (I Cor. 12:12-13); and the organization of its members in local churches for worship, for edification of believers, and for world-wide gospel witness,**	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	Ephesians 4:4-6
	each local church being autonomous but cooperating in fellowship and work (Eph. 4:11-16).	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	
	The church is united to the risen Lord by the indwelling Holy Spirit.	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	Rom 8:9-11; Eph 4:4-6
	We believe that each local assembly is under the direct leadership of the Holy Spirit.	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	
	and that the Holy Spirit appoints the ministering gifts as He will.	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1 Corinthians 12:7-11, 28
	We believe that we are to assemble ourselves together for the preaching and teaching of the Word, corporate worship, praise, prayer, encouragement, service, and equipping for ministry.	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	Heb 10:24, 25; Eph 4:12; 2Tim 4:2; Rom 12:12-13; Acts 2:42; 1Tim 3:15
8. Christian Life	**A life of righteousness, good works, and separation unto God from the evil ways of the world (Rom. 12:1-2), manifested by speaking the truth (James 5:12), maintaining the sanctity of the home (Eph. 5:22-6:4), settling differences between Christians in accordance with the Word of God (I Cor. 6:1-8), not engaging in carnal strife but showing a Christ-like attitude toward all men (Rom. 12:17-21), exhibiting the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23), and maintaining a life of prayer (Eph. 6:18; Phil. 4:6),**	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	
	including the privilege, when sick, of calling for the elders of the church to pray and to anoint with oil in the name of the Lord (James 5:13-18).	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	
	We believe that it is incumbent upon every believer to walk worthy of His calling--to walk after the Spirit and not after the flesh.	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	1 Thessalonians 2:12; Romans 8:4, 5
	We believe that Christian character and fruit is produced solely by the operation of the Holy Spirit through biblically appointed means such as Bible intake, prayer, fellowship, etc., and biblically-interpreted circumstances of life.	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	Ephesians 2:6, 7; 4:22-24; Galatians 5:16-23; John 17:17

Doctrine	Doctrinal Subcategory	Elder	Sch Bd	Admin	Bib Tch	Sec Tch	Elem Tch	Coach	Staff	
9. Ordinances	**Christians should observe the ordinances of our Lord Jesus Christ, which are (1) baptism (Matt. 28:19)**	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	
	of believers by immersion	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	
	and (2) communion of the bread and the cup (1 Cor. 11:23-26)	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	
10. Satan	**His existence and personality as the great adversary of God and His people (Rev. 12:1-10), his judgement (John 12:31), and final doom (Rev. 20:10).**	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	
11. Second Coming	**The personal, visible, and imminent return of Christ to remove His church from the earth (I Thess. 4:16-17)**	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1 Thess 1:10; Mat 24:21;
	before the tribulation (I Thess. 1:10; Rev. 3:10),									
	and afterward to descend with the Church to establish His millennial kingdom upon the earth (Rev. 19:11-20:6).	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2 Thess 1:7-10; Romans 6:7
	We believe that this age will end with the rapture of the church and that there will follow a period of great tribulation upon the earth, after which	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	
	the Lord will visibly return with His church in power and great glory	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	
	to introduce His millennial reign and establish Israel in the land according to the covenant promises.	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	Revelation 20:1-3, 7; Isaiah 11:6-9; Romans 8:21
	We believe that Satan will be bound until the end of the millennium during which time the curse upon the whole creation will be lifted.	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	
12. Future Life	**The conscious existence of the dead (Phil. 1:21-23; Luke 16:19-31), the resurrection of the body (John 5:28-29), the judgement and reward of believers (Rom. 14:10-12; II Cor. 5:10), the judgement and condemnation of unbelievers (Rev. 20:11-15), the eternal life of the saved (John 3:16), and the eternal punishment of the lost (Matt. 25:46; Rev. 20:15).**	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1 Corinthians 3:9-13; 15:51-54; 2 Corinthians 5:8, 10; Romans 14:10
	We believe that at death every believer passes into the presence of Christ and there awaits resurrection, after which He will be judged by Christ for his works.	1	1	1	1	1	1	1		
	We believe that the unsaved will remain under condemnation, and in misery, until the judgment of the Great White Throne where they will be united with their body to be cast into the eternal lake of fire.									Revelation 20:11-15
	We believe that Satan and the fallen angels also will be cast into the lake of fire to be tormented forever.									Revelation 20:10

APPENDIX 3

ESV-PREFERRED PROPOSAL

The Elder Board of AGC desires the ESV to be the preferred translation for GCS use. To provide consistency in memorization, the entire school ideally should be using one standard version. Since the ESV is the primary translation used on Sunday mornings in the pulpit of AGC, we would like it to be consistently preferred among all of the church's ministries. When the ESV is not available, a "more literal" translation is to be preferred, such as NASB or NKJV. Understanding the nature of change, we realize the complete transition may take some time.

What this proposal means:

- The ESV will be the standard translation for memorization and classroom reading. Students in grades 7-12 will continue to be allowed to memorize in any version, though this option should be a rare exception (as it is now). In the transition process, teachers should print out the verses in ESV for students who request it.

- Many times Bible curriculum publishers offer their material with a choice of versions. If the ESV is one of those options, it is to be chosen. If the ESV is not an option, a "more literal" translation should be preferred (see above).

- When teaching from the Bible, especially in Bible class, the ESV is to be the preferred text, unless there is a compelling reason to choose another version. Teacher discretion will be honored.

- Classroom sets of Bibles will be ESV.

- Students should purchase an ESV Bible for school use.

What this proposal does *not* mean:

- It does not mean that AGC is ESV-only, nor does it require any of its ministries to be ESV-only.

- It does not mean that teachers must use the ESV exclusively.

- It does not mean that a student sharing a devotional thought must use the ESV.

- It is not a condemnation of any other version or translation philosophy.

APPENDIX 4

SMALL GROUP MINISTRY SIGNUP REQUEST

Dear Students,   **NAME**: _____

We are trying to maximize discipleship opportunities by offering some new small group meetings with teachers. These groups are entirely optional. If you have a desire to meet with one of the teachers listed below on a regular basis with a small group of students at lunch, please write in their name in the order of your preference. Every effort will be made to honor your preferences, but space may be limited.

Guys' options:
    Mr. Teacher A
    Mr. Teacher B
    Mr. Teacher C
    Mr. Teacher D
    Mr. Teacher E

<table>
<tr><td>Please cross out the days
you are <i>not</i> available:

M   T   W   Th   F</td></tr>
</table>

Girls' options:
    Mrs. Teacher W
    Mrs. Teacher X
    Mrs. Teacher Y
    Mrs. Teacher Z

Please list a maximum of 4 teachers in your order of preference.

    1. _____
    2. _____
    3. _____
    4. _____

Is there a friend you would strongly prefer to be in the same group? If so, write their name(s) down, and we will do our best to accommodate your desires.

    1. _____
    2. _____
    3. _____

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ABSTRACT

RESTORING ACTIVE SPIRITUAL OVERSIGHT TO THE ELDERS
OF ANCHORAGE GRACE CHURCH
ANCHORAGE, ALASKA

Leo Bryan Alan Masters, D.Min.
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2012
Faculty Supervisor: Dr. Donald S. Whitney

This project was designed to help the elders of Anchorage Grace Church regain active spiritual oversight of Grace Christian School through doctrinal accountability and direct spiritual leadership. Chapter 1 gives the purpose, goals, ministry context, rationale, definitions, limitations and delimitations, and introduces the research methodology. Chapter 2 provides the biblical and theological basis for active elder oversight of the church entrusted to their care, and all its ministries. Chapter 3 examines other church-school settings and independent schools to gather wisdom from each. Discipleship methodologies are also examined and applied to the secondary school level. Chapter 4 is a walk-through of the project, detailing what was accomplished during each of the fifteen weeks. Chapter 5 evaluates the project's purpose, goals, strengths, and weaknesses. It also provides a reflection upon what the author would do differently, theological and personal reflections, and closes with a look to the future.

VITA

Leo Bryan Alan Masters

PERSONAL
        Born: October 5, 1975, San Diego, California
        Parents: Al and Linda Masters
        Married: Heather Lea Schilling, December 22, 2007

EDUCATIONAL
        Diploma, West Hills High School, Santee, California, 1993
        B.S. Biology, The Master's College, 1997
        M.Div., The Master's Seminary, 2001

MINISTERIAL
        Youth Pastor, New Hope Community Church, Newhall, California, 1997-98
        Youth Staff Member, Grace Community Church, Sun Valley, California, 1998-99
        College Leadership Team, Community Bible Church, Glendale, California, 2000-02
        Mission Trip Leader, Grace Christian School and Proyecto Fe, Anchorage, Alaska, 2004-
        Dean of Spiritual Life for Grace Christian School, Anchorage Grace Church, Anchorage, Alaska, 2010-
        Associate Pastor of Discipleship Ministries, Anchorage Grace Church, Anchorage, Alaska, 2012-

ACADEMIC
        Bible Teacher, Heritage Christian Academy, Maple Grove, Minnesota, 2002-04
        Bible Teacher, Grace Christian School, Anchorage, Alaska, 2004-12