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The Language of Prayer: A Qualitative Linguistic Analysis  
of Prayer Form & Function

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An abstract of  
a thesis submitted to the Faculty of Emory College of Arts and Sciences  
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Religion and language are two foundational features of human culture. Around the world, almost every society has some form of religious and linguistic practice. At the interface of language and religion is prayer. Despite the pervasiveness of these phenomena, from an academic, especially a linguistic perspective, prayer has been understudied. Rather than examining a specific religion or language, this project explores the patterns in the linguistic manifestations of prayer in the Emory University community.

The purpose of this study is to explore the concept of prayer as a linguistic phenomenon. Through a qualitative lens, this paper explores the language of prayer in both form and function. Recordings and interviews were conducted in order to gather empirical evidence about behaviors and ideas involving prayer in the Emory University community. The data collected supports a linguistic conception of prayer that endures across religions, cultures, and languages. Prayer is conceptually defined by its linguistic functions, not its linguistic form, as a process of agency negotiation.

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## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

This paper examines the relationship between language and the common religious phenomenon of prayer. “Prayer has been part of every known culture and in various forms has been present in every known religion.”<sup>1</sup> Because of the prevalence of prayer, one would assume that prayer has been well researched, scrutinized, and, consequently, understood. However, relative to the body of research on other topics in linguistics, prayer has received little attention. This study attempts to analyze the essence of prayer systematically in order to add to the body of knowledge on the subject.

Expression of faith and the establishment of organized religion were accomplished primarily through speech and writing. The rise of ideologically similar and pervasive religions became possible through unified codes of language. Thus, at the interface of religion and human society is language. Language plays a fundamental role in the development of religion, and one of its most central aspects is prayer.

### **Prayer as a Linguistic Phenomenon**

The primary mode of distribution and manifestation of prayer is language. As the use of language is the common factor across geographic, demographic, and philosophical boundaries, a linguistic examination of prayer would theoretically yield deep insights into prayer as a idea. Thus, this investigation explores the underlying linguistic foundation for how prayers are developed and why prayers are used. Among linguists, there is a debate about what the primary focus of the linguistic research agenda should be. From their earliest philosophical explorations, several important linguistic theorists have demanded that the “linguist must take the study of

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<sup>1</sup>Wuthnow, Robert. “Prayer, cognition, and culture.” *Poetics* 36.5-6. (2008): 333-337.



linguistic structure as his primary concern, and relate all other manifestations of language to it.”<sup>2</sup> The academic popularity of Noam Chomsky’s work on generative grammars fueled linguists’ interest to discover the structural *sine qua non* of language. Ludwig Wittgenstein, another influential linguistic theorist, had different opinions about the field. As Wittgenstein explains, we play “language games” with a variety of functions and goals.<sup>3</sup> We joke; we argue; we proclaim rules; we explain ideas; all are functions of language that are important to understanding the reality of language in daily life. In recent years, the field of sociolinguistics, which examines the functions, social implications, and uses of language in society, has grown in popularity.

Sociolinguists view the “other manifestations of language” to be not just relevant, but crucial to understanding the nature of language. Studying both the forms and functions of language is legitimate and useful for understanding a linguistic phenomenon thoroughly. In order to provide as thorough an exploration of language as possible and to avoid taking sides in this debate, this paper investigates both the linguistic forms and functions of prayer.

### Scope

Prayer is a complex act that involves cognition, language, spirituality, and psychology. Six areas of linguistics address the form of language: phonetics, phonology, syntax, morphology, semantics, and pragmatics. The fields of study that focus on the functions of language are more eclectic. These fields address the tasks that are accomplished by using language and the effects that language have on individual and group identity, power dynamics, and institutions (and vice versa). The relevant manifestations of prayer are those patterns in usage that arise through

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<sup>2</sup>de Saussure, Ferdinand. *Course in General Linguistics*. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1966. <http://www9.georgetown.edu/faculty/irvinem/theory/DeSaussure-Course-excerpts.pdf>

<sup>3</sup>Wittgenstein, Ludwig. *Philosophical Investigations*. (trans. G. E. M. Anscombe) Singapore: Blackwell Publishing, 1953.

observation of faith-based communities. The forms and functions of prayer (like language) might vary infinitely. Notwithstanding this tremendous variation, there are observable principles and patterns by which humans conceptualize and formulate prayer. Not all forms and functions of prayer are observable. The angst-ridden chemistry student before an exam, the injured patient about to enter the emergency room, the petrified child staring at her creaky closet, all might be silently praying, and those might be perfectly legitimate forms of prayer. However, these prayers are not readily observable and therefore cannot be analyzed linguistically. Therefore, the scope of the paper is limited to prayer as an observably linguistic phenomenon. As previously mentioned, one complication of studying such a pervasive occurrence empirically is the sheer enormity of the population size. This study used the Emory University religious community as the population. Specifically these communities were Roman Catholicism, Ecumenical Protestantism, Reform Judaism, and Islam. Research methodology and sampling will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter Three.

### **Purpose**

Essentially, the purpose of this thesis is to analyze prayer descriptively and as it occurs in society. Several questions guide research and examination of prayer. Reviewing these questions will help to outline the rest of the paper and establish intellectual accountability. These questions are (1) What is prayer? (2) How is prayer structured in language? (3) What forms does it take? (4) How does prayer function? (5) How does prayer accomplish these functions linguistically?

## **What is prayer?**

Across religions and languages there exist patterns in the form and function of prayer. However, this observation does not mean that prayer in each community is expected to be the same. Unsurprisingly, there might be significant conceptual variation in what is accepted as part of prayer from culture to culture. The purpose of examining a variety of communities of faith is to derive the axes of variation upon which prayer rests. Prayer may be spoken, thought, sung, whispered alone, acted out in groups, recited from memory, or spontaneously created. Language may vary infinitely within the rule-governed parameters of phonology or syntax. Similarly, the language prayer follows observable patterns; it is only a matter of uncovering what they are. Prayer is unlike other linguistic concepts because the prototypical prayer and its variations are not well known. For instance, take the simple idea of an apple. Apples are fruit that grow on trees and have a thin outer protective layer with juicy insides that surround a hard core containing seeds. Variation within this concept is acceptable; apples may be large or small, red or green, soft or hard. However, there is a conceptual limit to the idea of an apple. Apples should not be as large as basketballs or as blue as the sky. The purpose of this paper is to explore what the acceptable conceptual bounds of prayer are as accomplished through language. Analysis of many different types of prayers, religions, and individuals will help to provide a thorough description of prayer as it exists and is created in society.

## **How is prayer structured in language? What forms does it take?**

The “form of prayer” refers to all the aspects that compose the concept of prayer, the linguistic building blocks that are used in prayer. Each religion has its own types of prayers, and, within each religion, there exists variation in how prayer is structured across languages. Prayer

involves people, places, sacred objects, rituals, clothing, and more. However, in order to provide a single method of comparison across religions and a limited scope, the “form of prayer” will primarily refer to the structure of its linguistic manifestations. The linguistic manifestations include, primarily, speech and, secondarily, writing.

Linguistic structure consists of the structure and processes employed during prayer. The sounds, words, voices, and grammars that individuals and groups choose to use when they pray are what define prayer. Additionally, the linguistic form also refers to the patterns in how these microscopic characteristics are combined. Linguistic analysis of prayer structure requires knowledge about paralinguistic aspects such as who prays, what the subject of prayer is, and where and when prayer takes place. The patterns in these paralinguistic aspects also reveal conceptually “appropriate” forms of prayer as it exists in society.

### **How does prayer function? How does prayer accomplish these functions linguistically?**

Prayer is a crucial aspect of religion and the spiritual lives of humans. Many humans pray even though they are not religious. Thus, prayer has many functions that might not always be immediately obvious. While many fields attempt to tackle the significance of prayer in society, the purpose here is to explore the significance of the language used and linguistic choices made during prayer.

As Wittgenstein posited, “the meaning of a word is its use in the language.”<sup>4</sup> While not directly concerned with compositional semantics, this project describes the nature of prayer and the linguistic manifestations thereof. The different uses of prayer in actuality and the different uses of the word “prayer” are both relevant. Trends in the linguistic contexts for prayer may reveal the reasons for why individuals pray.

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<sup>4</sup> Wittgenstein (1953): 20

## Terminology

While these questions guide the collection of data and provide a framework for this paper, many terms involved are amorphous and loosely defined. In order to ensure clarity, it would be useful to furnish some brief working definitions:<sup>5</sup>

*Religion* is defined as a set of beliefs and practices that address spirituality and divinity. It is important here to note that this definition of religion includes not only major organized religions like Catholicism and Islam, but also philosophies such as Agnosticism, Atheism, and Polytheism.

*Faith* may be defined as the self-identification with and adherence to a particular religion. This term is particularly slippery for two reasons. First, like many social markers, unless asked, it is impossible to discern an individual's faith solely through observation. Second, faith is neither a binary, discrete concept nor a stable state. No one is simply faithful or unfaithful. The degree of faith an individual might fall on a continuum and changes over time.

A *higher being* is defined as a concept of divine force. Most, though not all, religions enshrine a specific deity as the architect of all human existence. For example, in Catholicism, the Holy Trinity (God, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit) composes this figure, and, in Islam, Allah is this figure. In other religions this role is different or nonexistent. A *higher being* is the embodiment (or recognition) of forces beyond the control of human(s). This definition of a *higher being* is equivalent to the concept of a *higher power*. *Higher being* refers to the concept in general rather than referring to any one specific deity.

Miriam Meyerhoff defined *communities of practice (CofPs)* as having three necessary conditions: mutual engagement, jointly negotiated enterprise, and shared (linguistic) repertoire.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> These definitions recognize the tremendous variation of valid connotations and denotations that exist for these terms. However, for the purposes of this paper, these narrower definitions will suffice.

This concept overlays with the idea of religious communities. Religious communities involve frequent gatherings (mutual engagement), collective expressions of faith (jointly negotiated enterprise), and holy texts and language (shared repertoire). Meyerhoff notes that CofPs are “defined in terms of the members’ subjective experience of the boundaries between their community and other communities.”<sup>7</sup> Faith’s aforementioned definition takes this idea into account. The object of examination in this study (besides individuals) involves faith-based CofPs. Although these terms are not semantically identical, for this study speech community<sup>8</sup> and CofP will be used interchangeably.

Another important term to introduce is the concept of *religiolect*.<sup>9</sup> In the study of sociolinguistics, the term idiolect is a general term for a language variety that communicates information about the identity of the speaker using that language variety. Linguists treat language variation as normal because languages differ across bounds of intelligibility and also within them. A commonly discussed type of language variant is dialects, or a language variety used primarily by individuals from a particular geographic region. Predictably then, the term *religiolect* is “a language variety with its own history and development, which is used by a religious community.”<sup>10</sup> Examples of *religiolects* include *Christianese*<sup>11</sup> and *Ladino*.<sup>12</sup> The use of a *religiolect* reveals or indexes certain traits of an individual, including a greater likelihood

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<sup>6</sup> Meyerhoff, M. (2008) “Communities of Practice” in *The Handbook of Language Variation and Change* (eds J. K. Chambers, P. Trudgill and N. Schilling-Estes), Blackwell Publishing Ltd, Oxford, UK.  
doi: 10.1002/9780470756591. 527-528

<sup>7</sup> Meyerhoff (2008): 527-528

<sup>8</sup> Blom, Jan-Petter, and John J. Gumperz. *Social meaning in linguistic structure: code-switching in Norway*. London: Routledge, 1972.

<sup>9</sup> Coined in Hary 1992: xviii n. 1.

<sup>10</sup> Hary, B. and Wein, M. (2013), “Religiolinguistics: on Jewish-, Christian- and Muslim-defined languages”. *De Gruyter Mouton*. 88-92.

<sup>11</sup> Leiter, S. (2013). “Christianese: A sociolinguistic analysis of the evangelical Christian dialect of American English”.

<sup>12</sup> Hary and Wein (2013): 92

that the individual belongs to a particular faith-based CofP. CofP and religiolect are useful terms for describing the behaviors and practices of individuals who pray.

### **Outline**

Chapter Two is a review of the literature addressing the topic of prayer. The literature review briefly focuses on a wide field of research that explores the relationships of language and religion, specifically in the realm of studies on prayer. This chapter summarizes the currently available findings about prayer, addresses gaps in the research, and comments on the utility of different sources of research. Chapter Three outlines this study's research methodology and the Emory University community subject population. Additionally, Chapter Three covers the data collection processes including interviews and religious services, the rationale and methods for sampling, and the measures taken to avoid bias. Chapter Four discusses what the data suggest about the form of prayer. Differences and similarities in the structural concept of prayer are analyzed through six different areas of linguistics: semantics, pragmatics, syntax, morphology, phonetics, and phonology. Chapter Four also analyzes the way individuals form prayers linguistically and the significance of these findings. Chapter Five discusses what the data suggest about the functions of prayer. This chapter analyzes the treatment of prayer as a speech act, the purposes for which it is used, and how those functions are accomplished through language. Additionally, the ways that individuals use language as prayer are presented. Chapter Six summarizes the conclusions drawn from the data, addresses shortcomings in the methods, and discusses difficulties in the research. Chapter Six concludes with suggestions for future explorations of the language of prayer.

## CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter outlines how the academic research has treated prayer as a linguistic phenomenon. A relatively limited body of academic literature *directly* addresses and explores the interface of language and religion. Even less frequently is prayer the subject of an academic article. Furthermore, authors seem to inhabit the role of advocate rather than academic in these articles.

Language and religion permeate human societies and spread prayer with them. The liberalization of institutionalized religions allows religious services to be offered in the local vernacular, so, therefore, organized religions are now practiced in large spectrum of languages. Further, prayer does not only exist in organized religion, which suggests that prayer is even more widespread than religion. Despite its pervasiveness, a thorough and empirically derived understanding of prayer language evades researchers. The relative privacy with which individuals conduct prayer and its multifarious purposes have made prayer difficult to study.

Academics have had trouble in applying the scientific method to research on prayer. Research problems include: sample randomization; ethical dilemmas; control groups; study design; integrity of data collection; and analytical methods, and these issues are present at practically every stage of study.<sup>13 14 15</sup> Many of these research problems are more prevalent and more relevant to medical or biological studies of specific types of prayer (e.g. intercessory). These research problems also are present in the social sciences as well. Investigators of prayer have difficulty identifying what variables to measure and then measuring these variables with

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<sup>13</sup>Berry, Devon. "Methodological Pitfalls in the Study of Religiosity and Spirituality." *Western Journal of Nursing Research* 27.5 (2005): 628-647.

<sup>14</sup>Hammerschmidt, DE. "Ethical and Practical Problems in Studying Prayer." *Archives of Internal Medicine* 160.12 (2000): 1874; 1877-8.

<sup>15</sup>Sloan, Richard P., Emilia Bagiella, and Tia Powell "Without a prayer: Methodological problems, ethical challenges, and misrepresentations in the study of religion, spirituality, and medicine" in *Faith and health: Psychological perspectives* (eds. Plante, Thomas G. and Allen C. Sherman), Guilford Press, New York (2001).



any consistency. Because researchers do not fully understand why humans pray, research hypotheses are unclear in defining the expected outcomes of prayer. This study intentionally uses qualitative research methods and scope in order to avoid some of these methodological traps. However, these methodological difficulties have important ramifications for the study of prayer.

Theological and philosophical studies have often explored the relationship between religion and language. Spirituality is disseminated primarily through organized religions, which use language as its medium. Therefore, by some accounts, “modern theology is—at least—a linguistic discipline.”<sup>16</sup> Studies have explored subjects such as the translation of religious mysteries into language,<sup>17</sup> the use of metaphorical and mythological language in religion,<sup>18</sup> and the philosophical purpose of prayer.<sup>19</sup> These types of theological or philosophical works are not written to arrive at empirically derived conclusions about the nature of prayer, but rather to deduce and explore the significance of prayer in the human experience. Indeed, while these studies make many important didactic points about the *significance* of prayer, little attention is paid to the *language* of prayer, itself.

The implications of religious language are increasingly the topic of sociolinguistic studies that explore the relationship of religious identity to language use. These studies focus on describing the linguistic choices, dialects, and identity of the examined speech communities. The examination of religiolects and religious CofPs are often the topics of this recent trend in sociolinguistics. Studies in this vein illustrate the potential insights provided by religiolects.<sup>20 21</sup>

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<sup>16</sup>Lawrence, Irene. *Linguistics and theology: The significance of Noam Chomsky for theological construction*. Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow Press, 2000.

<sup>17</sup>Downes, William. *Language and Religion: A Journey into the Human Mind*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011.

<sup>18</sup>Frye, Northrop. *The Double Vision: Language and Meaning in Religion*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991.

<sup>19</sup>Santayana, George. *Reason in Religion*, vol. 3, *The Life of Reason*. New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1982.

<sup>20</sup>Leiter, Sarah. *Christianese: A sociolinguistic analysis of the evangelical Christian dialect of American English*. Atlanta: Emory University, 2013.

<sup>22</sup> Religiolects studies can examine and describe the nexus of religion, language, politics, and nationalism.<sup>23 24 25</sup> These studies discuss prayer insofar as prayer reveals information about the identity of speakers. Unfortunately, these studies' mention prayer relatively infrequently; further, prayer is treated only as one of many identity and community building tools of religious language.

Few relevant conclusions about the linguistic nature of prayer can be drawn from these studies of religion and language as well as religious language. Religious identification has demonstrative effects on the speech of followers as well as those that come into contact with religious CofPs. This influence can range from limited semantic borrowings to religiolects that are unintelligible to the uninitiated listener. Because prayer is central to religion and language, prayer is likely to utilize many aspects of religiolects and religious languages. While research in the area of sociolinguistics is plentiful, these studies generally address prayer only tangentially. This observation is not criticism of those studies, but rather highlights the relatively small pool of direct research on prayer.

A thorough discussion of the form of prayer comes in sacred texts and holy books such as the Qur'an, the Bible, the Torah, and the Talmud. Many of the world's major religions have issued detailed explanations of the "proper" form of prayer linguistically, mentally, and physically.<sup>26</sup> For instance, the Roman Catholic Church publishes the *Catechism of the Catholic*

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<sup>21</sup>Hary, Benjamin. "The Jewish Linguistic Spectrum." Unpublished. (2013)

<sup>22</sup>Benor, Sarah Bunin. "Do American Jews Speak a "Jewish Language"?" *The Jewish Quarterly Review* 99.2 (2009): 230-269.

<sup>23</sup>Wein, Martin J. and Benjamin Hary. "Peoples of the Book: Religion, Language, Nationalism, and Sacred Text Translation." Unpublished. (2014).

<sup>24</sup>Kabir, M.G. "Religion, language and nationalism in Bangladesh." *Asian Journal of Control* 17.4 (1987): 473-487.

<sup>25</sup>Weinstein, Brian. "Language Strategists: Redefining Political Frontiers on the Basis of Linguistic Choices." *World Politics* 31.3 (1979): 345-364.

<sup>26</sup>"Catechism of the Catholic Church." Libreria Editrice Vaticana. [http://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0015/\\_INDEX.HTM](http://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0015/_INDEX.HTM) (1993).

*Church*, an extremely detailed guide about the Catholic faith. The tome contains an entire part entitled “Christian Prayer” that provides directions to traditional Roman Catholic prayer.

Religious texts such as this provide a wealth of knowledge about the structure of prayer in organized religion.

These religious texts provide some of the most detailed and thorough descriptions of prayer. The depth of analysis of prayer as a spiritual tool or religious construct is dependent on which religion is examined. Factors affecting a religion’s analysis of prayer include the relative institutionalization of the religion, centralization of leadership, and number and size of denominations. For instance, compared to Roman Catholicism’s *Catechism*, the number of denominations of Islam has made it difficult for any one authoritative guide to Muslim prayer (other than the Qur’an) to gain significant recognition. Religious texts provide a plethora of examples of prescriptive prayers and explanations of their structure. It is important to mention that these are *prescriptions* about prayer for followers of a certain faith. While liturgical specifications in authoritative texts are informative, they do not necessarily reflect which forms of prayer might take place in reality. Thus, if the object of this particular study is the faith-based community and not the religious institution, these prescriptive sources have limited utility. Certainly, billions of people pray in accordance with these texts daily. Nonetheless, descriptive studies should avoid using prescriptive sources. For this reason citations of religious texts in this paper are limited.

While not academic literature, pop-theology and “self-help” guides for prayer are worth mentioning due to extent of their promulgation. The vast majority of the religious section of a county library yielded this style of didactic works written by non-academic sources.<sup>27</sup> The prevalence of these works in a county library suggests that these authors have significant

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<sup>27</sup> The location of this library is in an upper-middle class suburb of northeast Atlanta.

influence on the practices and behaviors of the average person. For example, Anne Lamott, a *New York Times* bestselling author, in her book *Help, Thanks, Wow* directly addresses three specific functions of prayer. In this book, she discusses the nature of prayer, and she discusses how she uses prayer in her everyday life. The popularity of her works shows that, in addition to the prescriptions of organized religions, individuals also frequently interested in the prayer advice of mavens such as Anne Lamott.

Besides these examples of prescriptions for prayer, in the academic medical community, there exists a bounty of research on the effects of intercessory prayer. Recently, intercessory prayer, which is prayer made on behalf of another, and the effectiveness of intercessory prayer have been a popular topic in medical journals. These studies are interested in whether or not prayer has an observable and tangible effect on the health of those involved in the prayer. Generally, the form of these studies involves a control group and a prayer group. Both groups are made up of individuals that were suffering from various conditions from arthritis to coronary difficulties. The prayer group received intercessory prayer from an outside group of religious individuals. At this time, the scientific community has not come to consensus about the effects of intercessory prayer on patients. Many studies are inconclusive,<sup>28 29</sup> but there are also examples that support a connection between intercessory prayer and increased health<sup>30 31 32 33</sup> and

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<sup>28</sup>Roberts, Leanne, Ahmed Irshad, Steve Hall, and Davison Andrew. "Intercessory prayer for the alleviation of ill health." *Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews* 15.2 (2009).

<sup>29</sup>Mathai, John and Angela Bourne. "Pilot study investigating the effect of intercessory prayer in the treatment of child psychiatric disorders." *Australasian Psychiatry* 12.4 (2004): 386–389.

<sup>30</sup>Masters, Kevin S. "Research on the Healing Power of Distant Intercessory Prayer: Disconnect Between Science and Faith." *Journal of Psychology & Theology* 33.4 (2005): 268 - 277.

<sup>31</sup>Harris, WS, et al. "A Randomized, Controlled Trial of the Effects of Remote, Intercessory Prayer on Outcomes in Patients Admitted to the Coronary Care Unit." *Archives of Internal Medicine* 159.19 (2000): 2273-8.

<sup>32</sup>Matthews, Dale A., Sally M. Marlow and Francis S. MacNutt. "Effects of Intercessory Prayer on Patients With Rheumatoid Arthritis." *Southern Medical Journal* 93.12 (2000): 1177-86.

<sup>33</sup>Brown, Candy Gunther, Stephen C. Mory, Rebecca Williams and Michael J. McClymond. "Study of the Therapeutic Effects of Proximal Intercessory Prayer (STEPP) on Auditory and Visual Impairments in Rural Mozambique." *Southern Medical Journal* 103.9 (2010): 864-869.

examples that do not support this connection.<sup>34</sup> There are even studies examining the effects for nonhuman prayer targets.<sup>35</sup>

These studies' conclusions vary widely and these studies frequently suffer from methodological complications.<sup>36</sup> These complications include the difficulty of establishing a baseline for religious belief, establishing end-points, measurement of prayer "strength," relevance of religious tradition, and ethical implications.<sup>37</sup> There has been a flurry of meta-studies conducted to further explore the widely divergent study methods employed in examinations of intercessory prayer, again, with mixed conclusions.<sup>38 39 40</sup> These studies highlight the difficulty of approaching prayer in a quantitative and scientific manner. Prayer is a phenomenon that is very individualized and dependent on innumerable variables. It is difficult to understand what the purpose of prayer is and wrong to generalize all prayer as intercessory. Many scientific academics recognize these nuances but face empirical difficulties.

Social science disciplines are continuing to study the psychological and sociological functions of prayer. Social science academics treat prayer as a cultural object or largely an ancillary matter in favor of focus on wider social trends.<sup>41 42</sup> These studies focus on the

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<sup>34</sup>Palmer, Raymond F., David Katerndahl and Jayne Morgan-Kidd. "A randomized trial of the effects of remote intercessory prayer: interactions with personal beliefs on problem-specific outcomes and functional status." *Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine* 10.3 (2004): 438-48.

<sup>35</sup>Lesniak, Karen T. "The effect of intercessory prayer on wound healing in nonhuman primates." *Alternative Therapies in Health And Medicine* 12.6 (2006): 42-48.

<sup>36</sup>Sloan, Richard P. and Rajasekhar Ramakrishnan. "Science, Medicine, and Intercessory Prayer." *Perspectives in Biology and Medicine* 49.4 (2006): 504-514.

<sup>37</sup>Halperin, EC. "Should Academic Medical Centers Conduct Clinical Trials of the Efficacy of Intercessory Prayer." *Academic Medicine* 76.8 (2001): 791-797.

<sup>38</sup>Hodge, David R. "A Systematic Review of the Empirical Literature on Intercessory Prayer." *Research on Social Work Practice* 17.2 (2007): 174-187.

<sup>39</sup>Cadge, Wendy. "Possibilities and Limits of Medical Science: Debates over Double-Blind Clinical Trials of Intercessory Prayer." *Journal of Religion & Science* 47.1 (2012): 43-64.

<sup>40</sup>Masters, Kevin S. "Research on the Healing Power of Distant Intercessory Prayer: Disconnect Between Science and Faith." *Journal of Psychology & Theology* 33.4 (2005): 268 - 277.

<sup>41</sup>Cadge, Wendy and M. Daglian. "Blessings, strength, and guidance: Prayer frames in a hospital prayer book." *Poetics* 36.5-6 (2008): 358-373.

<sup>42</sup>Cerulo, Karen A. and Barra, Andrea. "In the Name of . . . : Legitimate Interactants in the Dialogue of Prayer." *Poetics* 36.5-6. (2008): 374-388.

connection between prayer as cognition and social markers like socio-economic status, occupation, race, age, etc.<sup>43 44</sup> Along similar but broader lines are sociological surveys like the PewResearch Religion & Public Life Project, Gallup Religion Polls, and the Public Religion Research Institute. These surveys examine the demographic and social patterns through studies of prayer, which tell us more about the qualities of religious people than the nature of prayer. Primarily sociological studies explain: who prays, what their views on religious topics are, what the qualities of religious people are, the geography of religion, and historical trends. While patterns of the form and function of prayer are noted in these studies, the significance they derive is from how these patterns relate to the identity and behavior of practitioners.

Prayer is acknowledged in the literature as a form of speech act.<sup>45 46</sup> Pioneered by J.L. Austin and John Searle, Speech Act Theory proposes that some utterances are not simply true or false (i.e. constative), but, in their use, change the state of the world as it exists (i.e. performative).<sup>47</sup> This assertion implies that there are specific linguistic and paralinguistic patterns that must be met in order for an utterance to “qualify” as prayer. Austin outlined certain felicity conditions that determine whether or not a speech act actually happened. Academics in the field of pragmatics expanded this logic to come to the conclusion that many times, the meaning of an utterance can be dependent on its context. Thus, understanding the meaning and content of prayer requires a grasp of its pragmatic or paralinguistic context. While the conceptualization of prayer as a speech act is mentioned in the literature, that idea is not

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<sup>43</sup>Levin, Jeffery S. and Robert Joseph Taylor. "Age Differences in Patterns and Correlates of the Frequency of Prayer." *Gerontologist* 37.1 (1997): 75-88.

<sup>44</sup>Krause, Neal and Linda M. Chatters. "Exploring Race Differences in a Multidimensional Battery of Prayer Measures among Older Adults." *Sociology of Religion* 66.1 (2005): 23-43.

<sup>45</sup>Blumenthal, David. "Liturgies of Anger." *Cross Currents* 52.2 (2002), [http://www.js.emory.edu/BLUMENTHAL/Liturgies of Anger.html](http://www.js.emory.edu/BLUMENTHAL/Liturgies%20of%20Anger.html).

<sup>46</sup>Bender, Courtney. "How does God answer back?" *Poetics*. 36 (2008): 477-479.

<sup>47</sup>Searle, J.R. *Speech Acts: An Essay in the Philosophy of Language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969.

explicated. Therefore, the parameters that determine the felicity of prayer, as well as the pragmatic factors that affect prayer are the subject of further exploration in this project.

Several academics describe what they perceive the purpose of prayer to be either for certain groups or in general. Broadly, a philosophical debate exists as to whether prayer is an individualized act or a communicative act between the individual and the divine.<sup>48 49</sup> Authors discuss how religious texts encourage listening to God and frame prayer as direct communication with the divine.<sup>50 51</sup> Mosche Greenberg described this communicative argument as the “social analogy of prayer speech.”<sup>52</sup> The significance of the individual-social prayer dialectic is that both views are likely to be considered legitimate in different contexts and for different individuals.

Research indicates that there are many functions outside of petition or direct communication with God. Studies in sociology and religion indicate that prayer is used to build a sense of community,<sup>53</sup> to signal social and spiritual commitment,<sup>54</sup> and to negotiate emotions or catharsis.<sup>55</sup> Prayer seems to play different roles for both individuals and religious communities that extend beyond those that have been examined and detailed in academic literature. This study aims to examine these functions and how they are accomplished in language. The next chapter will focus on research methodology and data collection.

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<sup>48</sup>Keane, W. “Religious Language.” *Annual Review of Anthropology* 26. (1997): 47-71

<sup>49</sup>Ciaravino, Helene. *How to Pray: Tapping into the Power of Divine Communication*. Garden City Park: Square One Publishers, 2001.

<sup>50</sup>Bender (2008): 477-479

<sup>51</sup>Cerulo & Barra (2008): 374-376

<sup>52</sup>Greenberg, Mosche. *Biblical Prose Prayer: As a Window to the Popular Religion of Ancient Israel*. Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1983.

<sup>53</sup>Robbins, Joel. "God Is Nothing but Talk: Modernity, Language, and Prayer in a Papua New Guinea Society." *American Anthropologist* 103.4 (2001): 901-912.; Wuthnow (2008): 333-337

<sup>54</sup>Heather, Noel. *Religious Language and Critical Discourse Analysis: Ideology and Identity in Christian Discourse Today*, Vol. 5. Oxford: Peter Lang, 2000.

<sup>55</sup>Cadge & Daglian 2008, O’Rielly, J. 2000 The hospital prayer book: a partner for healing, *Literature and Medicine*, 19 (1) (2000), pp. 61–83; Goffman, E. 1974 *Frame Analysis: An Essay on the Organization of Experience*. Harper & Row, New York (1974).

### CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DATA COLLECTION

This chapter discusses the study population, presents the research methods, briefly identifies some research obstacles, and addresses the collection of data. This study took place at Emory University from August 2013 to April 2014.<sup>56</sup> Emory University is a research institution that is based in the Druid Hills suburb of Atlanta. As of January 2014, Emory University has 14,513 students: 7,836 undergraduate and 6,677 graduate and professional students.<sup>57</sup> The Emory University student community was the population of this study. This population was chosen in order to set boundaries on the number of potential subjects and because it represents a relatively cohesive and diverse group. While Emory was founded by Methodist ministers and maintains its relationship with the United Methodist Church, the student body has significant religious diversity. The mission of the Emory University Office of the Dean of the Chapel and Religious Life is as follows:

The Office of the Dean of the Chapel and Religious Life seeks to fulfill its role in maintaining a religious, spiritual, ethical and moral presence in and to the University and to the Church. Consistent with the United Methodist historic commitment to minister in institutions of higher learning, as stated in the 1996 Book of Discipline, "The Church is aware of its responsibility to provide adequate professional ministry to persons in special situations beyond the local church which calls for an ecumenical ministry to persons of different denominations and faith groups."<sup>58</sup>

Thus, the university employs a variety of scholars and practitioners to promote underrepresented religions. Many different religious services take place in Cannon Chapel, which emphasizes the attempt to establish religious inclusivity. The wide array of faith communities available and the substantial tolerance for inquiry made the Emory faith-based community a unique and convenient opportunity to conduct research on prayer in higher education.

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<sup>56</sup>Data collection took place from January to February 2013.

<sup>57</sup><http://www.emory.edu/home/about/factsfigures/index.html>

<sup>58</sup><http://www.religiouslife.emory.edu/about/mission.cfm>



### **Data Collection**

The collection of data involved two separate parts. The first part involved religious services and the second part involved interviews. For examination of religious services, four faith-based communities were selected in order to provide a representative snapshot of the organized religious community. The four most populous religious groups of the student body were identified and selected: Reform Judaism, Protestant Christianity, Roman Catholicism, and Islam. For the purposes of this thesis, the following abbreviations will be used to refer to each service: Reform Jewish Shabbat (RJS), Ecumenical Christian Mass (ECM), Roman Catholic Mass (RCM), and Jumah Prayer Service (JPS). Leaders of each service were contacted and consented to allow observation and recording of the service. In some cases, the leaders asked their congregation for permission at a previous service. The video recording was organized to focus on the leader of religious service while also attempting to include those worshipping in as respectful a manner as possible. The investigator did not participate in the services, and left the service after the recording began. Analysis focused on the prayers offered during the religious service and the accompanying liturgical documents, if any were provided. Selected audio recording transcriptions of these religious services can be found in Exhibit D.

In the interview portion, participants were recruited by voluntarily opting-in to the study. Recruitment flyers were posted in several public locations on campus and circulated in public forums online. For example, flyers were posted in coffee shops, residence halls, and on public flyer bulletin boards. Participants emailed the investigator to opt-in. Each participant was guaranteed five dollars in remuneration for participation in a one-hour audio-recorded interview. Informants were not required to be of a specific religious background or even theistic. The only

limitations on participation were that subjects had to be at least eighteen years old and had to be a currently enrolled student at Emory University. The purposes of these limitations were to limit the scope of the paper and to ensure the ability to give legal consent. As the phenomenon of prayer is not limited by organized religious boundaries, it was determined that this study should not place any faith-based requirements on interviewees. Once ten participants had opted-in to the study, they were informed that they were selected for the study. Only eight out of the ten students who opted-in to the study responded to schedule interviews.

At the beginning of each interview, participants were requested to complete a questionnaire that asked about age, language proficiency, nationality, residency, ethnicity, race, and religious background.<sup>59</sup> Each participant also created a non-identifiable alias, which would be used for transcriptions. After the interviewer informed the interviewee of the purpose of the study and allowed the interviewee to ask any questions, the audio recording began. A question bank guided the interviewer, but the interviews were flexible; there was no specific order or quota of questions. The purpose of the interviews was to explore the linguistic nature of prayer according to the experiences and opinions of each informant. For the sake of time and clarity, the speech of the interviewer was excluded from the transcriptions. Selected interviewee quotations were transcribed from all interviews. These quotations were analyzed for a variety of qualitative and quantitative linguistic factors. Exhibit C contains the selected interview transcriptions. In order to ensure ethical compliance, Institutional Review Board approval was sought and granted for this study.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>59</sup>Please see Exhibit A for interviewee profiles.

<sup>60</sup>This study's IRB number is IRB00070859.

### Methodological Issues

There were significant logistical issues that impacted the study design. Prime among these were the time constraints created by the author's lateness in beginning project development and those imposed by the process of acquiring Institutional Review Board approval, as the study involved human interaction.<sup>61</sup> The time constraints demanded a smaller and therefore less representative and diverse pool of participants. Furthermore, there were issues regarding the difficulty of attempting to avoid sampling bias. In a study as small as this, there are trade-offs between randomization and representativeness in sampling. This question of preference between integrity in representation or elimination of bias resulted in selection of random sampling. Random sampling was chosen in order to prevent selection bias. However, as a result, there were many important perspectives that were excluded (e.g. none of the interviewees were of a Islamic background). In retrospect, a predetermined social category method like that proposed in Wolfram & Fasold (1974) would have been much better for a qualitative study such as this one.

Additionally, this study encountered the observer's paradox<sup>62</sup> and difficulties in interviewer bias. The investigator attempted to avoid the observer's paradox by leaving after the recording of a religious service began. The investigator chose to avoid attendance at the observed religious services rather than to be a participant-observer because the investigator is only a participant in one of the faith-communities (RCM). With limited ability to participate authentically, the decision was made in order to be consistent in observation across the four religious service recordings. At certain points during interviews, however, the interviewer asked the interviewees to give a prayer during the recording, which resulted in very limited success. This was likely due to the shyness that can result from the observer's paradox. Additionally,

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<sup>61</sup>The Principal Investigator submitted this study for approval on November 2, 2013, and the IRB granted approval on December 27, 2013.

<sup>62</sup>Labov, William (1972). *Sociolinguistic Patterns*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania. p. 209.

while the interviewer attempted to avoid coloring questions in certain ways, there are likely cases in which the framing of questions influenced the interviewee responses.

The purpose of this study is to understand the linguistic manifestations of prayer holistically. Analytical discussion of data will be covered in chapters four and five through the lenses of linguistic form and function, respectively.

## CHAPTER FOUR: FORM OF PRAYER

### *How is prayer structured in language? What forms does it take?*

What is meant by the word “form” with regards to prayer? Form refers to not only the structural areas of language, but also the social conventions that dictate the way a prayer is created. Suggesting that there are patterns and models of prayer is not to prescribe a normative model of the way people pray. Indeed, descriptive models of prayer, just like descriptive models of any other behavior might vary over time or in different places. In this case, the model for prayer describes the Emory University student community during spring of 2014. Providing a description of the patterns found in this community suggests that, like other types of linguistic phenomena, prayer is a concept with associated and established social conventions. It is difficult to parse prescriptivism from these social norms because many of the social norms might be and are influenced by the traditionally prescriptive institutions of organized religions. While prayer might deviate from these patterns (potentially *ad infinitum*), individuals are aware that they exist. These patterns are what will be analyzed here.

### **The Conceptual Insignificance of Linguistic Prayer Structure**

Before answering the above questions about the form of prayer, the relative importance of structure in the conceptual linguistic definition of prayer should be noted. Most definitions of prayer did not involve specific description of the linguistic patterns of prayer, as opposed to other types of well-known linguistic devices, such as essays, poems, and jokes. In interviews, respondents reported differing levels of deference to the idea that prayer has a conceptual form. Here, J explains his absolutist view about prayer and language:

- “I view language completely unnecessary to praying.” J 24:25

This utterance represents the respondents' consensus. They recognize that language can be completely unnecessary to prayer. Respondents admit that prayer is accomplished through nonlinguistic means like dance, meditation, or yoga. Take note that, as previously mentioned, this study recognizes the wide possibilities of prayer beyond language, but limits its scope to spoken prayer.

After establishing the topic of linguistic structure, respondents gave answers that differed in degree of deference to the idea that the prayer concept is defined by its form. Most respondents were in agreement that the structure of prayer is, at least in individual prayer, mostly irrelevant.

- "I don't think they need structure." H 5:41B
- "I don't think there's any sort of general organization for all prayers, they differ so much." MT 8:17B
- "Any form of communication whether you're yelling or saying it calmly or you're crying, it's still prayer." NT 4:12
- "I don't think there's a specific structure necessarily, but I think even across other religions, praying is pretty much the same concept, but just toward different Gods, I guess you could say." NT 10:09

These responses suggest that linguistic structure does not seem to be an important part of the conceptual definition of prayer. However, the subjects recognize that their definition of prayer need not preclude other definitions of prayer. Respondents were cautious to give answers that could be perceived as suggesting that they held prescriptive or bigoted views. In many cases, the respondents emphasized that there existed a great variety of possibilities for prayer and their views were not representative of all forms of prayer. The reasons for this pattern varied. Many

respondents seemed to want to avoid prescribing their views too broadly. Others admitted that they were ignorant of other cultures' and religions' methods of praying. These reasons support the idea that the conceptual linguistic structure of prayer is very flexible.

The type of prayer that takes place during religious services is more conceptually defined by its linguistic structure than that which takes place individually. During all religious services, there was very little divergence from the written liturgy. Prayers were written down, and most were recited from paper. Religious services contained prayers that were more structured. For instance, the Roman Catholic Mass contained the *Confiteor* (RCM 19:22-19:50) and the Our Father (RCM 51:55-54:12), and the Jummah Prayer Service contained the *Shehada* and the *Tekbir* (JPS 25:27-27:16). These examples exhibit the types of formally structured and prescribed prayers that are common in religious services.

There were very few or no circumstances in which the congregation was invited to speak spontaneously. In addition, these deviations were also usually a selection among a pre-approved set of alternatives. For instance, during the Ecumenical Christian service, the congregation was invited to speak freely, but to choose from among a prescribed selection of text.

- *Lector*: "I now invite you to share aloud the words or phrases from today's readings that have touched you, to share your words of life."

*Members of the Congregation*: "Light...He healed them. Syria. Power of God... **Thanks be to God.**" ECS 28:30-29:20

This example shows that there is a mixture between spontaneity and rigidity of prayer structure in religious services. Religious institutions appear to validate the necessity for conceptual prayer structure flexibility in individual prayer while promoting the institution's prescriptions as much as possible. Institutional adherence to prescriptions is not absolute.

Religious services promote one type of prayer, but not to the extent that leaders would stop or notice if a participant diverged from the prescribed text. There is no instance in any of the recordings during which a speaker corrects another individual for praying incorrectly. All religious services allowed and, at some point, encouraged individual prayer, thereby relinquishing control and concern over regulating the possibility of deviation from the prescribed prayer structure. The religious services provide a more normative structural framework for prayer than the interview respondents. However, all the religious services still allowed time for individual prayer, thereby showing deference to the idea of structural flexibility.

The point is that purely normative models regarding the linguistic structure of prayer are relatively rare. Individuals, by their own admission, claim that they are not familiar enough with different religions to know what is considered acceptable. Furthermore, respondents recognize the tremendous linguistic variation within their own prayers. Religious services and institutions provide outlines for prayer, including outlines for what to say. However, none claimed that there was only one acceptable form of prayer. In both religious services and individual responses, data suggests that prayer form is relatively or entirely flexible. While that statement might seem to defeat the purpose of this chapter, there are nonetheless patterns, at least in the examined communities, of prayer forms that prove useful to answering the questions originally posed. Therefore, defining prayer form is less a task of addressing what is or is not allowed conceptually and more a task of finding what linguistic patterns commonly occur.

There are six different areas of linguistics that generally address aspects of the form of language: Phonetics, Phonology, Morphology, Syntax, Semantics, and Pragmatics. While, individually, these areas do not provide the method for examination of prayer, making



observations about each with relation to the form of prayer is useful in constructing a conceptual definition of prayer.

### **Phonetics & Phonology**

The areas of phonetics and phonology refer to the sounds of language. The data collected in this study suggests that prayers are not defined by patterns of sound changes or certain pronunciation varieties.

Analysis of interviews reveals no distinguishable pattern of pronunciation when speaking about prayer or during examples of prayer. Indeed, all the respondents exhibited examples of certain dialects or idiolects, but no consistent pattern of phonetic or phonological features was observed or inferred from these interviews. Speakers did not attempt to mimic a particular accent. Of course, these individuals varied in regional origin, ethnicity, and religious background, among other things, all of which could be associated with a particular pattern of pronunciation. As previously mentioned, within a particular religion, there are reliable patterns of speaking: religiolects. However, there is much less support for the idea of a “praying accent.”

Within a religious service, there were several instances of different pronunciations of the same word. Take for example the word, “amen.” The word is significantly prevalent in Christianity, Islam, and Judaism. Scholars seem to disagree on the significance and origin of the difference in pronunciation between /eɪ'men/ and /ɑ'men/. Often cited reasons include the Great Vowel Shift, religious influences, and translational differences. Interview respondents agree that the pronunciation of “amen” does not matter (HM 10:27). The varied pronunciation of such a commonly occurring word suggests that pronunciation is not a crucial feature in the conceptual linguistic definition of prayer.

Across all religious services, there were no instances of pronunciation correction. These circumstances could indicate two different interpretations about the relationship of phonetics to prayer. The first is that pronunciation is simply irrelevant to prayer's conceptual linguistic structure. The second is that pronunciation is relevant to definitions of prayer, but this seems unlikely. For the second interpretation to be true religious services must have included many mispronounced "quasi-prayers" and service leaders must not have cared enough to correct those errors. Furthermore, speech during religious services is often in unison, which precludes correction until after the fact. To reiterate, when religious service leaders relinquish control over regulating deviation from a prescribed pronunciation, it follows that this deviation must not be important.

Pronunciation choices do not affect whether or not a particular utterance is considered prayer. Additionally, because prayer is a common behavior in practically every language variety, phonetic variation becomes increasingly irrelevant to establishing a structural linguistic framework.

### **Morphology & Syntax**

Morphology is the study of word formation and derivation. Syntax is the study of how words and their meanings combine to form utterances. The way that speakers choose to form their words and sentences reveals information about the structural concept of prayer. Morphology and syntax define relationships within a word and among words within an utterance. These relationships are rule-governed and constitute the foundation of how language is used to form and perceive concepts. Prayer helps individuals conceptualize their relationship to the

higher being, to the faith community, and to each other. Morphology and syntax help define these conceptual relationships.

As previously mentioned, prayer is a structurally flexible linguistic concept, which is to say that prayer allows for the inclusion of practically any word or sentence. Therefore, the challenge is not to define morphological and syntactic parameters or rules, but rather to identify morphological or syntactic patterns.

*Morphology.* There are a few identifiable and useful morphological patterns employed in prayer. Two of these trends are the avoidance of contractions and the avoidance of possessive forms. Speakers in religious services seem to avoid contractions and casual or relaxed tone they imply. In an examination of the ECM, analysis reveals that, in contexts where both a contraction and non-contracted phrase are allowed, speakers choose the non-contracted form more frequently. Circumstances in which a contraction could be formed but the contracted form was never used were excluded from the analysis. For instance, there were fourteen instances of “you have,” but because there were no instances of “you’ve,” that possible contraction was excluded from the analysis. The presence of these non-contracted forms further supports the idea that speakers avoid contractions in prayer.

**Exhibit E-1: ECM Contraction Analysis Chart:**

	I'm	I've	he's	o'er	don't	would've	where's	there's	can't	won't
Contraction (n=23)	7	2	4	1	3	1	1	1	1	1
Non- Contraction (n=32)	10	6	4	6	0	1	0	3	2	0

This weak morphological trend supports the point that while prayer might follow identifiable patterns, prayer is not conceptually defined by morphology. The trend seems to indicate a preference for a formal style during religious services.

The second trend is a preference for “of” (e.g. the thesis of Connor) rather than the Saxon genitive possessive form (e.g. Connor’s thesis).

- “...*book of the prophet Isaiah*” (rather than *Isaiah’s book*)
- “...remembering all the *peoples of the world...*” (rather than *the world’s people*)
- “Do you, the *people of Emory University...*” (rather than *Emory University’s people*)

This morphological choice can be a way to change the perceptual focus of the sentence. In the transcribed portions of the religious services “of” (n=52+) is used in more than twice the number of times the Saxon genitive (n=26) is used in circumstances where both would be grammatical. Using “of” places more emphasis on what follows “of” in the prepositional phrase, which would have less emphasis in the Saxon genitive form. For instance, one of the utterances above emphasizes “Isaiah” rather than “book”.

- “I may gaze on the *loveliness of the lord.*” (rather than *the lord’s loveliness*)
- “We are marching in the *light of God.*” (rather than *God’s light*)
- “Bear witness to *the love of God* to the world.” (rather than *God’s love*)

In particular, speakers avoid using the Saxon genitive with reference to God during religious services (Saxon genitive: n=10, “of”: n=30+). These utterances choose to emphasize “God” or “lord” rather than “loveliness”, “light”, or “love”. However, there are contradictory circumstances.

- “This is *Christ’s table.*”

- “...that all may always be fed at the table of Christ.”

Even in similar contexts both possessive forms are present, which makes the morphological distinction a matter of emphatic preference. The decision between possessive morphology does not seem to determine whether or not the utterance is considered a prayer. While the aforementioned trends occur in a plurality or majority of cases, there are also many contradicting instances. Therefore, this morphological evidence suggests that, during prayer, people prefer to emphasize God, Christ, and other proper nouns. Other morphological trends such as this are likely to help explain the linguistic behaviors of those that pray. However, these morphological trends do not seem to have explanatory power necessary to define the concept of prayer linguistically.

*Syntax.* Syntax attempts to explain how individuals perceive relationships between different words and the meanings they contain. Trends in prayer syntax are consistent among interviews and religious services. The use of passive voice, direct address, and present tense commands are common syntactic forms in prayer.

The use of the passive voice reduces or removes the degree of clarity and agency that might otherwise be present in a sentence. Passive voice can reflect a presumption that a higher being is acting without being actively recognized. Another reason for the frequency of the passive voice could be to indicate an opinion of ambiguity about the nature of agency relationships in life.

- “The most often for me is probably to give thanks, and to like pray for like family members and friends so that *they can be watched over and can be kept* on the right path.” NT 21:00
- “It is now time for *those prayers to be burned and to be buried.*” ECM 53:40-56:17
- “Surely, all *praises are due to Allah.*” JPS 27:16-28:21

In terms of syntactic relationships, the word “God” (and connotatively similar forms like “Holy Spirit”; “Jesus”; “Lamb of God”; “Allah”; “lord”; “Father”; etc.) is likely to occur as the syntactic agent. Syntactic structures in which someone or something else asserts agency over the higher being are uncommon. According to the religious faiths of the examined faith communities, the higher being(s) is omnipotent, thereby removing the possibility of perceiving a relationship in which things “happen to God” or “God” is treated as the syntactic subject. Even when “God” is the subject, these sentences usually indicate thanksgiving or affirmations of faith.

- “...his glorious book says, say he is Allah, the one and the only.” JPS 28:21-29:50
- “I believe in one God, the father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible.” RCM 51:55-54:12
- “We ask it in Christ’s name.” ECM 29:20-30:13
- “אלוהיך בכל לבבך ובכל נפשך ובכל מאדך.” “You shall love Adonai your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your being.” RJS 12:54-14:08

Again, these syntactic patterns help in a descriptive sense to build the idea of prayer. Other syntactic patterns in prayer include direct address and present tense commands. Both of these concepts will be discussed in the section on ASKING LANGUAGE later in this chapter.

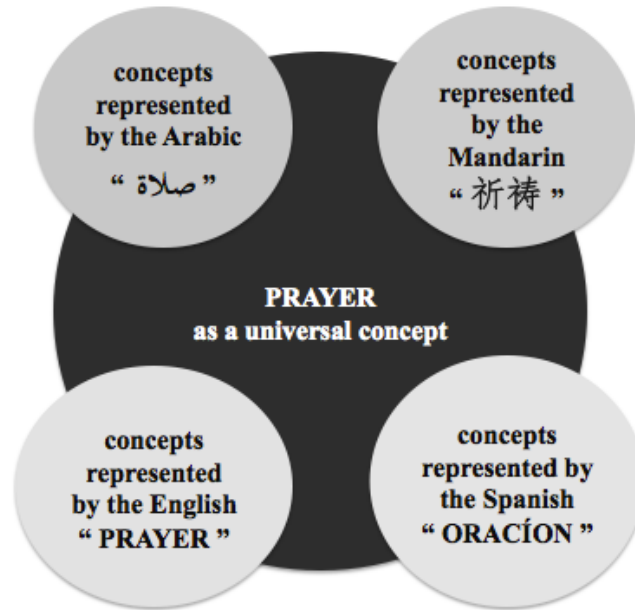
### **Semantics & Pragmatics**

Semantics is the study of how meaning is related to concepts, signs, and sounds. Pragmatics study how the context of an utterance can influence it’s meaning. Trends in semantic variation reflect the behaviors and sociolinguistic influence of communities on preferences in lexicon. The pragmatic features of prayer are crucially important to prayer practice in organized religions. While some of the behaviors that accompany prayer influence individual prayer,

formal pragmatic prescriptions affect the practice of prayer much less. Unlike the other areas of structural linguistics, pragmatics is crucial to the conceptual definition of prayer.

*Semantics.* The study of semantics discusses the connection between conventional meaning and words. An intriguing question to ask is: What can semantics tell us about the word “prayer”? Certainly, background analysis of this concept and its semantic qualities would appear to answer questions posed in this thesis. However, there is an important nuance between a semantic study of the word “prayer” and a qualitative linguistic study of the concept of prayer. Most simply put, a semantic study is much narrower than a qualitative linguistic study. Although the concept of prayer includes all the denotations of the word “prayer,” all the semantic meanings of the word “prayer” do not completely explain the concept of prayer. The semantics of the concept of prayer include semantic patterns of words that occur in prayer. Crucially, the word “prayer” need not actually occur during prayer. Understanding the meaning of a word in one language is not enough to understand the concept across languages and cultures.

**Exhibit F: Different conceptions of prayer in different languages.<sup>63</sup>**



There are categories of concepts that are represented by the different words for prayer in different languages. However, no one set of these semantic manifestations contains *all* of the concepts that make up the “universal” concept of prayer. This thesis hypothesizes that there exists a concept of prayer that is relatively consistent and stable across cultures and languages. This concept manifests itself in language, and the ways that it does so may differ from culture to culture. The English word “prayer” brings to mind a set of concepts, many of which are part of the larger concept of prayer, but might not accurately represent how a greater population of humanity views it. Therefore, a semantic examination of the word “prayer” would only yield a subset of relevant concepts. Relevant are the semantic trends that occur across the languages and cultures examined in this study sample.

<sup>63</sup>This exhibit is meant to simplify the difference highlighted between conceptions of prayer. In reality, this graphic would be much more complicated with the smaller circles overlapping with each other to exemplify the concentration of concepts that each word shares across languages. For instance, there are likely overlapping concepts between “prayer” and *oración*, but the purpose of the graphic is to show that neither of them separately can adequately explain larger concept of prayer.



One of the strongest semantic trends is the conceptualization of the higher being as masculine. In most religious services and interviews “God” is conceptualized as masculine.

- “I bear witness to there is nothing worthy of worship, but Allah. He is one and has no partners.”  
27:16-28:21 JPS
- “I believe in one God, the father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible. I believe in one lord, Jesus Christ, born of the Father before all ages.” 51:55-54:12  
RCM
- “Lord God your loving kindness always goes before us and follows after us.” 18:00-18:30 ECM
- “When I’m praying, I pray to God the Father.” 4:04 HM
- “Another would be you know Lord grant me a little more today, or things very similar to this nature of prayer being a process.” 26:45 J
- “The idea is that God has this overflow of prayers directed at him and these are kind of like his ambassadors that will be best in each area and are able to take up special cases to God.” 20:07  
MI
- “...you believe that he will do something or he has the power to do something and you are going to him to help it come about.” 28:50 NT
- “There’s also Lord Ganesha which is the remover of obstacles and so he, this form of God, he likes, my Mom always tells me this, you should pray to him before starting something new.”  
12:47 PS

The RJS was the only religious service during which a higher being was never equivocated with masculinity. Unsurprisingly, the respondents from Jewish backgrounds never referred to God in a masculine sense. Even individuals and religious services that have minimal references to God in a masculine sense (e.g. ECM and J) retain vestiges like the masculine word

“lord” in their prayers. Most religious faiths are patriarchic or have a history of patriarchy. The semantic value of God’s gender reflects this fact. The grammatical gender of a higher being seems to support the idea that religious organizations have an enduring influence on their adherents and their prayers.

Defining prayer through semantics proves arduous and ineffective. As previously mentioned, the idea of prayer is not defined by a prescribed set of words. To define prayer through semantics, one must either identify all the words used in prayer or identify all the most commonly words. Both tasks are arguably impossible. There are simply more effective and complete methods of answering the question: what is prayer?

*Pragmatics.* Pragmatics is the study of how linguistic meaning is affected by context. As previously mentioned, prayer is recognized as a speech act. Speech act theory claims that some utterances are not simply true or false. These utterances, speech acts, are successful or unsuccessful in having an effect on the world by being spoken. Examples include naming, marrying, swearing in, proclaiming, etc. However, to be successful, speech acts have certain linguistic and contextual requirements called felicity conditions. Analysis of how prayer functions as a speech act is covered in the next chapter.

Prayer can be understood in terms of other pragmatic features such as time and place. While these patterns are difficult to link with changes in meaning, literature in pragmatics has established that time and place can and do affect meaning. Most respondents indicated that the most common times that prayer takes place are in the morning and evening (after waking and before sleeping) and at meal times.

- “Every night before bed, my dad would pray with me.” HM 5:27

The two most commonly reported places to pray were at places of worship and at home. However, respondents also recognized the flexibility of these traditions.

- “I think you can pray at any time and anywhere.” SL 36:07
- “I think anytime is always appropriate. There are, kind of like you know, times that people usually do it: before bed, before you eat, at church, whatever. I think you can really do it everywhere. You can be walking down the street and praying and no one would know.” NT 15:31

Another timing pattern of prayer is distress triggering. Respondents claimed that during times of hardship would frequently coincide with times of prayer, regardless of faith background.

- “I think, without an event, I don’t really dialogue with God.” MI 27:01
- “A lot of my individual prayers at when I am at very low points.” HM 27:02
- “I think everyone prays more when they’re stressed out, just in general.” NT 30:50

Prayer occurs most frequently in select domains and in times of distress. However, prayer also transpires during organized routines or extraordinary moments. The function of time’s relationship to prayer could be thought of as at the extremes of regularity.

One of the most notable pragmatic features of religious services is movement. Movement in addition to language during religious rituals and prayers is a crucial felicity condition: in the RCM, individuals make the sign of the cross before prayer; in the Christian services, the celebrant raises her or his arms to bless the Eucharistic gifts; in the RJS, the group bows during prayer; in the JPS, individuals prostrate themselves as part of the prayer ritual. The prevalence of movement in prayer is high in religious services, but its prevalence in individual prayer is difficult to measure. Very few respondents mentioned movement as part of their definitions of

prayer. Therefore, movement seems to be more important to community prayer than individual prayer.

The significance of pragmatic features to prayer is more usefully understood in terms of the context in which prayer occurs, rather than how that context changes the semantic value of what is said during prayer. Context is more relevant to defining organized formal prayers more than to individual prayers.

### ASKING LANGUAGE

A useful framework for how prayer is structured is ASKING LANGUAGE. Individuals and institutions habitually form prayers like requests, petitions, and pleas. When asked about words or phrases they frequently use in prayer, respondents give “please” and “I would like” as examples. ASKING LANGUAGE is largely a combination of polite diction and imperative syntax. Prayers are like requests.

- “Maybe the phrase I hope, I’m sure please gets in there a few times. I would like. Yeah, those are the three.” H 12:43B
- “Another would be you know Lord grant me a little more today, or things very similar to this nature of prayer being a process.” J 26:45
- “There’s a lot of please, I’m asking for something.” MT 19:58B

Important to understanding ASKING LANGUAGE is the concept of an interlocutor. A speaker’s partner in a linguistic discourse is called an interlocutor. Although there are certainly exceptions, most utterances are spoken in order to convey meaning to another individual. Many prayers are structured similarly to polite requests or commands, in which the speaker explains their desire for their interlocutor to act in a particular way. However, prayer can be one of the

aforementioned exceptions; there are circumstances in which individuals pray with no human interlocutor present. Regardless of whether or not another human is physically present, speakers address their prayers as they would if they were having a conversation.

The data supports the hypothesis that linguistic prayers are addressed toward outward targets. Often this interlocutor/target is conceptualized as God or a higher being. However, accepting this conceptualization as default would suggest that only theists pray in this manner. However, even atheistic respondents agree that they do not “talk to themselves” during prayer. The assertion that all prayers are linguistically structured as if addressing an interlocutor does not presuppose belief in a higher power. Regardless of how well or poorly individuals define the concept of their prayer interlocutor, it nevertheless is an element present in prayers across religions and cultures.

- “I think I always have in mind God or thinking of God even if I don’t start off like hey God, I think I do have who I’m asking help from or who I’m thanking in mind, whether it’s God or Virgin Mary, or a saint or whatever. You kind of have a target in mind.” MI 18:24
- “There’s an address, you kind of specify who you’re talking to, and then, I don’t know, there’s the rest of it.” MT 7:38B
- “Prayer, I believe, is specifically to God.” NT 2:46
- “When I’m praying, I know who I’m praying to, so I don’t necessarily feel the need to specify who I’m talking to.” NT 19:30

The nature of a request requires the speaker to recognize that that individual either cannot or does not want to accomplish the task at hand alone. Therefore, the speaker recognizes that they must ask for something and the best way to ensure that that request is satisfied is by being

polite. ASKING LANGUAGE reflects this degree of politeness or humility that is reflected in linguistic choices.

- “Not submissive language, but language that is always implying a certain sense of humility.” J 28:48
- “I guess showing your subservience, I’m not sure that’s the right word, to show God, like you believe that he will do something or he has the power to do something and you are going to him to help it come about. I think that is what helps.” NT 28:50

Another topic to support the idea of ASKING LANGUAGE is the appropriateness of prayer requests. The respondents consistently replied that it is possible to pray for anything, but there exists a dichotomy of objects for which it is inappropriate to pray. Respondents had different interpretations dependent on their senses of ethics. Despite the fact that the concept of inappropriateness is subjectively perceived and interpreted, the concept is not an incoherently flexible one. Faith defines “sin” for many people, which they then equivocate to acts or behaviors for which it is inappropriate to pray. For example, one respondent explained how he had grown up in a fundamentalist Christian household and, for the time during which he still perceived that homosexuality was a sin, he felt unable to discuss his boyfriend with God.

- “Anything defined as sin you don’t...And sin can be defined however you want...I think that is a very internalized concept of sin, so you can’t pray for anything you personally believe is sin...whatever you’ve internalized as believing is sin, you can’t pray for that.” J 31:10
- “I couldn’t pray about my relationship with a guy. My faith and my sexuality were not, they were very much at odds. I couldn’t pray about the guy I liked or the boyfriend I had because I viewed that as sin. So, that’s the internalized definition of sin. And, you know, some time has

passed, and it was a very weird experience the first time I was able to talk to God about my boyfriend.” J 32:18

While this was one individual’s experience, the example clarifies many aspects of how respondents feel about the inappropriate nature of prayer. There exists a moral code that determines the conceptual boundary of what is “allowed” or “not allowed” in prayer. The distinction is a dichotomy, but one that is flexible over time. Conceptually, respondents state that all topics are “allowed” and would count as prayer, but that in practice, there are convictions that they tend to follow.

- “I think the only way that it wouldn’t be is if you are purposefully and intentionally praying to God for evil to be done in the world.” HM 19:45
- “If you pray like, please don’t arrest me, that’s not right...because you did something bad.” SL 34:01
- “I think that prayer done in negative emotion is not conducive and I don’t think its very appropriate to pray for something in that context.” H 16:53B
- “If you pray for death upon yourself, like obviously that is not going to be something God is not going to grant just because you pray for it.” NT 33:38
- “Anything that’s considered bad, I guess you could say, is probably not going to be granted or not going to like happen.” NT 36:17
- “Wishes of ill-intent are not going to be granted.” NT 37:08

ASKING LANGUAGE, while flexible and dependent on individual beliefs, is a useful framework for understanding how prayer is structured in language. The schema can be used to predict topics for which an individual is likely or unlikely to pray and also a general outline of what the language of that prayer might consist.

### Prayer Length

Another way to conceptualize prayer is in length. While not necessarily a linguistic concept, respondents consistently brought up the fact that they had a preference for their prayers to be as concise as possible. Often a distinction was drawn between individual prayers and formal or scripture-based prayers. Formal prayers in organized religious settings are rigid in their structure and perceived to be much longer than individual prayers. The reasons for why respondents prefer conciseness in prayer vary significantly. SL believed that her preference for conciseness had nothing to do with politeness, but rather her ability to say more prayers within an important time frame. Similarly, MT and MI prefer conciseness because they view it as a matter of efficiency. J and H discuss how they believe their inclination toward conciseness is a reality of God's or their own omnipotence of the facts of their lives.

- “If you can make it short, the God will be pleased. And sometimes it's like before the New Year, my Mom told me you only have ten seconds to make a wish, and...I keep it simple so I can make more wishes.” SL 50:14
- “I really appreciate a prayer that kind of gets to the point, and has a kind of clear and direct point.” MI 37:14
- “It's probably a lot more concise when I'm praying. There's like more persuasive, I'll say like why this should happen.” MT 20:27B
- “I think, I mean, I think it's better to be concise. I don't know what the point is in being not concise. Anything else is just ritual, things that are really needed.” MT 21:02B
- “Concise...I believe that when you're having an internal dialogue or conversation with a God, you don't necessarily need to list everything out elaborately and elaborate on everything you say



because there is that certain understanding that you have. You don't have to say why you want your family to remain healthy because you know why. That understanding almost takes away the need to elaborate." H 21:51B

- "Prayer is more open, prayer is more honest. In a sense, you do not need to use as many words...you don't need to explain yourself in prayer." J 8:50

Individuals claim that they prefer conciseness in prayer. However, verifying this behavior is improbable because of the private and infrequent nature of individual prayer. There is a strong perception among individuals that they prefer prayer to be concise. As opposed to the conceptual frameworks for praying, prayer length is a relative term. Therefore, making objective claims of length is difficult. The most likely comparison of length that individuals would conceptualize would be of prayers experienced in religious services. Thus, the appropriate length of prayer is a structural element that is conceptualized by contrasting two different forms of prayer.

### **Choice of Language Variety**

Prayer is a concept that spans the boundaries of language and religion. The choice of language variety informs the concept of linguistic prayer structure because it involves selecting one group of concepts and conventions (i.e. language variety) over that of another. Obviously, praying in one language over another does not make the prayer any more or less legitimate. The role of language choice helps to explain how and why individuals structure prayer in the ways that they do. Understanding the reasons that individuals find compelling for selecting a particular language variety reveals what linguistic factors are important to the concept of prayer.

Almost always, respondents reported that they pray in their native language (SL 36:39, HM 3:14). However, the choice of language variety is dependent on a number of factors. The

most important factor in deciding in which language to pray is capability. Clearly, there is no choice of language variety if the individual is monolingual. Along these lines, the extent of knowledge is another important limiting factor in language choice. The level of fluency in a language has a direct influence on the likelihood of an individual praying in that language.

- “I mean English, for sure, because it’s the only language I speak fluently.” J 6:10

There is a spectrum of fluency and therefore a range of likelihood that an individual will choose to pray in one language over another. The data suggests that, as a general rule, the higher the level of fluency in a language variety, the higher the likelihood that prayer will occur in that variety. Other factors can affect the decision to pray in a particular language variety including linguistic domain and religious affiliation.

Linguistic domains refer to the different areas of life in which different varieties of language are preferred over others. Pragmatic factors like the place, interlocutor, or conversational topic all contribute to different spheres of linguistic domains. Examples of linguistic domains include home, business, worship, school, etc. Individuals that grow up speaking multiple languages can have more experiences in specific linguistic domains than others, thereby becoming “more fluent” in the grammar and jargon of those cultural spheres. Alternatively, individuals can simply prefer to use one variety in certain circumstances and not others. For a bilingual like MI, the decision between Spanish and English does not hinge so much on level of fluency. However, MI explains how her experiences in different linguistic domains have influenced her selection of language variety.

- “I learned them in both, so I learned them in Spanish first at home, so the kinds of things that you say before eating or before going to bed, or prayers that exist in the home space or in the

rosary, which we do as a family, but prayers that we only do at school or the act of contrition or certain elements of the mass that I hadn't seen in Spanish, I first learned in English." MI 4:12

- "When we were little, my grandmother would say, *en el nombre de Dios*, in the name of God...for with her it was anything, making a cake, taking a shower, I have wanted to think something like that before taking a test would come to me in Spanish, something my teachers taught me like Holy Spirit enlighten me would come to me in English." MI 33:50

Another strong influence on the choice of language in prayer is whether or not a language is affiliated with a particular religion. Hebrew, Sanskrit,<sup>64</sup> and Arabic are considered "holy languages" in Judaism, Hinduism, and Islam, respectively. PS is of a Hindu religious background and she discusses how important to her speaking Sanskrit is during prayer. Despite her lack of fluency in Sanskrit, PS holds the belief that there would be some benefit to selecting that variety.

- "I went to Sunday School growing up, it was called Chinmaya mission, and we would say the prayer in Sanskrit or Hindi or whatever, but I don't know either language and then below we would have the English translation of what it meant, but it's really hard when you can easily forget what a prayer means rather than connecting with what the actual meaning is, so I think that's part of where it's sometimes harder to connect with prayer." PS 3:01
- "I grew up with this idea that Sanskrit was a great language to pray in because it connects you with God and all these scriptures were written in Sanskrit and it brings you closer." PS 36:31

In religious services, choice of language is influenced by the fluency of the congregation and the particular religious tradition. All the religious services included English, but to differing extents.

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<sup>64</sup>PS referred to Hindi and Sanskrit interchangeably in her interview.

**Exhibit E-4: Religious Service Language Choice Analysis**

<b>Religious Service</b>	<b>Primary Language</b>	<b>Secondary Language</b>	<b>Tertiary Language</b>
Reform Judaism Shabbat	Hebrew	English	N/A
Roman Catholic Mass	English	Spanish	Latin
Ecumenical Christian Mass	English	Latin	N/A
Jumah Prayer Service	English	Arabic	N/A

Religious organizations seem to cater to the linguistic needs of their constituencies.

Linguistic choice is also affected by the traditions of the institution. Although there are no Latin speakers, the RCM and ECM both retain use of Latin phrases during the service. Language variety is also much less a function of free choice than it is a matter of institutional prescription.

Choice of language variety is more flexible in individual prayer than it is in religious services. The reasons that language variety choices are made reveal insights about the linguistic structure of prayer. Capability and fluency are obvious limiting factors. Comprehension and intention of meaning is therefore crucial to prayer structure. The data support that fluency in a language variety is fundamental. Beyond that, pragmatic factors and relative levels of religious affiliation can also dictate in which language variety a prayer might occur. These observations imply that comprehension, intentionality, and religious affiliation are factors that influence the linguistic structure of prayer.

**Conclusion**

The analytical success or failure of this chapter can be understood in terms of the questions posed at the beginning:

*How is prayer structured in language?* Prayer is structured using imperative syntax, polite diction, and appropriate topics. The acceptability of prayer topic is subjectively interpreted and influenced by religious background. The framework of ASKING LANGUAGE is a useful tool to help analyze and predict the linguistic structure of prayer. ASKING LANGUAGE hypothesizes that prayers address conceptual interlocutors, make requests, and do so politely.

*What forms does it take?* Prayer takes two general forms: individual and religious service prayer. The distinction between these two types is vague. At one conceptual extreme are the formal, rigidly defined, predetermined, scripture-based religious service prayers. At the other conceptual extreme are the casual, flexible, spontaneous, independent individual prayers. These structural distinctions can and often are blurred, which reduces the utility of structural linguistic definitions of prayer. Widespread structural characteristics of prayer include the treatment of “God” as masculine, the avoidance of the Saxon genitive and contractions, the passive voice, and the choice of native language. The form that prayer takes is dependent on a number of factors. Although the most important factor in determining the linguistic structure of prayer appears to be religious affiliation, its influence is significantly more constrained in individual prayer.

This chapter analyzed the “form” of prayer both narrowly in terms of the different areas of structural linguistics and broadly in terms of sociolinguistic behaviors and qualitative concepts. Despite the trends described in this chapter, the data suggest that prayer is more conceptually defined by its functions than its forms. None of the areas of structural linguistics alone could be used to accurately and completely define the concept of prayer.

*Revisiting Form versus Function.* Form is less important than function in answering the question: what is prayer? Put another way, prayer is conceptually defined more by its linguistic functions than by its linguistic forms. Analysis through the lenses of form and function help the

reader to understand the important linguistic building blocks used in assembling the concept of prayer. However, the distinction is not a strict binary. Prayer form seems to depend on prayer function.

Many respondents describe prayer in relationship to its functions, not its form. Therefore, while this chapter describes the commonly used linguistic structures of prayer, structural elements are more arbitrary than functional elements in conceptual definitions of prayer. Therefore, the linguistic form of prayer in general is largely a byproduct of the linguistic functions of prayer.

- “The biggest thing is the motive of prayer. A lot of times, language is just for communicating or sharing something with others, but when you’re praying you usually have a purpose and a specific audience, like your God that you’re communicating with, and there’s something that you kind of hope to get out of it.” MT 2:15A
- “I just think that language and prayer is so entirely flexible.” J 50:45

The next chapter explores prayer through its linguistic functions. Additionally, the chapter provides a hypothesis that unifies the different functional patterns of prayer.

## CHAPTER FIVE: FUNCTIONS OF PRAYER

*How does prayer function? How does prayer accomplish these functions linguistically?*

To what do the “functions” of language refer? Language is used for many tasks. People use language to communicate information, to express emotion, to construct and perform identity, to perceive reality, and to influence others. Humans manipulate language to serve their needs and wants. How does language accomplish these tasks?

Prayer is a linguistic phenomenon. Humans manipulate language in different ways to pray. This chapter is concerned with describing not only the goals that motivate this linguistic concept, but also how language functions to achieve those goals. Describing structural elements is less useful than analyzing linguistic functions in defining the concept of prayer. The data collected in this study suggest that the concept of prayer is defined by its functions. At the beginning of each interview, respondents were asked to define prayer:

- “Prayer for me is just **communication** with God...At times during the day when I’m struggling I’ll just be like hey God, listen up.” HM 1:27
- “Prayer is the **articulation** of deeper wants and desires, sort of materialistic wants and desires that pertain to a person’s life, and what they pray to varies and is sort of arbitrary.” H 0:10A
- “Prayer is the internal **dialogue, conversation**, type of requesting, thanking and expression of a person’s wants, desires, and needs at a specific time that have been understood and come together over a period of time or not.” H 32:08B
- “It’s a **conversation**. It’s really just you opening up and talking to whatever higher being or power, or God you believe in.” J 0:25

- “Prayer would be any kind of **communication** that you’re having with whoever spiritually, I don’t know, leads your faith...Some kind of communication, orally or mentally with whatever being you’re directing this to.” MT 0:25
- “A personalized **message** to God or something more standard and scripted, that either way, it’s going to be, right, the difference between an open card where you write whatever you’re feeling versus like a sort of Hallmark card which nails the right expression, maybe is less precise, but more nicely packaged.” MI 13:05
- “Any kind of **communication** with a deity. It doesn’t have to be spoken or communal or anything like that. It can be silent.” MT 1:23A
- “I believe prayer is a **way of communicating** with God, that pathway or connection or whatever you want to call it to get your thoughts across, or just to talk.” NT 0:46
- “Prayer to me is something I do to calm the mind, but it also, more me, is a **way of connecting** with the higher power.” PS 1:00

Respondents emphasize the communicative nature of prayer. MT and H describe the wide variety and flexibility of prayer forms. Many respondents describe the goals that prayer can accomplish like “to get your thoughts across” or “to calm the mind,” but how does prayer do this? The conceptual functions of prayer and their linguistic manifestations are the subject of this chapter.

### **Prayer as Negotiation of Agency**

Humans use prayer to perceive and evaluate the limits and efficacy of their agency. The functions of prayer observed in this study support this hypothesis. This assertion assumes that prayer is motivated by needs or wants: prayer has purpose. These general needs and wants create



goals for prayer. The individual prays because she or he is motivated to see her or his desires come to fruition in reality. This argument also assumes that if individuals could manipulate their realities immediately to achieve their goals, then they would do so, and the point of prayer would be moot. As a consequence of this assumption, part of the reason that people pray is because they cannot accomplish their goals by themselves. Therefore, prayers are externally directed.

The reason that goals are communicated externally is because the preferred goal cannot be accomplished internally. This external communication of goals makes praying individuals aware that they have goals. Now aware of their goals, individuals begin to evaluate how likely these goals are to happen or not happen. This evaluation is then juxtaposed against an assessment of that individual's ability to influence the likelihood of the goal occurring (i.e. that individual's agency). Thus, the phenomenon of prayer allows individuals to speculate and negotiate limits or potency of their agency. Prayer is a process of adjusting one's expectations and perceptions of reality to their present circumstances.

As explored in the previous chapter, humans do not use the same prayer for every set of circumstances. There is tremendous variation in the forms of prayer, and all humans do not share the same goals and desires. Therefore, all prayer motivations are not the same. With diverse goals and diverse methods, how is prayer a cohesive concept? While there are many ways that humans use language to accomplish the goals of their prayers, the data collected in interviews and religious services identify trends. This chapter examines how language is used in prayer to function as a way to negotiate one's agency.

Respondents describe how prayer contributes to a sense of understanding or empowerment. This change in outlook is what is meant by negotiation of agency.

- "I'll be **more hardworking** after I pray." SL 23:18

- “I’ve always been told don’t pray for like an A on the test, pray that **God enables you** to study hard enough to make it.” HM 19:20
- “I think the biggest takeaway is that **I feel more in control of my life**. So, regardless of if anything happens, either way **I feel prepared to handle** whatever situation I was praying about.” HM 32:00
- “Prayer leads to **optimism**. HM 35:56
- “In prayer, it’s focusing on you, **your hopes, your wants, your desires for something to happen or for an outcome** and that outcome can be anything, but it’s still in the topic of your hopes, your desires, your wants, your needs, whereas a conversation with a friend can, like I said, be very broad and cover tons of topics and you might not care about an outcome.” H 6:28A
- “If there’s no physical action that I can take, then I feel like helpless. I still feel helpless, but I guess prayer is just worth a try.” MT 12:32B
- “For me its more about having an inner sense of peace or feeling, I guess like more content with whatever life gives you. **You’re kind of relinquishing control over things you cannot control.**” MT 27:42B
- “It can be a conversation or it can just be, not verbal I guess you could say, but a way of just of **explicitly stating desires, hopes, and dreams.**” NT 1:12
- “I feel better because **it gives me reassurance** and in addition to that it’s like, it has a calming effect, it just brings me back to where I am and it keeps me in the present.” PS 23:15
- “Prayer for me is a way to connect with God, have hope for the future, sort of change, I believe in destiny, but I believe that there are paths that you can take to get to your final destination, of whatever that may be, and I think that may be **a way to pick your path** or a way to help you follow the correct path and calm the mind, again.” PS 43:33

Regardless of belief in a higher power, interviews consistently reveal this point of view. SL describes how she will be “more hardworking” after prayer. HM describes how she feels “optimism” and “more in control” as a result of prayer. H describes prayer in greater detail revealing how he understands the process and how it differs from a conversation. For the faithful, they conceptualize their interlocutor as God or a higher being. Negotiation of agency means that prayer juxtaposes one’s agency against the likelihood that events are to occur. Prayer then allows the speaker(s) to evaluate if he, she, or they can achieve the desired outcome with application of their agency. Therefore, negotiation of agency reflects not only a process of motivation (the speaker believes that application of her, his, or their agency can accomplish the desired outcome), but also a process of acceptance (the speaker believes that application of her, his, or their agency cannot accomplish the desired outcome).

Religious services provide supporting examples for this hypothesis as well. Many services include a prayer in which the service leader explicitly states the reasons for why they pray.

- “That the government leaders may have the grace to rise above factions and base the common good as their top priority, we pray to the lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.** That nations may heed the gospels’ call to reform their lives by eliminating abortion, euthanasia, and capital punishment, we pray to the lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**” RCM 54:12-55:18
- “We praise him, seek his assistance, and ask for his forgiveness, and we seek refuge in Allah from the evil of ourselves and the wickedness of our deeds. Surely, whomever Allah guides, there is none to take him astray, and whomever Allah allows to stray, there is none to guide.” JPS 28:21-29:50



prayer aware of their agentive potential. In other words, prayer is a perlocutionary act: the act of praying makes the speaker (and hearers) aware of their agency. This effect is the primary function of prayer.

- “Do I think something is actually accomplished by what I prayed for and by the act of praying? No.” H 0:37B
- “The act of praying and defining those desires, wants, and needs **I think does have an internal effect on a person**, whether they believe their prayer was heard or not.” H 1:40B
- “A lot of times when I pray, it’s this release, so it’s this **emotional purge**, in a way where **I feel like something is being done**.” HM 12:26
- “I would say that, that consoles you or that makes you feel better, and I would say that is kind of why **prayer always has an effect**.” J 1:44

Individuals pray in order to help them navigate the events and circumstances of their lives. Prayer functions as a mechanism to help individuals come to terms with their realities and the role of their agency. When asked about tangible effects of prayer, respondents admit that perceived responses or results are unpredictable and unexpected. However, when asked about the effects of prayer on themselves, respondents admit that prayer makes them feel different than they felt before praying. Thus, the effect of prayer on its speaker (its perlocution) allows for negotiation of agency. Prayer is a speech act that has a personal effect on its speakers: agency awareness.

Prayer also functions as an illocutionary act, but this type of prayer seems limited to the context of religious services. Illocutionary acts are speech acts in which, by communicating her or his intent, the speaker makes that intent known and therefore changes the reality that she or he

now occupies. In other words, illocutionary speech acts immediately have an effect by their felicitous utterance.

- “I bear witness to there is nothing worthy of worship, but Allah. He is one and has no partners. And, I bear witness to Muhammad, *salla Llâhu ‘alayhi wa sallam*, as his servant and last messenger.” JPS 28:21-29:50
- “We ask you God the powerful and merciful, to invoke the holy spirit to sanctify these gifts of bread and wine that they may become for us the body and blood of our lord Jesus Christ.” RCM 1:03:30-1:05:20

The first example shows how religious institutions use prayer as a speech act to make others within aware that they have committed themselves to a certain set of ideas (e.g. that Muslims believe there is “nothing worthy of worship, but Allah”). The second prayer is also an illocutionary act. Within the Roman Catholic faith, the act of speaking the above quote is known as the Transubstantiation. An important tenet of the Roman Catholic faith is that when the priest states this speech act, the words non-metaphorically change the bread and wine into the flesh and blood of Jesus Christ. Thus, prayer is also used by religious institutions in an illocutionary sense to change the state of the world in ways that further their goals.

Speech acts are either felicitous or infelicitous. As previously mentioned, identifying the truth-value of speech acts is not informative. Rather, a more useful concept to analyze speech acts is the idea of felicity. As a simplification, felicity describes whether or not a speech act is successful in achieving the expected outcome. Austin describes how to think about felicity:

“There must exist an accepted conventional procedure having a certain conventional effect, that procedure to include the uttering of certain words by certain persons in certain circumstances, and further, the particular persons and circumstances in a given case must be appropriate for the invocation of the particular procedure invoked.”

Therefore, to define prayer as a speech act requires identifying the “accepted conventional procedure” that causes language to have the desired effect. As the number of people involved in prayer increase, so do the “circumstances” required in order for a prayer to be considered felicitous. To examine all the felicity conditions for prayer would require much closer examination of religious services and is out of the scope of this project. However, there are certain felicity conditions that appear central to the concept of prayer because they are operative in both religious service and individual prayer.

One felicity condition crucial to the idea of prayer is intentionality. Religious services emphasize the importance of intention and honesty during prayer. Christian faiths (and in different ways, Judaism) promote the Ten Commandments, one of which is “Thou shalt not bear false witness.” The Jewish faith stresses the concept of *kavanah*:

“The minimum level of *kavanah* is an awareness that one is speaking to G-d and an intention to fulfill the obligation to pray. If you do not have this minimal level of *kavanah*, then you are not praying; you are merely reading. In addition, it is preferred that you have a mind free from other thoughts, that you know and understand what you are praying about and that you think about the meaning of the prayer.”<sup>65</sup>

The *shehada* is a profession of faith in Islam. Saying the *shehada* with the appropriate level of intentionality and honesty is a requirement for conversion to the Islamic faith. Therefore, intentionality appears to be felicity condition necessary to the concept of prayer. Respondents share this view of intentionality or honesty as a felicity condition for prayer.

- “I feel like a **dishonest prayer** isn’t going to do you any good. MT 30:21B
- “I can’t think of any specific words, but I think if you sound like **you don’t really care about the wish or the prayer**, then they might not come true.” SL 29:00
- “It’s really the **intentionality** for me that separates it.” HM 18:03

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<sup>65</sup><http://www.jewfaq.org/prayer.htm>

- “If you **don’t know what you’re praying for**, and you’re just praying to pray, then I don’t know what kind of good that does.” MT 37:52B

Both religious service prayer and individual prayer require intentionality as a felicity condition. This idea helps explain the arbitrary nature of prayer form. It is difficult to define the linguistic form of intentionality, but it is a necessary to the linguistic concept of prayer. Prayer is a concept defined by its functions. Felicity conditions are what determine the successful completion of speech acts, thereby making them an important part of the conceptual definition of prayer.

Speech Act theory describes the idea of “complete execution” as a felicity condition. For instance, if a captain states the phrase, “I hereby name this ship the USS Barack Obama,” but then proceeds to call it by another name, the naming speech act is infelicitous because the captain did not act in a consistent manner. In other words, the captain did not completely execute the speech act. The complete execution felicity condition can help to explain the expectation of response that those who pray have toward prayer.

Prayers frequently identify goals and desires that are tangible and measureable. However, whether or not these goals are achieved seems either of second order importance or completely irrelevant to why people pray.

- “Rarely. And I think the times that you expect a response are often the times you feel like it doesn’t get answered.” J 2:23
- “I have no expectation that that prayer will be answered tomorrow...But I do have an expectation that God will answer in his own time and in his own way.” HM 12:57
- “God always responds, and I’m going to use the cop-out answer that even not responding is a response.” J 17:37



- “[Prayer is] outcome-oriented but not outcome-based. And what I mean by that is that when people pray they would like to see an outcome, but whether or not that outcome happens, they will continue to pray.” H 8:13A
- “I don’t usually think there’s like a direct response, oh like you’re praying and you hear someone talking to you back. It’s not necessarily like that, maybe it is for some people, I don’t know.” NT 21:46
- “Personally, if something happens contrary to my prayers, I think of it as what I wanted wasn’t meant to be, meant to be yet, or it wasn’t meant to be at all. Or maybe whatever the contrary happened, maybe I’ll now learn something from it. There’s a reason for it.” NT 24:02
- “I don’t think he’s necessarily responding, but he’s there listening.” PS 17:05
- “I don’t expect a response, I would like a response.” PS 17:37

If a response is not part of why people pray, then why is the subject of prayer frequently an individual’s wants and desires? Why is the *post hoc* outcome of a prayer not part of the conceptual definition of prayer? Why do people, even the unfaithful, continue to pray after they are unsuccessful in achieving that which they explicitly ask for in prayer? The agency negotiation hypothesis offers an answer to these questions. (Most) people bring up their wants and desires in prayer not because they expect that some higher power will immediately intervene and solve any problem. Rather, the reason that these goals are the subject of prayer is to make the individual aware of what is important to them and how their agency can affect those goals.

As discussed in chapter two, the medical community has executed numerous studies in an attempt to measure the results of petitionary prayer. What these studies fail to appreciate is that the primary function of prayer is not to see the explicit petition realized. Put this assertion in the context of the complete execution felicity condition. The investigators in these studies seem to

interpret the complete execution felicity condition as the requested outcome coming to fruition. The negotiation of agency hypothesis stipulates that the complete execution felicity condition would be met so long as the individual praying becomes aware of her or his agency. Often, simply saying a prayer makes the individual aware of their agency, which would completely execute the speech act. Therefore, there is no “complete execution” felicity condition that requires events to take place to fulfill the prayer. An individual can pray to pass an exam, fail that exam, and still have prayed in a felicitous manner. The prayer completely executed its task: agency negotiation by its utterance. Understanding the complete execution felicity condition helps explain why individuals exhibit ambivalence towards the response or outcome of prayer. This linguistic function of prayer is important to its conceptual definition. Prayer is conceptualized as a speech act that allows for the negotiation of agency.

### **Purposes of Prayer**

Negotiation of agency requires the speaker to identify goals, wants, or desires. These goals can be thought of as the purpose of prayer. When asked about why they pray, respondents characterized their purposes for prayer in similar ways.

- “Some form of addressing the higher power and then some sort of, I think there should be some form of gratitude within the prayer. Like thank you for whatever I have so far and then maybe some sort of what you foresee, what do you need at the time, this sounds really bad, but what do you want, and then some sort of closer with more gratitude is how I see it.” PS 11:06
- “There’s thanking prayers. There’s prayers for asking for something, and tied into that, but slightly different is the asking for forgiveness, the idea that one may have sinned.” H 5:41B
- “I talked about giving thanks, asking for help, and professing love.” MI 26:21

- “Thanking him for life, thanking for good events, bad events, lessons I’ve learned kind of thing, and hope for a good future, and looking after my parents, and my family and friends and other people I’ve met. That’s kind of the general outline I guess you could say.” NT 13:01

Thanking, asking, and expressing feelings are all linguistic functions present in prayer. As mentioned in chapter two, pop culture and self-help guides have attempted to outline the purposes for prayer. Anne Lamott’s *Help, Thanks, Wow* is useful in this regard. Religious institutions teach individuals mnemonic devices to help them understand the different purposes for which an individual may pray. HM explains “ACTS” as adoration, confession, thanksgiving, and supplication (9:18). MI provides “ALTAR” as another example:

- “It was like Thanks, and Praise, and I don’t know, variations of those words, I think it might have been like ALTAR, adore, love, thank, absolve, rejoice, I don’t know, something like that, but the concept was they gave us a framework for the right emotions to express during that time.” MI 8:07

The commonly reported purposes of prayer support the idea that prayer is a way to negotiate agency. Thanking, asking, and expressing feelings are all purposes of prayer that function to negotiate agency. Thanking occurs when an individual becomes aware that previous internal desire is satisfied. The individual might thank a higher being for intervening in the previous situation (reducing their perceived agency). Alternatively, the individual might thank the interlocutor concept for allowing the individual to recognize the potency of her or his agency (increasing their perceived agency). Asking occurs when an individual doubts the potency of their agency to accomplish a particular goal. An individual generally makes a request when she or he recognizes the limits of her or his agency. Expression of feelings is a way for that

individual to clarify their opinion about a set of agency dynamics. In any circumstance, awareness of agency is relevant.

As previously illustrated, a response to the explicit statement of desire in prayer is not necessary. If satisfying explicitly stated desires is not the purpose of prayer, then these linguistic statements must serve another purpose. The general linguistic function of prayer is to negotiate agency.

### **Prayer Targets and Linguistic Prayer Strategies**

The previous chapter explored the idea of the interlocutor concept. A prayer's target is conceptualized as a loosely defined interlocutor or conversational partner. While this interlocutor-concept seems to be present in most prayers, how it is defined depends on the individual. Religious institutions define this concept as God or a higher being. However, regardless of faith in a higher being, respondents still report that they feel as though they are speaking *to* someone or something.

Prayer targeting is also dependent on the individual's religious background. Religions differ on how acceptable it is to pray to certain targets. Respondents from Jewish backgrounds, for instance, did not report praying to anyone other than God. However, those from Protestant Christian, Roman Catholic, and Hindu backgrounds all explained that different prayer targets were acceptable and in some cases encouraged. Protestant Christianity and Catholicism both recognize the idea of the holy trinity: God, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit. Both divisions additionally hold the Virgin Mary in high regard. Catholicism beatifies saints, and Hinduism identifies thousands of deities. All of these are examples of prayer targets.

Prayer targeting reflects the idea that the expression of desires must be directed externally. Why do individuals express their desires externally in prayer? Two logical assumptions can be made to answer this question. The first is that individuals express their desires because they would like these wants to be satisfied. The second is that the external expression of these desires implies that the individual perceives that these desires cannot be satisfied internally. Prayer targeting therefore functions to negotiate agency awareness. Prayer targeting implicitly or explicitly requires an individual to ask the question: is this desire something that I can accomplish?

Prayer target selection is strategic, which is to say that prayer targeting involves taking into account the purpose, content, and urgency of a prayer when selecting a target. Target selection takes into account not only the relative importance of the prayer, but also who is best suited to receive it.

- “Sometimes, I’ll pray to Jesus. It really depends on the situation.” HM 4:13
- “I think God would be totally fine with me praying to [the virgin Mary], but I would not elevate any other religious figure than the trinity to the status of God, so it’s almost like pointless praying.” HM 15:38
- “It’s not something I would abstain from because I feel like God would have a problem with it, I just think it’s...not ineffective, that sounds awful.” HM 16:04
- “I guess it just depends on what you’ve been most exposed to, so what sticks out to you in terms of what saints you know their causes, or maybe if its something serious and specific you look it up who I pray to and you’re like oh my aunt has glaucoma, so it’s Saint Lucy for eyes.” MI 19:25

- “The idea is that God has this overflow of prayers directed at him and these are kind of like his ambassadors that will be best in each area and are able to take up special cases to God.” MI 20:07
- “In Hinduism, I guess there’s the *iyers* and the *iyengars* and your family is like one or the other. I’m an *iyer*, so we pray to Shiva and Shiva is the destroyer form of God. I like to think of Hinduism as monotheistic. So, I was always encouraged to pray to Shiva like to destroy evil and things like that, jealousy and hatred in the world, and for myself to put those thoughts away. I pray more to Vishnu even though I’m an *iyer*. Vishnu is the protector because I think a lot of the things I’ve gone through in my life makes me connect better to this form of God.” PS 5:36
- “My Dad always always tells me pray to Hanuman, which is one God in Hinduism before you have an exam or something so you can clear your mind before you take an exam or do something for the first time. There’s also Lord Ganesha which is the remover of obstacles and so he, this form of God, he likes, my Mom always tells me this, you should pray to him before starting something new.” PS 12:47

These examples illustrate not only strategic prayer targeting, but also rationales for why individuals engage in this type of behavior. HM describes how her prayer target decisions are less a matter of religious influence than of perceived efficiency. MI and PS share the opinion that certain higher beings (saints or deities) are uniquely positioned or able to oblige certain requests. These individuals take into consideration a variety of prayer targets for different reasons.

Strategic prayer targeting is a function of agency negotiation because, by considering which target will address the prayer most efficiently, that individual is evaluating agency dynamics. The prayer becomes a calculation of which target will maximize the likelihood of that the desired outcome. In this sense, the individual is not negotiating her or his own agency, but

rather than that of the higher being. Nevertheless, prayer targeting involves analysis of agency dynamics relative to an individual's current circumstances.

### **Prayer as Identity Development**

Prayer reveals personal and communal identity with regards to faith adherence. As discussed, prayer can function as a speech act that identifies individuals with specific religious faiths. How does the language of prayer function to contribute to identity development, and what does this say about prayer as a concept?

Noel Heather pioneered a model of critical discourse analysis (CDA) to evaluate religious language.<sup>66</sup> Heather analyzed a Christian religious community and introduced the concepts of Strong (S) and Weak (W) commitment frame:

“It seems a reasonable assumption that all ideologies have their more intense and relaxed more devotees-- as well as, usually, both more intense and more relaxed ‘dialects’ of the ideology in question...evaluation of commitment levels can play an important role as a yardstick by which religiously-minded people assess their own position in relation to others’ theological positions.”

Heather goes on to analyze the various linguistic qualities that identify an individual's usage as S (more intense devotion) or W (more relaxed devotion). Applying this framework to the present study, certain linguistic trends may be identified as S or W commitment frame. These linguistic qualities of prayer illustrate to what degree an individual identifies with a particular religious tenet or faith. One example is grammatical number.

Grammatical number is one way that individuals use to identify themselves with a community. Exhibit E-2 and Exhibit E-3 illustrate that prayer during religious services is more likely to use linguistic forms in plural number (we, us, our) than singular number (I, me, my).

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<sup>66</sup>Heather, Noel. *Religious Language and Critical Discourse Analysis: Ideology and Identity in Christian Discourse Today*, Vol. 5. Oxford: Peter Lang, 2000.

Using plural number more frequently than necessary would indicate a desire to associate oneself with a particular community. In this sense, plural number indicates a S commitment frame and singular number indicates a W commitment frame. Selecting plural over singular number in prayer contributes to an individual's adherence to a particular religious faith identity. Prayer therefore functions as to develop religious and faith identity.

Another qualitative example of commitment frame is the idea of scheduled (S) versus unscheduled (W) prayer. As discussed in the previous chapter, certain religions prescribe times when prayer is more appropriate. Scheduled prayer requires planning, and willingness to sacrifice that time to prayer. Therefore, relative to spontaneous prayer, scheduled prayer indicates S commitment frame.

The use of specific lexicon, syntactic structures, and styles can indicate the level of spiritual and ideological commitment that an individual may have to a particular faith tradition. Stronger commitment frames generally require more deference to God and therefore sacrifice of one's agency. Weaker commitment frames indicate less willingness to submit to the tenets of a particular faith or its higher being. Through making the decision to choose S or W commitment frame linguistic items, the individuals think about what level of agency they want to ascribe to themselves versus a higher being. Therefore, choices of commitment frame in prayer reveal how prayer functions as identity development and, subsequently, as agency negotiation.

### **Conclusion**

As discussed in the previous chapter, prayer is conceptualized more by its linguistic functions than by its linguistic forms. This chapter provides a working hypothesis for a



conceptual definition of prayer based on its linguistic manifestations and their functions.

Consider the questions with which this chapter begins.

*How does prayer function?* This hypothesis argues an overarching conceptual definition of prayer as linguistic phenomenon that provides a way to negotiate one's agency. Prayer presents an opportunity for individuals to think about their actions, their circumstances, and their constraints. Prayer is a conversation with an interlocutor concept that involves inspecting reality and evaluating what can be done about it. The data from both individual interviews and religious services support the idea that humans use prayer to adjust expectations about the potency or limits of their agency.

*How does prayer accomplish these functions linguistically?* Linguistic functions like speech acts, interlocutor targeting, and commitment frame selection are useful ways to conceptualize prayer. Prayer acts as both a perlocutionary and illocutionary speech act with felicity conditions like intentionality that define the concept. Individually and during religious services, people exhibit behaviors like prayer targeting and commitment frame selection. These linguistic functions of prayer also illustrate how prayer functions as negotiation of agency.

## CHAPTER SIX: SUMMARY

At the beginning of this paper five questions were posed about the concept of prayer: (1) What is prayer? (2) How is prayer structured in language? (3) What forms does it take? (4) How does prayer function? (5) How does prayer accomplish these functions linguistically? The previous chapters attempt to answer four of the questions above and, in doing so, answer the first. While this project is in not an exhaustive or comprehensive study of prayer, it does reveal linguistic patterns in how prayer is defined across boundaries of language, culture, and religion.

The agency negotiation model of prayer presented here is at odds with many common assumptions about prayer. Prayer has less to do with faith background than commonly believed. Although there are significant differences between religious service and individual prayer, many of those differences have to do with the level of structural rigidity or formality. While often conceptualized as a conversation with God, atheists and agnostics exhibit the same behaviors and philosophies when it comes to the language of prayer. Belief in God does not seem to be a necessary condition for prayer. Certainly, religious institutions have a strong influence on the beliefs and behaviors of their adherents with regards to prayer. However, even the most devout of adherents recognize conceptual variation of prayer. This commonly held assumption is applied as fact to empirical studies. The difficulties that many studies on this topic face can be attributed to assumptions about faith or purpose in regards to prayer. Further research should approach the concept of prayer with a more open mind to what it is and how it functions.

This project examines prayer as a concept through its linguistic manifestations. Again, it is worth pointing out that there are many permutations of prayer that have nothing to do with language. As mentioned at the start of this discussion, people pray in a variety of ways. Additionally, the prayers that occupy the mind without ever attaining linguistic configuration are

valid. This perspective inherently limits the hypothesis proposed in this paper. There are several relevant methodological and logistical limitations, which are worth mention.

### **Methodological Limitations**

This study consists of eight interviews and recordings of four religious services within the span of a few months. The most significant limitation is the size of the sample. The size of the sample was limited by time, scheduling difficulties,<sup>67</sup> and response rate. Of the ten students that opted in to the study, only eight responded to schedule an interview. Inclement weather delayed many of these interviews, which further limited the number or analytical rigor of interviews. Increasing the number and length of interviews and religious services would likely reveal novel insights about prayer.

The respondents were from three different religious backgrounds, between the ages of nineteen and twenty-two, and, with one exception, from within the United States. The relative homogeneity of the sample limited examination of different philosophies of prayer. Future studies should avoid random sampling with such a small sample size. In a qualitative study, a wide variety of data is important to developing a complete understanding of the object of study. The backgrounds of individuals examined in this study were limited to students with Western notions of prayer and religion. Future research should identify individuals from non-Western backgrounds and cultures to provide unique perspectives on the concept of prayer. Importantly, this study limited the population to the Emory University community. Selecting such a community has important implications for the identities of those individuals who occupy it. The average Emory student is of a specific socio-economic, educational, and ideological background,

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<sup>67</sup>In the Spring 2014 semester, Emory University closed on six days within the first month of classes. An *Emory Wheel* article chronicled the snow days: <http://www.emorywheel.com/emory-community-keeps-cool-during-ice-storm/>

which limits the efficacy of the data collected. Future studies should expand the population as wide as possible to increase the legitimacy of their results.

Talking about the concept of prayer in isolation is difficult. Respondents are very forthcoming on relatively personal topics like their belief in God, their level of faith, and their religious backgrounds. However, narrowing down conversation to the idea of prayer proved more difficult than expected. The academic literature on the subject reflects this reluctance to separate the idea of prayer from the other connotative associations: God, religion, faith, afterlife, sin, etc. As always, the observer's paradox comes into play in interviews. At times, the need to explain scope would push the discussion from interview to pedagogy. Clarifying the project's topic could infringe upon explanation, which would influence the views of the interviewee. Therefore, it was difficult to seek a balance between the lucidity and independence of answers.

The object of study, prayer, is an inherently esoteric subject. The personal and private nature of prayer imposes limits on the study. When interviewees do not have clearly defined ideas about the subject of a question, their answers are subsequently difficult to interpret. Furthermore, interviewees were hesitant to give concrete answers about their opinions for fear of appearing bigoted. Parsing between high-level conceptual definitions and daily habits proved complicated. Future studies should apply more systematic methods in providing respondents with background information on the subject of prayer as a linguistic idea.

### **Further Analysis & Research**

This study collected a large amount of data: approximately eight hours of interview audio recordings and six hours of religious service recordings. While these data inform the linguistic manifestation of an esoteric concept, there is much more that they can explain. More detailed and

rigorous analysis could be done with regards to semantic preferences (corpora and statistical analysis), different types of identity frames (critical discourse analysis), and paralinguistic phenomena (visual analysis). These analyses could help explain linguistic minutia in prayer or reveal deeper insights.

This project should be considered a pilot study that addresses prayer as a linguistic concept. By outlining the manners in which prayer might be understood as a linguistic phenomenon, this project posits hypotheses that future research may critique, support, or refute.

Most importantly, future investigators should systematically and rigorously test the concept of prayer as negotiation of agency. Quantitative surveys and longitudinal methods can be used to measure the degree that agency might change and the external factors that might affect prayer, respectively. Research should pursue a more unifying and clearer way to conceptualize prayer and its linguistic manifestations.

Further research on the linguistic structures of prayer should be carried out to support or refute the idea that linguistic forms are actually insignificant to the conceptual definition of prayer. Analysis of linguistic corpora of prayer should be identified and analyzed for structural patterns. Despite what the data suggest, the sample size of this study was insufficiently large as to rule out the possibility of a structurally defined prayer concept.

For prayer to be so pervasive, yet so arcane is perplexing. As is often the case in academia, to answer one question is to prompt another question. Certainly, humanity has yet to comprehend the mysteries of religion or language. However, the study of prayer grants an insightful glimpse into both.

## APPENDIX

**Exhibit A: Interviewee Profiles**

<b>Non-identifiable Alias:</b>	Sylvia Lu
<b>Year of Birth:</b>	1995
<b>Languages:</b>	Chinese, English
<b>Place of Birth:</b>	China
<b>Place of Home:</b>	China
<b>Race:</b>	Asian
<b>Ethnicity:</b>	Asian
<b>Faith Identity or Community:</b>	None
<b>Level of Practice of Faith or “Religiousness”:</b>	N/A
<b>Non-identifiable Alias:</b>	Hayden Morris
<b>Year of Birth:</b>	1991
<b>Languages:</b>	English, Conversational/Intermediate French
<b>Place of Birth:</b>	Raleigh, NC
<b>Place of Home:</b>	Cary, NC
<b>Race:</b>	White/Caucasian
<b>Ethnicity:</b>	White/Caucasian
<b>Faith Identity or Community:</b>	Christian: Presbyterian (PCUSA)
<b>Level of Practice of Faith or “Religiousness”:</b>	Religious and Faithful; I attend church regularly and have a small group of girls as a bible study community
<b>Non-identifiable Alias:</b>	Harris
<b>Year of Birth:</b>	1993
<b>Languages:</b>	English, Spanish (conversational), Arabic (conversational in Modern Standard and Moroccan)
<b>Place of Birth:</b>	New York, New York
<b>Place of Home:</b>	Scottsdale, AZ
<b>Race:</b>	White
<b>Ethnicity:</b>	White
<b>Faith Identity or Community:</b>	Jewish
<b>Level of Practice of Faith or “Religiousness”:</b>	Minimal Practice
<b>Non-identifiable Alias:</b>	Jacob
<b>Year of Birth:</b>	1992
<b>Languages:</b>	English
<b>Place of Birth:</b>	Spokane, WA
<b>Place of Home:</b>	Austin, TX
<b>Race:</b>	White
<b>Ethnicity:</b>	German
<b>Faith Identity or Community:</b>	Christian
<b>Level of Practice of Faith or “Religiousness”:</b>	Not practicing

**Non-identifiable Alias:** Maria Infante  
**Year of Birth:** 1993  
**Languages:** English, Spanish  
**Place of Birth:** Miami, FL  
**Place of Home:** Miami, FL  
**Race:** White  
**Ethnicity:** Hispanic  
**Faith Identity or Community:** Catholic  
**Level of Practice of Faith or “Religiousness”:** Practices when home

**Non-identifiable Alias:** Michelle Thakker  
**Year of Birth:** 1994  
**Languages:** English, Spanish, Arabic  
**Place of Birth:** Evanston, IL  
**Place of Home:** Buffalo Grove, IL  
**Race:** Caucasian  
**Ethnicity:** White  
**Faith Identity or Community:** Jewish  
**Level of Practice of Faith or “Religiousness”:** Zero

**Non-identifiable Alias:** Nellie Tulone  
**Year of Birth:** 1994  
**Languages:** English, Creole  
**Place of Birth:** Naples, FL  
**Place of Home:** Naples, FL  
**Race:** Black  
**Ethnicity:** Haitian American  
**Faith Identity or Community:** Christian  
**Level of Practice of Faith or “Religiousness”:** Moderate

**Non-identifiable Alias:** Priya Shah  
**Year of Birth:** 1993  
**Languages:** English, some Spanish, understand Tamil  
**Place of Birth:** Rochester, NY  
**Place of Home:** Lexington, MA  
**Race:** Asian  
**Ethnicity:** Indian  
**Faith Identity or Community:** Hindu  
**Level of Practice of Faith or “Religiousness”:** Moderate

**Exhibit B: Interview Question List**

- What is prayer?
- What makes prayers “prayers”?
- Do you always pray in a specific language variety?
- Who taught you how to pray?
- Can you give an example of prayer?
- Do you think your religious background has influenced the way that you pray?
- How are prayers structured?
- When is it okay or not okay to pray?
- Is prayer a conversation?
- Do you address God or a higher being when you pray?
- Do you expect a response from prayer?
- Are songs of praise prayer? Why or why not?
- Do you feel better when you pray? Why or why not?
- Why do you pray?
- What do you accomplish when you pray?
- Do you think prayer has a beginning and an end?
- What types of words do you or do you not use when praying?
- What is okay to pray for? What is not okay to pray for?



### Exhibit C: Selected Interview Transcription Excerpts

Co-Investigator Connor Leydecker conducted interviews at various locations on campus between January 31 and February 10, 2014. All interviews were one-on-one and were audio-recorded using MacBook Pro Photo Booth software. The names at the beginning of each transcription are non-identifiable aliases that were provided by the interviewees.<sup>68</sup>

These transcriptions are not complete. All the interviewer's comments, questions, and explanations were excluded from the excerpts because they do not reflect empirical evidence. Interviewee quotation excerpts were selected for their relevance to the study. If an utterance had nothing to do with prayer, it was excluded. These exclusions were made for the sake of space, clarity, and integrity of the work.

In all recordings, irrelevant, unintelligible, or unrelated parts of the recording were not included. If the service addressed prayer directly or could be interpreted as a prayer (e.g. a reading from a holy text), the recording transcription was included. This exclusion was done for the sake of space and to limit the sample to relevant parts. These limitations were important for deriving accurate linguistic analyses.

At the beginning of each new quotation is a time stamp that corresponds to the duration of that section in the video recording (e.g. [0:00-11:30]). If there is an A or B after the time stamp in brackets (e.g. [0:13A]) that indicates that the original recording is in two parts. A refers to the first part and B refers to the second part of the same interview. Italics indicate a word or phrase in another language (e.g. *en el nombre de Dios*). English translations are provided in quotations and parentheses immediately following the language of origin, a transliteration if necessary. Ellipses indicate that the speaker was unintelligible or inaudible. Additionally, ellipses mark times sections during which text was excluded for reasons of irrelevance. The text that follows an asterisk is not a direct quote, but a paraphrase. Native speakers provided any necessary translations. Semantically vacuous hedges such as kind of, like, um, uh, you know, etc. were excluded from the transcriptions for the sake of clarity. Commas were inserted gratuitously in order to help mirror the speaking pace of the interviewee. Transcription excerpts are provided in chronological order of recording.

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<sup>68</sup>This data collection method has received Institutional Review Board (IRB00070859) approval via waiver of documentation of consent Option 2, which stipulates that “[t]he research presents no more than minimal risk of harm to subjects” and “[t]he research involves no procedures for which written consent is normally required outside of the research context.”

**Sylvia Lu:**

- What exactly is prayer? [2:45]
- I don't know how to pray. [4:15]
- \*She doesn't know any prayers. [4:22]
- \*Equates wishes to prayer [5:20]
- 祝 zhù (“wish”) is making a wish, it is not a formal prayer. [6:13]
- That's very informal, the formal of prayer is 祈祷 qí dǎo (“prayer”). [6:30]
- A better year, healthy body, good grades, everything better. [7:22]
- \*She does not verbalize her prayers [8:54]
- Formal one is talking to God, the informal one is a conversation. [8:29]
- \*She thinks that praying has something to do with her getting a better grade later on after prayer. [9:53]
- Maybe fifty percent is from the prayer, and the other fifty percent is from me. [10:14]
- I think when my wish comes true, I think about it as just thinking my prayer is very correct. I will continue praying for the next New Year. [11:05]
- My mom told me that if you ever told anyone your prayers that the wishes will never come true. [12:00]
- Sometimes I did tell my friends what my goal was and the result was that my goal didn't succeed. [13:25]
- \*If you tell someone your prayers, they become less likely to happen, but not impossible. [13:40]
- \*It's easier to deal with failure if you don't tell other people about it. [14:45]
- Please let me get into Emory. [18:00]
- \*Prays the day before an exam or the day before grades come out, the result of an internship, or an application, if she prays it is more likely to be there; prayer is more formal than a wish. [19:55]
- After I pray, I feel more confident that it is more likely to happen. [20:30]
- I'll be more hardworking after I pray. [23:18]
- I think for prayer, your sentence needs to be really sincere, and that is the structure. [26:55]
- Because it shows my attitude and how much I want it to happen. If I sound more sincere, the wish might come true. [28:00]
- I can't think of any specific words, but I think if you sound like you don't really care about the wish or the prayer, then they might not come true. [29:00]
- \*Her parents taught her how to pray. [30:15]
- \*Discussion of gesture use during ritualistic prayer. [32:00]
- If you pray like, please don't arrest me, that's not right...because you did something bad. [34:01]
- \*Illegal things are not okay to pray for. [34:30]
- I think you can pray at any time and anywhere. [36:07]
- \*She always prays in her native language, Chinese. [36:39]
- \* 请 qǐng (“please”) and 让 ràng (“let”) as words she frequently uses in prayer. [39:39]
- \*She would use 请 qǐng (“please”) rather than 我想 wǒ xiǎng (“I want”); it has nothing to do with politeness. Using please will make the sentence shorter. [44:33]
- \*Given a choice between using more or less accented language, she chose less accented language. [45:45]
- \*She uses 上帝 shàngdì (“God”) as the word for Western God. [47:40]
- I can't think about it without God...but if it's the daily thing, I don't think about it as much. [48:37]

- If you can make it short, the God will be pleased. And sometimes it's like before the New Year, my Mom told me you only have ten seconds to make a wish, and...I keep it simple so I can make more wishes. [50:14]
- It's divided into formal and informal. The formal one is like you pray to the God and its very formal. You need to dress up formal and your behavior is formal. About informal prayer you can pray every day. [52: 43]

**Hayden M:**

- In church, the Lord's Prayer is what is typically said through the Presbyterian services. [1:00]
- Prayer for me is just communication with God...At times during the day when I'm struggling I'll just be like hey God, listen up. [1:27]
- \*Unintentional communication with God happens every moment of my life [1:50]
- A lot of the time I'll give an introduction, like hey God [2:17]
- I'll look up, I'll put my hands together, those are all signs that I'm praying [2:38]
- \*She prays in her native language [3:14]
- The words that I could understand I liked. [3:16]
- When I'm praying, I pray to God the Father. [4:04]
- Sometimes, I'll pray to Jesus. It really depends on the situation. [4:13]
- My relationship with God is such that God knows everything about me. [4:48]
- By introducing that informality, it leads to a deeper connection. [5:08]
- Every night before bed, my dad would pray with me. [5:27]
- The Lord's prayer is the classic one...The assurance of pardon is said as a prayer. [6:43]
- \*When asked about the structure of prayer: I think it depends on the denomination and the usage of prayer. [7:32]
- There's a passage in the Bible talking about how there is power in multiple people praying at the same time. [7:53]
- In a group setting, just like a popcorn prayer for example. We're holding hands and we either pass it around; one person calls it out and another person picks up in the middle. It's almost just like a structure in a sense...You have your beginning, the meat of it. [8:40]
- \*Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, Supplication [9:18]
- In Jesus' name we pray, amen is a pretty common ending to the prayers that I pray. [9:45]
- In the Presbyterian Church, I notice that I echo it, so like if a minister was like amen, we echo and say amen. [9:58]
- \*The pronunciation of amen does not matter [10:27]
- \*Meal times, church services, holidays [11:15]
- During really low points in my life is when I pray [11:21]
- While I'm praying it's definitely a monologue. I don't think there's a back and forth between me and God. [12:19]
- A lot of times when I pray, it's this release, so it's this emotional purge, in a way where I feel like something is being done. [12:26]
- I have no expectation that that prayer will be answered tomorrow...But I do have an expectation that God will answer in his own time and in his own way. [12:57]
- I think anyone on Earth is flawed, and when I pray, that's why I pray solely to the Holy Trinity because they are God. [14:58]
- I think God would be totally fine with me praying to her, but I would not elevate any other religious figure than the trinity to the status of God, so it's almost like pointless praying. [15:38]
- It's not something I would abstain from because I feel like God would have a problem with it, I just think it's...not ineffective, that sounds awful. [16:04]
- It's really the intentionality for me that separates it. [18:03]
- I've always been told don't pray for like an A on the test, pray that God enables you to study hard enough to make it. [19:20]
- I think the only way that it wouldn't be is if you are purposefully and intentionally praying to God for evil to be done in the world. [19:45]

- If you were praying for something to happen that you don't understand is evil, then I think that would still count as prayer. [20:03]
- A lot of my individual prayers at when I am at very low points [27:02]
- It reaffirms my faith in God, and my faith is probably one of my biggest motivators. [27:28]
- I have confidence that through God I can do anything, with myself I probably can't; I'm flawed. [27:45]
- \*Length of prayer is irrelevant because of God's omnipotence.
- Sometimes it's that I'm struggling with something and need to talk it out, and I need to talk through it with God, that's the reason why a personal prayer would be longer. [30:01]
- I think the biggest takeaway is that I feel more in control of my life. So, regardless of if anything happens, either way I feel prepared to handle whatever situation I was praying about. [32:00]
- \*It is not important that she gets what she wants when she prays. [34:02]
- Prayer leads to optimism. [35:56]
- \*Meditation and dancing count as prayer [41:00]
- How can you have a relationship with something that doesn't exist? [45:02]
- If they're struggling and they say a prayer and they're having doubts about God, but they believe in a higher power, then that totally counts as a prayer. But if they really, truly reject that notion, and they believe in the Flying Spaghetti Monster or something like they clearly made up or clearly mocking God, then I don't think that counts as prayer. [45:20]
- Intentional communication with God. [49:58]

**Harris:**

- Prayer is the articulation of deeper wants and desires, sort of materialistic wants and desires that pertain to a person's life, and what they pray to varies and is sort of arbitrary. [0:10A]
- It's much more informal, so it's relatable. [2:09A]
- Informal, conversational and sometimes I may use language in a more formal pattern or structure, but the words I use are still going to be relatively informal words, they're going to be conversational ideas and they're not going to be very formatted like you see in scripture. [5:14A]
- In prayer, the subject is you and your personal desires and wants and what's happening around you and, so while the language and form may be the same, the subject is much more intimate, much deeper, and while that can happen in a conversation with friends, as if someone says I really hope that so and so, but in prayer that has a deeper intimacy and connection. [6:18A]
- In prayer, it's focusing on you, your hopes, your wants, your desires for something to happen or for an outcome and that outcome can be anything, but it's still in the topic of your hopes, your desires, your wants, your needs, whereas a conversation with a friend can, like I said, be very broad and cover tons of topics and you might not care about an outcome. [6:28A]
- Outcome-oriented but not outcome-based. And what I mean by that is that when people pray they would like to see an outcome, but whether or not that outcome happens, they will continue to pray. [8:13A]
- The act of praying and defining those desires, wants, and needs I think does have an internal effect on a person, whether they believe their prayer was heard or not. [1:40B]
- When you outright ask for things and say that you wish that these things would happen, there's just a direct appreciation for that thing or that person and I feel like when you state it, as when you write it down, and that appreciation that happens can just cause you to realize everything around you to a greater extent, realize what you have and you appreciate it more so. [2:25B]
- \*Compares this to מודה אני *modeh ani* ("I give thanks") or Jewish morning prayer. [3:20B]
- \*Does not think that religious background influenced the way he prays because if it did he would probably pray in Hebrew.
- I don't think they need structure. There's the general idea that there are I guess two kinds of, three kinds of prayers I would say, and one of them ties into the other. There's thanking prayers. There's prayers for asking for something, and tied into that, but slightly different is the asking for forgiveness, the idea that one may have sinned. [5:41B]
- Very generally, it discusses health of myself, my friends, my family. It discusses the willingness to succeed, and it discusses the concerns I have at a specific time. [7:52B]
- \*He disagrees that there are any times that are more or less appropriate to pray. [10:50B]
- \*He does not think it is necessary to address a higher being [11:05B]
- \*He does not think that he addresses anything. Internal monologue. [12:06B]
- Maybe the phrase I hope, I'm sure please gets in there a few times. I would like. Yeah, those are the three. [12:43B]
- \*Contrasts his prayer with the canon and scripture [16:11B]
- I think that prayer done in negative emotion is not conducive and I don't think its very appropriate to pray for something in that context. [16:53B]
- \*He views length of prayer as a function of perception of thanksgiving/religious faith [21:00B]
- Concise... I believe that when you're having an internal dialogue or conversation with a God, you don't necessarily need to list everything out elaborately and elaborate on everything you say because there is that certain understanding that you have. You don't have to say why you want

your family to remain healthy because you know why. That understanding almost takes away the need to elaborate. [21:51B]

- \*Going off on a tangent about spirituality to the point where he forgets the question [26:30B]
- Prayer is the internal dialogue, conversation, type of requesting, thanking and expression of a person's wants, desires, and needs at a specific time that have been understood and come together over a period of time or not. [32:08B]

**Jacob:**

- It's a conversation. It's really just you opening up and talking to whatever higher being or power, or God you believe in. [0:25]
- I would say that, that consoles you or that makes you feel better, and I would say that is kind of why prayer always has an effect. [1:44]
- Rarely. And I think the times that you expect a response are often the times you feel like it doesn't get answered. [2:23]
- It's like a conversation with someone who just gets you. [4:01]
- I mean English, for sure, because it's the only language I speak fluently. [6:10]
- The language we use creates the space we inhabit. [7:06]
- Prayer is more open, prayer is more honest. In a sense, you do not need to use as many words... You don't need to explain yourself in prayer. [8:50]
- With a conversation with a friend, there's always a point. [9:49]
- \*His religious background has absolutely influenced the way he prays [13:25]
- It's definitely ongoing. It's a process and it's a relationship. And if you stop talking to your best friend for six months with no reason, that affects your relationship. [15:45]
- \*He never prays to anyone else other than God. [17:16]
- God always responds, and I'm going to use the cop-out answer that even not responding is a response. [17:37]
- You don't know what you need to have your ego broken down a little bit. [19:55]
- You don't know how God is going to answer this prayer because you don't know what you need. [20:03]
- I'm going to say everything has a beginning, middle, and an end. [22:23]
- The beginning is an opening of your vessel to pray, and then the middle, I would say, is the conversation, is the actual prayer, is whatever is on your heart, is whatever you are trying to convey, and whether your heart is conveying it while you go through certain actions or whether it's something you're actively thinking or actively saying out loud. And then I think there's an ending, and I think that is once you know your message has been sent out. [23:07]
- I view language completely unnecessary to praying. [24:25]
- Another would be you know Lord grant me a little more today, or things very similar to this nature of prayer being a process. [26:45]
- Not submissive language, but language that is always implying a certain sense of humility. [28:48]
- Anything defined as sin you don't... And sin can be defined however you want... I think that is a very internalized concept of sin, so you can't pray for anything you personally believe is sin... whatever you've internalized as believing is sin, you can't pray for that. [31:10]
- I couldn't pray about my relationship with a guy. My faith and my sexuality were not, they were very much at odds. I couldn't pray about the guy I liked or the boyfriend I had because I viewed that as sin. So, that's the internalized definition of sin. And, you know, some time has passed, and it was a very weird experience the first time I was able to talk to God about my boyfriend. [32:18]
- The prayer is changing to reflect whatever your personal faith is. [34:05]
- I almost want to say that your prayer affects your faith more. I'm gonna say your prayer affects your faith more in my opinion. So if we're viewing this as a relationship, me having a relationship with you will make me talk to you, but if we talk a lot more, if I'm initiating



conversations, if I'm willing to put myself out there, if I'm willing to be open with you, that's going to strength our relationship. [35:00]

- I would say that the more you pray the more you know your faith. [35:45]
- That's why when a lot of people have crises, you know when a family member gets really sick or a family member passes away unexpectedly that's why you see so many people turn to God, or have this religious revival or whatever because your priorities become clear. [39:55]
- I think you can honestly pray for whatever the f you want. [41:25]
- I think you calm down. [42:45]
- One thing I definitely know I remember doing, and one thing I definitely learned from my mother, is when I'm asking for a specific outcome you can sometimes in prayer I'll bargain or I'll plea or like I'll barter with God in prayer. [45:01]
- I think prayer is an opening up... You know, after talking, I think prayer is just being open. [49:25]
- I just think that language and prayer is so entirely flexible. [50:45]

- **Maria Infante:**

- Prayer would be any kind of communication that you're having with whoever spiritually, I don't know, leads your faith... Some kind of communication, orally or mentally with whatever being you're directing this to. [0:25]
- When its oral prayer can be something that's sort of more formal and more organized, something that's used in unison or you know maybe its something that loses meaning over time because it's recited so often. [1:06]
- Different from normal communication in that the words you're using are sometimes less important than the fact that you're using this speaking time as a moment to communicate with God, so it is it can be a kind of coming together that's relying on spoken word, but it's not as important as the concept of togetherness. [1:37]
- I guess I would be praying in English because I wouldn't be using a learned prayer. Since I'm alone it would be something informal and it wouldn't follow something you would learn in Sunday school. [3:49]
- I learned them in both, so I learned them in Spanish first at home, so the kinds of things that you say before eating or before going to bed, or prayers that exist in the home space or in the rosary, which we do as a family, but prayers that we only do at school or the act of contrition or certain elements of the mass that I hadn't seen in Spanish, I first learned in English. [4:12]
- Learned prayer, at least when I was first learning them, was very formal, a lot of thous, or at least that was the form I learned in school. [5:01]
- The way I learned my prayers was very formal and rigid. [5:20]
- I guess since I was educated in Catholic school and there was a grade riding on knowing a prayer a certain way, so it was like formal to the point of actually reflecting our conformance. [5:45]
- Parents and grandparents. So, I guess the concept of prayer preceded formal education, not that I can remember clearly the difference between preschool and home, but I imagine that I was doing the sign of the cross long before I was in school, but those went hand in hand in preschool. [6:14]
- There was some type of acronym for the types of things that you could talk to God about. [7:46]
- It was like Thanks, and Praise, and I don't know, variations of those words, I think it might have been like ALTAR, adore, love, thank, absolve, rejoice, I don't know, something like that, but the concept was they gave us a framework for the right emotions to express during that time. [8:07]
- Oh God, I have an important interview today, I've prepared a lot. Holy Spirit, please enlighten me, and help me do my best today. Thank you. [10:00]
- I feel like I've been spoon-fed all my praying methodology and mindset [10:57]
- \*Her Catholic background has influenced the way she prays [11:24]
- A personalized message to God or something more standard and scripted, that either way, it's going to be, right, the difference between an open card where you write whatever you're feeling versus like a sort of Hallmark card which nails the right expression, maybe is less precise, but more nicely packaged. [13:05]
- It feels natural, sometimes after a speech, I almost compulsively do it by accident. [14:25]
- I don't think there's times when it's inappropriate. I think there's times when doing it in a public handholding kind of call attention to yourself sort of way is obnoxious, but I wouldn't go so far as to say inappropriate. [15:35]

- If you're kind of open to interpreting circumstances as a response, then you could read it as a dialogue. [17:21]
- It feels kind of meaningless to pray in the form of monologue because it feels like you're speaking at a wall. If there's no feeling that it's being received then it could be kind of a deterrent and you wouldn't want to keep throwing words at nothing. [17:41]
- I think I always have in mind God or thinking of God even if I don't start off like hey God, I think I do have who I'm asking help from or who I'm thanking in mind, whether it's God or Virgin Mary, or a saint or whatever. You kind of have a target in mind. [18:24]
- I guess it just depends on what you've been most exposed to, so what sticks out to you in terms of what saints you know their causes, or maybe if it's something serious and specific you look it up who I pray to and you're like Oh my aunt has glaucoma, so it's Saint Lucy for eyes. [19:25]
- The idea is that God has this overflow of prayers directed at him and these are kind of like his ambassadors that will be best in each area and are able to take up special cases to God. [20:07]
- It's less pathetic feeling to approach another human being in prayer. [22:18]
- I think people have a harder time being angry with Jesus than they do like a saint. [23:01]
- You expect some kind of strength or willingness or relaxation to come of prayer. So like a response in the sense that it makes you feel better, more at peace. [23:22]
- I think praying, it takes you outside of your situation for a second and lets you reflect, compose thoughts, think about the best possible scenario, and think about what you want from the situation or what help you think you need. [24:13]
- I talked about giving thanks, asking for help, and professing love. [26:21]
- I think, without an event, I don't really dialogue with God. [27:01]
- Formally, I feel like a decent part of it is scripturally derived, so it's like the same kind of language you find from the Bible, or it will literally be like excerpts from it. So, I guess like a very polished kind of language. [29:47]
- Informally, not that different from a call to mom, like a this is the circumstance, I'm struggling, I feel lonely, I need help, or like, you know, this is what happened, thanks so much, it's been amazing, or something. So not difference from correspondence with home. It's still not on the level of friends where you can be crude or immature or lazy with language, but not with the same buttoned-up approach as with mass. [30:33]
- Communication with God it's more intentional and direct...and like definitely a little more respectful. [31:55]
- When we were little, my grandmother would say, *en el nombre de Dios* ("in the name of God"), in the name of God when we were gonna, for with her it was anything, making a cake, taking a shower, I have wanted to think something like that before taking a test would come to me in Spanish, something my teachers taught me like Holy Spirit enlighten me would come to me in English. [33:50]
- Less so, I really appreciate a prayer that kind of gets to the point, and has a kind of clear and direct point. [37:14]

**Michelle Thakker:**

- Any kind of communication with a deity. It doesn't have to be spoken or communal or anything like that. It can be silent. [1:23A]
- The biggest thing is the motive of prayer. A lot of times, language is just for communicating or sharing something with others, but when you're praying you usually have a purpose and a specific audience, like your God that you're communicating with, and there's something that you kind of hope to get out of it. [2:15A]
- I'm starting to think that praying for someone's demise is probably not a good thing to do, but in my own opinion, I think I wouldn't judge other people for praying for anything in particular. [0:19B]
- If I'm praying on my own, then it's in English. [1:44B]
- My Hebrew school teachers, the cantor came in and talked to us a few times, that was most of it, I guess I learned a little bit through example from my family. [2:10B]
- I learned the תפילה העמידה תפילת שמע *Amidah* ("The Standing Prayer") and the שמע *Shema* ("listen") and all the prayers for my bah mitzvah, and for Jewish holidays, but now it would be something in my head, I'm not gonna name names, but my friend's day died last week or two weeks ago, so I prayed for him on my own. Let him recover or be healthy again. That was obviously not successful, but I didn't learn anything from synagogue. [3:25B]
- When I'm really desperate for something, it is the Jewish God I'm thinking of. [5:13B]
- I haven't prayed very much in the past few years, and so whenever I do it's in like a really extreme situation, I'm just going to say what I'm thinking, and not going to go through the שמע *shema* ("listen") or anything. [6:16B]
- There's an address, you kind of specify who you're talking to, and then, I don't know, there's the rest of it. [7:38B]
- I don't think there's any sort of general organization for all prayers, they differ so much. [8:17B]
- I think the general concept, like the way I was taught was conversation, but for me it's a bit more one-sided, like I don't expect anything back, it's just like me putting my thoughts out there in case someone hears. But, in general if someone considers prayer conversation, I think that's valid. [10:31B]
- I don't really expect anything in response because prayer mostly comes in times of desperation, it's just I don't feel like there's anything else I can do except pray, it's a last resort, and I think part of the reason that it doesn't feel like conversation is that it's just something that I do to make myself feel better, like I don't know what I can do, but this small gesture, like I can, but I don't expect anything because I'm not sure it's valid. [11:28B]
- If there's no physical action that I can take, then I feel like helpless. I still feel helpless, but I guess prayer is just worth a try. [12:32B]
- There are other types of prayers that don't require a higher being. Those are probably not the prayers I do because I haven't been introduced to them. [13:56B]
- Out of a feeling of duty or thankfulness, I know there are a lot of prayers that express gratitude. [14:54B]
- \*She doesn't think the beginning or end of a prayer is more defined. [17:45B]
- There are definitely certain words that show up a lot in prayer, usually like God or Lord or stuff like that. [18:41B]
- There's a lot of please, I'm asking for something. [19:58B]
- It's probably a lot more concise when I'm praying. There's like more persuasive, I'll say like why this should happen. [20:27B]

- I think, I mean, I think it's better to be concise. I don't know what the point is in being not concise. Anything else is just ritual, things that are really needed. [21:02B]
- My prayers are more polite. There's probably less profanity. I don't think I like use slang words or anything like that, but it's not like unnecessarily or noticeably different or formal or anything like that. [21:55B]
- I think community prayer is probably more formal. [23:13B]
- Because I know what I'm saying in English. If I were to use a Hebrew prayer it would just be like sounds that I don't know what they mean. [24:53B]
- Because when I pray, it's for a very specific reason and I want to tie my prayers to this reason and not just praying something I learned years ago, and I don't know, I think it's appropriate. [25:15B]
- \*Language is not necessary to the idea of prayer. [26:22]
- For me its more about having an inner sense of peace or feeling, I guess like more content with whatever life gives you. You're kind of relinquishing control over things you cannot control. [27:42B]
- I think prayer ideally would be a pure expression of your feelings or of your hopes. [29:50B]
- I feel like a dishonest prayer isn't going to do you any good. [30:21B]
- How well it allows the person to evaluate life, what kind of confidence it gives them after saying the prayer...if it gives them a sense of peace, then it is successful. [34:33B]
- If you don't know what you're praying for, and you're just praying to pray, then I don't know what kind of good that does. [37:52B]

**Nellie Tulone:**

- I believe prayer is a way of communicating with God, that pathway or connection or whatever you want to call it to get your thoughts across, or just to talk. [0:46]
- It can be a conversation or it can just be, not verbal I guess you could say, but a way of just of explicitly stating desires, hopes, and dreams. [1:12]
- Prayer, I believe, is specifically to God. [2:46]
- It's still prayer. I guess most people have this thing that prayer is this calm, you're sitting down by yourself and you're talking. Any form of communication whether you're yelling or saying it calmly or you're crying, it's still prayer. [4:12]
- \*Profanity counts as prayer, although the likelihood of it occurring is low. [4:50]
- I don't think I was taught necessarily how to pray, just kind of like, I guess you learn as you go along because like when you're little, you just do what everyone else does, and when you get older, you just do it your own way. I don't think there's a specific way to pray, I think you just learn your own way. [7:24]
- I can't really say how they influenced my prayer. [9:15]
- I don't think there's a specific structure necessarily, but I think even across other religions, praying is pretty much the same concept, but just toward different Gods, I guess you could say. [10:09]
- Personally, I just talk as if the person is in front of me, there's no distinct, different words as if I were normally talking. [11:34]
- Thanking him for life, thanking for good events, bad events, lessons I've learned kind of thing, and hope for a good future, and looking after my parents, and my family and friends and other people I've met. That's kind of the general outline I guess you could say. [13:01]
- I don't think I open it a certain way every time, but I usually close it with in Jesus' name, Amen. [13:56]
- I think anytime is always appropriate. There are, kind of like you know, times that people usually do it: before bed, before you eat, at church, whatever. I think you can really do it everywhere. You can be walking down the street and praying and no one would know. [15:31]
- I think it's more discrete than continuing where you left off each time. [18:13]
- When I'm praying, I know who I'm praying to, so I don't necessarily feel the need to specify who I'm talking to. [19:30]
- To show thanks mostly, to go if I need help or if I feel like I need help, or like an ear to listen to, or to listen to me, I mean. There are various reasons, just for no reason, just to like talk, I guess. [20:04]
- The most often for me is probably to give thanks, and to like pray for like family members and friends so that they can be watched over and can be kept on the right path. [21:00]
- I don't usually think there's like a direct response, oh like you're praying and you hear someone talking to you back. It's not necessarily like that, maybe it is for some people, I don't know. It's more of that you have a hope that things will be righted, or put in their right place, or things will be fixed, or you're going to be looked over or the people you prayed for are going to be looked over, it's more of like the confidence that you know what you asked for will be carried out, with or without your knowledge. [21:46]
- Sometimes you need that opposite thing to happen instead of what you wanted to happen in order to either teach you something or to help you gain more experience at something, or just for like any reason. [23:20]

- Personally, if something happens contrary to my prayers, I think of it as what I wanted wasn't meant to be, meant to be yet, or it wasn't meant to be at all. Or maybe whatever the contrary happened, maybe I'll now learn something from it. There's a reason for it. [24:02]
- I know that when you pray for people that it helps their well-being, as well as your well-being. [25:41]
- I think that praying for things helps. I can't tell you to what degree it helps, but I believe it helps. [28:33]
- I guess showing your subservience, I'm not sure that's the right word, to show God, like you believe that he will do something or he has the power to do something and you are going to him to help it come about. I think that is what helps. [28:50]
- I think everyone prays more when they're stressed out, just in general. [30:50]
- If you pray for death upon yourself, like obviously that is not going to be something God is not going to grant just because you pray for it. [33:38]
- Anything that's considered bad, I guess you could say, is probably not going to be granted or not going to like happen. [36:17]
- Wishes of ill-intent are not going to be granted. [37:08]
- You don't have to believe in God in order to pray, it's open to anybody. [40:17]
- Prayer is usually between a person and God. [44:34]

**Priya Shah:**

- Prayer to me is something I do to calm the mind, but it also, more me, is a way of connecting with the higher power. [1:00]
- Being able to understand, like I pray in a different language, I pray in Sanskrit, so I guess being able to understand what the prayer means in English, because I would speak or know Sanskrit, being able to connect with God in some form, understand that God exists. [1:50]
- I think it's definitely limiting in the sense like I went to Sunday School growing up, it was called Chinmaya mission, and we would say the prayer in Sanskrit or Hindi or whatever, but I don't know either language and then below we would have the English translation of what it meant, but it's really hard when you can easily forget what a prayer means rather than connecting with what the actual meaning is, so I think that's part of where it's sometimes harder to connect with prayer. [3:01]
- I guess I would say I come up with my own prayer in English, but I don't feel as good about it as I would if it was in a different language, I don't know why, but I think it was just the way I was raised growing up with going to Sunday school every Sunday learning about why we do *pūjās* (“worship”) and why we pray. [3:46]
- Prayer to me, it's really hard for me to connect sometimes because we're praying to different like forms of the same God. It's confusing to me a little bit. [4:57]
- In Hinduism, I guess there's the iyers and the iyengars and your family is like one or the other. I'm an iyer, so we pray to Shiva and Shiva is the destroyer form of God. I like to think of Hinduism as monotheistic. So, I was always encouraged to pray to Shiva like to destroy evil and things like that, jealousy and hatred in the world, and for myself to put those thoughts away. I pray more to Vishnu even though I'm an iyer. Vishnu is the protector because I think a lot of the things I've gone through in my life makes me connect better to this form of God. [5:36]

**दैनिकप्रार्थना:****Daily Prayers****प्रातःकालः***Prātaḥ-kālah**In The Morning Upon Waking Up :*

कराग्रे वसते लक्ष्मीः करमूले सरस्वती ।  
करमध्ये तु गोविन्दः प्रभाते करदर्शनम् ॥

*Karāgre vasate lakṣmīḥ karamūle sarasvatī  
karamadhye tu govindaḥ prabhāte kara-darśanam*

On the tip of your fingers is Goddess *Lakṣmī*, on the base of your fingers is Goddess *Sarasvatī*, in the middle of your fingers is Lord *Govinda*—in this manner, in the morning look at your palms.

[8:10]<sup>69</sup>

<sup>69</sup>The interviewee provided this image as a translation of this prayer, which was originally spoken in Hindi/Sanskrit after the interview.



- So, this is what you do normally, is like you open the palms of your hands and you pray to each finger actually because each finger represents a different part of, I don't precisely remember because it's been so long since I've learned it, but a different part of or different form of God and you say this in the morning to start off your day. [8:32]
- Some form of addressing the higher power and then some sort of, I think there should be some form of gratitude within the prayer. Like thank you for whatever I have so far and then maybe some sort of what you foresee, what do you need at the time, this sounds really bad, but what do you want, and then some sort of closer with more gratitude is how I see it. [11:06]
- So what I've been taught my whole life is that you can pray at all times, any time of day is good. But there's certain prayers that go along with morning like the one I did, there's some that go along at night like before you go to bed in Hinduism, there's some before you eat. My Dad always always tells me pray to Hanuman, which is one God in Hinduism before you have an exam or something so you can clear your mind before you take an exam or do something for the first time. There's also Lord Ganesha which is the remover of obstacles and so he, this form of God, he likes, my Mom always tells me this, you should pray to him before starting something new. [12:47]
- I think it was instilled in me as a child even. [14:52]
- I don't think he's necessarily responding, but he's there listening. [17:05]
- I don't expect a response, I would like a response. [17:37]
- I pray for the world, for the betterment of the world, for myself to, I think it's mostly to calm the mind and to, like a little bit of hope, or gives me hope that there's a better future. Sometimes, I pray for other people, too, like I pray for other people all the time, actually, probably more than I do for myself. [21:16]
- I feel better because it gives me reassurance and in addition to that it's like, it has a calming effect, it just brings me back to where I am and it keeps me in the present. [23:15]
- I don't like to think of it as a beginning and an end because that's really constricting to me. [26:39]
- I think words that are very polished. [27:58]
- I don't like to have a negative view of the world when I pray. [28:51]
- There's *poojas* which are like offerings to God, there's *aartis* which are like closings of *poojas* where everyone moves, I guess that's more physical. [33:05]
- I think it would be more of a like sixty or seventy Sanskrit and less of English, just because I grew up with this idea that Sanskrit was a great language to pray in because it connects you with God and all these scriptures were written in Sanskrit and it brings you closer. [36:31]
- If I was able to connect with the language more, I would definitely pray in Sanskrit more than in English. [36:57]
- I am more demanding in English. [39:30]
- I speak probably more formally, but not to a great extent. [41:50]
- Prayer for me is a way to connect with God, have hope for the future, sort of change, I believe in destiny, but I believe that there are paths that you can take to get to your final destination, of whatever that may be, and I think that may be a way to pick your path or a way to help you follow the correct path and calm the mind, again. [43:33]

## **Exhibit D: Selected Religious Service Transcription Excerpts**

### **Selected Religious Service Transcription Excerpts**

This project examines four faith-based communities at Emory University. Reverend Lisa Garvin, Acting Dean of the Chapel and Religious Life granted permission to a copy of a University recording of University Worship (an ecumenical Christian mass) on the morning of January 26, 2014 at Cannon Chapel. Father Frank Guista and the congregation granted permission to record the Roman Catholic mass on the evening of January 26, 2014 at Cannon Chapel. Dr. Isam Vaid, Religious Life Advisor, granted permission to record a Jumah prayer on the afternoon of Friday, January 31, 2014 at Cannon Chapel. Both the Roman Catholic Mass and the Jumah prayer were video-recorded using MacBook Pro Photo Booth software. Evan Seti, a student service leader, granted permission to use his recording of a Shabbat service on the evening of February 26, 2014 at the Marcus Hillel Center.<sup>70</sup>

In all recordings, irrelevant, unintelligible, or unrelated parts of the recording were not included. If the service addressed prayer directly or could be interpreted as a prayer (e.g. a reading from a holy text), the recording transcription was included. This exclusion was done for the sake of space and to limit the sample to relevant parts. These limitations were important for deriving accurate linguistic analyses.

The transcription conventions vary slightly from recording to recording. Any deviations from the following conventions are noted at the beginning of the transcription. Transcriptions are separated into parts based on movement or changes in linguistic structure (e.g. recitation versus hymn) for purposes of clarity. At the beginning of each new section is a time stamp that corresponds to the duration of that section in the video recording (e.g. [0:00-11:30]). On the same line as the time stamp is a brief introduction that describes the actions of those individuals in the recording during that section (e.g. Priest does the sign of the cross and begins mass while standing in the front of the space). There is a blank line between the description and the beginning of the transcription for the section. Italics indicate that the text was sung. Bolding indicates that more than one person spoke that text in unison. Ellipses indicate that the speaker was unintelligible or inaudible. Additionally, ellipses mark times sections during which text was excluded for reasons of irrelevance. Two pound signs mark the end of the recording (e.g. ##). Native speakers provided any necessary translations. At points, references are made to the Christian or Hebrew Bible using traditional chapter and verse convention. The reference is a proper noun followed by numbers (e.g. Isaiah 8:23-9:3). The proper noun refers to the largest section or “book” that is being referenced. The number before the colon refers to which chapter within that book is being referenced. The number after the colon refers to the specific line or “verse” within that chapter is being referenced. The numbers after the dash provide the end point for the reference. In this case, Isaiah 8:23-9:3 refers to the book of Isaiah chapter 8 verse 23 through Isaiah chapter 9 verse 3.

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<sup>70</sup>This data collection method has received Institutional Review Board (IRB00070859) approval via waiver of documentation of consent Option 2, which stipulates that “[t]he research presents no more than minimal risk of harm to subjects” and “[t]he research involves no procedures for which written consent is normally required outside of the research context.”

**Roman Catholic Mass: Cannon Chapel, January 26, 2014, 6PM EST**

Additional Conventions: The Spanish reading does not have an English translation to follow it. The English translation excluded because the Spanish reading is understood to be a translation of the reading immediately preceding the Spanish reading (i.e. Isaiah 8:23-9:3).

[0:00-14:00] Preparations are made.

[14:00-17:49] Welcome to mass and call to introduce each other. Introductions are made between attendants. The speaker tells the congregation who the celebrant of mass is and what the readings and gospel will be. The congregation sings and individuals play violin and organ as the priest and altar boys process in to seats behind the altar.

[17:49-18:54] Priest introduces the investigator. Investigator speaks about the purpose of the recording and explains its uses.

[18:54-19:22] Priest does the sign of the cross and begins mass while standing in the front of the space. As he begins, the congregation stands.

[19:22-19:50] The Confiteor is recited. During the recitation, the congregation does the sign of the cross.

**I confess to you almighty God and to you my brothers and sisters that I have created sin, in my thoughts and in my words, in what I have done and what I have failed to do. Through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault, and I ask mother Mary ever virgin, all the angels and saints and to you my brothers and sisters to pray for me to the lord our God.**

[19:50-20:47] A Psalm is sung.

[20:47-23:47] A Psalm is sung.

[23:47-24:29] The priest opens his arms and speaks while standing at the front. After the prayer is completed, the congregation sits.

Let us pray. Almighty and ever-living God, direct our actions that we are called to praise you that in the name of your beloved son may a bounty of good works from our lord Jesus Christ your son who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God forever and ever.  
**Amen.**

[24:29-25:41] First reading is recited. A lector reads from the podium at the front.

A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah. First the Lord degraded the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the end he has glorified the seaward road, the land west of the Jordan, the district of the gentiles. Anguish has taken wing, dispelled is darkness, for there is no gloom where but now there was distress. The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light. Upon those who dwelt in the land of gloom a light has shone. You have brought them abundant joy and great rejoicing, as they rejoice before you as at the harvest, as people make merry when dividing spoils. For the yoke that burdened them, the pole on their shoulder, and the rod of their taskmaster who you have smashed, as on the day of Midian. The word of the lord. **Thanks be to God.**

[25:41-27:26] A cantor recites and sings the responsorial psalm with the congregation joining in certain instances.

*The lord is my light and my salvation. **The lord is my light and my salvation.*** The lord is my light and my salvation, whom should I fear? The lord is my life's refuge, of whom should I be afraid? ***The Lord is my light and my salvation.*** One thing I ask of the lord, this I seek, to dwell in the house of the lord all the days of my life, that I may gaze on the loveliness of the lord and contemplate his temple. ***The lord is my light and my salvation.*** I believe that I shall see the bounty of the lord in the land of the living. Wait for the lord with courage, be stouthearted, and wait for the lord. ***The lord is my light and my salvation.***

[27:26-29:34] Lector at the podium walks to the front of the altar. Meanwhile a second lector stands from the congregation and walks to the front of the altar. They stand shoulder to shoulder and bow to the altar in unison. The first lector walks to a seat and the second lector walks to the podium. The lector reads the second reading in Spanish.

Lectura de la primera carta del apóstol san Pablo a los Corintios. Hermanos, los exhorto el nombre de nuestro Jesucristo. a que de concorden y no hay divisiones entre ustedes que estén unidos en un mismo sentir, en un mismo pensar. Me digo esto: por cada uno de ustedes, yo soy de Pablo, yo de Apolos, yo de Pedro, yo de Cristo. ¿Acaso Cristo está dividido? O han sido bautizados ustedes en el nombre de Pablo?

[29:34-31:07] Lector at the podium walks to the front of the altar. Meanwhile a third lector stands from the congregation and walks to the front of the altar. They stand shoulder to shoulder and bow to the altar in unison. The second lector walks to a seat and the third lector walks to the podium. The lector reads the second reading in English.

I urge you, brothers and sisters, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you be in agreement and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and in the same purpose. For it has been reported to me that you my brothers and sisters, by Chloe's people that there are rivalries among you. What I mean is that each of you says, I belonging to Paul, or I belonging to Apollos, or I belonging to Cephas, or I belonging to Christ. Has Christ been divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul? For Christ has not sent me to baptize, but to preach the gospel and not with the wisdom and eloquence, so that the cross of Christ might not be emptied of its meaning. The word of the lord. **Thanks be to God.**

[31:07-33:32] The lector walks in front of the altar and bows before finding a seat. Music plays and the congregation sings Hallelujah. Priest holds a bible in front of the altar up in the air and then walks to the podium. He opens the bible on the podium and then opens his hands.

The lord be with you. **And with his spirit.** A reading from the holy gospel of Matthew. **According to you oh lord.** Hearing that John had been arrested he withdrew to Galilee, and leaving Nazara he went and settled in Capernaum, beside the sea, the region of Zebulun and Naphtali. That had been said through Isaiah the prophet was fulfilled: The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, by the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the gentiles. The people who were

sitting in darkness have seen a great Light, and upon those who were sitting in the land and shadow by death, light has arisen. From that time Jesus began to preach and say repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. As he was walking by the sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon who was called Peter, and his brother Andrew casting a net into the sea, they were fishermen, and he said to them, follow me, and I will make you fishers of men. At once they left their nets and followed him. He walked from there and saw two other brothers, James the son of Zebedee, and his brother John, in the boat with their father Zebedee, mending their nets. He called them and immediately they left the boat and their father and followed. He went around all of Gailee teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and curing every disease and illness among the people. The gospel of the lord. **Thanks be to lord Jesus Christ.**

[33:32-51:55] The congregation sits. The priest delivers a sermon.

[51:55-54:12] The priest sits down. A period of silence and then the priest stands up and reads from a book. The congregation stands and joins him speaking the *Nicene Creed* in unison.

**I believe in one God, the father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible. I believe in one lord, Jesus Christ, born of the Father before all ages. God from God, light from light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, consubstantial with the father, through him all things were made. For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven, and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the virgin Mary and became man. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate, he suffered death and was buried, and rose again on the third day in accordance with the scriptures. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead and his kingdom will have no end. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the father and the son, who with the father and the son is adored and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets. I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic church. I confess one baptism for the forgiveness of sins and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.** With the conviction that the life of Christ offers in every form of darkness we can now pray in confidence to offer our needs.

[54:12-55:18] A lector stands at the podium and reads from a book.

That the church should proclaim the good news of Christ the good news to those that live in the darkness of oppression and division, we pray to the lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.** That the government leaders may have the grace to rise above factions and base the common good as their top priority, we pray to the lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.** That nations may heed the gospels' call to reform their lives by eliminating abortion, euthanasia, and capital punishment, we pray to the lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.** That all those that teach students may find wisdom and enjoy the call to shape the lives of the young, we pray to the lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.** That those who are ill may find the meekness in their weakness and new understanding in the reductive power of Christ, we pray to the lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.** That those who have died may be led to the light of the resurrection, we pray to the lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

[55:18-55:32] The priest speaks now.

Father, we have seen your salvation in your son Jesus Christ, fill us with his light and transform the world with his grace. We ask for this through Christ our lord. **Amen.**

[55:32-58:45] The priest and congregation sit, the lector returns to the congregation seating. Music is played and a responsorial psalm is sung. Meanwhile, two assistants lay a sheet over the altar and bring chalices and other items to the altar and then bow in front of the altar before sitting.

[58:45-1:02:37] The priest stands and walks to the altar and music plays while three people bring items to the priest. A robed man helps him carry them to the altar. The three individuals sit down. Music ends. Priest raises his hands. Congregation stands.

Pray brothers and sisters that my sacrifice may be acceptable to God the almighty father. **May the lord accept the sacrifice at your hands, for the praise and glory of his name, for our good and the good of all this church.** Accept our offering oh lord we pray and in sanctifying them that they may grant us our salvation, we ask for this through this Christ our lord. **Amen.** The lord be with you. **And with his spirit.** Lift up your hearts. **We lift them up to the lord.** Let us give thanks to the lord our God. **It is right and just.**

It is truly right and just our union and our salvation always and everywhere to give you thanks, lord, holy father, creator of the world and source of all life. For we never forsake the words of your wisdom, but by your providence we even now work in your midst. With you... led your people Israel to wisdom. Now with your church... you always accompany her by the power of the holy spirit and lead her along the paths of life to the eternal joy of your kingdom through Christ our lord. And so through the angels and saints, in the hymn of your glory as we acclaim:

[1:02:37-1:03:30]: Music plays as the singer and congregation sings Holy, Holy, Holy.

***Holy, holy, holy lord, God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the lord. Hosanna in the highest.***

[1:03:30-1:05:20] Priest continues speaking with arms outstretched. During the recording, bells are rung by an individual off to the side of the space. One instance of bell ringing is marked by [^]. When the priest invokes the Holy Spirit, he kneels. Once he is finished with his utterance he stands. The priest holds up the host and wine at various times during this part of the mass, which is known as the Transubstantiation.

You are indeed holy and should be glorified, my God, by the human race, and you always walk with us on the journey of life. Blessed indeed is your son, present in our midst, when we are gathered by his love, and when his once with his disciples to love for us, have opened the scriptures and break the bread. We ask you God the powerful and merciful ^ to invoke the Holy Spirit to sanctify these gifts of bread and wine that they may become for us the body and blood of our lord Jesus Christ. On the day before he was to suffer on the night of the last supper he took bread, said the blessing, broke the bread, and gave it to his disciples saying, take this, all of you, and eat it, for this is my body which will be given up for you. ^^ When supper was ended, he took the cup, he gave you thanks, gave the chalice to his disciples, saying: take this, all of you, and drink from it, this is the chalice of my blood, the blood of the new and everlasting covenant,

which will be poured out for you and for men for the forgiveness of sins. Do this in memory of me. ^^ The mystery of faith.

[1:05:20-1:06:00] Music plays and singer sings.

[1:06:00-1:08:00] Priest continues speaking with hands outstretched.

Therefore, Holy father, as we celebrate the your son, our savior, who went after his death and passion on the cross to the glory of the resurrection, and who you have seated at your right hand, we proclaim your glory and your love until he comes again, and we offer you the bread of life and the chalice of blessing. Look with favor on the worship of your church, which we have formed the paschal sacrifice that Christ has given unto us. And grant that by the power of the spirit of your love, we may be counted now and until the day of your bidding among the members of your son, whose body and blood we have in communion. And so you call us to your table oh lord, a thorough march in unity, so that together with Francis, our Pope, Wilton, Luis, and David, our bishops, with all the bishops, priests, and deacons and your entire people as we walk in your ways that we may strive to bring joy and trust into world. Remember our brothers and sister who have fallen asleep in the vigil of Christ, and all the dead whose faith you alone have known. Admit them to rejoice and divine to your face and in the resurrection, give them the fullness of life. Grant those of us when it comes that your work is done that we may come to eternal resting place and live with you forever. Then, in communion with the blessed virgin Mary, mother of God, with the apostles and martyrs and all the saints who will praise and exult you and Jesus Christ, your son, through him and with him and in him, oh God the almighty father, in the unity of the holy spirit, glory and power is yours forever and ever.

[1:08:00-1:10:20] Music begins as the priest raises the host and chalice. Singer sings.

Congregation stands and some raise their hands up to shoulder level. The Our Father is recited and Sign of Peace is made.

***Amen. Amen. Amen.*** At the savior's command, informed by divine teaching, we say, ***our father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us, and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. Amen.***

Deliver us lord, we pray, from every evil and graciously grant peace in our days, that we may be granted mercy, that we may be free from sin, safe from all distress, as we wait in joyful hope for the coming of our savior, Jesus Christ. ***For the kingdom and the power and the glory are yours, now and forever.*** Lord Jesus Christ, you said to your apostles, peace I leave you, my peace I give you. Look not on our sins, but on the faith of your church, and graciously grant us peace and unity, in accordance with your will. You will reign forever and ever. **Amen.** The peace of the lord be with you always. **And also with you.** Let us all offer each other a sign of peace.

[1:10:20-1:12:40] Priest and congregation move around to offer each other the sign of peace, which is usually expressed as a handshake and saying peace be with you, but is also expressed as a hug or kiss with those more intimate. Music plays and the congregation sings.

***Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us. Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us. Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the***

*world, grant us peace.* This is the lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world, happy are those who are called to his supper. **Lord, I am not worthy to receive you, but say the word and my soul shall be healed.**

[1:12:40-1:21:05] Priest eats the host and drinks from the chalice. Music plays and the singer sings. The congregation lines up in the center to receive communion, which is the blessed host and wine. After the congregation has finished receiving communion and the song is over, the priest stands. Congregation stands. The priest allows an individual to come forward and give community announcements before ending the mass. During the mention of the holy trinity, the priest and congregation make the sign of the cross.

Let us pray. Grant... us, almighty God that by receiving the grace by which you bring us new life, may always be glory to your gift. We ask for this through Christ, our lord. **Amen.** A few announcements... The lord be with you. **And also with you.** May the blessing of almighty god, the father, son, and Holy Spirit come upon you and be with you forever. **Amen.** The mass has ended, go in peace. **Thanks be to God.**

[1:21:05-1:23:55] The congregation sings an exit song. The priest walks to the altar and kisses it, the robed man carries the cross to the front of the altar and bows with the lectors and the priest. He leads them out of the space. After the song is over, the congregation exits, genuflecting as they leave.

##



**Ecumenical Christian Mass: Cannon Chapel, January 26, 2014, 10:30AM EST**

Additional Conventions: In the Ecumenical service recording, the following abbreviations are used during segments in which there are multiple speakers: JW for James Wagner, President of Emory University; SHC for Susan Henry-Crowe, outgoing Dean of the Chapel and Religious Life; LG for Lisa Garvin, the Acting Dean of the Chapel and Religious Life, C for the congregation, F for Francis, A for Amelia, D for deacon (further information not provided about the identities of F, A, or D).

[0:00- 3:10] Music plays while congregation gathers and preparations are made.

[3:10-5:02] A man welcomes the congregation, explains the psalm, introduces the musicians, and the order of mass.

[5:02-6:54] The minister walks to the front of the altar and welcomes the congregation. The minister invites the congregation to greet each other, which they do.

[6:54-10:31] The minister discusses the dedications of the mass and makes community announcements. The minister introduces the preacher.

[10:31-13:54] The chorus sings.

*My God is awesome. He can move mountains. Keep me in the valley. Hide me from the rain. My God is awesome. Heals me when I'm broken. Strength where I've been weakened. Forever he will reign. My God is awesome, awesome, awesome, awesome. My God is awesome, awesome, awesome, awesome. My God is Awesome. Savior of the whole world. Giver of salvation. By his stripes I am healed. My God is Awesome. Today I am forgiven. His grace is why I'm living. Praise his holy name. My God is awesome. If you know this sing with us. Awesome. My God is awesome. Awesome. Yes, he is awesome. Awesome. My God is awesome. Yes, he is awesome. Awesome. Just say forever hold on. Awesome. He's holy. He's holy. He's holy. He's holy. Awesome. Yes he is awesome. Awesome. Someone knows about the deliverer. Deliverer. Deliverer. Deliverer. Deliverer. Awesome. Yes, he is awesome. Awesome. My God is awesome. He can move mountains. Keep me in the valley. Hide me from the rain. My God is awesome. Heals me when I'm broken. Strength where I've been weakened. Praise his holy name.*

[13:54-18:00] Organ music plays, and the congregation stands as the processional begins. Psalm is sung.

[18:00-18:30] The lector speaks.

Hear now the opening prayer. Lord God your loving kindness always goes before us and follows after us. Summon us into your light and direct our steps in the way of goodness that come through the cross of your son, Jesus Christ, our savior and lord. And all God's people said, **amen**. You may be seated.

[18:30-19:42] Lector returns to the congregation. A different lector goes to the podium.

A reading from Isaiah. Nevertheless there will be no more gloom for those who are in distress. In the past he humbled the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the future he will honor Galilee of the Gentiles, by the way of the sea along the Jordan. The people walking in darkness have seen a great light. On those living in the darkness of the shadow of death, a light has

dawned. You have enlarged the nation, and increased their joy. They rejoice before you as people rejoice at the harvest. As men rejoice when dividing the plunder. For in the day of Midian's defeat you have shattered the yolk that burdened them, the bar across their shoulders, the rod of their oppressors. Holy wisdom, holy word. **Thanks be to God.**

[19:42-23:20] The lector returns to the congregation. The musicians play music. The congregation joins and sings.

*God, my light and my salvation, in whose strength my hope is laid. Confident in my salvation, I shall never be afraid. Evil hosts may rise against me, wars distress, and flesh decays, yet the cruelest death imagined but begins my song of praise. Shelter me within the haven of thy house all time to come. On the rock of thy protection, let me safely find a home. Lift me high above the legions who would rail against thy word.*

*O'er the tumult of division, make my cry for peace be heard. When my trust is disappointed, faith confronted with disdain, friend and foe defeat my purpose, even then wilt thou sustain. Had I not with eyes believing seen the goodness of thy face, never could I taste thy pleasure, nor await thy saving grace.*

[23:20- 24:56] As soon as the psalm is over, a different lector begins reading.

A reading from first Corinthians. I appeal to you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another, so that there may be no divisions among you, and that you may be perfectly united in mind and thought. My brothers, some from Chloe's household have informed me that there are quarrels among you. What I mean is this, one of you says, I follow Paul, another, I follow Apollos, another, I follow Cephas, still another, I follow Christ. Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Were you baptized into the name of Paul? I am thankful that I did not baptize any of you except Crispus and Gaius, so no one can say that you were baptized into my name. Yes, I also baptized the household of Stephanas, beyond that I don't remember if I baptized anyone else. For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel. Not with words of human wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power. For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to those who are being saved it is the power of God. Holy wisdom, holy word. **Thanks be to God.**

[24:56-26:45] The lector returns to the Congregation. Music plays as the congregation stands.

*Come and see, come and see, I am the way and the truth, said he. Follow me, follow me, come as a child, oh come and see. Kyrie, Kyrie, Kyrie, eleison. Christe, Christe, Christe eleison. Christe, Christe, adoramus te. Kyrie, Kyrie, Kyrie eleison.*

[26:45-28:50] A lector stands in front of the altar with a book in hands and begins reading.

A reading from the gospel of Matthew. When Jesus heard that John had been put in prison, he returned to Galilee. Leaving Nazareth he went and lived in Capernaum, which was by the lake in the area of Zebulun and Naphtali to fulfill what was said through the prophet Isaiah. The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, the way to the sea, along the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles, the people living in darkness have seen a great light, and on those living in the valley of the

shadow of death a light has dawned. From that time on Jesus began to preach, repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near. As Jesus was walking by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon, called Peter, and Andrew his brother. They were casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. Come follow me, Jesus said, and I will make you fishers of men. At once they left their nets and followed him. Going on from there he saw two other brothers, James, son of Zebedee and his brother, John. They were in the boat with their father Zebedee, repairing the nets. Jesus called them and immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him. Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and preaching the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness among the people. News about him spread all over Syria, and people brought to him all who were ill with various diseases, those suffering severe pain, the demon-possessed, those having seizures, and the paralyzed, and he healed them. I now invite you to share aloud the words or phrases from today's readings that have touched you, to share your words of life.

[28:50-29:20] Individuals in the congregation speak, then the lector closes the gospel.

Light...He healed them. Syria. Power of God... Holy Wisdom, Holy Word. **Thanks be to God.**

[29:20-30:13] The preacher approaches the podium as the lector returns to the congregation. The preacher speaks.

Let us be in the posture of prayer. God, of our weary years, God of our silent tears, thou who has brought us thus far along the way. Lead us in your light, we pray. May the words of my mouth and the meditations of our hearts together be acceptable in your sight, oh lord, our strength, our liberator, our redeemer. We ask it in Christ's name. **Amen.**

[30:13-50:40] The preacher delivers a sermon.

[50:40-53:40] A lector goes to the podium from the congregation. As the words "let us pray" are said, the lector raises her hands.

Loving and gracious God, you promised to always hear us when we pray. Be with us now as we lift our voices up to you. We pray for our human family, for all the people who teach us how to love and be loved. Open our hearts to one another and break down the barriers that divide us. Let us pray. ***Kyrie, Kyrie, Kyrie, eleison.*** We pray for those who suffer in body, mind, or spirit. Let them know the comfort of your presence, oh God, and move us to be present with them as well. Let us pray. ***Kyrie, Kyrie, Kyrie, eleison.*** We pray for your magnificent creation. Open our eyes to recognize the holy value of your earth and all its living beings, and guide us in the wise and creative use of your gifts. Let us pray. ***Kyrie, Kyrie, Kyrie, eleison.*** We pray for your church for the community of faithful all throughout the world. Unite us in compassion and understanding and empower us to do your work together. Let us pray. ***Kyrie, Kyrie, Kyrie, eleison.*** We pray for this community. Work through us by your spirit, so that this may always be a place of welcome and inspiration for all who enter it. Let us pray. ***Kyrie, Kyrie, Kyrie, eleison.*** In the name of Jesus Christ our lord, amen. **Amen.**

[53:40-56:17] The Dean of the Chapel stands in front of the altar. There is a crumbled paper in a stone container on a podium in front of the altar.

It is time that we come to an important part of this service. Since 2001, there have been so many occasions in this community where we have prayed and been in our prayers. In this bowl there are just some of them, I have kept them in my office all these years. It is now time for those prayers to be burned and to be buried. And so, these written prayers that have been prayed, for all the peoples of this community over time, that have been offered, we burn them as an offering of our communal prayer, and communal thoughts, and communal wishes. Some for the peoples of the world, that you remember the children of violence. For those who have been affected by violence, the peoples of Haiti, the peoples of Japan, the peoples of the Phillipines, those who live in Africa, those of your own, and those of the rest of the world. We will burn this prayer symbolically because it would be a fire hazard. **Laughter.** So at this time, Michael will light from the altar candle and we will burn this prayer as we pray quietly and thoughtfully, remembering all the peoples of the world.

[56:17-59:49] The Dean of the Chapel returns to her seat. A pianist plays music.

[59:49- 1:16:40] Many people gather at the front of the chapel to participate in the liturgy.

LG: As Susan prepares to depart this community, and to extend this ministry of hospitality and justice, let us offer to God our thanks for her.

SHC: At the invitation of President James Laney in the fall of 1991, I began my appointment to Emory University as the University Chaplain, and the Dean of the Chapel and Religious Life. I have, with God's help, and to the best of my abilities, exercised this trust, accepting its privileges and responsibilities. President Wagner, after careful prayer and consideration, I leave this charge and publically state that my term as Dean of the Chapel and Religious Life at Emory University has come to an end.

JW: Do you, the people of Emory University and her religious communities recognize and accept the fulfillment of this appointment?

C: **We do.**

SHC: Let us pray. Oh God of the Ages, you called me to stand in this university and serve at this altar. To you and your service I have devoted body, mind, soul and spirit. You have filled my memory with the record of your mighty works, enlightened my understanding with the holy spirit, asking that I center my heart and will on what you would have me do, even as you have entrusted these people to my care. As I leave this place, surround us all with your loving kindness. In prayer, quicken our devotion, in praises, heighten our love and gratitude, in worship, give us readiness of thought and expression that together we might serve you, and each other and all of creation. We pray through the power of your most gracious spirit. **Amen.**

JW: Susan, the work of ministry is rooted in the gifts of ministry, and I know that you feel that the people of Emory University and her religious communities have been generous in their gifts to you. I invite you now to share expression of some of these gifts with them.

SHC: All of these and many more are the gifts of this community. I have been the steward of these gifts. Today, I return them to you. Use them to continue to create a world where religion builds bridges, justice prevails, and all peoples flourish in dignity. I don't know where people are. Where's Brendon? The religious life scholars are these PhD candidates who represent five of the world's great faith traditions. To the religious life scholars and the communities you represent: receive these keys and let the doors of this university and praying communities continue to be open to all people. And the people said.

**C: Amen.**

SHC: To the university worship deacons. And you are here. These are the youngest ones that have been formed by this community to serve as deacons and there are other deacons gathered in this room, but to you the deacons, receive the gospel, receive this gospel book that the word of God may always be proclaimed.

**C: Amen.**

SHC: And to the priests: some of you know that this was made by an artisan in Izmir, in Ephesus, where I changed my heart about Paul. It was because of this Muslim man who insisted that to this community he would put crosses on our patens and on our chalice. There are priests who have been formed by this community and are now serving in the world, and to you the priests, receive this paten and chalice, that all may always be fed at the table of Christ. And the people said.

**C: Amen.**

SHC: The journeys program is my prized journey. There have been those and about four hundred others who have gone on journeys to the deep south and to the Native American communities in Montana, and to the cities in New York, and to all around the world in the Middle East and Bosnia and South Africa. And these are those who are fellow travelers. I give you and hope that you will receive this map that you may continue to seek justice, reconciliation, and peace throughout the world.

**C: Amen.**

SHC: And to those who fill this space with music. And I'm going to include George in this. George is the one who keeps us always hearing ourselves and the word of God. To those who fill this space with music: receive this gong and bell that you may continue to sing praise with sounding voices, timbrel and dancing, strings, trumpet and pipes.

**C: Amen.**

SHC: And then, to the Inter-religious Council. The IRC started over twenty years ago with representatives from all of the faith communities here. I have two things for you, but one of them you have to imagine. First is, I give you this round table, receive this table that you may continue to gather as a Council around it knowing that all tables should always be round and open. And on that table if I had remembered to do it yesterday, which I didn't. I would've brought you a Saba menu. We eat food from Saba every Monday night, and half of them complain and half of them don't, but Saba is the place that feeds us, so as you gather around the table, may you always keep it open and may it always be round, and may it always be full of life and food.

**C: Amen.**

SHC: And, to Lisa, I'm still in charge. President Wagner in his wisdom, I think.

JW: For a little while.

SHC: Invited Lisa to be the acting Dean of the Chapel and Religious Life, and I am very proud of that. And to Lisa, I am giving you this, not to give it back. That is the first stole that I wore in this community, and I entrust it with all the power and all the privilege and all the love. And Francis, if you will come. Many of you know that I wrote an article that is in this book. It is called Chaplaincy in the Twenty-First Century. When I wrote it, I had no idea that I would be moving to Washington. I'm going to give it to President Wagner to hold it and to hold it as a love story of my love for you and this University. We see this story and cherish it and know how much with which love it is given. And I am giving this empty journal to Francis on behalf of me to this community that you may write in it and that the stories you continue to write will reflect those stories that there will be new stories that this community goes into the world.

JW: And let the people say.

C: **Amen.**

JW: Having witnessed the exchange of gifts between Susan and those with whom she has shared this sacred trust, do you, do we, the people of Emory University and her religious communities accept these gifts and the responsibilities that they represent?

C: **We do.**

LG: I want to invite Amelia to join us. We have gifts for you as well. If you can do it to us, we can do it to you. And Amelia you go first.

A: This is a gift from the deacons in the present and in the past.

SHC: Thank you so much. It is a great gift, thank you very much.

LG: There's more. This is where I get in trouble, but you get in trouble too. So, for more than twenty-two years, you have gathered us all around the table, whether in the formal lounge, or in your home, or at this Eucharistic table. You have fed us in body, mind, and spirit. You just told the story of this paten and chalice that you brought back to us, and I'm going to be in trouble for this, but we are giving it to you. I have co-conspirators. We have enjoyed its beauty and all that it symbolizes, hospitality, nourishment, and the ways that religion builds bridges. We want you to take it to Washington D.C. to continue to tell its story and our story as you live your life of radical hospitality and do the work of justice.

F: On behalf of the whole university worship community, I want to thank you. You have been our spiritual guide for over twenty years and at this time, I can still see generations of Emory students that pass through this chapel want to pursue better things and pursue their dreams in the community. You have taught us that it is not enough to be spiritual and not religious. We have to worship together, so together we will form the body of Christ. And under your guidance, the university worship community is truly ecumenical. Different traditions, worshipping together, praying together, and learn how to love God. You have also shown us how to live as a person of faith of all faiths. You show us that in justice to anyone you must everyone. I learned this from your teachings, your writings, and your acts. I understand that I may never see all...of God or understand why they are different between different people, different religions, different ways, different lifestyles, but I learned from you that I will never judge harshly against anyone. I would rather leave the judgment to God and if judge I must, then my judgment will be based on love and the love for each other. Those of you who know me know I love to complain about doing anything, but this time, I really cannot complain about losing Susan from this community because she is going to be so good at her new job. Susan, you are going to be so impressive to all the people you touch and to everybody who is going to be under your care. So on behalf of the community, I can only wish you good luck.

C: **Amen.**

D: One more thing that we don't want to forget. We share this work with you, I know oh so well how important it is to have those in our lives to whom we can turn, especially when we can't turn to anyone else. And so I want to invite Chuck and Eleanor and Ash and Mock and David to stand, so that they can be recognized as your family to support you through all of this.

LG: Let us pray together. Oh God, **you have bound us together for this season. We give you thanks for all that we share. Drawing ever nearer to you, in life, in death, in life beyond death. Grant that we may always delight in your presence, love and serve others, seek justice and resist evil, and proclaim you as the source of our hope. God is with us. We are not alone. Thanks be to God. Amen.** As everyone returns to their seats, I would like to invite

the ushers to come up and receive this morning's offering. Again, the offering today goes for the Martin Luther King, Jr. Scholars program.

[1:16:40-1:27:23] Ushers go around the congregation collecting money. Organ music plays. The Dean of the Chapel approaches the altar with LG and the preacher, and the ushers. The congregation sings before the Dean of the Chapel speaks.

*Praise God from whom all blessings flow. Praise God the source of all we know, Alleluia, Alleluia. Praise God the word's incarnate way, Praise God the spirit's loving sway. Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.*

This is Christ's table. It is an open table. All are invited and all are welcome. To my right in front of the organ is served grape juice and to my left is served wine. You are all invited to come by the outer aisle and return by the center aisle. With great thanksgiving, the lord be with you. **And also with you.** Lift up your hearts. **We lift them up to the lord.** Let us give thanks to the lord our God. **It is right to give our thanks and praise.** It is truly right and the greatest joy to give you thanks and praise eternal God, creator and ruler of the universe. You are our God and we are the creatures of your hand. You make us from the dust of the earth and breathe into us the breath of life and set us free in your world to love and to serve you. When we rejected your love and ignored your wisdom, you did not reject us, you loved us still, and called us to return to you still in obedience and love. Therefore we praise you, joining our voices with the heavenly choirs and all the faithful of every time and praise who forever sing to the glory of your name. **Holy, holy, holy lord, God of power and might. Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Hosanna in the highest. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the lord. Hosanna in the highest. Hosanna in the highest. Hosanna in the highest.** You are holy, oh God, and blessed is your son, Jesus Christ our lord. One of your great loves for the world, you sent Jesus Christ among us to set us free from the tyranny of evil. He loved us as one of us, he lived with us as one, sharing our joys and sorrows. By his dying and rising, he releases us from bondage to sin and frees us from the dominion of death. Remembering all your mighty acts and merciful acts, we take this bread and this wine from the gifts you have given us and celebrate with joy the redemption one for us and Jesus Christ. Accept for us as our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving, as a living and holy offering of ourselves that our lives may proclaim the one crucified and risen. **Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again. Hosanna in the highest. Amen, amen, amen. Hosanna in the highest.** Pour out your spirit on us gathered here and on these gifts of bread and wine. Make them be for us be the body and blood of Christ that we may be for the world, the body of Christ, redeemed by Christ's blood. By your spirit make us one with Christ and one with each other and one in ministry to all the world until Christ comes in final victory and we feast at that great banquet. Through your son, Jesus Christ, with the holy spirit and your holy church, all glory and honor is yours almighty God, now and forever. **Amen. Amen. Amen. Hosanna in the highest. Hosanna in the highest. Hosanna in the highest.** And now by the confidence of the children of God, we are bold to pray in our mother tongue the prayer that Jesus gave us. **Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, for thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.** Cause there is one loaf we who are many are one body. For we all partake

of the one loaf, the bread which we break is a sharing in the body of Christ. And the cup over which we give thanks is a sharing in the blood of Christ.

[1:27:23-1:33:54] The Dean of the Chapel begins giving communion. Music plays and the congregation sings.

***Oh lamb of God that takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us. Oh lamb of God that takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us. Oh lamb of God that takest away the sins of the world, grant us thy peace...Taste and see, taste and see the goodness of the lord. Oh taste and see, taste and see the goodness of the lord.***

[1:33:54-1:37:17] The congregation returns to their seats and the Dean of the Chapel returns to the altar.

Let us unite as we pray together. **In gratitude for this moment, this meal, these people, we give ourselves to you. Take us out to live as changed people because we have shared the living bread and cannot remain the same. Ask much of us, expect much from us, enable much by us, encourage many through us, so that we may live to your glory through Christ our lord. Amen.**

***We are marching in the light of God. We are marching in the light of God. We are marching in the light of God. We are marching in the light of God. We are marching. We are marching. We are marching. We are marching in the light of God. We are singing in the light of God. We are singing in the light of God. We are singing in the light of God. We are singing. We are singing. We are singing. We are singing in the light of God. We are praying in the light of God. We are praying in the light of God. We are praying in the light of God. We are praying in the light of God. We are praying. We are praying. We are praying. We are praying in the light of God.***

[1:37:17-1:40:48] The celebrants are gathered in front of the altar.

LG: Again we thank you for gathering to be with us on this special occasion. We want to invite all of you to join us downstairs in Brooks commons for lunch after the closing music by VOIS, but receive now this blessing for Chuck and Susan, as they go to DC and for us as we continue our life of faith here together. God the eternal, keep you in love with one another. Go to serve one another and God in all that you do. Bear witness to the love of God to the world, so that for those to whom love is a stranger, they will find in you, generous friends.

SHC: And now, a couple of words of thanks: I would like to thank Robert Franklin for an absolutely marvelous service. Call us to the high ground and may we ever stay in that way. To Jim Wagner who is a great friend, a great supervisor, and a great love who has cared for me and this work in ways that you will never know, and I am deeply grateful to you. The interns who are my prizes, there are sixty of them, they are tutored in the ways of chaplaincy, I am so proud of you, and you go into the world and keep doing what you are doing. Those who make music in this world, continue to make music and to continue to write poems and pray prayers. To those that travel in this world, continue to journey being and adventurer, may you never know what



will happen next. May someone offer you lunch along the way because it won't be me, and may it be that you know more at the end than when you left. And to the deacons, you are entrusted the good news, may you break every kind of oppression there is in the world. To the inter-religious council, may you always keep the table open and invite all into the conversation. And to my colleagues, you are great. I trust you with all of this work, and I know that you will do it well, and you can call me when it gets hard. Lynn and Lisa, you will do well and will continue doing well, and I am always there. Receive now this benediction, as one journey ends, we can for a moment, glimpse the arc of the greater journey. From birth to death and invoke the presence of the holy in it, as we set out on paths often unknown, as you go may you find the right questions to ask, may you love all people, may you give even more than you have received, may you have mercy on the poor and the weak, and may God grant you in all things, joy and peace. In the name of Christ, who created us and Christ who redeems us and the holy spirit, **Amen.**

[1:40:48-1:45:26] The chorus sings a psalm. The celebrants process out.

##

### Jumah Prayer: Cannon Chapel, January 31, 2014, 1:30PM EST

Additional Conventions: Arabic is read from left to right, but the English translation is provided as a gloss directly below the original Arabic.

[0:00-11:30] Preparations are made.

[11:30-13:20] Call to prayer in Arabic and sung, rolled up his sleeves.

الله أكبر. الله أكبر. الله أكبر. الله أكبر.

God is great. God is great. God is great. God is great.

أقول لا إله الا الله نفسه. أقول لا إله الا الله نفسه.

I say there is no God but god himself. I say there is no God but god himself.

أقول أن محمدا رسول الله. أقول أن محمدا رسول الله.

I say that Muhammad is God's prophet. I say that Muhammad is God's prophet.

ليس هناك إله إلا الله نفسه. الله أكبر. الله أكبر. حي على الصلاة.

Come to the prayer. God is great. God is great. There is no God but God himself.

[13:20-15:30] Individual prayer takes place. Individuals begin while standing, and prostrate to the floor to kiss the ground while praying silently.

[15:30-19:20] Two individuals near the front of the prayer mats have quiet discussion.

[19:20-25:27] Others enter the space and begin praying. Meanwhile, others in the space have hushed discussion while people enter and continue preparations for the service.

[25:27-27:16] The Imam prays in Arabic.

الله أكبر. الله أكبر. الله أكبر. من رحمة الله. السلام عليكم.

Peace be upon you. By the mercy of God. God is great. God is great. God is great.

أقول لا إله الا الله نفسه. أقول لا إله الا الله نفسه.

I say there is no God, but God himself. I say there is no God, but God himself.

أقول أن محمدا رسول الله. أقول أن محمدا رسول الله.

I say that Muhammad is God's prophet. I say that Muhammad is God's prophet.

حي على الصلاة. حي على الصلاة. حي على الصلاة. حي على الصلاة.

Come to the prayer. Come to the prayer. Come to the prayer. Come to the prayer.

الله أكبر. الله أكبر.

God is great. God is great.

الحمد لله. ليس هناك إله إلا الله نفسه.

There is no God but God himself. Thank God.

[27:16-28:21] The Imam prays in Arabic.<sup>71 72</sup>

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ نَحْمَدُهُ وَنَسْتَعِينُهُ وَنَسْتَغْفِرُهُ وَنُؤْمِنُ بِهِ وَنَتَوَكَّلُ عَلَيْهِ  
 وَنَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنْ شُرُورِ أَنْفُسِنَا وَمِنْ سَيِّئَاتِ أَعْمَالِنَا مَنْ يَهْدِهِ اللَّهُ  
 فَلَا مُضِلَّ لَهُ وَمَنْ يُضِلَّهُ فَلَا هَادِيَ لَهُ . وَنَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ  
 لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ وَنَشْهَدُ أَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ وَرَسُولُهُ . عِبَادَ اللَّهِ رَحِمَكُمُ  
 اللَّهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُ بِالْعَدْلِ . وَالْإِحْسَانِ وَإِيتَاءِ ذِي الْقُرْبَى وَيَنْهَى عَنِ  
 الْفَحْشَاءِ . وَالْمُنْكَرِ وَالْبَغْيِ يَعُظُّكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ . أَذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ  
 يَذْكُرْكُمْ وَادْعُوهُ يُسْتَجِبْ لَكُمْ وَلَذِكْرُ اللَّهِ أَكْبَرُ .

[28:21-29:50] The Imam prays in English.

Surely, all praises are due to Allah. We praise him, seek his assistance, and ask for his forgiveness, and we seek refuge in Allah from the evil of ourselves and the wickedness of our deeds. Surely, whomever Allah guides, there is none to take him astray, and whomever Allah allows to stray, there is none to guide. I bear witness to there is nothing worthy of worship, but Allah. He is one and has no partners. And, I bear witness to Muhammad, *salla lâhu ‘alayhi wa sallam*,<sup>73</sup> as his servant and last messenger. Now then I seek Allah’s refuge against *Shytn*,<sup>74</sup> the outcast. I start in the name of Allah, most gracious, most merciful. His glorious book says, say he is Allah, the one and the only. Allah the eternal, the absolute, he does not beget, nor is he born, and there none like under him *as-Salâm Alaikum*.<sup>75</sup>

[29:50-35:18] The Imam of the service gives a sermon in English.

[35:18-35:49] During the sermon, the Imam recites from the Quran.

And on top of that, Ibrahim, ‘*alayhi wa sallam*’<sup>76</sup> prays, and this is from *Surat ‘Ibrāhīm* thirty-seven.<sup>77</sup> Our Lord, I have made some of my offspring dwell in this uncultivable valley by your

<sup>71</sup>This prayer does not have an accompanying English translation because it is understood that the spoken text in [28:21-29:50] is an English translation of this Arabic prayer.

<sup>72</sup>This Arabic image of Friday Jumah prayer was taken from <https://www.alislam.org/books/salat/10.html>

<sup>73</sup>When mentioning the name of Muhammad or Abraham (Ibrahim), immediately reciting this Arabic phrase afterwards is a common Islamic convention: “peace be upon him”

<sup>74</sup>“Satan”

<sup>75</sup>“and peace be upon you.”

<sup>76</sup>“peace be upon him”

<sup>77</sup>This utterance is a reference to the thirty-seventh verse in the thirteenth chapter of the Quran (*Surat ‘Ibrāhīm*).

sacred house in order that they may perform *al-salah*.<sup>78</sup> So fill some hearts among men with love towards them and oh Allah provide them with fruits that they may give thanks.

[35:49-37:42] The Imam continues with his sermon in English.

[37:42-38:36] During the sermon, the leader recites from the Quran in English.

And mentioned when Abraham was raising the foundations of that house, and Ismail saying our lord accept this from us, indeed you are the hearing the known. Our lord, and make us Muslims in submission to you and from our descendants a Muslim nation in submission to you. And show us our rites accept our repentance. Indeed you are accepting of repentance, the merciful. Our lord, and send among them a messenger for themselves, who will recite for them your verses and teach them the book and the wisdom and purify them. Indeed you are the exulted and the might and the wise.

[38:36-40:46] The Imam continues with his sermon in English.

[40:46-41:20] During the sermon, the Imam recites from the Quran.

Allah has made an example for those who believe. The wife of the Pharaoh when she said my lord, build a house in the garden for me in your presence. Rescue me from Pharaoh and his deeds, and rescue me from this wrong doing people. And it goes on to say, and Mary, the daughter of Imran, who guarded her chastity, and we breathed our spirit, our spirit into her. And she confirmed the words of her lord in his book and was one of the obedient.

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<sup>78</sup>“prayer”

[41:20-48:14] The leader continues with his sermon in English.

[52:45-54:22] The service leader recites in Arabic verses 2:14-2:23 from *Surat Al-Baqarah*, the second chapter of the Quran.<sup>79</sup>

وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ آمَنُوا كَمَا آمَنَ النَّاسُ قَالُوا أَنُؤْمِنُ كَمَا آمَنَ السُّفَهَاءُ ۗ أَلَا  
 إِنَّهُمْ هُمُ السُّفَهَاءُ وَلَكِن لَّا يَعْلَمُونَ (١٣) وَإِذَا لَقُوا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا قَالُوا  
 آمَنَّا وَإِذَا خَلَوْا إِلَىٰ شَيَاطِينِهِمْ قَالُوا إِنَّا مَعَكُمْ إِنَّمَا نَحْنُ مُسْتَهْزِئُونَ  
 (١٤) اللَّهُ يَسْتَهْزِئُ بِهِمْ وَيَمُدُّهُمْ فِي طُغْيَانِهِمْ يَعْمَهُونَ (١٥) أُولَٰئِكَ  
 الَّذِينَ اشْتَرُوا الضَّلَالََةَ بِالْهُدَىٰ فَمَا رَبِحَت تِّجَارَتُهُمْ وَمَا كَانُوا مُهْتَدِينَ  
 (١٦) مَثَلُهُمْ كَمَثَلِ الَّذِي اسْتَوْقَدَ نَارًا فَلَمَّا أَضَاءَتْ مَا حَوْلَهُ ذَهَبَ اللَّهُ  
 بِنُورِهِمْ وَتَرَكَهُمْ فِي ظُلُمَاتٍ لَّا يُبْصِرُونَ (١٧) صُمٌّ بُكْمٌ عُمَىٰ فَهُمْ لَّا  
 يَرْجِعُونَ (١٨) أَوْ كَصَيْبٍ مِّنَ السَّمَاءِ فِيهِ ظُلُمَاتٌ وَرَعْدٌ وَبَرْقٌ  
 يَجْعَلُونَ أَصَابِعَهُمْ فِي آذَانِهِمْ مِنَ الصَّوَاعِقِ حَذَرَ الْمَوْتِ ۗ وَاللَّهُ مُحِيطٌ  
 بِالْكَافِرِينَ (٢٩) يَكَادُ الْبَرْقُ يَخْطَفُ أَبْصَارَهُمْ ۖ كُلَّمَا أَضَاءَ لَهُمْ مَشَوْا  
 فِيهِ وَإِذَا أَظْلَمَ عَلَيْهِمْ قَامُوا ۗ وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ لَذَهَبَ بِسَمْعِهِمْ وَأَبْصَارِهِمْ  
 إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ (٢٠) يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اعْبُدُوا رَبَّكُمُ الَّذِي  
 خَلَقَكُمْ وَالَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ (٢١) الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمُ الْأَرْضَ  
 فِرَاشًا وَالسَّمَاءَ بِنَاءً وَأَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَأَخْرَجَ بِهِ مِنَ الثَّمَرَاتِ  
 رِزْقًا لَّكُمْ ۗ فَلَا تَجْعَلُوا لِلَّهِ أَنْدَادًا وَأَنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ (٢٢) وَإِن كُنْتُمْ فِي  
 رَيْبٍ مِّمَّا نَزَّلْنَا عَلَىٰ عَبْدِنَا فَأْتُوا بِسُورَةٍ مِّن مِّثْلِهِ وَادْعُوا شُهَدَاءَكُمْ  
 مِّن دُونِ اللَّهِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ (٢٣)

And when they meet those who believe, they say, "We believe"; but when they are alone with their evil ones, they say, "Indeed, we are with you; we were only mockers." (14) [But] Allah mocks them and prolongs them in their transgression [while] they wander blindly. (15) Those are the ones who have purchased error [in exchange] for guidance, so their transaction has brought no profit, nor were they guided. (16) Their example is that of one who kindled a fire, but when it illuminated what was around him, Allah took away their light and left them in darkness [so] they could not see. (17) Deaf, dumb and blind - so they will not return [to the right path]. (18) Or [it is] like a rainstorm from the sky within which is darkness, thunder and lightning. They put their fingers in their ears against the thunderclaps in dread of death. But Allah is encompassing of the disbelievers. (19) The lightning almost snatches away their sight. Every time it lights [the way] for them, they walk therein; but when darkness comes over them, they stand [still]. And if Allah had willed, He could have taken away their hearing and their sight. Indeed, Allah is over all things competent. (20) O mankind, worship your Lord, who created you and those before you, that you may become righteous - (21) [He] who made for you the earth a bed [spread out] and

<sup>79</sup>This translation was obtained from tanzil.net. Verse numbers remain for clarity.

the sky a ceiling and sent down from the sky, rain and brought forth thereby fruits as provision for you. So do not attribute to Allah equals while you know [that there is nothing similar to Him]. (22) And if you are in doubt about what We have sent down upon Our Servant [Muhammad], then produce a surah the like thereof and call upon your witnesses other than Allah, if you should be truthful. (23) But if you do not - and you will never be able to - then fear the Fire, whose fuel is men and stones, prepared for the disbelievers. (24)

[54:22-1:01:10] Service leader speaks in English and introduces the Dean of the Chapel.

...Indeed we are privileged to be together for...again. We have a very special guest with us today, the Dean of Chapel and Religious Life, Doctor Susan Henry-Crowe is with us. And you may or may not know that she is retiring after twenty years of service. And within those twenty-two years of service and of those twenty-two years, the MSA is twenty years old, so a lot of the things that have happened have happened under her leadership. She has a few remarks to share, then we have a short presentation in the next three to five minutes if you could just stay put. Do we have the Dean of Chapel here? So, I will turn it over to you, Doctor Susan Henry-Crowe, this is our wonderful Friday congregation.

[1:01:10-1:04:20] Dean of the Chapel delivers remarks in English.

[1:04:20-1:05:30] Service leader presents gifts to Dean of the Chapel. Closing announcements made by the service leader.

[1:05:30-1:12:05] Congregation participates in inaudible individual prayers and eventually leaves. The space is cleaned, and prayer mats are rolled up.

##

**Reform Shabbat Service: Marcus Hillel Center, February 21, 2014, 7PM EST**

[0:00-2:36] The service leader and other individuals make conversation while preparing for Shabbat Service. There are many chairs surrounding a seated service leader with a guitar and a music stand. The service leader and other individuals are sitting in the chairs. The leader plays the guitar and sings a Hebrew hymn with the other individuals.

מה יפה היום שכת שלום. שכת שכת שלום. שכת שכת שלום.

Mah yafeh hayom shabat shalom. Shabbat Shabbat shalom. Shabbat Shabbat shalom. Shabbat Shabbat shalom. Shabbat shalom.

‘How lovely is this day of Shabbat peace. Good Sabbath. Good Sabbath. Good Sabbath. Good Sabbath.’<sup>80</sup>

[2:36-7:11] The service leader instructs the members of the congregation to sing louder and informs them of the next song. At [6:12] the group stands and sings. During certain words, the group bows in rhythm with the song.

La la la l'cha dodi, La la la likrat kalah, La la la p'nei shabat, P'nei shabat n'ka b'lah Shamor v'zachor b'dibur echad, Hishmia nu eil ham'yuchad Adonai echad ush'mo echad L'sheim ultiferet v'lit'chilah Likrat shabat l'chu v'neilchah Ki hi m'kor hab'rachah Meirosh mikedem n'suchah Sof ma'aseh b'machshavah t'chilah Mikdash melech ir m'luchah Kumi tz'i m'toch hahafechah Rav lach shevet b'emek habachah V'hu yachamol alayich chemlah Hitnaari meiafar kumi Livshi bigdei tifarreich ami Al yad ben yishai beit halachmi Korva el nafshi g'alah Hitor'ri hitor'ri Ki va oreich kumi ori Uri uri shir dabeiri K'vod Adonai alayich niglah Lo teivoshi v'lo tikalmi Mah tishtochachi umah tehem Bach yequesu aniyei ami V'nivn'tah ir al tilah V'hayu limshisah shosayich V'rachaku kol m'vaylayich Yasis alayich elohayich Kimsos chatan al kalah Yamin usmol tifrotzi V'et Adonai taaritz Al yad ish ben partzi V'nism'cha v'nagilah Boi v'shalom ateret balah Gam b'simchah uv'tzoholah Toch emunei am s'gulah Boi chalah boi chalah

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<sup>80</sup>Although this hymn was repeated twice, the repetition was not included for the sake of space.

“Come my beloved to greet the bride. The Sabbath presence, let us welcome. “Safeguard” and “Remember”- in a single utterance, the one and only God made us hear. Adonai is one and Adonai’s name is One, for renown for splendor and for praise. To welcome the Sabbath, come let us go for it is the source of blessing; from the beginning, from antiquity, she was honored; last in deed, but first in thought. O’ Sanctuary of the Sovereign, royal city-- Arise and depart from amid the upheaval. Too long have you dwelled in the valley of weeping, God will shower compassion upon you. Shake off the dust--arise! Don your splendid clothes, My people, through the son of Jesse, the Bethlehemite! Draw near my soul - redeem it! Wake up! Wake up! For your light has come, rise up and shine. Awaken, awaken utter a song, the glory of God is revealed on you. Feel not ashamed, be not humiliated. Why are you downcast? Why are you disconsolate? In you will my people’s affected find shelter, as the city is built upon its hilltop. May your oppressor be downtrodden and may those who devoured you be cast far off. Your God will rejoice over you, like a groom rejoices over his bride. Rightward and leftward, you shall spread out mightily, and you shall extol the might of Adonai. Through the man descended from Peretz, we shall be happy and joyful. Enter in peace, O crown of her husband, even in gladness and good cheer. Among the faithful of the treasured nation, enter O bride! Enter, O bride.”

[7:11-8:55] The leader tells them to sit. Once he is ready to play, he asks them to stand again.

המבורך המבורך לעולם ועדברכו את יי המבורך ברוך יי

Barchu et Adonai ham'vorach Baruch Adonai Ham'vorach Ham'vorach L'olam vaed

“Bless God, the One who is blessed. Blessed is God, the One who is blessed, now and forever.”

[8:55-11:15] The leader asks the group to be seated. The group continues to sing.

אהבת עולם בית ישראל עמך אהבת תורה ומצות חקים ומשפטים אותנו למדת על כן יי אלוהינו בשכבנו ובקומנו נשיח  
בחקיך ונשמח בדברי תורתך ובמצותיך לעולם ועד כי הם חיינו וארך ימינו ובהם נהגה יומם ולילה ואהבתך אל תסיר  
ממנו לעולמים ברוך אתה יי אוהב עמו ישראל

Ahavat olam beit Yisraeil Am'cha ahav'ta, am'cha ahv'ta Torah umitzvot chukim umishpatim  
Otanu limad'ta Otanu limad'ta Akein Adonai Eloheinu b'shochbeinu Uv'kumeinu nasiach  
b'shukecha Vnismach b'divrei torat'cha Uv'mitzvotcha l'olam vaed Ki heim chayeinu v'orech  
yameinu Uvahem neh'geh yomam valailah, neh'geh yomam valailah V'ahavatcha al tasir  
mimenu l'olamim Baruch Atah Adonai oheiv amo Yisraeil, oheiv amo Yisraeil

“Unending is your love for your people, the house of Israel: Torah and Mitzvot, laws and precepts have you taught us. Therefore, O Adonai our God, when we lie down and when we rise up, we will meditate on your laws and rejoice in your Torah and Mitzvot forever. Day and night,



we will reflect on them, for they are our life and the length of our days. Then, your love shall never depart from our hearts! Blessed is Adonai, who loves the people Israel.”

[11:15-12:54] The service leader instructs the group to stand. After the hymn is finished, he instructs them to sit, and the group sits.

שמע ישראל יי אלהינו יי אחד ברוך שם כבוד מלכותו לעולם ועד

Sh'ma Yisraeil Adonai Eloheinu Adonai Echad Baruch sheim k'vod sheim k'vod malchuto  
L'olam vaed

“Listen, Israel, Adonai is our God, Adonai is One. Blessed is God’s glorious kingdom forever and ever.”<sup>81</sup>

[12:54-14:08] The group chants another hymn.

ואהבת את יי אלהיך בכל-לבבך ובכל-נפשך ובכל-מאריך והיו הדברים האלה אשר אנכי מצוך היום על-לבבך ושננתם  
לבניך ברתוד במ בשבתך בביתך ובלתך בדוך ובשכבך ובקומך וקשרתם לאות על-דדי והיו לטטפת בין עיניך וכתבתם  
על מזוזות ביתך ובשעריך

V'avhava eit Adonai Elohecha B'chol l'avvacha uvchol nafsh'cha Uvchol m'odecha V'hayu  
had'varim, v'hayu had'varim haeileh Asher anochi M'tza v'cha hayom al l'avvecha  
V'shinantam l'avnecha v'dibarta bam B'shivt'cha b'veitecha Uvlecht'cha vaderech  
uvshochb'cha Uvkumecha Uk'shartam l'ot al yadecha v'hayu l'totafot bein einecha uch'tavtam  
Al m'zuzot beitecha Uvisharecha

“You shall love Adonai your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your being. Set these words, which I command you this day upon your heart. Teach them faithfully to your children; speak of them in your home and on your way, when you lie down and when you rise up. Bind them as a sign upon your hand; let them be a symbol before your eyes; inscribe them upon the doorposts of your house and upon your gates.<sup>82</sup> Be mindful of all my mitzvot, and do them; so shall you consecrate yourselves to your God. I, Adonai am your God who led you out of Egypt to be your God; I, Adonai am your God.”<sup>83</sup>

[14:08-16:14] The group sings a hymn.

<sup>81</sup>Deuteronomy 6:4

<sup>82</sup>Deuteronomy 6:5-9

<sup>83</sup>Numbers 15:37-41

Mi chamochah baeilim Adonai Mi kamochah nedar bakodesh Nora t'hilot oseih fele Adonai yimloch l'olam vaed Malchutcha rau vanech Bokeia yam lifnei Mosheh Zeh Eili anu v'amru, Adonai yimloch l'olam vaed

“Who is like you, eternal one, among the gods that are worshipped? Who is like you, majestic in holiness, awesome in splendor, doing wonders?<sup>84</sup> In their escape from the sea, your children saw your sovereign might displayed. This is my God they cried, the eternal will reign forever and ever.”

[16:14-18:12] The group sings a hymn.

בנויהשכ יי אלוהינו לשלום נווהעמיד מלכנו לחיים

Hashkiveinu Adonai Eloheinu l'shalom V'haamideinu malkeinu l'chayim.

“Grant oh eternal God, that we may lie down in peace and raise us up. Oh sovereign to a life renewed. Spread over us the shelter of your peace.”

Spread the shelter of your peace over us. Guide us with wisdom, compassion and trust. Save us for the sake of your name. Shield us from hatred and sorrow and pain.

[18:12-20:16] The group sings a hymn.

ושמרו בני ישראל את השבת לעשות את השבת לדרתם ברית עולם ביני ובין בני ישראל אות היא לעולם כי ששת ימים עשה יי את השמים ואת הארץ וביום השביעי שבת ונפשי

V'shamru v'nei Yisrael et hashabat Laasot et hashabat l'dorotam b'rit olam Beini uvein b'nei Yisraeil b'nei Yisraeil Ot hi l'olam Ki sheishet yamim asah Adonai asah Adonai Et hashamayim v'et haaretz Uvayom hashvii shavat vayinafash Shavat vayinafash shavat vayinafash.

The people of Israel shall keep Shabbat, observing it in every generation as a covenant for all time. It is a sign for ever between Me and the people of Israel, for in six days the Eternal God made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day God rested from labor.”<sup>85</sup>

[20:16-22:37] The group sings a hymn. The leader and the group stand before they chant. The pages of the songbook fall and the group helps retrieve them. During the hymn the group bows when speaking certain words. At the end of the hymn, the service leader instructs the group to be seated.

<sup>84</sup>Exodus 15:11

<sup>85</sup>Exodus 31:16-17

אדני שפתי תפתח ופי יגיד תהלתך. ברוך אתה יי אלהינו ואלהי אבותנו ואמותינו אלהי אברהם אלהי יצחק ואלהי יעקב אלהי שרה אלהי רבקה יאלה לאה ואלהי רחל האל הגדול הגבור והנורא אל עליון גומל חסדים טובים וקונה הכל וזוכר חסדי אבות ואמהות ומביא גאלה לבני בניהם למען שמו באהבה מלך עוזר ומושיע ומגן ברוך אתה יי מגן אברהם ועזרת שרה. אתה גבור לעולם אדני מחיה הכל אתה רב להושיע מכלכל חיים בחסד מחיה הכל ברחמים רבים סומך פליט ורופא חולים ומתיר סורים ומקים תואמו לישני עפר מי כמוך בעל גבורות ומי דומה לך מלך ממית חיה ומצמיח ישועה ונאמן אתה להחיות הכל ברוך אתה יי מחיה הכל.

Adonai, sfatai tiftach, ufi yagid t'hilatecha. Baruch atah, Adonai Eloheinu v'Elohei avoteinu v'imoteinu, Elohei Avrahm, Elohei Yitzchak v'Elohei Yaakov, Elohei Sarah, Elohei Rivkah, Elohei Rachel v'Elohei Leah. Ha-El hagadol hagibor v'hanora, El elyon, gomeil chasadim tovim, v'koneih hakol, v'zocheir chasdei avot v'imahot, umeivi g'ulah liv'nei v'neiham l'maan sh'mo b'ahavah. Zochreinu l'chayim, Melech chafeitz bachayim, v'chotveinu b'sefer hachayim, l'maancha Elohim chayim. Melech ozeir umoshia umagen. Baruch atah, Adonai, magein Avraham v'ezrat Sarah. Atah gibor l'olam, Adonai, m'chayieh hakol atah, rav l'hoshia. M'chalkeil chayim b'chesed, m'chayeih hakol b'rachamin rabim, someich noflim, v'rofei cholim, umatir asurim, um'kayeim emunato lisheinei afar. Mi chamochah baal g'vurot umi domeh lach, melech meimit um'chayeh umatzmiach y'shuah. V'ne-eman atah l'hachyaot hakol. Baruch atah, Adonai, m'chayeih hakol.

“Adonai, open up my lips, that my mouth may declare your praise. Blessed are you, Adonai our God, God of our fathers and mothers, God of Abraham, God of Issac, and God of Jacob, God of Sarah, God of Rebecca, God of Rachel, and God of Leah, the great, mighty and awesome God, transcendent God who bestows loving kindness, creates everything out of love, remembers the love of our fathers and mother, and brings redemption to their children’s children for the sake of the Divine Name. Shabbat Shuvah--Remember us for life, O Sovereign who delights in life, and inscribe us in the Book of Life, for Your sake, Living God. Sovereign, Deliverer, Helper and Shield, Blessed are You, Adonai, Sarah’s Helper, Abraham’s Shield. Eternal is your might, O Adonai; all life is your gift; great is your power to save. With love you sustain the living, with great compassion give life to all. You send help to the falling and healing to the sick; you bring freedom to the captive and keep faith with those who sleep in the dust. Who is like you, master of might? Who is your equal, O Adonai of life and death, source of salvation? Blessed is Adonai, the source of life.

[22:40-25:10] Service leader tells the group that they may be seated and informs them of the next hymn. The group sits and sings another hymn.

שלום רב על ישראל עמך תשים לעולם כי אתה הוא מלך אדון לכל השלום וטוב בעיניך לברך את עמך ישראל בכל עת ומדובכל שעה בשל

Shalom rav, al Yisraeil amcha, tasim l'olam ki atah hu melech adon, l'chol hashalom. V'tov b'einecha l'vareich et amcha Yisrael b'chol eit u'v'chol sha'ah, bishlomecha.

“Grant abundant peace to Israel your people forever, for you are the sovereign God of all peace. May it be pleasing to you to bless your people Israel in every season and moment with your peace.”

[25:10-27:22] The service leader speaks and asks for prayer intentions. After he asks, if any names are spoken, they are inaudible. After pausing for a moment, the service leader tells the group the name of the next hymn and they begin to sing.

At this point in our service, if you can think of anybody you know that could be in need of healing, if you can think of anybody at this time, please feel free to say their name aloud...

ותיבמי שברך אבותינו מקור הברכה לאמותינו מי שברך אימותינו מקור הברכה לאנו

Mi shebeirach avoteinu M'kor hab'rachah l'imoteinu. Mi shebeirach imoteinu M'kor hab'rachah laavoteinu. Bless those in need of healing with r'fua sh'leimah.

“May the Source of strength who blessed the ones before us, help us find the courage to make our lives a blessing and let us say, Amen. Bless those in need of healing with r'fua sh'leimah, the renewal of body, the renewal of spirit, and let us say, Amen.”

[27:22-30:14] The service leader asks for a moment of silence. After a moment, the service leader announces the hymn name, and the group sings.

Now let us take a moment to be silent.

במרומיו הוא יעשה שלום עלינו ועל כל ישראל ואמרו אמנעושה שלום

Oseh shalom bimromav Hu yaaseh shalom aleinu V'al kol Yisraeil v'imru amein.

“May the one who makes peace grant peace to us Israel and all the world and let us say amen.”

[30:14-32:08] The service leader names the next hymn and asks the group to rise. The group aligns to face a specific direction and chants the hymn.

עלינו לשבח לאדון הכל לתת גדלה ליוצר בראשית שלא עשנו כגויי הארצות ולא שמנו כמשפחות האדמה שלא שם חלקנו כהם וגרלנו ככל המונם ואנחנו כורעים ומשתחוים ומודים לפני מלך מלכי המלכים הקדוש ברוך הוא שהוא נוטה שמים ויסד ארץ ומושב יקרו בשמים ממעל ושכינת עזו בגבהי מרומים הוא אלהינו אין עוד אמת מלכנו אפס זולתו ככתוב בתורתו וידעת היום והשבת אל לבבך כי יי הוא האלוהים בשמים ממעל ועל הארץ מתחת אין עוד ונאמר והיה ייך על כל הארץ ביום ההוא יהיה יי אחד ושמו אחד

Aleinu l'shabeiach laadon hakol lateit g'dulah l'yotzeir b'reishit shelo asanu k'goyei haaratzot v'lo samanu k'mishp'hot haadamah shelo sam chelkeinu kahem v'goraleinu k'chol hamonam

vaanachnu korim umishtachavim umodim lifnei melech malchei ham'lachim hakadosh baruch hu shehu noteh shamayim v'yoseid aretz umoshav y'karo bashamayim mimaal ush'chinat uzo ush'chinat uzo B'govhei m'romim Hu Eloheinu ein od Emet malkeinu efes zulato kakatuv b'torato v'yadata hayom v'yadata hayom vahashevota el l'vavecha ki Adonai hu haelohim v'al haaretz, v'al haaretz mitachat ein od v'neemar v'hayah Adonai l'melech al kol haaretz bayom hahu bayom hahu y'hiyeh Adonai echad Ush'mo ush'mo ush'mo echad

“We must praise the God of all to ascribe greatness to the molder of creation. Who has set us apart from the other families of earth, giving us a destiny unique among the nations. We therefore bend our knees and bow in awe and thanksgiving before the one who is sovereign over all, the holy one, the blessed one. Who spread out the heavens and established the earth. Whose glory is revealed in the heavens above, and whose greatness is manifest throughout the world. Adonai is our God, there is none else. God’s sovereignty is true, as it is written in God’s Torah: You will know the day and take to heart - Adonai is the only God in heaven above and the earth below, there is no other. It has been said, Adonai shall reign over all the earth. On that day, Adonai shall be one and your name shall be one.”<sup>86</sup>

[32:08-33:28] The leader speaks and becomes inaudible. The group sits. The leader speaks again and the group rises. The leader announces the hymn and the group begins to chant.

At this time, we think of those people in our lives who death has recently taken from us. At this time we ask...

יתגדל ויתקדש שמה רבא בעלמא די ברא כרעותה וימליך מלכותה בחייכון וביומיכון ובהיי דכל בית ישראל בעגלא יתהדרו ויתנשא, ויתרומם יתפארו וישבה יתברך. עלמאי ולעלמי לעלם מברך שמה יהא. אמן ואמרו, קריב ובזמן עלהתאמן ואמרו בעלמא, דאמירן ונהמתא, תשבחתא ושירתא, ברכתא כל מן לעלא הוא, בריך דקדשא שמה ויתהלל וי.

Yitgadal v'yitkadash sh'mei raba. B'alma di v'ra chirutei, v'yamlich malchutei, b'chayeichon vu'yomeichon uv'chayei d'chol beit Yisrael, baagala uviz'man kariv. V'im'ru: Amen. Y'hei sh'mei raba m'varach l'alam ul'almei almaya. Vitbarach v'yishtabach v'yitpaar v'yitromam v'yitnasei, v'yit'hadar v'yitleh v'yit'halal sh'mei d'Kud'sha B'rich Hu, l'eila min kol birchata v'shirata, tushb'chata v'nechemata, daamiran b'alma. V'imru: Amen. Y'hei sh'lama raba min sh'maya, v'chayim aleinu v'al kol Yisrael. V'imru: Amen. Oseh shalom bimromay, Hu yaaseh shalom aleinu, v'al kol Yisrael. V'imru: Amen.

“Exalted and hallowed be God’s great name in the world which God created, according to plan. May God’s majesty be revealed in the days of our lifetime and the life of all Israel--speedily, imminently, to which we say Amen. Blessed be God’s great name to all eternity. Blessed,

<sup>86</sup>Zachariah 14:9

praised, honored, exalted, extolled, glorified, adored, and lauded be the name of the Holy Blessed One, beyond all earthly words and songs of blessing, praise, and comfort. To which we say Amen. May there be abundant peace from heaven, and life, for us and all Israel. To which we say Amen. May the One who creates harmony on high, bring peace to us and to all Israel. To which we say Amen.”

[33:28-35:28] The group sits. One individual notices the camera recording and the service leader explains the recording to him. The group then sings another hymn.

עבדו את יי בשמחה בואו לפניו ברננה

Ivdu et Adonai b'simchah, bo-u l'fanav birnanah.

“Worship God with gladness! Come into God’s presence with singing.”<sup>87</sup>

[35:28-36:17] The service leader speaks to everyone and they answer him back. One individual waves to the camera, and another one jokes about slaughtering goats. Everyone leaves the room and the service leader puts his guitar away. The group makes conversation and the recording ends.

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<sup>87</sup>Psalm 100:2

**Exhibit E: Linguistic Prayer Structure Analyses****Exhibit E-1: ECM Contraction Analysis Chart:**

	I'm	I've	he's	o'er	don't	would've	where's	there's	can't	won't
Contraction (n=23)	7	2	4	1	3	1	1	1	1	1
Non- Contraction (n=32)	10	6	4	6	0	1	0	3	2	0

**Exhibit E-2: Analysis of Grammatical Number Usage in Religious Services<sup>88</sup>**

Religious Service	%Plural Voice	%Singular Voice	n <sub>plural</sub> - n <sub>singular</sub>
ECM	65.84 (n=185)	34.16 (n=96)	+89
RCM	58.88 (n=63)	41.12 (n=44)	+19
JPS	62.50 (n=25)	37.50 (n=15)	+10
RJS	83.33 (n=35)	16.67 (n=7)	+28

**Exhibit E-3: Analysis of Grammatical Number Usage in Religious Services with Singular Instances Spoken in Unison Removed**

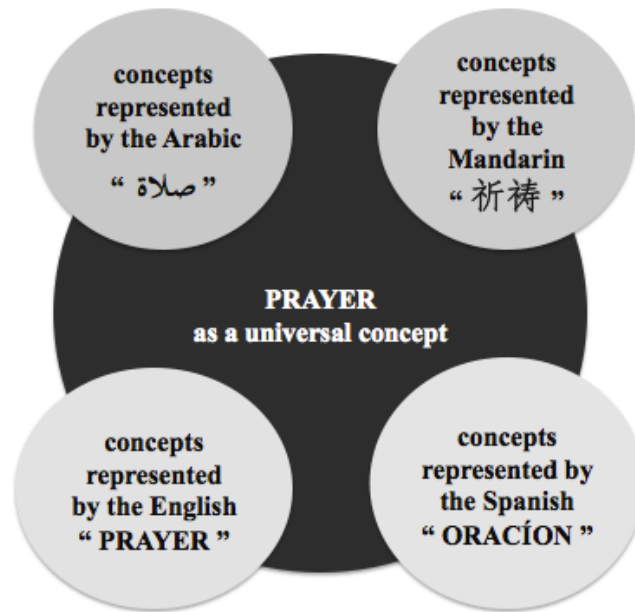
Religious Service	%Plural Voice	%Singular Voice	n <sub>plural</sub> - n <sub>singular</sub>
ECM	75.00 (n=185)	25.00 (n=55)	+130
RCM	79.75 (n=63)	20.25 (n=16)	+47
JPS	62.50 (n=25)	37.50 (n=15)	+10
RJS	100.0 (n=35)	0.0 (n=0)	+35

**Exhibit E-4: Religious Service Language Choice Analysis**

Religious Service	Primary Language	Secondary Language	Tertiary Language
Reform Judaism Shabbat	Hebrew	English	N/A
Roman Catholic Mass	English	Spanish	Latin
Ecumenical Christian Mass	English	Latin	N/A
Jumah Prayer Service	English	Arabic	N/A

<sup>88</sup>Singular instances are the words: "I", "me", and "my". Plural instances are the words: "we", "us", and "our". Only instances where both would be grammatical were included. The number of singular instances includes instances of singular usage that are spoken in unison. (Does not include Spanish reading or incidences in Latin)

**Exhibit F: Illustration of Different Conceptions of Prayer in Different Languages.<sup>89</sup>**



<sup>89</sup>This exhibit is meant to simplify the difference highlighted between conceptions of prayer. In reality, this graphic would be much more complicated with the smaller circles overlapping with each other to exemplify the concentration of concepts that each word shares across languages. For instance, there are likely overlapping concepts between “prayer” and *oración*, but the purpose of the graphic is to show that neither of them separately can adequately explain larger concept of prayer.



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