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ACSD
Association for Christians
in Student Development

Mission and Introduction to The Association for Christians in Student Development:

The Association for Christians in Student Development (ACSD) is comprised of professionals who seek to bring their commitment to Jesus Christ together with their work in college student development. Through the exchange of ideas, encouragement of networking, regional and annual conferences, and application of scriptural principles to developmental theory, ACSD seeks to enable its members to be more effective in ministering to students.

The roots of ACSD go back to the 1950s with the formation of the Christian Association of Deans of Women and the Association of Christian Deans and Advisors of Men. The two groups merged in 1980, reflecting a commitment to work together with mutual respect. ACSD has grown and currently represents more than 1,100 individuals from more than 250 institutions. While membership originally centered in Bible institutes, Bible colleges, and Christian liberal arts colleges, the Association has committed itself to linking up with colleagues in all institutions of higher education, both public and private. In support of this emphasis, the Association has sponsored prayer breakfasts and workshops in conjunction with annual conferences presented by major student affairs associated organizations.

Membership in ACSD is open to all persons who have or are preparing for responsibilities in student development areas in higher education and who are in agreement with ACSD's doctrinal statement, constitution, and by-laws. Members receive the Association's newsletter, free access to placement services, reduced rates at annual conferences, and copies of *Growth: The Journal of the Association for Christians in Student Development.*

In keeping with the mission and goals of the Association, the purposes of Growth: The Journal of The Association for Christians in Student Development are:

- To provide a forum for members to publish original research.
- To encourage the membership to be active in scholarship.
- To provide members with access to beneficial resource material intended to inform good practice.
- To stimulate research in Christian student affairs.
- To promote the ideals of ACSD and Christian student affairs.

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Dear Readers:

We are pleased to share with you another edition of *Growth: The Journal of the Association for Christians in Student Development.* We trust that you will find these articles and book reviews to be helpful in informing your work as educators. This year, you will discover five feature articles that explore pertinent issues of spirituality, sexuality, race, gender, and the academy. These articles are followed by a collection of book reviews that are intended to introduce us to new publications that will guide and shape our efforts as student development practitioners.

We are grateful to those who work to make *Growth* possible, including Dr. Jason Morris, Assistant Professor of Higher Education at Abilene Christian University who serves in the role of Book Review Editor, and Britney Graber, a graduate student from Taylor University, who joined the *Growth* staff this year as the Assistant Editor. They, along with our peer review team, have put forth great effort to produce an edition that represents strong scholarship and is diverse in its coverage of topics.

We particularly want to encourage you, the reader, to consider submitting manuscripts for consideration for future issues of *Growth;* the next edition will be published in the spring of 2016. This will be an exciting edition as it celebrates the 15th anniversary of the journal. Publication guidelines are included in this issue on the inside of the back cover and are also available via the Association for Christians in Student Development web site: www.acsd.org/participate/write-for-growth-journal/. We are especially interested in manuscripts presenting original or basic research and encourage anyone who has recently completed a graduate thesis or dissertation to submit an article.

We as a publication team would like to thank you for your support of *Growth: The Journal of the Association for Christians in Student Development.* We hope your read will be both engaging and challenging.

Sincerely,

Skip Trudeau, Co-Editor
Tim Herrmann, Co-Editor

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Precursors to and Pathways Through Conversion: Catalytic Experiences of Born Again Christian College Students

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Abstract

Born again Christians are a significant religious population in the United States, and throughout the world. The process by which a born again identity is assumed is not clearly described in the research literature. Therefore, we asked 18 born again Christian college students a series of questions designed to uncover what led to their identity of being born again. Responses fell into three overarching themes. First, participants described <u>exposure within relationships</u> to God's principles. Second, participants noted the influence of <u>introspection and reflection</u> on their lives apart from the influence of God. Third, participants had an <u>active response</u> in which they reported such things as recognizing conviction by the Holy Spirit, that they decided to act on that conviction, and that they took action to follow Jesus. Findings are discussed with within the framework of Cohen and Hill's (2007) theory of religion as culture.

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Issues of spirituality and religion have received increasing attention in the recent research literature on college students (Astin, Astin, & Lindholm, 2011; Bowman & Small, 2012; Hill & Pargament, 2008; Toussaint & Jorgensen, 2008). It remains clear that religious involvement among students as they enter college is high. Fully 80% of first-year students attended religious services in the year prior to entering college, 77% currently believe in God, and 69% pray (Astin et al., 2011). As the college experience unfolds, this high level of involvement begins to diminish and students become less engaged in religious activities (Astin et al., 2011). As this happens, students become more ecumenical, believing that non-religious people can live just as morally as religious believers, and they are more likely to reject the biblical principle that God will punish those who don't believe in Him (Astin et al., 2011; Driscoll & Breshears, 2010).

A longitudinal study of over 2,500 youth and emerging adults found that far fewer people aged 18-23 identify with a particular religious group than do people in their mid-teens. The proportion of teens who identify as either Catholic or Protestant drops from 77 to 64% during this time while the proportion of students who identify as not religious jumps from 14 to 27%. Still, over half of teens remain in their religious group while they are in college (Smith, 2009).

Research has shown that those least likely to stray from their faith and most likely to subscribe to biblical principles include students who identify as either evangelical Christians, conservative Protestants, or born again Christians (Astin et al., 2011). Though these terms have slightly different meanings, they have a great deal of conceptual overlap and are often used interchangeably. The present study sought to explore how people convert to the identity of a born again Christian. Specifically, we sought to understand what happens just before someone experiences spiritual regeneration to a Christian faith, how one starts to identify as born again, and whether there are common factors that can be identified that lead to taking on a born again religious identity.

Studying the conversion experiences of people who identify as born again is highly complex due to the differing understandings of the term and how those who claim the identity conceptualize it in a way that may differ from Scripture (Foubert, Watson, Brosi, & Fuqua, 2012). The Christian concept of regeneration is central to the Gospel. The essential nature of the new birth is addressed in Jesus' dialogue with Nicodemus in John 3:3 "I tell you the truth; no one can see the Kingdom of God unless he is born again." While Christian conversion has traditionally been understood as a dramatic and often instant transformation, during the last few decades some have found this depiction lacking in describing the conversion experiences of some who identify as Christian. This subgroup perceives spiritual transformation as a process more than an event (Lee, 2008). Although the dynamic change within the Apostle Paul is the most well-known biblical

example of conversion, there are at least three other New Testament models of Christian conversion that differ from Paul's experience, suggesting that the personal nature of each individual's relationship with God is begun as uniquely as it subsequently unfolds (Smith, 2001).

Effects of Being Born Again

Research has shown that age 18 is a dynamic age for spiritual change, both in the way of growth and decline. Adopting a born again status is, not surprisingly, related to a jump in religious service attendance and a huge increase in personal religiosity (Regnerus & Uecker, 2006). The effects of a born again status stretch beyond the religious realm. For example, if a student identifies as being born again, that student is less likely to smoke marijuana. Marijuana use declines even further when students have higher proportion of friends who also identify as born again (Adamczyk & Palmer, 2008). Born again teens also report better relationships with their mothers than do their peers. In addition, when teens become born again, they experience a significant improvement in their relationships with their fathers if the conversion occurs within their religious tradition (Regnerus & Burdette, 2006).

There is something about the born again experience that is qualitatively different from being a member of a church without having such an experience. For example, Tankink (2007) documents a case in which members of an Anglican Church in Africa converted to a Pentecostal Church, became born again, and experienced substantial relief from trauma. A common theme among born again Christians in that region of Africa is a post-regeneration instantaneous removal of pain that had been caused by trauma from war, significantly different from religious experiences reported by those in the Anglican and Roman Catholic churches (Tankink, 2007).

Most research puts the proportion of born again Christians in the U.S. population at somewhere between one-quarter and one-third (Calhoun, Aronczyk, Mayrl, & VanAntwerpen, 2007; Smith, 2006; Smith, Faris, Denton, & Regnerus, 2003). Not surprisingly, such individuals often live in conflict with others given differing worldviews. Evidence for this conflict emerges in many contexts. For example, an ethnographic study of a Lutheran college found that a subgroup of students who adhered more strongly to biblical principles rejected the less biblically consistent programming of their institution in favor of developing their own programming. This self-designed programming supported their group identity and values (Bryant & Craft, 2010). Such conflicts are increasingly common in various denominations and corners of Christianity.

Recent research reveals that the religious beliefs of some college students who identify as Christian are in conflict with the Bible (Smith, 2009). These distinctions are particularly evident when examining denominational differences. One in five mainstream Protestant students denies that Jesus was the Son of God who was raised from the dead. This compares to one in eleven Roman Catholics and one in twenty conservative Protestants.

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The same pattern exists about whether there will be a judgment day when God will reward some and punish others. Though over four out of five conservative Protestants agree, just half of Catholics and less than half of mainstream Protestants answered affirmatively (Smith, 2009). Evangelical Protestants also report stronger faith, are more likely to believe in a literal interpretation of the Bible, attend church more frequently, and read the Bible more frequently than Catholics and mainline Protestants (Dougherty, Johnson, & Polson, 2007; Smith, Faris, Denton, & Regnerus, 2003).

Theoretical Frame

Cohen and Hill (2007) postulate in their theory of religion as culture that Jews, Catholics, and Protestants differ in systematic ways when it comes to religiosity and spirituality. In particular, they state that there are individualistic and collectivistic characteristics of each group that vary. Specifically, when Jews identify important life experiences, they describe collective religious encounters that are social in nature. Protestants are more likely to identify individual personal experiences with God. Catholics tend to fall somewhere in the middle of this social/God continuum. Cohen and Hill's theory suggests that many Protestant groups experience both religious and spiritual phenomena on an individual level with the person to God. This perspective stands in contrast to cultures that place a higher value on social connections as a fundamental part of religious culture such as Judaism, Catholicism, and Hinduism. Judaism is classified as a religion of *descent*, one that emphasizes the family of origin and cultural rituals. Protestantism, on the other hand, may be classified as a religion of *assent,* one that emphasizes a belief system compelled by one's internal motivation to become part of a faith group.

Cohen and Hill (2007) find that Protestants are significantly more intrinsically motivated in their religious identity, followed by Catholics, then Jews. On a scale of how important their religious identity was to them, Protestants scored highest, followed by Catholics, then Jews. Cohen and Hill note that there is limited research on the processes related to the religious and spiritual identity among those who claim to be religious or spiritual (Cohen & Hill, 2007). The present study sought to inform Cohen and Hill's theory of religion as culture by exploring the experiences that led self-identified born again Christian college students to convert to Christianity. Related to this theory, how did these students assent to their belief system and what factors led to this process?

The Nature of Religious Conversion

Many of those who have conversion experiences see regeneration as the first step in a long process of transformation (Kahn & Greene, 2004). However, such beliefs are much more common among those who convert to non-Christian religions rather than to evangelical Protestant sects. What one commits to is not necessarily correlated with the strength of commitment. For example, research has shown equal levels of commitment among different types of believers. Though their commitments are widely divergent,

the strength of evangelical Protestants' commitment and surrender to Jesus was shown to be just as strong as Unitarians' commitment to their community without creeds or requirements (Kahn & Greene, 2004).

What leads to regeneration. Research on what leads to spiritual or religious change points to several catalytic factors. Half of those who report some sort of conversion experience mention a religious activity such as going to church, a retreat, praying with others, or something of that sort (Smith, 2006). Half also mention that they had a personal problem that preceded their conversion such as an illness, accident, or death of someone special. Most people do not have a distinct moment or event of religious transformation like Saul's conversion on the road to Damascus. Just over a third report a consequence of their change as being closer to God, being more spiritual, dedicating their life to God or Christ, and engaging or reengaging their faith. Some report improvement in their behavior and/or character. Still others have an improved outlook on life (Smith, 2006). A qualitative study of adult women found that though they understood conversion to be transformative, they viewed conversion as a process rather than a single event, demonstrated through behavior, and different from being saved (Lee, 2008).

The purpose of this study was exploratory in nature, designed to investigate the pathways to the spiritual regeneration experience among born again Christians. How does one become a born again Christian? Are there common factors that precede such a conversion experience? Due to the exploratory, phenomenological nature of the research questions, we chose a qualitative, interview-based method.

Method

Participants. Participants in this study responded to an invitation for people who were "Born Again Christians," who were undergraduate students, and who were from 18 to 25 years of age. Students attended a large public Midwest university in a state commonly referred to as being part of the "Bible belt." Volunteers included eleven females and seven males. Participants identified themselves as Baptist (8), Church of Christ (2), Latter Day Saints (1), Methodist (1), Non-denominational (5), and Presbyterian (1). Notably, all of these groups except for the Latter Day Saints are part of a group traditionally classified as Protestant. All participants except one identified their race as White or Caucasian; the remaining participant identified as a Pacific Islander. Several methods were used to recruit participants including an advertisement on Facebook, announcements at meetings of multiple Christian student organizations, snowball sampling, emails from members of a campus Christian faculty group to students they knew who might meet the criteria for our study, referrals from local pastors in town, and participants from a research pool of human subjects taking coursework in Educational Psychology.

Procedure. Participants were interviewed one-on-one with one of the authors from this study in a private conference room or office. Participants were interviewed using a semi-structured interview protocol. Interviews were recorded with a digital audio recorder

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and were then transcribed verbatim. Interviews were conducted over the course of two academic semesters. In order to protect participant confidentiality, only one experimenter served as a contact person for the participants. Participants did not provide their names to interviewers. Instead, they provided a self-selected pseudonym to be used throughout the study. Recordings and transcriptions were kept under lock and key. Participants were informed about all of these procedures at the beginning of their interview. Interviews lasted between 30 and 60 minutes.

Guided by a process outlined by Cresswell (2006), the authors of the study met every other week for constant comparison, to compare field notes from interviews, begin to identify emergent themes, share insights, and assess for when the point of redundancy and saturation was reached. When we reached 18 interviews, we determined this point had been reached and concluded our interview process.

In keeping with recommendations by Aten and Hernandez (2008), steps were taken to ensure credibility and rigor. To protect the validity of our findings, multiple researchers collaborated on this project. Although all four authors are self-identified born again Christians, each represents a different denominational background, providing some diversity of perspective and validity safeguards. Finally, we consciously worked to preserve the integrity of the participants' stories.

Results

Participants were asked a series of questions designed to uncover what led to their taking on the identity of being born again. Responses fell into three overarching themes. First, participants described *exposure within relationships* to God's principles. These relationships were with a variety of individuals who were either already close to them and/or within religious organizations (e.g., church, campus ministries, church and youth camps). Second, participants noted the influence of *introspection and reflection* on their life without the influence of God. Third, there was an *active response* on the part of our participants in which they reported such things as recognizing that they were being convicted by the Holy Spirit, that they decided to act on that conviction, and that they took action to follow Jesus. Each theme, supported by participant quotes, is presented below with discussion following.

Exposure within relationships. Many participants reported that others who held significant roles in their lives were critical in either providing or supporting the spiritual guidance that led them to claim a born again identity. An overwhelming majority of students discussed in great detail how they grew up in God-centered homes with believing parents who had personal relationships with God, took them to church, and when they were ready, walked them through the salvation process. For example, when asked what led to her conversion, Susie noted:

> Um, I was born in a Christian family, pretty much grew up in the church. And, um, I just felt like something was missing, and um, I prayed about it a lot with my… with my grandma. I was very close to her. And, um, she kind of told me, you know, the steps that needed to be taken. And I just prayed about it, and accepted God as my savior.

Other participants reported many other critical relationships as being key including pastors, Sunday school teachers, youth pastors, campus ministers, friends, and siblings. Each of these individuals provided an example to our participants of God working in their lives and led these participants to Him. For example, Samantha reported:

> I have an older brother that's two years older than me, and he became a Christian before I did, and I noticed the differences in his life, and so I asked him about it and he told me that he had been born again, but I didn't understand what that meant, so I went and talked to my parents about it and they explained it to me more, and I prayed and asked Jesus into my heart.

The influence of family in combination with a church, both encouraging conversion, emerged as a powerful catalyst for many participants. Heidi described a young life growing up in a Christian home with Christian parents. She noted:

> I've always heard about Christ, just from my parents, and going to church, going to AWANA or Sunday school… all that kind of stuff. So we were having a family story time, basically, about Jesus and stuff like that, so that was the circumstance of when, like, I finally understood that I needed Christ in my life.

Hayden echoed this theme, stating:

> I was raised in church, um, my family took me since I was born, um physically, but I made that decision when I was 7 and um, there was this special speaker at our church at the time and he was kind of like a kid speaker and so like, the way that he put it, he put it in terms that I understood and it was just like a tugging on my heart and I just felt like that was what God was wanting me to do and so I went to the front and prayed and talked to my parents about it and things like that.

A key element of being exposed to biblical truths involved organizational entities in which scriptural messages were delivered. Specifically, churches, summer camps, and campus parachurch organizations provided a vehicle through which participants were exposed to teachings that led to their conversion. For example, Sarai noted that she attended a conference in the eighth grade:

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The speaker was just talking and basically said that if you are embracing some sin as ok and some as not, you are still a sinner and you are still separate from God. Then I realized that I was like, "Oh, ok, well, I'm not as good as I think I am."

Likewise, Peter described two people who were important in his conversion experience:

(My roommate was) someone who just modeled the idea of what a Christian should be. Just what it looked like when somebody walks with Jesus, who just displays what Christ should be. That was really impactful. Then, there was a guy at the BCM (Baptist Campus Ministry) that kind of took me aside and taught me things from the Bible, so this is who God is; this is what Jesus looked like. I think that had a tremendous impact… they were very patient with me, very kind, because they knew what needed to happen, but they were very gentle with how they approached me.

Peter's statement reflects his belief that through these key relationships God was using others to reach him. He noted the characters of the Christian men he was exposed to as possessing the qualities that allowed him to open his heart to God.

Introspection and reflection. The second emergent theme in which students described their conversion process centered on introspection and reflection. The participants reported that after their exposure to God came a time in their lives when they looked inward—at the sin in their lives and the emptiness in their hearts without God. Many reported doing this at a young age while several others reported this during later developmental stages in their lives. Peter described this time as one in which God became "very real to me" and he "decided to follow Jesus." This happened subsequent to an experience when he noted, "I just felt the conviction of God come upon me, and that's when He (God) started to become very real to me. He showed me what I had become, and I didn't like it."

Jackson provided a poignant example of how he felt convicted by sin, influenced by Scripture, and helped by an influential person during his time of introspection:

I actually, one night, opened the Word, just at random, just at a loss, just at the bottom of everything, like Augustine, he kind of hit the same place and just opened the Bible, and just a passage convicted him and he was just trapped intellectually, spiritually, or whatever. I opened the Word, it was just a random passage, Jeremiah 3 at least to me at least, I've never read it. And the chapter is about Israel's faithlessness and God's call to repent, and it was talking about how Israel has worshipped idols and how they committed adultery against the Lord, and they committed adultery on every hill, on every high place and under every blade of grass and all that. And then the last chapter, the last verse I mean, says "and let us lie on our beds of shame,

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and let our inequity cover us." And, I was literally lying in bed, just having engaged in a night of sin, debauchery, and just kind of started crying and I think that's the point when I recognized like, "Okay, I need help, I can't do this by myself anymore" and I was willing to do whatever it took to be changed. And so I, I actually, began to, after that, the next day I decided to get help with some Christian counseling, and actually for the first time confessed all of my sins, my secret life of sin.

Some participants also reported that they had experienced some life-changing event or experience that served as a catalyst prompting their reflection on their lives and what was missing. For example, Maisie cited her brain surgery as influential. She shared:

I realized that there were so many things that were wrong in my life and there is only one thing that can be made right. And even though I make mistakes and stuff that, um, Christ will always be there for me. So even when other people can't be; He will be there.

Tim described battling depression as an influential part of his introspection. He noted that before he was born again, he had many life circumstances that he was unable to handle until he made some changes:

(I started) reading my Bible every day and asking for peace I was provided with peace so a lot of the decisions I have to make I don't stress out now because I know everything is going to work out for the good of me because I love God.

An active response. The third theme that emerged from the data focused heavily on the participants' active response after hearing God's word from someone and recognizing that they needed God. This theme emphasized the moment of conversion for many of our participants, of their becoming born again. Participants discussed in great detail what they actually did. They described different practices such as walking to the front of the church during an "altar call," praying the sinner's prayer, and other activities that symbolized their volitional decision to pursue God. For example, Susie described her conversion process as following the "ABC" method, whereby she Admitted she was a sinner, Believed that Jesus Christ is God's Son and that He came down to earth the die for our sins, and Committed her life to God through evangelism and living by the teaching of the Bible. In a similar way, Erin described her moment of conversion:

First I had to confess that Jesus Christ died for my sins and he was, he existed and he was the Son of God. And then I, it was whenever I was ten years old, and I had a lot of my friends were doing it, and pretty much that was at first what I was doing, but now I know because I fully believe that, like, that I am born-again 'cause I believe and I do what it says, I do what the Bible says.

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Many described the complexity of the conversion process by noting that introspection launched them toward the decision to actively pursue a personal relationship with God. The students considered their maturing process as a key factor in understanding themselves in their relationship with God. This maturity allowed them to see the essence of their lives, their struggles, and then to see how God was doing a work within them. They reported that this learning process was critical in their overall conversion process that led them to a deeper and more purposeful relationship with God. For example, Sara described the nature of the conversion process as one of understanding and commitment:

> [It's] a process, I mean it's a, you have to know about God and know the Bible before you fully understand what you are doing and committing to, kind of like a marriage, and you are committing yourself to a religion and how you feel in your morals and values, so it's a process of how you believe plus the religion that you believe.

Following a period of introspection, Jackson noted the conviction he felt at an event:

> They had an altar call thing, and I actually went up and I felt the Lord telling me to get on my knees and just pray, "Have mercy on me. I am a sinner." And that, I think at that conference, that was the point where, where I had ceded my rights, abdicated the throne of my heart to Jesus Christ.

Another participant, Sarai, described conversion in a way that separated the concepts of justification and sanctification (Grudem, 1994), without direct reference to either concept. She stated:

> The actual being born again, was definitely a single event, because I do think that whenever you place your trust in Christ, that is an event that is a one-time decision. Um, but your growth in your relationship with Jesus is a process. Because I am definitely not in the same place that I was now, than I was my freshman year before high school. Um, so my growth and my development has definitely been a process but the actual me being born um, as a true believer in Jesus and walking with Jesus that was a one-time event thing.

In a similar way, Scout noted taking on the identity of being born again was a single event. "It was that prayer and that recognition of needing a Savior. But the process of growing as a born again Christian is definitely a process, that will happen at that point until I pass away."

Several other students reported that their growth process was directly influenced by their college experiences, the intense temptation, and the sin they experienced. One participant discussed how it was the college experience that tested her the most and limited her development but served as a major mechanism in her future ministry.

Discussion

We sought to determine whether born again Christian students have commonalities in their experiences pre-conversion and during their conversion processes. By interviewing 18 participants who identify as born again, we were able to illuminate the experiences of this population.

Our participants reported, almost universally, some *exposure within relationships* to the message of Jesus from an individual they either knew or who was part of a group to which they belonged. The combination of a family who encourages conversion and a church that does so emerged as a particularly powerful influence. For some people, it may be that a Christian family can prepare a future believer for the salvation message sent by churches, parachurch groups, and student development professionals that will later require a response. It may also be that the messages preached outside the home are reinforced in the home and are then acted upon, resulting in conversion.

Our second major finding was that after hearing about God, those who converted went through a time of *introspection and reflection* when they realized the depth of their sin. Participants who later converted reported a deep sense of conviction, realizing that they were lost without God. It was interesting to note that during this time of reflection, our participants were essentially alone with God. They looked to the Bible and to their own thoughts to come to their own conclusions.

Our third major finding is that participants had some *active response* to what they heard about God and to their period of reflection that then characterized their conversion. Some participants came forward to profess faith publicly during a church service, some prayed with others; in each case, a volitional activity was described.

Our results point to the central role of families, the church, parachurch organizations (e.g., Student Mobilization, Baptist Campus Ministry, InterVarsity), and student development staff at faith-based institutions, and their role in providing the conditions necessary for conversion to occur. Our findings suggest that a powerful combination is created when born again parents and a church or other organization with the same theology influences an individual.

Given the correlations of being born again with positive outcomes ranging from better relationships to decreased drug use (e.g., Adamczyk & Palmer, 2008; Hill & Pargament, 2008; Regnerus & Burdette, 2006), the experiences of our participants suggest several implications of our findings for practicing pastors and spiritual educators. The experiences of our participants suggest that time sharing the message of God, particularly John 3:3 and other conversion narratives, is fruitful. Our participants also noted the influence of recognizing how far apart from God they were. This suggests that a well-timed message to people about the nature of sin and how it separates people from God is a necessary element in a conversion process. In addition, pastoral staff should endeavor to provide opportunities for students to make active decisions to profess faith and affirm a born again status, when they are ready. Our results also point to the serious need for supporting

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parents who raise children. Ministries designed to help parents support the faith development of their children seem all the more important given the finding that so many of our participants grew up in homes with believing parents. These findings also highlight the importance of conducting outreach to support those who do not have the benefit of living in a home with born again parents.

Given the qualitative nature of our method, we note that our findings illuminate the experiences of our participants but cannot be generalized. However, this finding does open doors to new lines of research. For example, born again students could be asked to rate the influence of members of their family, their church, and relevant parachurch organizations on their conversion process using a Likert-style, quantitative measure. A regression could be used to determine which variables most strongly contribute to conversion and in what combination of influence.

One might also study the effects of having parents or churches that do not subscribe to a born again theology and how this impacts a larger population of students who identify as born again and those who do not. Our study was limited in the population that we recruited, born again Christians at a secular institution. Had we studied a group that included students who did not convert or students on a faith-based campus, we may well have had different findings.

Our study was also limited by the fact that all of the students came from one campus, in a cultural context where churchgoing and identifying oneself as Christian is normative as part of being in the "Bible belt" of the country. Had the study taken place on a campus in a different region with a different culture, it is likely that we would have heard different responses from our participants. In addition, racial diversity was represented by only one of our 18 respondents, despite the fact that the population on this campus includes 19% minority students. Thus, Caucasian students are substantially overrepresented in our sample.

Our study confirmed the validity of Cohen and Hill's (2007) theory of religion as culture with a population who identify as born again. Cohen and Hill (2007) suggest that Protestants focus on the relationship between the individual and God, not mediated by the Church. Our second theme was consistent with this theory, in that our participants reported taking time for introspection and reflection with God prior to their conversion. This time came after contact with family and/or the church and before an active response where they expressed their faith. What is noteworthy is the individualistic nature of this introspection, much in line with how Cohen and Hill (2007) describe Protestants. Even our third theme of an active response is an individual decision rather than a corporate decision. Born again Christians constitute an important subset of Protestants, thus future research on this theory might ask whether or not participants are born again. Doing so could identify meaningful patterns in responses on important variables of interest.

Conclusion

We sought to determine whether there were identifiable catalytic factors that were influential in conversion experiences of born again Christians. From interviewing 18 college students who claim that identity, the most obvious powerful catalysts seem to be parents, role models in their church or other similar organization, and church-related programming. Pastoral staff, staff from parachurch organizations, older brothers and sisters, and others who role model being born again were highly influential. A less obvious facilitator of spiritual growth was time for reflection and introspection on a life without God. Some of our participants had to reach low points to spur this reflection. Still, this time to reflect appeared important. Finally, it seems important that in order to be born again, many of our participants needed the opportunity for a place to make their active response. This could be a church where there is an opportunity to affirm their belief, attending a faith-based institution, an altar call at a religious gathering, or an event by a ministry where students come to realize that they are broken and respond by crying out for a savior. Further clarification of the nature and functioning of these catalysts will help researchers and practitioners further understand the complex process of becoming born again.

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Experiences of Students and Alumni Navigating Sexual Identity in Faith-Based Higher Education: A Qualitative Study

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Abstract

Students and alumni affiliated with faith-based institutions of higher education who experience same-sex attraction regardless of identity label or behavior ("sexual minorities") shared some of their experiences in these unique settings. The results of this study are consistent with existing research in this area suggesting that sexual minorities may be a distinct group in several important ways. We reported on their experiences of milestone events, meaning-making associated with identity, and concerns about campus climate in light of a range of perspectives on religious doctrine and institutional policies.

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Studies on faith-based campuses are beginning to offer a look at the experiences of students navigating sexual identity concerns in these unique settings. The experiences are diverse and far-reaching, and they include navigating sexual identity development in light of religious identity as well as experiences of campus climate in light of their own status as sexual minorities.

Sexual Identity Development

Sexual identity refers to the labels people use to think about themselves and convey to others information about their sexuality. Common sexual identity labels include gay, lesbian, straight, bi, and queer. Most of the research and theoretical models have reflected the experiences of sexual minorities (or those who experience same-sex attraction regardless of identity label or behavior).

Recent scholarship has focused on the milestone events in sexual identity formation. That is, many sexual minority adults have identified key milestones in the formation of their identity as lesbian, gay, or bisexual (LGB). Common milestones include but are not limited to: first experience of same-sex attraction, first experience of sexual behavior to orgasm, first labeling of self as LGB, first disclosure to others, and first ongoing same-sex relationship.

In a previous study of sexual minorities at faith-based institutions (Yarhouse, Stratton, Dean, & Brooke, 2009), it was noted that many Christians did not report experiencing some of the common milestone events. In this study, only 30% of Christian sexual minorities reported engaging in same-sex behavior to orgasm; 14% reported labeling themselves as gay; 20% reported an ongoing same-sex relationship. These findings could be interpreted in many ways. For example, it could be that the strain of conflict between religious and sexual identity causes many sexual minorities to simply delay milestone events that will eventually become a part of their experience. Alternatively, they may be charting a different course, following a unique trajectory in which their religious identity informs decisions about specific milestone events.

Campus Climate

Campus climate also factors into these discussions. Research on campus climate suggests that many campuses in the U.S. "are neither positive nor inclusive, with many students experiencing hostility because of the anti-lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) attitudes of others" (Tetreault, Fette, Meidlinger, & Hope, 2013, p. 949). A decade ago, many sexual minorities felt they had to hide their sexual identity and/or were concerned for their safety (Rankin, 2003). More recent research on campus climate suggests improvements while concerns remain about disproportionate harassment and discrimination (Rankin, 2010).

When we turn our attention to faith-based institutions of higher education, we note far fewer studies in this area. From the studies conducted thus far, we do see concerns regarding campus climate. For example, Yarhouse et al. (2009) reported that while it was

unusual for students to hear faculty or staff express negative comments or jokes that "put down" people who experience same-sex attraction, it was much more common to hear these things from other students (73.1% of respondents reported hearing such things four or more times during the past year, and male students [87%] reported this more so than female students [59%]). This sets a climate that students described as largely negative with some distinction between "homosexuality" in general and homosexual behavior (84% of respondents viewed the community perception of homosexuality as "generally negative" or "negative," while 96% viewed the perception of homosexual behavior as "generally negative or "negative" (Yarhouse et al., 2009, p. 104).

What little research has been conducted suggests that while many students are themselves religious and may be navigating sexual identity differently than those at other institutions, they are doing so in a campus climate that is largely negative toward homosexuality and especially homosexual behavior. They may share the views of the institution—particularly about behavior—but nonetheless they are navigating sexual identity in that context. The present investigation provided a more in-depth look at current sexual minority students and alumni of faith-based institutions.

Method

In the tradition of exploratory research and due to the relative under-representation of studies about this population, primarily descriptive statistics and qualitative analysis were employed. Qualitative methodology allowed respondents to share details about their faith, sexual identity, and campus experiences. Interviews were recorded and transcribed and three research members trained in qualitative analysis reviewed the transcripts and identified themes and subthemes from the transcribed interviews. When differences arose regarding themes or subthemes, these were re-reviewed until the reviewers were able to reach consensus on all themes.

Participant Description

Eighteen participants completed the semi-structured interview and are included in data analysis. There was an equal distribution of current students ($N = 9$) and alumni ($N = 9$) from a number of colleges/universities. All participants identified as a sexual minority, Christian, and attending a religiously affiliated college or university, as these comprised the selection criteria. The sample was predominantly male (83.3%; $N = 15$), Caucasian/White (83.3%; $N = 15$), single (83.3%; $N = 15$), and in their late twenties ($M = 26.11$; $SD = 9.80$). With regard to student classification, current students were mostly seniors (66.7%) with several juniors (11.1%) and sophomores (22.2%). Time since alumni left or graduated college varied widely within a range of 0.25 – 28.75 years ($M = 8.04$; $SD = 11.57$). All but one participant identified as Protestant, considering themselves to be both spiritual and religious ($M = 7.44$ and 8.33 on a 10-point Likert-type scale, respectively).

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Results

The results are organized around two major areas: (1) experiences of attraction, orientation, identity, and associated milestone events, and (2) campus climate.

Sexual Attraction, Orientation, Identity, and Associated Milestone Events. Participants were asked to reflect upon their experiences of sexual attraction during the time period they attended college. For example, individuals were asked to describe both their homosexual and heterosexual attraction on a 10-point Likert-type scale with 1 indicating no attraction and 10 indicating strong attraction. On average, participants reported low opposite-sex attraction (M = 2.94) and strong same-sex attraction (M = 8.78).

Participants were asked how they identify themselves to others and how they resolved the tension that often arises between one's sexual identity and one's Christian identity (alumni responded retrospectively about their time at college). Approximately 66.6% indicated that they eschewed a sexual identification label and primarily identified with their Christian faith. Three participants endorsed a Gay/Bisexual Christian identity (16.7%), two claimed a Heterosexual/Straight identity (11.1%), and one identified as LGB with nominal or covert Christian affiliation (5.6%). Alumni also shared how they currently identify themselves to others, which changed somewhat since their time in college/university. Over half of alumni (N = 5; 55.6%) now identify as a Gay/Bisexual Christian; two maintain their primary identification in their faith, having never identified as LGB (22.2%); one no longer identifies as LGB and now identifies as a Straight Christian with a heterosexual orientation (11.1%); one participant did not respond.

Milestone events. Participants responded to a number of questions regarding what are often understood to be "milestone events" in the development of a gay sexual identity (see Table 1). All participants reported experiencing same-sex attraction at an average age of about 11. Nearly all participants (94.4%) reported confusion about their same-sex feelings occurring at an average age of about 12. A current student shared that, "Even though I had experienced same-sex feelings for years prior, I never paid it much attention until I began to go through puberty (because I had not had any feelings to compare them against up to that point). These feelings were only solidified." A male alumnus similarly reported, "I experienced confusion as I felt sexual feelings toward my male friends in junior high, but because there was so much shame attached to the idea of being gay, I pretended to want a girlfriend."

Regarding sexual activities with same-sex partners, 61.1% reported being intimately/romantically kissed, being fondled, and fondling someone of the same sex. Same-sex sexual behavior to orgasm was reported by 77% of the sample at a mean of 17.5 years old. One participant reported that, "In 7th grade, I experienced my first orgasm while masturbating during a homoerotic fantasy." Others similarly indicated that homosexual pornography played a role in their first same-sex sexual behavior to orgasm. Participants initially attributed their same-sex feelings to a gay identity at an average age of about 18, with nearly half of these later "taking on a gay identity" at an average age of about 21.

Participants also shared about their first same-sex relationship (differing from any same-sex sexual behavior outside of a relationship), with half endorsing a relationship at an average age of approximately 21.

Table 1

Number and Mean Age of Participants Indicating They Had Various Sexual Experiences

Experience	Mean Age (*SD*)	*N*	Percent of Sample
Awareness of same-sex feelings	11.22 (4.31)	18	100%
Confusion about same-sex feelings	12.24 (3.42)	17	94.4%
Intimately/romantically kissed by someone of the same sex	20.45 (4.18)	11	61.1%
Been fondled (breasts or genitals) by someone of the same sex (without orgasm)	16.00 (5.80)	11	61.1%
Fondled (breasts or genitals) someone of the same sex (without orgasm)	15.55 (5.84)	11	61.1%
Same-sex sexual behavior (to orgasm)	17.50 (2.96)	14	77.8%
Initial attribution that I am gay/lesbian/bisexual	18.79 (4.00)	14	77.8%
Took on the label of gay	21.38 (5.18)	8	44.4%
First same-sex relationship	21.11 (3.06)	9	50%
Intimately/romantically kissed by someone of the opposite sex	18.33 (4.42)	9	50%
Been fondled (breasts or genitals) by someone of the opposite sex (without orgasm)	20.17 (4.36)	6	33.3%
Fondled (breasts or genitals) someone of the opposite sex (without orgasm)	20.00 (3.83)	7	38.9%
Opposite-sex sexual behavior (to orgasm)	24.33 (1.16)	3	16.7%
First opposite-sex relationship	16.77 (5.12)	13	72.2%
First disclosure of same-sex attraction	17.94 (2.96)	18	100%

Participants were also asked about sexual experiences with opposite-sex partners. Half reported a sexual history that included being intimately/romantically kissed by someone of the opposite sex. One-third indicated that they had been fondled by someone of the opposite sex, while 38.9% reported fondling an opposite-sex partner. Relatively few individuals reported opposite-sex sexual behavior to orgasm (16.7%). Nearly three-quarters (72.2%) endorsed a first opposite-sex relationship at a mean age of about 16.

In terms of the meaning/significance of milestone events, participants were asked, "Thinking back on your first experience of same-sex attraction, what did those experiences mean to you?" Five themes arose from the data: *unaware of meaning/confused* (N=8), *gay is wrong* (N=6), *fear* (of consequences, family, God's disapprove, self-condemnation) (N=4), *temporary phase* (N=3), and *different/outsider* (N=3). For example, in terms of *fear*, a current sexual minority student shared:

> …it scared me. Because I grew up in a Christian home and I was like, "How is that going to play out, work…" and I had just become a Christian

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when I started really experiencing these in a direct way. The first time I was attracted I had just become a Christian, and I was just like, "Can I continue to be a Christian?"

Participants were also asked about when they first disclosed their same-sex sexuality to another person. The specific prompt was, "Tell me about when you first disclosed your same-sex attraction or identity" with multiple additional prompts related to circumstances, effect on relationship, and attribution/meaning-making. Nearly half (*N*=8) shared that their first disclosure occurred when they were between ages 11 and 18, while seven participants shared that first disclosure was later, between ages 19 and 24 (three did not respond). Disclosure to family (siblings, parent) and Resident Director were the most common, followed by friend, mentor, and youth pastor. In terms of circumstances, we identified several themes, including *supportive circumstances* (*N*=4), *unplanned disclosure* (*N*=4), *disclosure within close relationship* (*N*=3), *internal pressure to disclose* (*N*=3), *conflict between same-sex sexuality and Christianity* (*N*=3), *external pressure to disclose* (*N*=2), and *disclosure within therapy* (*N*=2).

In terms of effects on the relationship in which disclosure had occurred, we distinguished three themes: *supportive/accepting/compassionate* (*N*=5), *grew closer* (*N*=5), and *no significant change* (*N*=5). Regarding the theme *grew closer*, a student shared, "I feel like overall it had an effect of deepening our relationship. As we ended up I would ask for her advice and stuff like that, I think it deepened our relationship."

When participants elaborated on attributions and meaning-making, we identified three themes: *broken relationship with father* (N=3), *no strong attribution* (N=3), and *broader identity* (N=2). For the theme *broader identity*, one student shared: "I don't want to be somebody that is like the defining part of who I am. I think a lot of people can get so wrapped up in it that that's what drives their personalities, their reality, and everything. And while it may be a part of who I am, that's not the total sum of who [participant] is…."

We asked if people were currently in a same-sex relationship. Most participants (*N*=13) said they were not currently in a relationship. Only two indicated that they were currently in a same-sex relationship (both current students). Four offered that they had previously been in a same-sex relationship. Of the two currently in a relationship, both reported these as positive relationships. Of those who shared having previously been in a same-sex relationship, two indicated they were comfortable in that relationship, while two indicated they had not felt comfortable. Four participants shared that any sort of physical sexual activities occurred off-campus or in private on-campus.

We asked if participants were currently in an opposite-sex relationship. Most (*N*=14) said they were not, and only one participant indicated that he was currently in an opposite-sex relationship (and that the partner was aware of his same-sex attractions).

Campus Identity and Relationship to Campus Policies

A significant focus of this research was campus climate. Most participants (*N*=12; 66.7%) endorsed being known as a sexual minority to only a few close friends while they were students. Four individuals reported that they were known to be a sexual minority by many others on campus. Few (*N* = 2; 11.1%) described themselves as trying to "pass" as heterosexual and were not known by anyone as a sexual minority. With regard to their attitudes toward campus policies regarding sexuality and sexual behavior, participants were split. About half (55.5%) shared that they came to a Christian university but quietly disagreed with their policies, while 44.4% chose to attend a Christian university because they agreed with the existing policies. Notably, no participants vocally or publicly disagreed with the policies.

Participants were asked, *"*How would you describe your college/university's atmosphere regarding same-sex attraction?" The most frequently cited themes here were *Hesitance to discuss/avoidance of topic (N*=8), *Open to discussion/progress* (*N*=8), *Understanding/compassion if it is a struggle* (*N*=7), *Unsafe climate* (*N*=6), and *Policy/prohibition against same-sex behavior (N*=6*)*.

Concerning *Hesitance to discuss/avoidance of topic,* a current student stated that while faculty and staff are fairly open to discussion, there is an overall climate of avoidance among students:

> …the students in general, I think it just makes them uncomfortable because of the classic Evangelicalism that pretty much everybody has been brought up in. And they never really thought about the issue, because there's not a lot of gays in church. They've never really interacted with and gotten to know them as people.

A second theme had to do with the campus being *Open to discussion/progress.* A current student shared this about the openness to discussion about sexual identity on campus:

> When I was a freshman it wasn't a very big issue on the minds of anybody. However in the past two years I think because of the efforts of some of the organizations on campus we've had some people come in to speak at chapels and I think there's been a much more open discussion about it.

With regard to the theme, *Understanding/compassion if it is a struggle,* a current student shared:

> Our university really tries to push the issue to make it more known. Not from a specifically acceptable standpoint, but to say it's a legitimate struggle just the same as everybody else in the sins that they have. They try to have

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a biblical view on it and just to encourage people to come alongside people with the struggle. I think it's been something that's been getting in motion.

Six participants shared the theme of their campus being an *Unsafe climate.* For example, a current student stated,

I'm not comfortable telling other people that I'm gay. I'm not comfortable saying that. Or being open about it on campus. I don't know if that gives you a feel for the atmosphere. I think people are kind of closed-minded.

Interviewers probed further around the question of policies, particularly as they pertained to public displays of affection as an expression of same-sex sexuality. We identified two themes: *Equal treatment/all sexual behavior is prohibited* (*N*=5) and *Policy specifically against same-sex behavior* (*N*=4).

Concerning *Equal treatment/all sexual behavior is prohibited,* a current student described the campus atmosphere in regard to sexual behavior:

I mean even straight couples are limited to the amount of PDA – public affection that they can show. I mean, you'll see couples walking around, holding hands – and then hug for a very long time looking into each others' eyes like they want to kiss, but you rarely ever see a couple kiss on campus.

The second theme identified in this probe was *Policy specifically against same-sex behavior.* An alumnus recalled:

Well there was absolutely no toleration for that at all. I believed – I never in my time there saw two people of the same gender display any sort of physical romance for each other, and my understanding as a student was that if one was caught, that there would be discipline.

In the interview portion that dealt with campus climate, we also asked each participant about his or her personal experience on campus. We identified two main themes: *Pockets of safety* (N=8) and *Conceal/hide* (*N*=3). With respect to the theme, *Pockets of safety*, an alumnus shared his personal experience:

Mine was a little different from my friends, I've realized. The group of friends I hung out with I chose very carefully and very intentionally because I realized that they were just a little bit more accepting in general. So most of them were all theater majors, so that kind of explains it, but two of them I can think of didn't agree that homosexuality was okay, but they still treated me like a human being, still had fun with me, still invited me to things, and my sexuality never defined me.

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The other theme was *Conceal/hide*. As an example, an alumnus recalled the pressure to hide his same-sex attractions:

> So there was an upper classman that lived on the hall who was kind of overseeing this mandatory Bible study freshmen had to participate in. And he assigned us accountability partners. And we actually were sent to our room and we were told to open up about things you were struggling with. And I remember as I walked to the dorm room with my partner, I told myself, "Do not open up about your sexuality. They're going to try to get that out of you and it's not safe. You cannot talk about it."

Advice to other sexual minorities. Participants were asked the question, "What advice would you give to other Christian students on your campus who experience same-sex attraction?" We identified several themes, including *Find trustworthy people (N=14), Be aware of potential consequences (N=6), Broaden identity (N=4), Transfer (N=4), Do not repress your sexuality (N=4),* and *Explore your identity (N=4)*.

Concerning the theme, *Find trustworthy people*, one current student shared: "I encourage you to find a group of friends who can be open and honest and listen and even if they're not 100% in support of it they will be willing to listen." An alumni offered this:

> Find at least one person you can be open with. Don't believe at all whenever somebody says you must do something in order to be a good Christian. If somebody's putting preconditions on your Christianity, then I would treat that with extreme skepticism.

Another theme was *Be aware of potential consequences* (of telling others/hostile environment). In advising students to be aware of potential consequences, one alumnus offered this:

> To go somewhere they feel safe. To try to be safe. It's really hard for Christian kids if you come from a really dogmatic environment because a lot of times your home life isn't safe and your church might not be safe and if you are really wrapped up in your youth group like I was, that doesn't really offer you a safe place to land either…. But I would still say if you are a freshman or a sophomore kid and you've got same-sex attraction, you still probably find it a pretty hostile place.

An additional theme was *Broadening identity* (not defined solely by sexuality).

Advice to your college/university about improving services. Participants in this study were asked the question, "What advice would you give to your college/university about how they can better serve students on your campus who experience same-sex attraction?" The most

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frequent themes by numeric count were *Dialogue* (*N* = 10), *Sanction underground LGBT group or provide safe place to meet* (*N* = 8), *Increase awareness/education about same-sex attraction issues* (*N* = 6), *Clarify policies to alleviate fear/ambiguity* (*N*=4), *Change policies about same-sex behavior* (*N* = 4), *Equal treatment of homosexuality and other sins* (*N* = 4), and *Current resources are helpful* (*N* = 4).

The most frequently identified theme was that of *Dialogue* (*N*=10). An alumnus shared:

> I feel like talking about homosexuality once a year is not enough. I really think that we now in our day in age, we have to incorporate into our curriculum. I guess when I'm talking about curriculum maybe broader than just classrooms, but maybe incorporated into this is what we're gonna do every year, like, we're gonna do a series, and just open up to those students.

The next most frequently cited theme was to *Sanction underground LGBT group or provide safe place to meet* (*N*= 8). For example, a current student stated:

> Just have spaces where people can talk without feeling like they will face any evidence of repercussions whether officially through the administration in terms of … or more subtle discrimination on campus. Just provide safe spaces where students and faculty can discuss these things in a nonjudgmental non-punitive manner. Like the only way understanding will be reached is through spaces like that where people from different backgrounds come together and hear stories. So I'd say find a way to have those conversations on an official level.

Another theme was the recommendation to *Increase awareness/education about same-sex attraction issues (N = 6)*. A current student expressed a need for acknowledgment of sexual minorities on campus:

> I think actually having some resources would be really great to have. And, just being a little more open to it and not condemning people who are gay and saying you can't be Christian if you're gay, which is kind of the climate. I guess just realizing that they are really important and that people can be gay and still love Jesus and want to serve God. Acknowledging that it does exist and it exists on this campus.

Discussion

This study provides a more in-depth look at the experiences of sexual minority students and alumni from faith-based institutions of higher education. Their experiences are remarkably diverse, yet we see common themes throughout the discussion of milestone events and campus climate.

It is not uncommon to study milestone events in the development of an LGB identity. However, it is important to consider the unique experiences of people of faith who are navigating sexual identity in light of their religious identity. In some cases, they may be

asking a different set of questions about what their same-sex attractions and behavior mean to them. Some of our participants may have either delayed or refrained from specific milestone events that may or may not be a point of conflict with their religious beliefs and values. In some cases, decisions to refrain from specific milestone events (e.g., adopting a public gay identity) may have to do with campus climate and openness or extent of being "out" as a sexual minority in a more public way.

In terms of campus climate, we see more of a consensus view that Christian campuses have been and continue to remain difficult settings for Christian sexual minorities. Although not the focus of this study, there is reason to believe that there may be some improvements noted by alumni who reflected back on their experiences when they were undergraduates, but there appears to be much that could be done to improve climate. Even in cases in which students or alumni support more conservative doctrinal positions that are reflected in some campus policies, there seemed to be near consensus that campus climate is an important area for ongoing improvement.

The question of how to best improve climate for sexual minorities at faith-based institutions of higher education is a uniquely challenging situation for constructive dialogue among multiple stakeholders. We can envision some within the mainstream LGBT community wishing us to challenge the policies and doctrinal positions at these institutions; at the same time, other professionals, students, and alumni may wish to retain doctrinal positions but revisit policies and campus climate to improve the lived reality of Christian sexual minorities.

When participants were asked about what a campus could do to improve, they wanted to see more dialogue/discussion and also more in terms of support groups. There were also requests to clarify policies that may seem unclear about how a person can engage this topic and be supportive of one another without putting oneself at risk of discipline. There were also those who wished to change campus policies and the theological and doctrinal positions presumably associated with those policies. This is a remarkably complex issue in terms of balancing respect for sexual orientation and respect for religion in the context of higher education. (The issue of professional training in religiously-affiliated graduate training programs is another related matter but is beyond the scope of this paper; the interested reader should review articles in the recent volume of *Psychology of Sexual Orientation & Gender Diversity*; e.g., Bieschke, 2014; Gonsiorek, 2014; Hancock, 2014; Hathaway, 2014).

It is important that we at least identify as a superordinate goal the improvement of campus climate for students navigating sexual identity concerns. Some of the recommendations often made in the mainstream LGBT literature in response to campus climate concerns at state universities may need to be adapted to the unique educational settings under discussion. For example, creating an atmosphere in which sexual minority faculty and staff who abide by community standards of behavior could openly mentor and be a resource to sexual minority students would seem to be an improvement, as would approved support and education groups that facilitate exchange of ideas and perspectives

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(while not undermining campus policies). Each of these kinds of changes may be an improvement and source of encouragement for those who identify as sexual minorities. Of course, addressing language and microaggressions that set a negative climate would also be important. Such steps are likely to be viewed as insufficient by some stakeholders and may be viewed as exceptionally challenging to implement by other stakeholders.

Conclusion

Sexual minority students and alumni affiliated with faith-based institutions of higher education shared some of their experiences in these unique settings. Findings from the limited number of studies conducted thus far suggest that sexual minorities in these contexts may be a distinct group in several important ways. We reported on their experiences of milestone events, meaning-making associated with identity (in light of navigating both religious identity and sexual identity), and concerns about campus climate in light of a range of opinions regarding doctrine and policies, as well as suggestions for improvement.

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Exploring the Relationship Between the Co-Curriculum and Academic Outcomes: A Methodology

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Abstract

Higher education is currently evaluating the value of non-academic components of four-year institutions, particularly in relation to their impact on academic outcomes. In evaluating these areas, new methodologies are consistently developed exploring the co-curriculum and academic outcomes. However, no methodologies exist that evaluate the relationship between student involvement and academic outcomes. The methodology outlined in this research develops a quantitative means of measuring the relationship between student involvement in the co-curriculum and academic outcomes abilities using two new measures. These measures were then tested for reliability and validity. The researcher collected and scored student essays, which measured student ability in academic outcomes. Students also completed a questionnaire asking questions about involvement in seven areas of campus: residence hall activities, all campus events, leadership, multicultural, spiritual, intellectual, and athletics. Scores from the essays and the surveys were matched, and then analyzed. Both measures were found to have reliability and validity.

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Students enter college and have extensive opportunity to be involved on campus. From getting involved in a major to joining an intramural team, the variety of opportunities for students is extensive. Student involvement is "the amount of physical and psychological energy that the student devotes to the academic experience" (Astin, 1999, p. 518). An involved student contributes significant time and energy to their studies, attends extracurricular activities, and has consistent and frequent interactions with other members of the campus community (Astin, 1999). Astin (1999) explains, "the amount of student learning and personal development associated with any educational program is directly proportional to the quality and quantity of student involvement in that program" (p. 519). The more time and energy a student devotes to something, the more involved they are, the better they will perform as well as learn. While this relationship is evident within the classroom, students do not spend all their time studying. A significant portion of students' time and energy is devoted to co-curricular activities, which include engaging in extracurricular activities, interacting with faculty, staff, and peers, and living in a campus residence (Kuh, 1995). Many academic affairs professionals believe academic gain to be the most important component of a student's college experience (Astin, 1993). While the value of academic pursuits is often assumed, the value of co-curricular activities is not as evident (Kuh, 1991).

According to Kinzie and Kuh (2007), universities that focus on student learning will present varied opportunities for learning both inside and outside the classroom. Because students are consistently involved in both areas of the university, the relationship between these two parts of an institution is important to consider. Boyer (1990) establishes the idea that the campus curriculum should be integrative, including not only academics, but campus life and community as well. According to Boyer (1987), "all parts of campus life—recruitment, orientation, curriculum, teaching, residence hall living, and the rest—must relate to one another and contribute to a sense of wholeness" (p. 8). In this case, the co-curriculum and curriculum are closely aligned, working toward the same goal of student learning. A university that prescribes to Boyer's system "recognizes the essential integration of personal development with learning; it reflects the diverse ways through which students may engage, as whole people with multiple dimensions and unique personal histories, with the tasks and content of learning" (Keeling, 2004, p. 3). All components of the curriculum and co-curriculum contribute to student learning, and integrating these areas will only increase student learning (Keeling, 2004). The American College Personnel Association (1994) states that:

> The key to enhancing learning and personal development is not simply for faculty to teach more and better, but also to create conditions that motivate and inspire students to devote time and energy to educationally purposeful activities, both inside and outside the classroom. (p. 1)

The conditions both inside and outside the classroom are important to student learning. Aligning the goals between the curriculum and co-curriculum would create what Kuh (1996) terms a "seamless learning environment," which he describes as the most effective learning environment. If the curriculum and co-curriculum have the same outcomes, they can partner together to create a holistic campus community. It is important for student and academic affairs professionals to begin recognizing the ways in which the curriculum and co-curriculum interact, because separation between these two serves as a block to effective learning environments (Schroeder & Hurst, 1996).

If a primary outcome of education is student learning (Keeling, 2004; Fried, 2007), then both the co-curriculum and the curriculum should be promoting collaboration, in order to create the best learning environment. As "the part of a … curriculum shared by all students. It [general education] provides broad learning … and forms the basis for developing important intellectual, civic, and practical capacities" ("Association," n.d.). General education, or the core curriculum, should be promoting student learning. Established core outcomes provide a means for measuring whether or not the core curriculum promotes student learning. Measuring student involvement alongside core outcomes can in turn create an opportunity for exploring the relationship between these two areas of campus. Unfortunately, little research correlating student involvement with academic outcomes currently exists. Much of the existing research explores these areas of campus either qualitatively, or theoretically. No existing data provides the necessary information to comprehensively evaluate student involvement. Similarly, it is very difficult to quantitatively measure how well students are able to perform in academic outcomes on a broader scope (beyond individual departments).

Explaining the Methodology

Because much of the current research into collaboration between student involvement and academic outcomes revolves around theoretical and qualitative research, this study sought to establish a quantitative methodology for exploring the relationship between these areas. By developing two separate measures, one for student involvement and one for academic outcomes, and correlating the scores from each measure, this study was able to quantitatively explore the relationship between student involvement in the co-curriculum and students' ability in academic outcomes. Each measure sought to be as comprehensive as possible, and was intended to provide information not currently available using established assessment measures.

Participants

Participants in this study were graduating seniors enrolled for at least two years in a small Christian liberal arts university in the Midwest. A convenience sample was conducted using an existing senior capstone course of 183 students, comprising 42.3% of the total seniors at the institution. Seniors were defined as any student participating in the seminar

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with senior credit standing, who had attended the university for at least two years. As these students had a minimum of two years' opportunity to gain skills in the institutionally defined liberal arts outcomes, and also had at least two years to be involved co-curricularly, they were strong candidates for the purposes of this research.

Measures

Student involvement. Two separate measures were developed for this study. The first was an inventory questionnaire exploring student involvement in co-curricular programming. The questionnaire, implemented at a small liberal arts institution, separated student involvement into seven separate categories based in the literature as well as the AAC&U's Essential Learning Outcomes (Kuh, 1996; Astin, 1999; "Association," n.d.). These categories were: spiritual, intellectual, all campus events (events open to any student on campus that were not hosted by academic departments), residence hall events (events open to students in campus residential living), multicultural, athletics (including intramurals), and leadership (student involvement in leadership positions and leadership-related activities on campus). Students completed the survey online through Survey Monkey, and included basic demographic information such as age and major.

Every answer to each question in the inventory was given a numerical value ranging from one to five. These values were added to create a scale for each category. Students then received a score for each category, based on their answers; lower scores indicated lower levels of involvement in the respective category, while higher scores indicated higher levels of involvement. Each student also received a total involvement score, although this score was not utilized in the data analysis.

As this study was developed from a lack of preexisting research, the inventory was newly created for this research study. Therefore, reliability was not established for the inventory in advance of this initial research study. However, the questionnaire was tested for scale reliability through this study, and six of the seven scales were found to have reliability (see Table 1). The only scale that did not prove reliable was the scale on athletics. Based on the

Table 1

Reliability Analysis of Involvement Scales

Scale	Cronbach's Alpha	N of items	Mean	Variance	Std. Deviation
Spiritual	.770	5	13.39	12.818	3.580
Intellectual	.681	6	13.00	10.831	3.291
All Campus Events	.817	14	38.24	82.077	9.060
Wing/Hall Events	.790	7	21.42	16.218	4.027
Multicultural	.692	8	14.17	14.082	3.753
Athletics	.604	3	6.76	7.014	2.648
Leadership	.877	20	34.73	81.658	9.037
Rubric Scale	.712	5			

Cronbach's Alpha of .604 it was determined that the athletics scale was not reliable, while all other scales have high reliability. In addition to testing for scale reliability, the inventory appeared to have a high degree of face validity as it closely aligned with previous research and literature-based involvement constructs.

Core outcomes. The second measure developed for this research utilized existing course data. Students enrolled in a senior seminar course were required to write a five- to seven-page essay exploring a controversial topic (Appendix B). They were asked to explore two sides of the controversy without bias and present their own reasoned opinion. Through this paper students demonstrated an ability to use writing skills and critical thinking, the two core outcomes measured for this study. The rubric used to grade this essay was the instrument used to evaluate how well students were able to practice the outcomes described (Appendix C). The rubric organized the essay in five categories.

1. Position number one analysis (depicting one side of the controversial issue without bias).

2. Position number two analysis (depicting a conflicting side of the controversial issue without bias).

3. Personal perspective and analysis of personal biases.

4. Quality of cited sources.

5. Organization, grammar, clarity, spelling, and required length.

Each category was given a numerical score ranging between zero and fifty (the first three categories) or zero and twenty-five (the last two categories). The latter two categories were given lower scores for purposes of grading for the course. The higher the score, the better the student demonstrated an ability to perform in that area. As the essay asked students to demonstrate each outcome, and was not based on self-report, the rubric functioned as an accurate measure of student ability in the measured outcomes.

Reliability and validity were not available for the rubric, as this essay assignment had not been previously assigned to students at this institution. However, inter-rater reliability was built into the essay instrument through training and measurement. Four raters were recruited from a Masters in Higher Education program at the institution being studied to grade the essays submitted by the participants in the study. The raters were first-year graduate students and were offered compensation for their time. Two other raters included the Director of Assessment and the researcher. Raters participated in a calibration session that ensured all evaluators reached a consensus regarding rubric standards and utilized identical evaluation methods. For this calibration session, raters were asked to evaluate five essays using the rubric. The

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raters then shared results, and worked together to understand what the most accurate scores were based on the rubric. In this way, raters were able to reach a consensus regarding the rubric standards, and were able to measure the essay more accurately.

In addition to developing a calibration session for raters, inter-rater reliability was built into the rubric evaluation itself. Five essays were randomly selected for all raters to evaluate. The scores for these essays were compared upon completion of the evaluation. Based on the scores submitted by each grader, it was determined that the measurement was consistent; there was little variation in scores across raters.

Data Collection

Students were given six weeks to complete the essay assignment and submit their work using the institution's web-based course management system. Prior to evaluating the essays, the raters took part in the above-mentioned calibration session in order to gain inter-rater reliability. Meanwhile, IRB approval was sought before distributing the student involvement survey. When IRB approval was received, the researcher presented the survey to participants, who were offered extra credit in their senior seminar course for completion of the survey. Informed consent was on the first page of the survey, and informed students that while their name was solicited in order to connect survey scores with rubric scores, their scores were kept confidential, and their identities played no part in the research beyond the initial matching of rubric scores to survey responses. Students had two weeks to complete the survey.

Analysis

Upon completing the evaluation of the essays and receiving surveys, rubric and survey scores were matched by student, so that scores could be correlated. The data was cleaned; any students who had completed the survey but had not completed the essay, and vice versa, were removed from the study. After cleaning the data, an analysis of scale reliability was performed on both the inventory scales and the rubric scale (see Table 1 above). A factor analysis was then performed on the rubric categories in order to determine if the total essay score measured one component, or if each category needed to be correlated individually (Mertler & Vannatta, 2002) (Table 2). The results of the factor analysis of the rubric categories found that there was only one extraction; all rubric categories contribute to the overall essay score in a way that is not significant enough to analyze each individual rubric category. The factor analysis shows that one component was extracted with a total eigenvalue >1 at 2.542, and no other components were extracted with an eigenvalue above 1. Table 2 illustrates these relationships.

(Table is on next page)

Table 2

*Factor Analysis of Rubric Categories**

Rubric Category	Component 1
Position 1	.782
Position 2	.691
Personal	.636
Sources	.668
Quality	.776

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	2.542	50.833	50.833	2.542	50.833	50.833
2	.844	17.683	68.515			
3	.727	14.545	83.060			
4	.453	9.066	92.126			
5	.394	7.874	100.000			

<u>Note.</u> *1 components extracted.

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Based on the factor analysis and scale reliability, a multiple regression was performed measuring six predictor variables on one criterion variable. The athletics variable was not included in the multiple regression, as the scale was not found to be reliable. Because the factor analysis determined the rubric scores measured only one component, the total essay score served as the single criterion variable in place of individual rubric scales. In addition to the multiple regression, a bivariate correlation was performed analyzing the correlation between the seven predictor variables (athletics was included in this analysis), each other, and the criterion variable. The multiple regression and bivariate correlation were used to better understand the relationship between student involvement and academic outcomes.

Limitations

There are a few limitations to the methodology outlined above. The primary limitation is that research of these variables in a quantitative manner has not been performed before. The involvement questionnaire and essay rubric were two new instruments implemented for the first time through this research. While both have high face validity, and the questionnaire proved to be statistically reliable, it would be beneficial to utilize these instruments in further research in order to attain higher reliability and validity. Another limitation to this methodology regards the outcomes measured; only two outcomes of a possible eleven existing at the institution studied were measured. One of these outcomes

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(writing proficiency) is not expected to have a high correlation with student involvement and it is not likely that student involvement will be a significant predictor of student writing ability.

Further Study

Further implementation of this methodology would be beneficial in order to gain more reliability and validity. In addition, it would be beneficial to create an assignment and rubric that measured multiple outcomes not measured by the rubric represented here. For example, many students chose to write about religious and political issues in their essays. It might be possible to alter the essay assignment to direct students toward choosing a certain controversial topic. There would then be increased consistency in rating the essays, and a category could be added considering how students process different outcome areas. Another possible alteration would include creating a series of miniature assignments that had students process various areas related to different outcomes. Finally, because the involvement inventory is broken down into individual categories, it would be simple to either revise questions to better fit a variety of institutions, or to add categories specific to the institution being studied.

Implications

Little quantitative research has been performed exploring the relationship between student involvement in the co-curriculum and student ability with academic outcomes. Because of the gap in the research, this study is valuable not only for its findings but for the methodology established. Quantitative data has been collected using two new measures. While these measures would likely need to be adapted at different institutions, they can now be utilized for future research. Institutions will be able to better understand the impact student involvement in the co-curriculum has on what students learn. Moreover, using this or a similar methodology provides information about specific areas of the co-curriculum. Because the involvement inventory creates scores for each area of involvement, institutions can gather data regarding how individual areas impact student learning.

Conclusion

Student involvement in the co-curriculum is articulated in the literature as being valuable to student learning (Astin, 1999; Fried, 2007; Kuh, 1996). This study sought to determine quantitatively if there was a relationship between student involvement in the co-curriculum and student ability in core curriculum outcomes. As very little research was done prior to this study, a new methodology was developed. The methodology outlined in this study provides a quantitative means of measuring variables previously studied in only qualitative ways. By developing a simple means of assessing student involvement, this study has created a measure that can be used across institutions. Furthermore, the measure

utilized for assessing student abilities in academic outcomes can be easily altered to fit a variety of institutional settings. Hopefully, this methodology is the first step in many research studies exploring the complex yet vital relationship between academic outcomes and student involvement.

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Demographics

      Name:

      Age:

      Gender:

      Transfer Student:

      Years at [school redacted]:

Spiritual [4-21]

      How often do you attend spiritual renewal week events?

            Occasionally attend some events (1)

            Most days most semesters (2)

            All or nearly all days all semesters (3)

      Please indicate how often you attend the following.

      Chapel

      Small Group

            Never attended (1) Rarely attended (2) Occasionally attended (3)

            Frequently attended (4) I did not sign up for a small group (n/a)

      Please indicate how often you attend the following.

      Sunday Night Community (previously Vespers)

      Church Services

            Never (1) Once a month (2) Twice a month (3) Three times a

            month (4) Four times a month (5)

Intellectual [6-25]

      How often do you participate in the following?

      Meeting with faculty outside of class

      Attending non-course related speakers and/or lectures

            Never (1)   Rarely (2) Occasionally (3) Frequently (4)

      Please indicate the frequency with which you attended the following

      activities.

      Plays (student directed or main stage)

      Classical music or choral performances

            Never (1) Rarely (2) Occasionally (3) Frequently (4)

      How often did you participate in the following?

      [School redacted] Theater productions (as an actor or crew member)

            No Productions (1) 1-2 Productions (2) 3-4 Productions (3)

            More than 4 Productions (4)

      How many years did you participate in the following?

      Music ensemble (e.g. Orchestra, Chorale, [school redacted] Ringers, etc.)

            I did not participate (1)   1 year (2)   2 years (3)

            3 years (4)   4 or more years (5)

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All Campus Events [14-42]

How often did you attend or participate in the following campus events?

Airband

Never (1) 1 time (2) 2 times (3) 3 times (4) 4 times (5)

Nostalgia Night

Never (1) 1 time (2) 2 times (3) 3 times (4) 4 times (5)

Reject Show

Never (1) 1 time (2) 2 times (3) 3 times (4) 4 times (5)

Welcome Weekend Hoe Down

Never (1) 1 time (2) 2 times (3) 3 times (4) 4 times (5)

My Generation Night

Never (1) 1 time (2) 2 times (3) 3 times (4) 4 times (5)

Sing Noel

Never (1) 1 time (2) 2 times (3) 3 times (4) 4 times (5)

Silent Night/[name redacted] Halapaloosa

Never (1) 1 time (2) 2 times (3) 3 times (4) 4 times (5)

Cardboard Boat Regatta

Never (1) 1 time (2) 2 times (3) 3 times (4) 4 times (5)

Parent's Weekend

Never (1) 1 time (2) 2 times (3) 3 times (4) 4 times (5)

[School redacted]-athon

Never (1) 1 time (2) 2 times (3) 3 times (4) 4 times (5)

Youth Conference

Never (1) 1 time (2) 2 times (3) 3 times (4) 4 times (5)

Sex and the Cornfields

Never (1) 1 time (2) 2 times (3) 3 times (4) 4 times (5)

How often did you attend "Study Break"?

Never (1) 1-2 times (2) 3-5 times (3) 6 or more times (4)

How often did you attend other events not listed but open to anyone on campus?

Never (1) Rarely (2) Occasionally (3) Frequently (4)

Wing/Hall Events [5-15]

Please respond to the following question.

How many years did you live in campus housing?

I did not live in campus housing

(1) One year (2) Two years (3)

Three years (4) Four or more years (5)

How often did you attend the following?

Wing/Floor Retreat

Never (1) Once (2) Twice (3) Three or more times (4)

I did not live on campus (n/a)

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How often did you participate in the following?

Brother-Sister Wing Event

  Never (1) Rarely (2) Occasionally (3) Frequently (4)

Pick-a dates

  Never (1) Rarely (2) Occasionally (3) Frequently (4)

Open House (your wing or other wings)

  Never (1) Rarely (2) Occasionally (3) Frequently (4)

Floor Educationals

  Never (1) Rarely (2) Occasionally (3) Frequently (4)

Programmed Residence Hall Events not listed (e.g. guest speakers, cook outs, etc.)

  Never (1) Rarely (2) Occasionally (3) Frequently (4)

For other events, please list.

Multicultural Events [8 – 22]

How often did you attend the following?

Mosaic Night

  Never (1) 1 time (2) 2 times (3) 3 times (4) 4 times (5)

How often did you attend events for the following?

World Religions Week

  Never (1) Rarely (2) Occasionally (3) Frequently (4)

World Opportunities Week

  Never (1) Rarely (2) Occasionally (3) Frequently (4)

Social Justice Week

  Never (1) Rarely (2) Occasionally (3) Frequently (4)

How often did you participate in the following?

Lighthouse

  Never (1) 1 time (2) 2 times (3) 3 or more times (4)

Spring Break Trips

  Never (1) 1 time (2) 2 times (3) 3 or more times (4)

Semester Abroad

  Never (1) 1 time (2) 2 times (3) 3 or more times (4)

International Academic Trip During J-Term

  Never (1) 1 time (2) 2 times (3) 3 or more times (4)

Athletics

How often did you participate in the following?

Intercollegiate Athletics

  I did not participate (1) 1 year (2) 2 years (3) 3 years (4) 4 years (5)

How often did you participate in the following?

Intramural Athletics

  Never (1) Rarely (2) Occasionally (3) Frequently (4)

How often did you attend the following?

  Never (1) Rarely (2) Occasionally (3) Frequently (4)

Leadership [13-38]

How often did you participate in the following?

Leadership Networking Night (LNN)

Never (1) Once (2) Two or more times (3)

How often did you attend the following?

Pursuit (Previously Lit at Nit)

Never (1) Rarely (2) Occasionally (3) Frequently (4)

How often did you attend events for the following?

National Student Leadership Conference

Never (1) Rarely (2) Occasionally (3) Frequently (4)

For how many years did you hold the following positions?

Personnel Assistant

Never (1) 1 year (2) 2 years (3) 3 years (4) 4 years (5)

Discipleship Assistant

Never (1) 1 year (2) 2 years (3) 3 years (4) 4 years (5)

Discipleship Coordinator

Never (1) 1 year (2) 2 years (3) 3 years (4) 4 years (5)

Orientation Leader

Never (1) 1 year (2) 2 years (3) 3 years (4) 4 years (5)

Orientation Cabinet Leader

Never (1) 1 year (2) 2 years (3) 3 years (4) 4 years (5)

[School redacted] Student Outreach Position

Never (1) 1 year (2) 2 years (3) 3 years (4) 4 years (5)

[School redacted] World Outreach Position

Never (1) 1 year (2) 2 years (3) 3 years (4) 4 years (5)

CREW/Other Admissions Position

Never (1) 1 year (2) 2 years (3) 3 years (4) 4 years (5)

Student Ambassador

Never (1) 1 year (2) 2 years (3) 3 years (4) 4 years (5)

Chapel Coordinator

Never (1) 1 year (2) 2 years (3) 3 years (4) 4 years (5)

Other position and number of years

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Each student will select a topic for which they can analyze multiple valid perspectives (e.g. What is the appropriate Christian position on capital punishment?). Students are encouraged to select a topic around which they have significant questions and would enjoy exploring in greater depth. This is not the time to write a paper about an issue with which you are already very familiar. You should currently feel some ambiguity regarding your topic and use this assignment as an opportunity to explore and reach a more informed conclusion.

Students should consult the list of suggested topics and submit their proposed topic for instructor approval by February 27th. After the topic has been approved, students should write a 5-7-page paper (plus a bibliography) that describes two opposing or conflicting perspectives related to their topic. These descriptions should fairly and accurately describe the positions and include an analysis of their strengths and weaknesses. Students are expected to explain and analyze the nuances of these arguments and should avoid broad generalizations or straw-man arguments when describing a particular position. Students should appropriately cite 4-5 credible sources to support each perspective. Credible sources include scholarly books/journals and major print media (e.g. *New York Times, Washington Post, the Economist*, etc.). Cable news, and their corresponding websites, are often rich sources of opinions, but lack the depth of analysis and academic credibility required for this assignment. Finally, the paper should include the student's personal perspective or opinion on the topic and an analysis of the student's potential biases related to the topic. Sources may be cited using the style most commonly used in your major (e.g. MLA, APA, Chicago, etc.). Whatever style you choose, please be consistent.

Please refer to the evaluation rubric below for specific assignment expectations. This rubric will be used to evaluate your work.

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APPENDIX C: POSITION ANALYSIS ASSIGNMENT RUBRIC

	Needs Improvement	Average	Above Average	Exemplary
Position #1 Analysis	**Points Range: 0-34** The student's summary does not clearly explain the perspective.	**Points Range: 35-39** The student's summary of this perspective is accurate but may be lacking in clarity and/or fairness.	**Points Range 40-44** The student's summary of this perspective is explained clearly, accurately, and fairly. The argument's strengths and weaknesses are discussed.	**Points Range 45-50** The student's summary of this perspective is explained clearly, accurately, and fairly. Strengths, weaknesses, and nuances of the argument are explained and demonstrate the student's ability to critically examine an argument.
Position #2 Analysis	**Points Range: 0-34** The student's summary does not clearly explain the perspective.	**Points Range: 35-39** The student's summary of this perspective is accurate but may be lacking in clarity and/or fairness.	**Points Range 40-44** The student's summary of this perspective is explained clearly, accurately, and fairly. The argument's strengths and weaknesses are discussed.	**Points Range 45-50** The student's summary of this perspective is explained clearly, accurately, and fairly. Strengths, weaknesses, and nuances of the argument are explained and demonstrate the student's ability to critically examine an argument.
Personal Perspective and Analysis of Personal Biases	**Points Range 0-34** The student's perspective on the selected topic is unclear.	**Points Range 35-39** The student's perspective on the selected topic is clear.	**Points Range: 40-44** The student's perspective on the selected topic is clear, thoughtful, and fair to conflicting perspectives.	**Points Range: 45-50** The student's perspective on the selected topic is clear, thoughtful, and fair to conflicting perspectives. The student provides an analysis of his/her potential biases and how they might affect his/her conclusions.
Quality of Cited Sources	**Points Range: 0-16** Fewer than two pertinent sources were cited for each of the two positions. In all cases, the cited sources were not appropriate for citation in academic work. Sources are not cited appropriately or consistently.	**Points Range: 17-19** Fewer than four pertinent sources were cited for each of the two positions. In most cases, the cited sources were not appropriate for citation in academic work. Sources are cited, but not with consistent style.	**Points Range: 20-22** Four pertinent sources are cited for each of the two positions. In some cases, the cited sources were not appropriate for citation in academic work. Sources are cited appropriately and consistently.	**Points Range: 23-25** Four or five credible and reliable sources are cited for each of the two positions. These sources may include scholarly books/journals or major and reputable print media (e.g. *New York Times, Washington Post, Economist*, etc.). Sources are cited appropriately and consistently.
Organization, Clarity, Spelling, Grammar, and Required Length	**Points Range: 0-16** The paper is not well organized and many sentences are unclear. The paper has many spelling and grammatical mistakes. The length requirement was not met.	**Points Range: 17-19** The organization of the paper is not clear. Several sentences need to be clarified as well. The paper also has several spelling and grammatical mistakes. The length requirement was not met.	**Points Range: 20-22** The paper is well organized, but a few sentences are unclear. The paper also has a few spelling and grammatical mistakes. The paper is 5-7 pages in length.	**Points Range: 23-25** The paper is well organized and the style is appropriate for academic writing and clear. The paper is absent of spelling and grammatical mistakes. The paper is 5-7 pages in length.

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(Notes)

Program Model for Women's Leadership Development and Career Success

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Abstract

In our work with students in the residence halls, we identified a need for additional education regarding professional identity formation among female students. We have found a naivety in students regarding the current climate of the American workforce and potential challenges women may encounter in their career fields as it pertains to gender norms, gender-bias, and inequity. In thesis research by Timmerman (2013), it was found that the workforce climate remains bleak for female professionals. While women make up the majority of the American working population, very few hold management or senior-level positions within their field. Current research indicates that colleges and universities by and large do not prepare female students for navigating the difficulties of gender-bias in a contemporary workplace. In response, a women's leadership event was designed to provide one programmatic step toward addressing this educational gap.

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For a number of years, optimism prevailed among new and hopeful female professionals regarding gender equity in the workforce. However, research by Noble and Moore (2006) shows these early signs of optimism to be waning as women are continuously marginalized. Some gains have been made, but the gains are marginal considering that women are earning over 60% of university degrees (Farrington, 2012). Conversely, undergraduate students largely carry the perception that a gender gap no longer exists in a contemporary professional setting, and will not impact them in the workplace (Garcia, 2009). Yet current statistics reveal this to be a misperception, particularly in upper-level management and high-ranking leadership roles (Farrington, 2012).

While there has been some marginal increase in women holding managerial positions in the past few decades (Latu et al., 2011), women are still largely underrepresented. Particularly in business and corporate leadership roles, in medicine, in faculty positions within higher education, and in the sciences and engineering, women have not achieved equity. It would seem that the higher the position and ranking, the fewer female faces can be seen in these roles (Farrington, 2012). Moreover, it is only the most exceptional women who rise to the top of their prospective field, and of these, few remain long term (Sipe, Johnson, & Fisher, 2009).

Characteristics often associated with upper-level leadership roles have long been attached to men more so than to women (Garcia-Retamero & Lopez-Zafra, 2006). Additionally, women receive subtle negative gendered cues in the workplace, which leak into their perceptions of opportunity for employability, growth, and professional development (Garcia, 2009). There is added difficulty for women in balancing home and work, battles of constant competition, and often a pre-established hierarchy of male dominance in higher-level administration. Overall, women are bowing out of higher-level roles. Some are choosing not to pursue them altogether in light of the barriers they may face (Noble & Moore, 2006) and discouragement they receive.

Research also indicates that sex-segregated work environments, with primarily male leadership, can foster a work environment that is less than congenial to women (Garcia, 2009). For example, in environments with few women in leadership, research has shown that female employees remain less confident, and thus they avoid opportunities to lead in general (Garcia, 2009). Women may also see the lack of women in upper-level positions as professionally threatening, which can negatively impact work performance and participation (Yeagley, Subich, & Tokar, 2010). Furthermore, women are not concentrated in roles which emphasize power, authority, or leadership. This lack of concentration contributes to steering women away from that pursuit altogether (Garcia-Retamero & López-Zafra, 2006).

According to Noble and Moore (2006), women generally play an important role in the workplace and without them in senior leadership roles, there is a lack of diversity, perspective, and approach. Additional research by Farrington (2012) would indicate that

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the pursuit of gender equity in leadership is imperative in providing access to a diverse talent pool in a world where educated and thoughtful leaders will evoke positive societal change.

The overall quality of companies, businesses (Noble & Moore, 2006), and, in the case of our research, Christian institutions of higher education, is being impacted by gender inequities. Out of the 108 CCCU institutions, a 12-year study by Anderson and Longman (2011) showed that most CCCU campuses average a female student population of at least 60%, yet administration represented in these institutions is by and large dominated by male professionals. In 2010, at the conclusion of their study, 78% of CCCU schools had one or no female members on their executive leadership teams (Anderson & Longman, 2011). Complicating the issue, there are historical and theological barriers still in place for women attempting to gain leadership positions within Christian higher education. Particularly for colleges and universities closely associated to a specific denomination, the theological constraints add additional complexities for female employees as they strive to grow in leadership or attain higher-level positions (Anderson & Longman, 2011). While acknowledging these complexities, the fact remains that subtle gendered messages to students on CCCU campuses are being absorbed daily. When women in higher education hold few administrative positions, female students struggle to picture themselves in an upper-level leadership role in their own career.

Thus, if undergraduate students have the perception that today's workforce has achieved gender equity (Garcia, 2009), and research indicates that this is not the case (Sipe, Johnson, & Fisher, 2009), then what better place to model gender-balance in leadership than in Christian higher education, where leaders have a critical influence on the next generation of professionals?

Response to Findings

In response to this research, and our own experiences in Christian higher education, we chose to develop a program for female undergraduate students that might spur conversation and learning on these topics. The program came out of a desire to educate women on gendered messages being communicated in contemporary culture. We hoped to assist female students in the process of shaping long-term career goals, and we desired to do so in a way that prepared them to thoughtfully engage with brokenness in the professional world as it pertains to gender.

Among our female residents, we saw natural leadership skills and the desire to cultivate those skills in a profound way. However, we found that the leadership training and development we were providing in the undergraduate setting did not speak directly to gender, its social construct, or the disparities young women might face following their time in collegiate leadership roles. Nor did our leadership training address the issue of long-term career goals for these students or how those goals may be impacted by gender inequities or societal gender-bias.

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Research by Sipe et al. (2009) would recommend that colleges and universities should help students dispel the belief that gender equity is no longer an issue. There is a need for colleges and universities to do more in the area of preparing female students for the potential gender-related challenges that they will face in the pursuit of upper-level professional leadership roles.

Many institutions of higher education remain fairly silent in terms of educating female students about the potential socio-cultural implications gender may have in relation to employability (Garcia, 2009). Colleges and universities generally place emphasis on individual skills and abilities rather than highlighting gender differences in student development efforts. Gendered patterns, gender-related bias, and inequality are topics often avoided (Garcia, 2009) or simply left unaddressed. This led to the question: as Christian institutions of higher education, are we preparing our female students to be faithful to their vocational calling, with the additional recognition and preparedness for the aspects of the workforce that have been impacted by brokenness in our culture? How are we preparing them to respond to what society tells them is true about their gender identity? Are they prepared to boldly, professionally, and graciously respond when they are faced with a disparity that is perceived to be gender-related?

Theoretical Background

Theory of Self-Authorship

The theory of self-authorship was consulted in the design of the women's program as it was recognized that the internal ability to define one's own belief system, personal identity, and positive social relations is critical to a thriving career. In a longitudinal study exploring working adults, Baxter Magolda (2008) discussed the level at which these adults drew upon their identity, core beliefs, and ability to navigate relationships in order to function well in the workforce. Creamer and Laughlin (2005) also linked self-authorship with career-decision making for women as far as how they utilize others' advice in order to determine future career paths. Baxter Magolda called educators to recognize the importance of applying the constructs of self-authorship in order to aid college students in their own meaning making. It follows then, that when a person knows himself or herself well, they are better able to pursue a career that offers fulfillment.

Through qualitative research with college students, Creamer and Laughlin (2005) affirmed the connection between self-authorship and career-making decisions. They found that, particularly in the beginning stages of self-authorship, women are heavily influenced by the people whom they hold in high regard. It is suggested that students are influenced by parents in career decisions, and other mentors may need to develop relational rapport with students in order to also influence career choice (Creamer & Laughlin, 2005).

Additional mentors should also explore messages students have received from immediate mentors, such as a parental influence, and then seek to "model and support more complex ways of knowing by helping students consider the limits of relying exclusively on people

in their immediate environment" (Creamer & Laughlin, 2005, p. 24-25). Student affairs professionals may also employ elements of self-reflection in order to guide students toward a defined internal voice (Baxter Magolda, 2008). An educational community that encourages students' self-authorship would help students identify primary voices of influence and seek to expand students' understanding of their own identity and future career options.

Through the lens of this theory, evidence suggests that young women are more apt to follow the advice given to them by those with whom they have a close relationship. According to the research of Creamer and Laughlin (2005), proponents of this perspective assert that counselors, teachers, advisors, as well as other educators may systemically share some of the responsibility for the under-enrollment of women in certain fields. This directly correlates to the subtle, and potentially menial, messaging communicated to students by people whom they trust in positions of authority. Interconnectivity found between women and these outside influences may attribute to one reason why women are underrepresented in fields that are often regarded as masculine, such as those in science, technology, engineering, and math (Garcia-Retamero & Lopez-Zafra, 2006).

A large part of a person's identity lies in what they believe to be true about who they are, how they understand life, and how they live. A person's gender is a large component in the identification of those truths. There are messages sent from birth that directly link to a person's sex, and those messages interface with decision making, thought processes, and goal-setting. A coherent sense of authentic identity will allow a person to operate with confidence and certainty, even in the face of difficulty, challenge, or setback. However, that identity is undeniably influenced by its surrounding culture. This presents both positives and negatives as we work to address these issues in our current context.

Social Cognitive Theory

Both internal and external factors contribute to women's leadership aspirations as they enter the professional world. The social cognitive theory provides a theoretical framework for understanding the social lens through which women approach decision-making processes, and ultimately, careers (Yeagley, Subich, & Tokar, 2010). The theory proposes that "a triadic relationship [exists] between individual differences, environmental factors, and behaviors that together explain occupational interests and goals" (Conklin, Dahling, & Garcia, 2012, p. 69). Therefore, the need to examine gender and its implications on leadership potential and success for women is magnified. The process of identity development that women experience is more complex than that of men (Coogen & Chen, 2007), with young girls experiencing negative gender-role orientation and limiting gendered socialization. This process impacts both life and occupational roles that at times may interface with adverse societal stereotyping (Coogen & Chen, 2007).

The concept of self-efficacy is a component of the social cognitive theory. Self-efficacy is defined as an estimate of one's ability to successfully perform tasks in a given domain (Coogen & Chen, 2007). Thus, a woman's perceived ability influenced by internal and

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external factors communicated verbally and non-verbally over the course of a lifetime has an impact on career choice and overall leadership role pursuit (Yeagley, Subich, & Tokar, 2010). This suggests that a woman's self-efficacy is so heavily influenced in the negative that her affective commitment toward a certain end-goal is not enough to accomplish her highest career goals (Coogen & Chen, 2007).

Women's Leadership Event

The program, presented at Calvin College, a Christian liberal arts institution, centered on providing undergraduate women with current information on gendered-related challenges women face professionally and equipping them with essential tools and skills to best navigate these difficulties. Specifically, self-branding was addressed, meaning how particulars of appropriate, professional dress holds the capacity to express a person's core values and brings self-awareness in regard to long-term career goals. Additional topics were navigating movement forward or upward in a specific career, and being people of influence in current and future contexts.

Specifically, the women's leadership program sought to fulfill four main objectives:

1. Participants will be able to recognize and discern the importance of presenting oneself modestly and professionally in the workplace.

2. Participants will be able to understand the concept and value of networking within the career field as it pertains to gender.

3. Participants will be able to understand the complexities of future work environments and how to navigate these environments well.

4. Participants will begin to engage in conversation regarding their interest in attaining leadership positions in their future career field.

It was important in our conception of the program to tie the objectives closely to the learning outcomes of our institution's residence life program. We desired that participants would gain additional tools for thriving as independent adults, both in college and as they move into their career fields. This aligned with the Calvin College Residence Life objectives of growing students in personal responsibility, creating just relationships, and desiring purpose and congruence for all students living within the residence halls (Calvin College, 2014).

Thus, we desired to educate participants regarding unjust practices related to gender in order to encourage just relationships, as well as to help our students become "responsible participants in their communities" now and in future work environments (Calvin College, 2014). In all these things, we hoped participants would grow as faithful citizens living out their vocational calling and embracing a positive sense of identity, specifically in regards to their gender (Calvin College, 2014).

The format for the event consisted of three female keynotes at different levels of leadership and within various professional fields. The first session covered self-branding, looking specifically at the empowerment of women through the articulation of their clothing and asking the question: does their "self-marketing" reflect their values, principles, and career goals? The second session helped women begin to navigate what setbacks and challenges may arise in the pursuit of career goals. Finally, the third session addressed the importance of being women of influence in professional settings. As we did not focus on any specified career fields, participants were encouraged to use the framework of a future career in order to effectively translate the content into a future professional context.

The first keynote speaker directed participants through a reflection identifying core values to construct their personalized brand. This session guided students toward self-awareness, giving tools to select professional style that represented explicit career goals and aspirations. This session directly connected to ideas presented by Creamer and Laughlin (2005) regarding the importance of self-authorship for women as they contemplate future career paths and aided the program objective stated earlier to help participants recognize and discern the importance of presenting oneself modestly and professionally in the workplace.

Participants listened to a second professional who experienced setbacks in her career as a result of gender-bias. The speaker shared thoughts on resiliency in the workplace, the importance of cultivating identity, and retaining the power of self-definition in challenging contexts.

Finally, the event concluded with a powerful call to be people of influence in all contexts. The speaker addressed the double-bind theory and its impacts, leaving participants exposed to conflicting expectations in the current climate for female professionals. This accomplished our programmatic goal of helping participants to understand the complexities of future work environments and how to navigate these environments. It also encouraged students to assume the power of influence in whatever leadership role they serve in, regardless of career level. Through exposure to these ideas, students were more prepared to be professionals who take risks with a spirit of courage and grace, and aspire to attain positions of leadership in future career fields.

Women's Leadership Event Reflections

A wide range of students participated from all academic years, although the highest percentages of participants were first-year or third-year students. In the evaluation post-event, three questions were asked: whether the event helped the participants think about the topic of women and leadership from a Christian perspective, challenged their thinking and/or increased their understanding of gendered-issues, and if participants would be interested in attending future events regarding this topic. In all areas, the majority of participants either agreed or strongly agreed.

In the comments sections, students indicated appreciation for the relevancy of the speakers, leaving comments such as, "the speakers were wonderful and presented important

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topics for people at all stages," and, "I really loved hearing from the speakers and it was amazing to see how things in my life fit with what the speakers were talking about." One student commented on the importance of positive role modeling, stating, "[it was] so helpful to see examples of women who take faith and leadership seriously – [it] helped me believe in the possibility of doing it myself." Another enjoyed the program environment, commenting, "I enjoyed taking this time to listen and reflect. It felt like a retreat." There were several comments indicating that offering similar programming in the future would be helpful. One student specifically requested programming on similar topics for female Resident Assistants during training.

Because of the success of the program, and with new research and gender-based studies being conducted each year, we intend to implement a second installation of the women's leadership program in the spring of 2015. This time the program will involve three institutions, with a target goal of sixty participants. We hope to encourage positive conversation, networking, and goal-setting with the growth of this program.

Additional Resources

In Timmerman's thesis work (2013), care was enacted to develop a general curriculum plan to address some of the issues found in current research regarding women. The curriculum could be adapted for various programs in a variety of contexts over several weeks' time. Career development offices, residence life, and many other offices within student development could find the curriculum useful as they seek to develop current effective student leaders and future successful female professionals. The curriculum addresses three overarching goals: help undergraduate women gain professional negotiation skills, give undergraduate women networking opportunities in order to develop networking skills, and offer connections to successful women currently in their future career field. Topics included in the curriculum plan, which could be adapted for any future context, include the history of women's relation to the American workforce and its evolution, examples of current issues from local professional women, case studies revolving around applicable theories (such as the theory of self-authorship or social cognitive theory), and covering leave and pay negotiation through role plays. It is also important to offer hands-on experience through mentoring and internship opportunities. Setting up meetings over coffee or lunch with career women in students' potential field or requiring students to interview a number of professionals could create wonderful opportunities for conversation, growth, and future work possibilities (Timmerman, 2013).

With such a diverse curriculum, there is space for departments across institutions to collaborate, including collaboration between specific academic departments and their related career fields in order to create connections for students. The program can be adjusted to fit the current needs of the students, recognizing the diverse challenges facing women in today's work environments. Any program that offers an opportunity for undergraduate students to gain an understanding of the current discriminations against female professionals is valuable.

Questions to Consider for Implementation

While our program covered only a few topics, additional issues could be discussed, such as salary inequities, sexual harassment or discrimination, pregnancy and maternity leave, child care and family leave, and moving upward professionally after having children. Consult your institutional or departmental goals in order to provide context for narrowing the direction of your program. Identify your students' needs and craft a program catering to what would be most helpful for your student population. It is also important to consider what ways you can collaborate with other departments within the framework of individual institutions.

Our particular program and research did not address the following areas of research which could be considered: the connection between gender and race in regards to discrimination and bias, western cultural messaging versus eastern cultural messaging as it pertains to gender, and the interplay of socio-economic circumstances as it relates to issues of gender among various races and cultures. Awareness of other factors that connect with gender can also lend to the specification of programming within your institutional setting.

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The Invisible Wall:
Exploring the Experiences of African-American Students at CCCU Institutions

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Abstract

African-American students who attend a CCCU institution do not complete their degrees as frequently as other student groups. The average gap at CCCU institutions between "overall and Black graduation rates is more than 19%. This is greater than the gap at other private institutions" (Smith, 2009a, p. 80). While the six-year graduation rate for African-American students at private universities averages 51%, colleges and universities in the CCCU average only 36%. CCCU graduation rates are 9.5% lower than other private institutions due to CCCU affiliation alone. "CCCU affiliation was the only variable to have a significantly more negative association with Black graduation rates than with overall graduation rates" (Smith, 2009a, p. x).

This study examined the experiences of African-American students within the context of Council for Christian Colleges and Universities (CCCU) institutions. While previous research explored African-American graduation rates, the unique spiritual context of Christian colleges and institutions in the CCCU had not been adequately studied. The purpose of this research was to explore the perceptions of African-American students regarding their experiences at CCCU institutions in order to identify the barriers and hindrances encountered by these students in their pursuit of a degree.

A qualitative, case-study methodology was utilized to conduct nine focus groups with African-American students at three CCCU institutions in the

Western region. The sample was comprised of 51 African-American students who had completed at least four semesters at the institution. Themes unique to each school were identified and a cross-case analysis was conducted. The findings indicated the experiences of African-American students at CCCU institutions were similar to other predominantly White institutions without a spiritual affiliation. The unique context of the spiritual environment did not create an environment that promoted African-American student success and did not positively impact African-American students according to their expectations. The findings indicated there are aspects of the environment at CCCU institutions which can be improved to enhance the experiences of African-American students.

Introduction

African-American[1] students who enroll at a college or university in the United States do not have a high probability of graduating. Nationally, less than half of all African-American students who start college at a four-year institution graduate in six years or less (Carey, 2008). The average number of African-American college students in the United States who complete a college degree at four-year colleges and universities in the United States is nearly 20 percentage points less than their White peers (Lynch & Engle, 2010). African-American students also "typically graduate at a lower rate than their White peers at the same institution" (Carey, 2008, p. 2). Although an increase in the number of African-American students enrolled in colleges has occurred and some gains in degree completion have been achieved since the Civil Rights Movement, enough progress has not occurred. Legal, historical, and structural disadvantages prevent many African-Americans from receiving the socioeconomic advantages associated with college degree attainment (Harper, Patton, & Wooden, 2009).

One of the most accurate ways to compare educational effectiveness between institutions is to analyze the gaps in graduation rates between various ethnic groups at the same institution (Carey, 2008, 2004; Lynch & Engle, 2010). Six-year graduation rates are typically utilized because they are perceived to be more accurate due to student "swirl," the practice of students enrolling in multiple schools at one time, stopping out for a semester, transferring, and ultimately returning to complete a degree (Adelman, 2000; Astin & Oseguera, 2004; Carey, 2008; Oseguera, 2006). To understand the graduation rates of various ethnic groups, Oseguera (2006) explored the variance in graduation rates for White, Asian, Mexican-American, and African-American students. Utilizing four- and six-year graduation rates, there were "significant racial disparities at every institutional type for African-American students" (Oseguera, 2006, p. 28).

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1 The terms "African-American" and "Black" are often used interchangeably in the research. However for the purposes of this research, the term "African-American" will be used. It refers to Black students who have a primary identification with the United States and will exclude international students. If a quote utilizes the term "Black," it will be maintained in its original form.

African-American Students Graduation Rates and CCCU Schools

Private universities are the most effective at graduating African-American students and typically do so at a higher rate than the national average (Lynch & Engle, 2010; Oseguera, 2006; Smith, 2009a; U.S. Department of Education, 2006). While private universities in general have the smallest graduation rate gaps between African-American and White students, private universities with a Protestant affiliation or background are generally less successful (Oseguera, 2006; Smith, 2009a).

To study this phenomenon at Protestant institutions, Smith (2009) conducted a quantitative analysis of more than 400 private, Protestant, and Council for Christian Colleges and Universities (CCCU) institutions. CCCU schools are "an international association of intentionally Christian colleges and universities" and most are predominantly White institutions (CCCU, 2012).

In this research, African-American graduation rates were highest at secular and religious private institutions and lowest at CCCU institutions. For the institutions included in this research, the overall graduation rates for African-American students were 51% at private institutions, 40% at Protestant institutions, and only 36% at CCCU institutions. Overall, "Black graduation rates were 11% lower than the overall graduation rates at Protestant institutions and 15.1% lower at CCCU institutions" (Smith, 2009a, p. 83). The gap between African-American and overall graduation rates at private institutions in this research was 10.6%. An even larger 19.2% gap existed at Protestant institutions with a CCCU affiliation (See Table 1.1).

Table 1.1 Gap in Graduation Rates at Private, Protestant and CCCU Institutions

	Overall	African-American	Gap
Private	61.3%	50.7%	10.6%
Protestant	52.3%	39.7%	12.6%
CCCU	54.8%	35.6%	19.2%

(Smith, 2009a)

While the six-year graduation rate for African-American students at private universities averages 51%, colleges and universities in the CCCU average only 36%. CCCU graduation rates are 9.5% lower than other private institutions. "CCCU affiliation is the only variable to have a significantly more negative association with Black graduation rates than with overall graduation rates" (Smith, 2009a, p. x).

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This study built upon the findings from Smith's research and examined the experiences of African-American students within the context of Council for Christian Colleges and Universities (CCCU) institutions. While previous research explored African-American graduation rates, the unique spiritual context of institutions in the CCCU had not been adequately studied. The purpose of this research was to explore the perceptions of African-American students regarding their experiences at CCCU institutions in order to identify the barriers and hindrances encountered by these students in their pursuit of a degree.

A qualitative, case-study methodology was utilized to conduct research with African-American students at three CCCU institutions in the Western region of the United States. The sample was comprised of 51 African-American students who had completed at least four semesters at the institution.

Site and Participant Selection

Three CCCU campuses in the Western region were chosen as the research sites for this study. The sites were selected on the basis of membership in the CCCU and at least a 10% gap in the six-year graduation rate between African-American and overall graduation rates. Each of the sites was a private, liberal arts, predominantly White institution, and had less than 8,000 undergraduate students. Outside of academic success, the three institutions also emphasized personal development and growth as a primary goal for students. The identities of the schools were confidential and pseudonyms were used for students.

The first institution, [school #1 redacted], is a small liberal arts college in California with less than 3,000 undergraduate students. [School #1 redacted] is a denominationally affiliated CCCU institution with a mission to develop students who live out the values of the university and serve the community. The small size allows for close personal attention and creates an environment where it is difficult for a student to get lost. The university enrolls fewer than 20% Latino students and approximately 5% of the student enrollments are African-American students. In 2010, the six-year overall graduation rate was 59% for all students, 62% for White students, and only 27% for African-American students. The gap at [school #1 redacted] between African-American and overall graduation rates was 32% in 2010 (Collegresults.org, 2012). Students who enroll at [school #1 redacted] are required to complete the SAT or ACT, have a personal faith commitment, and must either actively attend a church or receive a pastoral interview to be admitted. There are few faculty of color at [school #1 redacted] and chapel is required for all full-time undergraduate students.

The second institution, [school #2 redacted], is a liberal arts university with less than 3,000 undergraduate students. The mission of the university is to provide excellence in higher education and to train students to engage in service. In 2010, the six-year overall graduation rate was 53% for all students, 57% for White students, and 46% for African-American students (U.S. Department of Education, 2012). The gap between African-American students and White students at [school #2 redacted] was 11% in 2010. [School

#2 redacted] enrolls 15% Latino students and 4% African-American students. [School #2 redacted] has a student to faculty ratio of 15 to 1. To be admitted to the university, being a Christian is not required. However, a faith fit is preferred. Involvement in church, school, and community activities are reviewed as a part of the admissions process. Chapel is not required but encouraged for all full-time undergraduate students.

The third institution, [school #3 redacted], is also a predominantly White private institution with approximately 4,000 students. [School #3 redacted] is not associated with any specific denominational affiliation. In 2010, the six-year overall graduation rate was 65% for all students, 68% for White students, and only 30% for African-American students (U.S. Department of Education, 2012). [School #3 redacted] views itself as having an academic basis broader than that of the standard college of arts and sciences. [School #3 redacted]'s mission focuses on implementing biblically centered education and scholarship. An emphasis is also placed on developing Christian thought and character. Students who enroll at [school #3 redacted] are required to be an Evangelical Christian believer and fulfill basic GPA and academic requirements. Students are also required to submit a pastoral reference, which comes from the pastor of their church or its equivalent. To graduate, students are required to complete at least 25 theology units. Neither of the other two sites have these requirements.

Discussion of Themes

Three central themes emerged in this research common to African-American students at the three CCCU institutions. They were: 1) The Invisible Wall, 2) Swimming Upstream, and 3) Awkward Spirituality.

The invisible wall. The first theme, "The Invisible Wall," refers to what many African-American students encountered when they arrived at a CCCU institution. Students could feel a wall but they could not see it, especially when their White friends were not experiencing the same barriers. Others examining the environment may also not be able to detect the wall without closely listening to the experiences of non-majority students. Yet the wall hinders African-American persistence, marginalizes them, and enhances their loneliness and isolation. This theme may be a strong contributor to the lower-than-expected graduation rates at CCCU institutions for African-American students (Smith, 2009b).

This theme was first articulated by Kayla when asked what it was like to be an African-American student at her institution. She drew a picture, Figure 1.1, which portrays her, the lone African-American, on one side of the wall. The other individuals are on the opposite side of the wall, which as she described her picture, was a barrier she was able to see but could not reach through. The picture depicts the resistance encountered by African-American students in classrooms, residence halls, and around campus. Racism and microaggressions strongly contribute to the invisible wall.

The surprising aspect of this theme was how strongly it was felt by African-American students and how little was being done to remove the barriers that contributed to the

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wall. The students perceived that non African-Americans were not aware of or did not care about their challenges. Again, the Christian mission of the school was not adequately influencing the racial experiences of African-American students who were isolated by this wall and separated from others. For the wall to be removed, the entire community at each institution must first acknowledge its existence and then work together to dismantle the barriers to success for African-American students.

Figure 1.1 The Invisible Wall
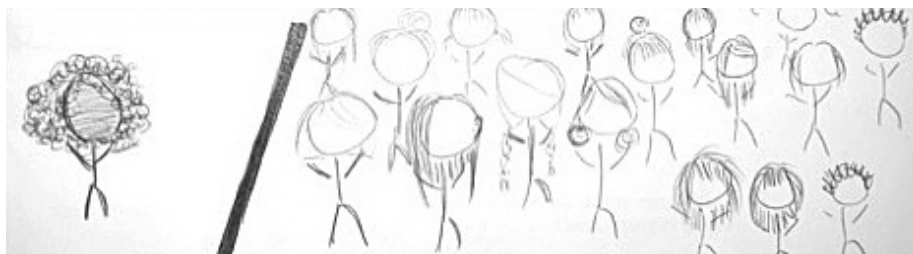
The façade. This research confirmed that the campus environment significantly impacts the experiences of African-American students (Davis, 1998; Museus & Kiang, 2009; Pike & Kuh, 2005). Students at three institutions described the environment as a façade. They believed the institution wanted to be inclusive of their experience but also perceived the individuals in the environment were not equipped to successfully understand how to relate to their experience. The support structures and allocation of resources were not focused on retaining African-American students, further enhancing the barriers (Oseguera, 2006).

Each of the three institutions intentionally recruited diverse students, presumably because they believed it was important to enroll a diverse student population. Unfortunately, though, institutional behavior did not go beyond recruitment. According to participants at all three institutions, many of their African-American friends left after their freshman year due to the resistance they encountered once they arrived on campus. This façade was an unfortunate reality for private institutions, which would do well to focus on degree completion for all students. Consistent with previous research, participants also frequently felt misunderstood or devalued by the predominantly White culture (Allen, 1992; Kuh, 2001; Museus, 2011). While CCCU institutions can remove this barrier by engaging in diversity training, there does not currently seem to be great openness for change.

Stereotypes, microaggressions, and racism. This research confirms that cultural challenges, racism, and microaggressions negatively impact African-American student success (Fries-Britt & Griffin, 2007). While each institution had an identifiable African-American community, there was variance in the extent to which support and encouragement were offered. As the literature review indicates, a positive racial environment, largely free from negative racial stereotypes, microaggressions, and racism, is essential for success (Allen, 1988; Bennett & Okinaka, 1984). For administrators and leaders at CCCU institutions,

the goal of intentionally diminishing the quantity of microaggressive statements should be a priority. Unfortunately, students at all three institutions reported the prominence of stereotypes, microaggressions, and racism and perceived their culture was not respected, valued, or seen as relevant to the larger university experience, further contributing to the invisible wall (Rodgers & Summers, 2008).

While the presence of microaggressions was not a surprising finding, their pervasiveness and the extent to which they created a negative racial environment for African-American students was. During the focus groups, many racial incidents were reported only after hearing other participants recount their experiences. This surprised me but also indicated that many of the students in the focus groups had not adequately processed the impact of these racial experiences. It was clear that sufficient support of students as they respond to difficult racial situations was lacking from the three institutions. Previous research indicates this support is essential for African-American student success, as individuals within the environment who help students process and understand their experiences may help to remove the barriers contributing to the invisible wall (Fries-Britt & Griffin, 2007).

Swimming upstream. The second theme, "Swimming Upstream," refers to the ways African-American students perceived themselves working harder than White students to achieve the same results. While this may not be the reality, in an environment where there are so few African-American students, it is easy to understand why this was a strong perception. In one focus group, Halle was asked to describe what it was like for her as an African-American student at her institution. She drew a picture, see Figure 1.2, of African-American students in a river with a strong current. Ahead are White students, swimming together in unison. Behind, are fewer African-American students, unable to stay with the group. This image was a strong depiction of many of the experiences described by students in the focus groups.

Three factors which contributed to African-American students feeling as if they were swimming upstream were the academic environment, the lack of effective support services, and ineffective funding. Previous research indicates that academics, support services, and effective funding are vital for African-American students to succeed (Bensimon, 2005; Carey, 2004; Harvey-Smith, 2002). This research confirmed that both academic experiences and funding were strong barriers for African-American students and that extra support services are necessary for African-American students, who may arrive on campus less prepared than other students (Lee & Ransom, 2008). These three factors were perceived by participants to put them at a disadvantage and behind the majority students. This caused them to "swim upstream," further alienating and isolating them.

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Figure 1.2 Swimming Upstream
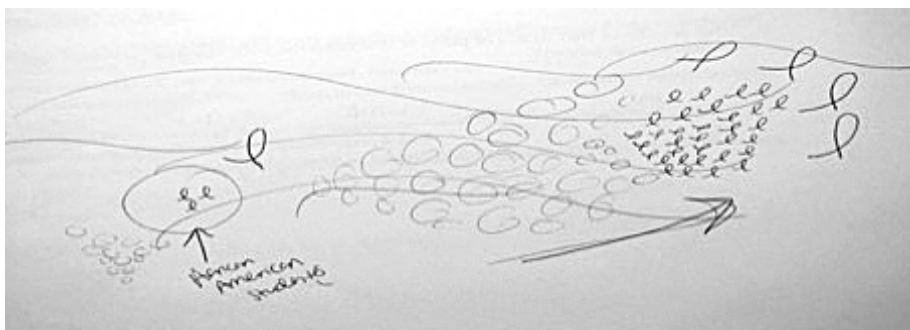
Academic experiences and classroom challenges. Faculty and student interaction powerfully impacts African-American student success (Museus, 2011). This research confirmed African-American students were deeply impacted by their professors and also confirmed the conceptual framework. Faculty and staff do contribute to the lower-than-expected graduation rates for African-American students, who perceived faculty lacked the ability to effectively work with students from various cultures within the classroom. Students also perceived faculty were not accustomed to navigating difficult racial and cultural experiences. This further isolated African-American students from the experience that White students had with professors, another reason they were swimming behind White students.

The participants perceived the majority of faculty members to be interested in being inclusive in the classroom. However, their attempts at being inclusive often resulted in further isolation. Improving the classroom environment for African-American students may not require a significant undertaking; providing better training to faculty regarding how to be culturally sensitive in the classroom might significantly improve the classroom experience.

Participants also reported they were frustrated when their professors did not confront microaggressions in class. While students may have experienced racial tensions in classrooms in previous high school or college experiences, they did not expect to experience this dynamic at a private Christian institution. While their expectations were not explicitly communicated, students expected professors in a Christian environment to treat them differently than they would be treated in a secular classroom. This lack of teacher advocacy further increased the feeling of working against the current and isolation from the majority. Again, to improve this reality for African-American students may simply involve empowering majority professors to be aware of their experiences and encouraging them to confront racism and microaggressions when they occur in their classrooms.

Support services. This research indicates the three CCCU institutions did not provide adequate support services. Previous research indicates effective support services are essential components of both closing achievement gaps quickly and promoting success for African-American students (Carey, 2008; Longman & Schreiner, 2010). To promote persistence, support services should be implemented in the midst of a campus community which is widely aware of the challenges of minority students. CCCU institutions that want to immediately and quickly improve the African-American student experience must highlight their challenges and provide adequate funding for support services.

Subsequent to providing services, they must be promoted by all members of the community. The types of services which have been demonstrated to help African-American students succeed include expanding offices of multi-ethnic programming, enhancing financial aid, developing minority leadership scholarships, expanding campus clubs, enhancing advising, and recruiting more African-American students, to name just a few. These changes would help to reduce the isolation felt by African-American students "swimming" behind the massive school of White fish.

Awkward spirituality. The third theme, "Awkward Spirituality," refers to what many African-American students encountered in the spiritual environment at CCCU institutions. Students who selected a Christian college for the spiritual environment were disappointed once they arrived on campus because they encountered a reality different from what they expected.

Figure 1.3 Awkward Spirituality

Lisa was asked to describe what it was like for her as an African-American student on campus. She drew a picture of herself, alone, surrounded by other White people in the middle of a chapel experience, see Figure 1.3. In the drawing, she is separated from other people and is standing alone. In the focus group, she talked about how this drawing represented her experience of the "Awkward Spirituality" at her institution.

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Spiritual environment. Previous research indicates the fit between spirituality and faith is important for African-American student success. The majority of students who attend a faith-based institution do so intentionally (Astin, Astin, & Lindholm, 2010). However, participants at all three institutions wanted something from the spiritual environment they did not experience. [School #1 redacted] and [school #3 redacted] students were disillusioned by the spiritual environment and [school #2 redacted] students, while not a primary factor in their college selection, still desired an improved spiritual environment. CCCU institutions have an opportunity to develop a spiritual environment which promotes the success of students from a variety of cultures but to do so requires effective processes of evaluation and planning.

As the main difference between CCCU institutions and otherwise similar private institutions is the spiritual environment, one would expect to see a stronger impact of spirituality on student experiences. However, this was not what students encountered. This is a troubling reality for CCCU institutions. Successfully integrating spirituality and faith into the curricular and co-curricular experiences of African-American students does not happen by chance; it requires changing what has been done in the past in order to meet the needs of students today and in the future. As student demographics continue to change, the spiritual environment must change as well.

Students did report spiritual growth amidst the spiritual environment at the three institutions, but it was often in spite of the environment, not because of it. At predominantly White institutions, it is common to assume the experience of the majority culture is the same as what minority cultures experience. However, this is often not the case. Administrators and other campus leaders who believe the spiritual environment impacts all students in the same ways may be surprised to hear the actual experiences of minority students. Indeed, it would benefit all administrators at CCCU institutions to seek out and listen to the spiritual frustrations of their African-American students. Seeking to listen to and hear the experiences of non-majority students is the first step toward positive change.

Spiritual environment and expectations. Previous research indicates that spirituality helps or hinders African-American student persistence and success based on whether or not he or she feels included or excluded (Watson, 2006). At institutions like [school #3 redacted] and [school #1 redacted], students who selected the institution primarily for the spiritual environment and are required to engage in mandatory spiritual practices are negatively impacted when these spiritual experiences marginalize and exclude them. This reality can be changed, however, by developing spaces on campus where the voices and spiritual practices of minority students can be expressed. By implementing consistent, methodical and progressive improvements to the spiritual environment, minority students and specifically African-American student experiences can be more included in and supported by the spiritual environment.

Intentional efforts are necessary to create space for African-American students to feel welcome. Students whose pre-college worship experiences were similar to their institution's were more able to fit into the spiritual environment. This finding has implications for the types of students recruited and for the support offered to students once they arrive on campus. As recruiters become cognizant of the spiritual experiences of students, they will be more equipped to recruit students who are a better fit and who feel less disconnected spiritually. As campus ministers begin to understand how their non-majority students are isolated by their spiritual practices, they will be more open to change. If CCCU institutions desire to enroll and retain diverse students, they need to ensure the spiritual environment is inclusive.

Opportunities for Future Research

This research focused on successful students who had completed four semesters and survived in the environment in spite of barriers. To further explore the experiences of African-American students at CCCU institutions, perspectives from freshman and sophomore students should also be considered. It was not clear what, if any, differences existed between the perspectives of first-year students and those who were on track to graduate. Freshman and sophomore students may have provided a different perspective on the African-American student experience at CCCU institutions.

A second opportunity for future research is to study the experiences of African- American students who do not persist. While students who leave a school are difficult to find, the information gathered from them would be valuable. A fuller picture of what it is like to be an African-American student could be developed. This line of research would inform administrators regarding why students leave and would give insight into how decisions to leave are made. Although this information can be difficult to obtain, it is essential to understand more fully the experiences of African-Americans at CCCU institutions.

Research supports that spirituality helps some African-American students cope with their college environment and may provide the necessary support to increase student retention (Stewart, 2009; Watson, 2006; Watt et al., 2008). Further research can also be conducted into the spiritual experiences of African-American students at CCCU institutions. Participants in this research reported they were negatively impacted by their spiritual experiences but these students did not leave. A more thorough and nuanced investigation into how spirituality impacts the persistence and success of African-American students would provide helpful information for administrators.

Discussion and Reflections

The findings raise questions regarding how Christian colleges should best respond to race and racism in a way that improves the experiences of non-majority students in the future. Historically, Evangelical culture has ignored structural issues of racism and often has not perceived "a societal or institutional responsibility to make up for the history of racism and inequality in America" (Smith, 2009a, p. 10). As Emerson and Smith (2001) discussed, Evangelicals, the majority of whom are White, typically do not see structural

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issues of inequality. Evangelicals also typically offer individual explanations for success or failure. This prevents White Christians from seeing or acknowledging structural issues of racism and contributes to denying the existence of racism within society.

This research occurred within the context of Christian colleges. It is important to note that the spiritual environment at these schools is the primary difference between CCCU institutions and other predominantly White institutions. The findings provide evidence that Christian colleges have not sufficiently met the challenges of race and racism. What is most troubling about the findings is how little the institutional mission and Christian environment positively affected African-American students' perceptions of their educational experiences.

A typical Evangelical response is to attribute success to individual choice and hard work. Failure is perceived to be a lack of effort. This perspective places the onus of responsibility for success or failure on the individual but does not consider from where a person has come, what challenges he or she has encountered, and whether or not he or she is able to influence any external or structural barriers. Previous research supports the idea that "certain religious belief systems, namely Evangelical Protestantism, promote values of individualism which shape Whites' understanding of the logic of inequality generally and the logic of racial inequality more specifically" (Eitle & Steffens, 2009, p. 507; Hinojosa & Park, 2004)**.** It is this individualistic attitude that removes any organizational or structural responsibility from churches or colleges to improve the reality of African-Americans. This is shortsighted and damaging to students of color. However, it has historically been the approach of the church and many institutions of Christian higher education as well. This difference between the mission of CCCU schools and the inability to provide racial equality and social justice is an ongoing and serious issue and was a central focus of this research.

Evangelical Christians perceive themselves as welcoming to everyone, including others, and accepting differences. This research confirms, however, that at Christian colleges, acceptance, openness, and appreciation of differences was not a reality that African-American students perceived. The findings provide a unique opportunity for Evangelicals to reflect on how open, accepting, and welcoming they are to non-White people in both churches and Christian institutions of higher education.

The findings also reveal another aspect of Christian culture that contributes to the African-American student experience – the segregation of churches. Unfortunately, the current racial tension within the spiritual environment at CCCU institutions parallels and reflects the historical tension between principles of faith and race in this country. Many Evangelical churches in the United States are not diverse institutions. Although it is cliché, it is true that Sunday mornings are the most racially segregated hours of the week. During the Civil Rights Movement, when many barriers to African-Americans were removed legally, many churches did not quickly change. Christian colleges are comprised of Christian individuals who frequently attend White Christian churches with little exposure

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to diversity. Christian higher education parallels the reality of Evangelical Christianity and solutions to one will impact the other (Gilbreath, 2008).

The campus and racial environments at the three research sites reflect the culture of the predominantly White Evangelicals who run them. Unfortunately, this culture does not create an environment which helps African-American students succeed. While CCCU institutions are obviously not churches, they do share similar traits and characteristics; Evangelical leaders often do not see or understand the challenges of non-White individuals and are often not aware that racial challenges still exist. For CCCU institutions to develop capacity to meet the needs of the next generation of college students, these perspectives on race and ethnicity need to change.

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(Notes)

How to Stay Christian in College

Budziszewski, J. (2004).
Colorado Springs, CO: THINK.

Reviewed by Britney N. Graber

Recently, emerging adulthood stepped to the forefront of Christian student development conversations. A rising number of college students reared in Christian homes retreat from the faith, but why? College is a time of exploration and independence. However, what about the college environment causes students either to reject Christianity or become indifferent to it? J. Budziszewski, a professor of government and philosophy at the University of Texas, delves into the challenges Christian students face on college campuses and offers suggestions to take action in response. Being a former atheist, Budziszewski writes from first-hand experience and wisdom in dealing with the conflicts that emerge at the intersection of the Christian faith and secular educational environment.

How to Stay Christian in College divides into three core sections sandwiched between introductory and concluding chapters. In his introduction, Budziszewski intertwines empathy and hope for the college or almost-college student. His personal experience with the struggle to reconcile faith and educational circumstance lends itself to resonate with students facing similar challenges. The first core section of Budziszewski's book concentrates on worldviews, providing information about what students may encounter and how to begin integrating faith in an environment of opposing worldviews. Myth(s) encountered on college campuses is the focal point of the second core section. Specifically, Budziszewski targets myths surrounding academia, relationships, and politics. The third and final core section delves into the practical application of coping

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socially, religiously, and academically on a secular college campus. Budziszewski believes coping with life on campus in these three areas is the most challenging for students of faith. The book concludes by focusing on life's meaning and how students can glorify God through the college experience, despite the challenges and oppression they may face.

Due to his faith and career background, Budziszewski speaks skillfully and knowledgeably concerning the challenges Christian students face in the collegiate setting. Yet, while providing a dose of reality, Budziszewski continuously interjects moments of hope. He writes, "Higher education doesn't have to be a wasteland. With a little help, Christian students can find college a means of God's blessing instead of a spiritual snare" (p. 15). Budziszewski's heart and compassion for Christian college students remains evident throughout the book as he attempts to remind his readers about their purpose in life. Not only does he write for Christian college and almost-college students, but also for their parents, communicating the struggles their child will face in college and, hopefully, elicit support.

The central theme that emerges from *How to Stay Christian in College* is the question often begged of students: "Who are you going to be?" Budziszewski provides practical examples of appropriate Christian responses when specific situations arise, but all of it boils down to personhood and development of character based on faith. College is a time when most students become independent, are exposed to new ideas and beliefs, are pressured to adopt new beliefs, and/or may prove to be embarrassed by their own. For example, Budziszewski discusses Naturalism and how, because it contains "a grain of truth," it is extremely dangerous (p. 57). Discernment is a practice to be developed and turned into a reflexive habit. Budziszewski encourages students to seek Truth, study the Bible, and grow in their faith.

In various portions of the book, Budziszewski offers tangible examples of questions and responses for students encountering other students seeking to learn more about faith, what Budziszewski calls "plain questions" (p. 64). For example:

> Question: Is "Christ" a last name, like "Jones"?

> Answer: *No, it's another word for Messiah. It's a title. "Jesus Christ" means "Jesus, the Chosen One of God." *(p. 64)

Although Budziszewski provides good, basic questions and answers, some students may not find it easy to apply these examples to their own lives. He provides one conversation as an example that flows directly from one question into another seemingly-perfect subsequent question. This exchange leaves the reader to glean what is possible from Budziszewski and apply similar concepts to their own situation(s). While what Budziszewski offers seems black and white, reality is many hues of gray. Every conversation does not proceed, perhaps, with respectful dialogue.

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When students encounter behavior(s) that are in conflict with their morals or beliefs, Budziszewski offers this encouraging and expert advice: "Don't Argue, Don't Apologize, Don't Back Down, and Don't Get Trapped" (p. 73). Often Christian students feel belittled when challenged by competing lifestyles or behaviors; however, Budziszewski urges Christian students not to compromise their beliefs. Appropriately, he advises students to seek professional advocates to act, if necessary.

Budziszewski, in my opinion, provides an inclusive overview of common myths encountered in a secular college setting. For example, one of the myths he addresses is: "God belongs to your [political] party" (p. 112). Budziszewski clearly sees through the common, legalistic way of thinking so many Christian students possess, having never challenged or processed what they were taught. Instead, they blindly adhere to beliefs their parents held or beliefs taught by their church. Indirectly, Budziszewski challenges these students to reflect and develop their own faith through what they sincerely know to be true.

Practically, Budziszewski offers many suggestions throughout his book regarding Christian practice, including finding a Christian community and spending time in worship, prayer, Bible study, encouraging and supporting one another, and reaching out to non-Christians. Personally, I appreciate Budziszewski's challenge to the reader to befriend non-Christians in addition to building a solid community of Christian friends, as we are called as Christians to minister Christ's love to those around us. Furthermore, he promotes the continuous development of discernment to guide one through relationships. For example, Budziszewski discusses that by submitting to Christ, one's "mind is renewed" (p. 145). Thus, Christ's presence will develop one's ability to discern, act, and speak to His glory.

Budziszewski speaks of the reality in encountering difficult and oppositional people, even professors in the collegiate setting. However, Budziszewski effectively makes a case, therefore, for surrounding oneself with Christian mentors, a small group, a church, and even a Christian intellectual group in order to combat frustration and despair when feeling under attack. Through various communities, one can experience support and encouragement, despite difficult situations and environments.

While writing skillfully for Christian college students at secular universities, Budziszewski does not explicitly discuss the struggles Christian college students face at faith-based institutions. It may seem counter-intuitive that students at a Christian college would experience a crisis of faith; nonetheless, lack of commitment seems to be a reoccurring theme among today's emerging adult demographic. Budziszewski, perhaps, excludes this sector of the college-age population that needs to be included now more than ever before in order to aid Christian college students in growing in their faith, rather than turning from it.

Additionally, Budziszewski writes that his book is targeted for upcoming college students. However, the struggles high school students face could parallel the struggles of

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the Christian college student – especially moving from a public high school to a public university. I imagine some overlap would exist that might strengthen Budziszewski's argument(s) as well as build more connections to the reader who shares in that experience.

Budziszewski effectively solidifies his arguments in the final chapter. He begs the question: "What is it all for?" Throughout the entire book, he provides examples and scenarios of encountering opposing worldviews, combatting myths, and coping in various settings. However, he discusses the reasons and implications for doing so in the conclusion of his book. Through his own faith journey, Budziszewski writes with expertise, compassion, and love for the Christian student enrolling in or attending college, and provides hope while doing so.

Related books:

Budziszewski, J. *Ask Me Anything: Provocative Answers for College Students*
Budziszewski, J. *Ask Me Anything 2: More Provocative Answers for College Students*
Morrow, J. *Welcome to College: A Christ-Follower's Guide for the Journey*
Nye, A. *Fish Out of Water*
Smith, A., Editor. *Can You Keep Your Faith in College?: Students from 50 Campuses Tell You How – and Why*
Wheaton, D. *University of Destruction: Your Game Plan for Spiritual Victory on Campus*

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Transforming Students: Fulfilling the Promise of Higher Education

Johansson, C., & Felten, P. (2014).
Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Reviewed by Beth K. Hale

"Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be *transformed* by the renewing of your mind" (Romans 12:2). We are all changing. We are all growing. We are all *transforming*; and it should come as no surprise to us that our students are as well. Authors and educators Charity Johansson and Peter Felten collaborate to create their description of the process of transformation as outlined in the somewhat brief pages of *Transforming Students: Fulfilling the Promise of Higher Education.*

Johansson, a professor of physical therapy, and Felten, director of the Center of Engaged Learning and associate professor of history, pick up the story of their institution, Elon University, where *Transforming a College: The Story of a Little-Known College's Strategic Climb to National Distinction* (Keller, 2014) leaves off. The authors draw conclusions regarding transformational learning in higher education through the combination of their professional experiences at Elon University and qualitative data collected through dozens of interviews with Elon students, alumni, faculty, and staff. Their findings are further legitimized through several intentional nods to longstanding student development theorists, and a diverse collection of current best practices. Though the authors clearly describe transformational learning to be non-linear, further stating, "There is no recipe for something as serendipitous as transformation" (p. 5), the six subsequent chapters clearly describe four stages of the transformation process: disruption of a previous way of looking at the world, followed by reflective analysis of one's

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underlying assumptions, verifying and acting on these new understandings, and finally, integrating these new ways of being into everyday life.

Inspired by Loren Pope's *Colleges That Change Lives* (Pope 2000; Pope & Oswald, 2012) and Richard Light's *Making the Most of College* (2004), Johansson and Felten assert that,

> Transformational learning changes people for a lifetime. The goal of the transformative learning process in college is that students emerge with a powerful combination of knowledge, skills, and commitment; that they see the work that needs to be done, the contributions that need to be made, the things in the world that need to be changed; that they have the capacities and the confidence needed to contribute to those changes; and that they have a sense of both agency and urgency. (p. 6)

Not only does transformation change people for a lifetime, it also is a process that spans the length of a lifetime; the work of transformation is never complete. The college years, however, present a particularly prime opportunity for students to engage in the transformation process in a way that most have not yet experienced. As the book's title implies, colleges and universities promise to take students from one point, and escort them to another. According to the text, a college's role in the transformation process is to aid a student in developing his or her own idea of self; it is not to change them or merely help them mature. Johansson and Felten's interviews revealed that most students standing at the threshold of their college experience were expecting to experience something new and different, but could not anticipate the degree to which they were challenged and stretched by the variety of new and differing opinions surrounding them. This disruption, as the authors describe it, often occurs as soon as a student turns the page to begin this new chapter of his/her life. First-year students are beginning to experience a tension between what is comfortable and well-known, and the uncertainty that lies ahead.

Fundamental to the mission of higher education, transformation seeks to "challenge students' current views, guide them in the examination of their assumptions, and offer them the chance to construct an emerging sense of self and relationship with the world" (p. 2). As the facilitators of "productively disruptive experiences," student development professionals are urged to present students with both challenges, as well as opportunities to reflect critically on the beliefs, biases, and assumptions that surfaced as a result of those challenges. Theorist Nevitt Sanford would tell you that the idea of challenge and support is certainly not a new one, though it does appear to be a critical starting point for transformation.

While in college, students are both transforming and learning how to understand and continue the transformation process in the postgraduate years. Reflective analysis, both internally and externally, and active awareness of one's own transformation is critical in the furthering of this work. In external analysis, higher education professionals are able to offer critical points of reflection, perplexing questions, and valuable feedback to

supplement the internal dialogue happening within the student. It is here that we begin to see the value of transformation within the context of community. Change is beginning to occur, and is nurtured through collaboration.

Transformative learning is characterized by a deep and enduring change in thinking that is seen through changed ways of being in the world. It also generally reflects a new connection to some larger goal or purpose. Johansson and Felten contend that for learning to be transformative, reflective analysis must be followed by verification. They define verification as "action that clarifies and confirms this new way of being" (p. 64). Transformation inspires action. During this verification stage, students are taking their new ways of thinking for a test drive. They have formed a new idea, and now it is time for them to test that idea through their actions. Do these new conclusions draw them nearer to the person they hope to become? Are the outcomes of their actions resulting in positive progress? In this stage of transformation, the college atmosphere provides a practice field, replete with coaches and guides. Johansson and Felten's interviews confirmed the importance of community during each of the phases of transformation. Mentors of all types play an essential role in the students' developmental journey, and can come in the form of professors, student development staff, community members, and peers. These guides offer important insights and directions to these students' new actions, which oftentimes stimulates a growing confidence, ultimately leading to sustained changes.

Transformation is not only a journey to be made by students, but by institutions as well. As with our students, our institutions should strive to grow in ways that allow them to become better versions of themselves. For the university, there is a delicate balance that comes with managing ever-present changes and a longstanding institutional mission. This work does not appear to be easy, but the authors offer their insights on the potential return on investment: "Over time and with practice, the continued integration of dissonance, honest examination, and recalibrating actions will strengthen the university's core, representing institutional depth and soul" (p. 99). In many ways, our institutions can inspire the growth and transformation of our students through leading by example. Transformed colleges and universities challenge their community members in their own transformations, and "students' experiences of deep and lasting changes are most likely to take place within the context of organizations that are themselves engaged in the same process" (p. 4).

At the heart of their work, the authors sought to illuminate the transformation process as seen at Elon University, and to describe the benefits of intentionally assisting students through their own transformational learning. Being that a fluid concept such as transformation is not easy to measure, the anecdotal evidences of Johansson and Felten's study do present themes from which to draw conclusions. Openly stated, the implications found from their research are designed specifically to apply to residential colleges and universities of similar standing, as the residential model presents a prime opportunity for transformation. Though details regarding the methodology employed (sample size,

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for example) are largely left to the imagination of the reader, the authors' findings and thoughtful analysis are an encouragement to all who encounter transformation, and substantiate the work of those who seek to impact the lives of others – particularly those of emerging adults. *Transforming Students: Fulfilling the Promise of Higher Education* is a quick read that provides plenty of anecdotal encouragement, and will easily earn its place on your bookshelf.

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Spiritual Formation in Emerging Adulthood: A Practical Theology for College and Young Adult Ministry

Reviewed by Taylor T. Smythe

Emerging adulthood is a relatively recent addition to lifespan development vernacular, making its first debut into research literature nearly a decade ago. In the light of its short existence, very little literature provides a depth of insight into the challenges of this cluster of twenty-somethings and their unique developmental needs. Setran and Kiesling offer their latest book—*Spiritual Formation in Emerging Adulthood: A Practical Theology for College and Young Adult Ministry*—as a comprehensive introduction to research and practice related to this ever-expanding demographic. Though it has its weak spots, Setran and Kiesling's book equips the reader with an understanding of the challenges facing young adults in the present age. The real strength of this work, however, is that the authors move beyond context and into the pragmatic.

Written explicitly for an audience of Christians, Setran and Kiesling set out to provide a theological understanding of holistic spiritual formation of young adults with a focus on practice. Their practical elements pay specific attention to church ministry, para-church ministry, and higher education settings, though parents of students in this age bracket will find the research equally meaningful and apropos. After presenting the many challenges facing students of this age, the authors argue mentoring is the most effective solution.

To begin, Setran and Kiesling establish the current landscape of faith in emerging adulthood. They present a well-researched summary of existing literature on emerging adult faith, noting the challenges of increased individualism,

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jadedness with the institutional church, an overall loss of corporate spiritual formation, and the prevalence of Moralistic Therapeutic Deism as a worldview. The authors argue effective mentoring can address these issues at the level of the heart and generate space for transformation of character. Effective mentoring, Setran and Kiesling offer, consists of the facilitation of three postures: remembering, attending, and envisioning.

Setran and Kiesling attempt to move the reader through these three postures, allowing us to *remember* past research (or, for many, read it for the first time), *attend* to God's present work in students' lives and world, and *envision* ways to develop students in these critical and formative years. Each chapter follows a similar format to the book as a whole, presenting a literature review of the given chapter's topic that creates a foundation for discussion of practical implications. The authors organize the chapters in such a way that each one builds upon one another intuitively, moving from research to practice and from internal motivations to external interactions. The book, like each chapter, concludes with a framework for application and future considerations.

One of the great strengths of this volume is its conception of ministry as a holistic, all-encompassing process. The authors integrate topics of identity, vocation, morality, and others with an understanding of faith and spiritual formation that defies the compartmentalization so common to young adults. While some chapters emphasize certain facets of a subject more than others, the breadth of topics explored makes Setran and Kiesling's work invaluable to persons who frequently engage with emerging adults.

Not only does *Spiritual Formation in Emerging Adulthood* offer a thorough rationale for the importance of spiritual formation, it also acts as a primer on identity development and formation that filters prominent developmental research through the lens of faith and spirituality. Familiar names in developmental research such as Erik Erikson, James Marcia, and Sharon Daloz Parks intermingle with experts on emerging adulthood and spirituality such as Jeffery Arnett and Christian Smith, making the book a natural exploration of that overlap. Along with these authorities in the world of academia, Setran and Kiesling interweave a variety of sources spanning from Dietrich Bonhoeffer to Walt Disney—all in ways that feel appropriate to their given contexts.

The authors effectively communicate the gravity of the shifting cultural climate in relation to emerging adults while simultaneously providing hope for individual transformation. While this book does not outline a list of nine easy steps to transform a young adult into a mature Christian, it offers a helpful stepping-stone in the process of leading students to a place of holistic flourishing. Each chapter is peppered with practical wisdom that may vary in relevance based on the prior knowledge and experiences of the reader, though all are likely to find themselves refreshed in some capacity.

While every reader will find value in this work as a whole, an area where the book falls short is its chapter on relationships. As one might imagine, that chapter focuses on the different types of human relationships in the lives of emerging adults. Whereas the scope of every other chapter is fairly broad, this chapter hones in on romantic relationships,

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spending a considerable amount of its pages describing the progression from physical attraction to physical intimacy in vivid detail. While I applaud the densely descriptive paragraph in defense of the value of singleness, it appears to be an afterthought and is eclipsed by the discussion of romantic and sexual relationships. Other noticeably absent topics include platonic friendships and discussion of the relationships of students with same-sex attractions. While these topics could warrant entire books themselves, Setran and Kiesling's failure to deliver any practical thoughts on these issues leaves a considerable void.

As a whole, though, *Spiritual Formation in Emerging Adulthood* is meaningful and informative. The authors utilize a sizable review of literature to make the case that mentoring is one of the most potent venues for spiritual formation. In a culture increasingly more individualistic, Setran and Kiesling argue such intimate and intentional communities of truth provide effective spaces for change—even if mentoring is inherently counter-cultural. With the research and experience to back up these claims, the argument is both welcome and timely.

"On the cusp of adulthood, twentysomethings need leaders who can teach and exemplify a vision of human flourishing that beckons them forth into a life of meaning and purpose" (p. 232). With this end goal in mind, Setran and Kiesling present a treasure trove of insight that proves invaluable for those working in institutions of higher education. No matter one's field of expertise or credentials, they are likely to find the authors' case compelling and knowledge applicable. Setran and Kiesling bring academic credence to the ongoing work of professionals in student affairs, calling us to envision a future of flourishing for our students, ourselves, and our world.

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Organizational Leadership: Foundations & Practices for Christians

Burns, J. S., Shoup, J. R., & Simmons Jr., D. C. (Eds.). (2014). Westmont, IL: InterVarsity Press.

Reviewed by Brian T. Starr, Ph.D.

While the practice of leadership is by no means new to the human experience, the study of leadership as a discrete academic discipline emerged quite recently in the modern university. Careful scholarly treatment of this discipline from a holistic Christian perspective is both needed and welcomed, and the recently published *Organizational Leadership: Foundations & Practices for Christians* provides an excellent addition to that body of literature. The concatenated work of evangelical Christian scholars, this text provides its readers a broad introduction to the field of leadership in general, theological reflections on Christian leadership in particular, and practical advice for those Christians who aspire to take on the leadership mantle.

The book is divided into three sections, and the opening chapter is Timothy G. Dolan's reflection on the divine call to leadership. Differentiating between God's primary call to all Christians and His secondary call to certain vocations or tasks, Dolan reminds us that discernment of such important matters must be done in the context of Christian community with careful attention devoted to ascertaining the compatibility of one's gifts, skills, passions, and convictions with the demands of leadership. Gayne J. Anacker and John R. Shoup devote the second chapter to unpacking the meaning and importance of worldview and then laying the groundwork for understanding leadership from the perspective of those who have adopted a worldview that is distinctly Christian. Rick Langer wraps up the first section of the book with an excellent chapter on the theological

underpinnings of Christian leadership and a sobering reminder that a biblical call to leadership "is a striking contrast to the modern American tendency to aspire to lead and to assume that a call to lead is unnecessary or else universally given" (p. 73).

One of the refreshing aspects of any volume with multiple authors is the diversity of writing styles. The second section of the book begins with Jack Burns' delightful river metaphor for understanding the emergence of leadership theory. Working his way from creation up to the modern "sea of complexity," Burns discusses ten major leadership schools in a helpful, concise summary of the history of leadership theory. This reflection sets the stage for his next chapter on the tenth leadership school, Christian leadership, nascent in its development within the current context of dynamic scientific discovery. Borrowing from the mathematical discipline of Chaos Theory, Burns challenges Christian leaders and organizations to define properly their "strange attractor" or ultimate goal. His selection of a visual display of the Lorenz Attractor is intriguing and reminds us that the journey from our current place to desired destination is not always linear.

The third and largest section of the volume takes readers from the theoretical realm to the world of actual practice, and those who are looking for deployable tools will be most drawn to these final chapters. Here they will find Ronald K. Pyle's thoughts on communication in the image of God, with a reminder of the importance of the often-neglected art of effective listening. They will be challenged by Jack Burns to discern when it is best to avoid conflict and, if conflict is necessary, they will find advice on how to negotiate the conflict successfully. They will navigate a very practical chapter by John R. Shoup and Chris McHorney on the process of decision making with a systematic treatment of common decision-making flaws and concrete steps toward making sound decisions. They will be reminded by R. Scott Rodin of the perils of money, frequently and implicitly dismissed by Christians in capitalistic societies, and will hear his critical admonition toward transparency in the raising, investing, and spending of an organization's financial resources. Finally, they will receive a necessary word from Timothy G. Dolan on the importance of sustaining the leader through personal margin, accountability, and lifelong learning.

Many readers will find this volume to be an engaging and helpful book. Doubtless, some objections will be raised. Theologically, the writers hail from the evangelical tradition and readers from other Christian traditions might find some areas of disagreement, though it seems likely that most resulting critiques will be relatively inconsequential in praxis. While the themes of the book flow logically and cohesively throughout, the diversity in writing styles from chapter to chapter will prove quite energizing to some, but less so to others. And though the book draws primarily from the academic field of leadership and will thus be well-traveled intellectual territory for most readers, Burn's use of metaphors from contemporary theories of mathematics and physics might prove unfamiliar to some.

Readers would be well advised to resist the tendency to stop reading when the numbered chapters close. The postscript is not an entirely comfortable read, but it is an important one.

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Before being properly and ultimately reminded that "Great Christian leaders are never alone" (p. 283), the authors recount the stories of Moses, John the Baptist, and Jesus. These tremendous leaders dealt with obstacles of every sort and magnitude. The temptation to think that Christian leadership will be a road easily traveled is quickly dispatched by biblical evidence that is quite to the contrary. Far too often in Christianity in general, and evangelicalism in particular, the theme of the great prophet Jeremiah is reduced to what we have recorded in verse 11 of the 29th chapter of his eponymous book. It is a great verse and a profound biblical truth. But there are less pleasant, and equally true, themes to be found in Jeremiah, and the rest of the canon too, which we are less likely to ponder and embrace. The editors Burns, Shoup, and Simmons, Jr. end their volume with faithful optimism only after they remind aspiring leaders that the call to follow Jesus, and lead others who would do the same, is a call to death. Readers of spiritual substance and intellectual honesty will appreciate this truth in advertising.

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The Next Christians

Reviewed by Paul Stonecipher

The college environment not only develops the critical thinking skills of college students, but higher education often brings students to engage those critical thinking skills toward their spiritual selves. And although *The Next Christians* by Gabe Lyons was not explicitly directed toward college students or toward higher education professionals, the author presents some challenging concepts certainly applicable to both audiences. This text is reviewed here to promote not just the critical analysis of our individual faith but provide some challenging perspectives on how that faith is expressed in the increasingly pluralistic environment which contemporary students and student development professionals encounter.

Following up on the provocative findings of *Unchristian* released in 2007, Gabe Lyons tackles the challenge of answering the question "so now what?" that naturally followed. It is through his work *The Next Christians* where the answers start to develop. Lyons represents the prototypical graduate of many Christian colleges and universities. Upon graduating from Liberty University, he became active in Christian leadership circles with his high-profile work. But Lyons admits he was honestly ashamed to call himself Christian; a statement many Christian college students probably can appreciate and identify with, especially those who attend or have graduated from a secular college. In this follow-up text, Lyons attempts to portray the next generations of Christians who are returning to the call of restoration and changing the way the world sees Christianity in the long term.

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Using a case-study approach in demonstrating his concerns regarding the perceptions of Christianity and the paradigm shifts he sees coming, Lyon's work is extremely applicable to Christians engaging in student development. Although Lyon's book does not explicitly discuss the higher education environment, his words are extremely poignant during this period when higher education is also exploring and redefining its mission and presence. The college, even the Christian college, is one of the seven channels of cultural influences this text encourages Christians to reengage. Written in three parts, *The Next Christians* self-admittedly does not declare new, ground-shaking concepts. Instead, every concept raised is actually as old as first-century Christianity, but each example is displayed using current and applicable case studies.

In "Part One: The World is Changing," Lyons illustrates the reality of a transition taking place in America. Founded in the rich data laid out in *Unchristian*, Lyons provides poignant stories and imagery of the perceptions of Christianity in America and the changing landscape. One of the most striking images is that of the French countryside where centuries-old villages were built around the church, occupying the center of culture not just for their religious roles but as centers of education, civics, artistry, and innovation. Today, many of these same places of worship have become nothing more than places of architectural interest for tourists. Exploring the post-Christian landscape of postmodernism and skepticism would strike many as a pessimistic and fearful discussion. Lyons views this as a rising opportunity for true cultural change.

In chapter three, Lyons lays out a spectrum of responses Christians have taken to dealing with the current culture, from separatist to cultural, explaining that a healthier, more effective and Christ-like approach lives in the heart of the "restorer." The last chapter of this section explores the Gospel, bringing back two "chapters" often forgotten in many evangelistic tellings: creation in the image of God and the call to join God in restoration.

"Part Two: The Restorers" illustrates seven significant paradigm shifts in the behaviors of Christians engaging culture: (a) provoked, not offended; (b) creators, not critics; (c) called, not employed; (d) grounded, not distracted; (e) in community, not alone; (f) civil, not divisive; and (g) countercultural, not relevant. In a context of social media-obsessed students, who despite having hundreds or thousands of "friends" or "followers" are feeling more isolated than ever, the chapter "In Community, Not Alone" can be especially powerful and full of application. Additionally, for a generation tired of hypocrisy and incivility (especially with regard to the church), the admonition to be "civil, not divisive" might come as a healing balm or a word of hope.

Brady Bobbink, a campus minister at Western Washington University, once compared reading a book, especially a Christian book, to eating fried chicken. He encouraged his students and interns to enjoy the good meat provided by the great authors, but to be aware of the bones to be thrown away. Such a provision might be wise here. Although some of his assertions might be a bit simplistic, the spectrum of Christian responses to culture or the seven characteristics of "the next Christians" for example, they do represent

a solid theoretical construct from which to begin the discussion. And his illustrations demonstrate the ways in which the variety of Christian responses to culture is as classic as the days when Jesus walked the earth. Lyons also uses examples or case studies some Christians would find objectionable or containing messy elements which might distract from the message being delivered, but this internal discomfort is also part of the point in that it promotes critical thought on why we are feeling this discomfort. All of these are prime elements for starting solid discussions on Christian behavior and practice for the next generation.

Lyons' work *The Next Christians* provides a great book for starting some deep conversations and ideas. This book requires more conversation, practical application, and deeper case studies, and I believe these are responses Lyons explicitly encourages. Having founded Qideas.org and hosting a series of conferences gathering leaders and innovators to converse on weighty issues, Lyons would encourage readers to find others to talk through what his book has to say. As student development professionals and administrators of higher education, we have a hand in shaping the very culture Lyons writes about. The very Millennials we advise and mentor are "the next Christians" of tomorrow. This book would serve as a powerful tool for discussion groups, readings for student leaders, and anyone realizing the importance of their roles in engaging the larger culture outside of our Christian circles of influence.

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View From the Top: An Inside Look at How People in Power See and Shape the World

Lindsay, D. M., & Hager, M. G. (2014).
Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Reviewed by Kirsten D. TenHaken

Michael Lindsay, in *View From the Top*, makes a contribution to leadership research that is unprecedented. Lindsay's 10 years of research, including in-depth interviews with 550 of the top CEOs and senior officials in the United States, comprise the largest leadership study of its kind which is, in itself, a remarkable achievement. The resulting work provides valuable insights into the characteristics and behaviors of many of the world's elite leaders. However, while Lindsay's explicit messages simply describe the view from the top, his implicit messages ascribe more value to these high-profile leaders than other leaders, therefore communicating that "the top" is a place everyone ought to aspire. In the field of Christian higher education, and especially in a student development context, the difference between these messages muddles a clear understanding of faithful leadership.

The central purpose motivating Lindsay's research and this book is clearly introduced: "It was in pursuit of a desire to know how power and leadership really work and can be used for pursuit of the common good that I undertook this research" (p. xii). Therefore, the narrative that follows provides a window into the lives of leaders who sit atop the world's most powerful organizations. As it progresses, however, Lindsay's explicit statement that *View From the Top* is for "those who aspire to the top" (p. xiii) is somewhat negated through other implicit messages. The descriptive narrative of the lives of elite leaders gradually morphs into a simultaneously prescriptive narrative of the course toward such elite leadership, implying leaders from all audiences must pursue this specific course.

In order to recount the power and leadership of high-profile leaders, Lindsay uses seven chapters to outline the seven principles that distinguish the characteristics and behaviors of these elite leaders from their peers. Consistent to all seven principles is the necessity of leaders having "the ability to maximize opportunity" (p. 132). Among other principles, Lindsay specifically highlights the necessity of networking and connections, the value of adopting a generalist or liberal arts approach to life, and the role of a catalytic experience in the development of a leader. He breathes life back into the results of his research through consistent use of stories that both invite the humanity of the reader and capture the humanity of the leader being exemplified.

To provide context for these stories and principles, in his introduction Lindsay offers a thorough description of an elite subset of leaders, platinum leaders, who possess both exceptional influence and skill at employing such influence. In an attempt to distinguish between these leaders and other leaders, Lindsay defines platinum leaders by "(1) the scale of their organizational influence … (2) their penchant for maximizing opportunity and catalyzing change; and (3) their talent for garnering trust and goodwill" (p. xiii). As Lindsay outlines the seven principles of leadership, he builds a case for the ways platinum leaders epitomize these three distinctions in all aspects of their leadership.

In the midst of Lindsay's relentless pursuit toward building a case for the value of platinum leadership, however, there lies the essence of my original critique: Lindsay's explicit message encouraging readers to learn from platinum leaders becomes an implicitly

cumbersome message communicating that platinum leadership is the ideal form, and perhaps the only valuable form, of leadership. The approach Lindsay utilizes even in introducing the idea of platinum leadership places greater inherent value on platinum leaders as opposed to more ordinary leaders, because he defines platinum leadership before he ever provides a general definition of leadership. When he eventually gets around to defining leadership as "the exercise of influence in the service of a shared cause" (p. xiv), the value of a leader who embodies this definition seems minimal.

Furthermore, as Lindsay details the seven principles of high-profile leaders throughout the text, he often concludes the description of the principle—and therefore, concludes the chapter—with at least a sentence that refocuses the reader on platinum leadership. For example, Lindsay concludes the final chapter on leading for good by writing, "Platinum leaders live lives of high risk and high reward, maximizing every opportunity to make the biggest impact" (p. 136). Lindsay employs two more sentences to make his ultimate conclusion here, but the point is null. He cannot redeem the fact that he implied, once again, that platinum leadership is the most impactful, and therefore, the most valuable form of leadership.

In the midst of all the ambiguity regarding Lindsay's explicitly descriptive narrative and his implicitly prescriptive narrative, I am left wondering how he would respond to the following question: Leadership, for what purpose? In his introduction and conclusion where more space exists for personal narrative, Lindsay demonstrates a deep sense of

appreciation and value for leadership outside of that which is considered to be elite leadership. He writes in the introduction,

> I'm now convinced that the most gratifying part of leading a major institution has little to do with achieving organizational goals or redirecting a company culture. Instead, the dividend of power comes from relatively small deeds, the most common example being investing in young people. (p. xix)

His narrative in the conclusion places similar value on faithful leadership regardless of sphere of influence, but nowhere in the narrative of the seven leadership principles did he feel inclined to communicate this value in order to minimize the negative implicit messages throughout. In this way, *View From the Top* leaves readers perplexed about the purposes for which they lead, if they even stop to consider that question.

In the end, Michael Lindsay ought to be commended for his exceptional contribution to the research literature on high-profile leadership. The insights he offers into the power and influence of the world's most prominent leaders is worthy of the consideration of any person seeking to develop their understanding of leadership, power, and influence. His work may be ambiguous due to the simultaneous descriptive and prescriptive narratives, but the lens through which this book is approached can significantly impact its potential for relevance. For those of us in Christian higher education, we must consider *View From the Top* as descriptive of high-profile leaders but not as prescriptive of an ideal form of leadership or a vision for faithful leadership in higher education. Through this lens, Lindsay's book will be of greatest potential value.

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Growth: The Journal of the Association for Christians in Student Development

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3. Research, theoretical, or applied articles dealing with the integration of faith and learning within the field of Christian Student Development or within the broader field of Christian Higher Education as a whole.
4. Reviews of articles in other journals relevant to Christian Student Development.
5. Reviews of books relevant to Christian Student Development practice.
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1. Send an electronic copy (double-spaced) in either a PDF format or Word document only, to sktrudeau@taylor.edu, Co-Editor of *Growth: The Journal of the Association for Christians in Student Development,* Taylor University, 236 West Reade Ave., Upland, IN, 46689-1001.
2. Follow the guidelines on format, style, and submission procedure provided in the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (6th edition).
3. Manuscripts should adhere to the following length parameters:
   • 10-15 pages for original research articles
   • 7-10 pages for applied research articles
   • 3-4 pages for article reviews
   • 3-4 pages for book reviews
4. Avoid submitting manuscripts which have been previously published or that are being considered for publication in other journals. If an article has been rejected by another journal, it may then be submitted to *Growth.*
5. Include an abstract of no more than 150 words on a separate sheet of paper.
6. Include the current *vita* information for each author: address, title, degree(s) and institutions where earned, and specializations.
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