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ABSTRACT

Students are coming to colleges and universities for spiritual fulfillment and have turned to religious student organizations (i.e. Campus Crusade for Christ, Newman Centers, Muslim Student Association, Hillel, etc.) to attain guidance and support. To better understand the spiritual environment religious student organizations have in place, many researchers have used the spiritual development theories of Sharon Parks. Parks theorized that "mentoring communities" need seven environmental elements in order to offer students the greatest chance for spiritual development.

The purpose of this study was to gain a better understanding of Parks' environmental elements adopted by religious student organizations to help support spiritual development. The research questions focused on students' perceptions of their religious student organization community and determined if a relationship exists between Parks mentoring community's theory and the members' spirituality. Using a quantitative research design, two surveys, the *Spiritual Well-Being Scale* and a self developed questionnaire, were administered to a hundred and seven students in a variety of religious student organizations at three institutions to gain a better understanding of the Parks' environmental elements within the religious student organization. Specifically, descriptive statistics, analysis of variance, and correlation analysis of the variables were used in this study to address/answer the research questions.

The findings revealed that the three religious groups studied (non-Christian, non-Denominational Christian, and Denominational Christian) had similar spiritual well-being scores, resulting from the Spiritual Well-Being Scale. The findings also revealed that high involvement in those religious student organizations did not mean a high spiritual well-being score and that Parks' theory of a mentoring community was

significant for Christian groups but not as helpful for non-Christian religious student organizations. The research concludes with suggestions for future research, especially for non-Christian religious student organizations.

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Although my name might be on the cover of this monumental document, it is arrogant to think that this study is the product of just one person. Sure, the work is mine and the late evenings writing, and writing, and writing are mine as well, but I would not be typing this page at all if it wasn't for the many motivators and supporters that graced my path along the way.

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CHAPTER ONE

What is my purpose in life? Who am I called to be? Why is life so difficult for some and easy for others? Am I on the right path toward happiness? These "big questions" are not new to the generation entering college, nor are they unique to any population. They have been lingering questions for college students since universities first opened their doors. Students are questioning their meaning and purposes in this world. They are searching for something more. They are searching for their sense of spirituality.

Students are coming to colleges and universities hungry for some type of spiritual fulfillment, and this quest is clearly seen in the Higher Education Research Institute (HERI) (2005, 2007) study on *College Students' Search for Meaning and Purpose*. This study which "summarized findings from a survey of 112,232 entering first-year students attending 236 diverse college and universities across the country" (HERI, 2005, p. 1) verified the demand college students have searching for spiritual development. In the report's conclusion, college students were shown to have heightened levels of spiritual exploration and interest. The report also stated that a majority of students (76%) are actively searching for places within college and university settings to explore their spirituality further and almost half (48%) say that it is essential or very important that colleges and universities encourage their personal expression of spirituality (HERI).

Background

Spirituality and religiousness, terms that will be discussed and defined in the following sections, have shown several positive effects on students' lives, from physical and psychological health, to a deeper civic responsibility, to more awareness and

tolerance of racial/ethnic diversity (HERI, 2005). In fact, "students who do not participate in religious activities are more than twice as likely to report poor mental health or depression than students who attend religious services frequently" (Hofius, 2004, ¶ 2). Low and Handal (1995) revealed certain religious dimensions, such as belief in God and/or a relationship with God or a higher being, positively impacted students' overall adjustment to college. This positive impact was even more prominent for first year students who were still experiencing transition issues. In addition, students who participated in spiritual activities also participated more in a variety of co-curricular activities instead of just secluding themselves to one particular group's activities (Kuh & Gonyea, 2006).

Other research also suggested students who perceived their spirituality as important in their lives were likely to have more satisfied life experiences than students with average or low spirituality (Zullig, Ward, & Horn, 2005). Kuh and Gonyea (2006) also claimed that students involved in spiritual activities spent less time "partying" and more time participating in structured activities hosted by the university. Their findings supported other research which suggested students with high levels of spirituality were also less likely to use marijuana and other illicit drugs (Berkel, Armstrong, & Cokley, 2004). In addition, the American Council on Education (ACE) published the Student Personnel Point of View in 1937 and again in 1949, one of the founding documents of student affairs, which specifically mentions the importance of spirituality in higher education as it states "the concept of education is broadened to include attention to the student's well-rounded development – physically, socially, emotionally, and spiritually – as well as intellectually" (1949,p. 17).

Unfortunately, students are often not finding paths of spirituality in the walls of higher education institutions. More than half of students (59.7%) said that faculty have never "encouraged discussions of religious/spiritual matters" and only 19.6% reported that their professors "frequently encouraged exploration of questions of meaning and purpose" (HERI, 2007, p. 2). Spirituality and religiousness currently does not have any value in the secular community of higher education, as many faculty and administrators conclude that the search for spirituality is a religious and personal venture that fits better in religious communities than in the classroom (Cherry, Deberg, & Porterfield, 2001; Nuss, 2003; Stamm, 2003). Even though spirituality is viewed differently than religion by students (HERI, 2005), spirituality has been nevertheless dragged out of the classroom of higher education with religion since most educators defined the two interchangeably (Chickering, Dalton, & Stamm, 2006).

One of the ways in which students may search for spirituality in secular institutions is through religious student organizations that sponsor religious activities and consists of a community of believers. These religious student organizations exist in many different forms from highly conservative groups to extremely liberal groups. They also cross many religions from Christianity (e.g. InterVarsity), to Judaism (e.g. Hillel) to Muslim (e.g. Muslim Student Association) to Buddhist (e.g. Soka Gakkai International) and many more. Campus Crusade for Christ boasts having more than 37,000 student members with more than 1,000 chapters on campuses and is the largest evangelical religious group in the United States (Campus Crusade for Christ, n.d.; McMurtrie, 2001). InterVarsity Christian Fellowship, which is rated as the second largest evangelical religious organization, has over 35,000 student members and over 560 campus chapters

(McMurtrie, 2001). Hillel states it has over 500 college chapters, and the Muslim Student Association gathers over 25,000 people at their conference every year (Hillel International, n.d.; Muslim Student Association, n.d.).

Many, if not all or most, religious student organizations claim to offer spiritual development to their participants through a variety of activities, services and faith sharing events. For example, religious student organizations can offer a sense of "union with community" which Love and Talbot (1999) claimed is essential for spiritual development. Students joining religious organizations that offer "union with community" have the potential to gain a greater sense of spirituality when sharing their faith with others that have similar faith beliefs. This fact does not deny that spirituality is very individualistic, but proposed that a shared sense of community can help foster spiritual growth (Bryant, 2004; Chickering, Dalton, & Stamm, 2006; Hulett, 2004; Parks, 2000). In fact, many religious student organizations have stated publicly through their mission statements the importance of establishing a supportive community for spiritual development. For example, Campus Crusade for Christ mentioned in their website, "We serve as a spiritual resource to students, providing information, training, relationships, opportunities and environments that are conducive to spiritual growth" (Campus Crusade for Christ, n.d., ¶ 4).

In addition, many religious student organizations acclaim belief in a higher power or life essence (e.g. InterVasity website, n.d. & Soka Gakkai International website, n.d.), which is an important aspect for spiritual development defined by Love and Talbot (1999). On the other hand, it is important to note that some religious student organizations are not based in any particular faith and clearly contradict the idea that a

higher power or life essence is essential for spiritual development (Rooney, 2003). So while a belief in a higher power or life essence is important for many religious student organizations it does not encompass all religious student organizations.

In order to better understand the spiritual environment that these religious student organizations create, the spiritual development theories of Sharon Parks (1986, 2000) have been used by a variety of researchers (Bryant, 2004; Chickering, Dalton, & Stamm, 2006; Love, 2001; Mayhew, 2004; Moore & Upcraft, 1990; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). Parks' work (2000), which expanded upon Fowler's faith development (1981) and purposely created stages of faith for young adults, recognized that "higher education serves – consciously or unconsciously – as a mentoring environment for the re-formation of meaning and faith" (p. 172). Her research and exploration provided higher education with a strong foundation for creating environments supportive of spiritual growth. Parks called these environments "mentoring communities" in which organizations can be evaluated. Parks theorized that mentoring communities needed to have seven different environmental elements in order to offer students the greatest chance for spiritual development. These seven environmental elements are: 1) Network of Belonging, 2) Big-Enough Questions, 3) Encounters with Otherness, 4) Habits of Mind, 5) Worthy Dreams, 6) Access to Images, and 7) Communities of Practice. These seven elements are the theoretical foundation for this research and will be explained in more detail in the next chapter. They give researchers guideposts by which organizations, which specifically focus on spiritual development, can be evaluated and studied.

Purpose of the Study

Some administrators have become cautious of religious student organizations because of fear of possible discrimination practices, separation of church and state laws, and possible brainwashing (Barlett, 2004; Farrell, 2004; Rooney, 2003). Yet other administrators praise the workings and activities of religious organizations as the students' only means of escape from a secular academic community (Cherry, Deberg, & Porterfield, 2001).

The purpose of this study was to gain a better understanding of the environmental elements that religious student organizations have adopted to help support spiritual development. Understanding the spiritual environment in these religious student organizations may help student affairs administrators and professional staffs who advise these organizations effectively assess the programs and services that these religious organizations offer students and therefore create more effective environments for spiritual development. As Lindholm, Bryant, and Rogers (2007) stated, "understanding where students are in their conception of spirituality may be useful for practitioners and faculty" (¶ 49). In order to accomplish this, the findings of the study will help determine the students' perception of their community in the religious student organization according to Parks' (2000) theory of mentoring communities, and then will verify if a relationship exists between the extent the organization matches Parks' theory and the members' spirituality.

Using a quantitative research design, a survey was administered to students in a variety of religious student organizations in order to gain a better understanding of the environmental elements employed by the religious student organization for spiritual

development. A spirituality score was attained using the *Spiritual Well-Being Scale* (Ellison, 1983). In order to determine which environmental element of Parks' (2000) theory of mentoring communities are perceived to apply to religious student organizations a survey was developed by researcher and then administered to students in religious student organization communities. Furthermore, this survey was also administered to non-Christian religious student organizations, such as the Muslim Student Association, in order to determine if Parks' theory of spiritual development was consistent with non-Christian communities of spirituality as well.

Research Questions

1. Is there a difference in students' perceptions of their spirituality among students in Christian vs. non-Christian religious student organizations? Within the Christian religious student organizations, is there a difference between those religious student organizations with a specific denomination versus organizations that are non-denominational?
2. Are students who label themselves more involved with a particular religious student organization score higher on spirituality measurements (i.e. Spiritual Well-Being Scale) than students who label themselves as being less involved with the religious student organization?
3. Are Parks' (2000) mentoring environmental elements present in religious student organizations? If so, is there a relationship between the student's perception of Parks' mentoring community elements within the religious student organization and the students' individual spirituality score?

4. Do students that identified more of Parks' (2000) mentoring environmental elements (i.e. Network of Belonging, Big Enough Question), in their religious student organization have higher levels of spirituality than those students who identified less mentoring elements present in their religious student organization?

Importance of the Study

Little research has been conducted regarding the characteristics of students joining religious student organizations and what impact the religious student organizations might have on the spiritual development among college students. Research that has been conducted has mainly focused on evangelical Christian groups and ignored other religions of faith (Bryant, 2004; Cook, 2000; Lowery, 2000; Lowery & Coomes, 2003; Magolda & Gross, 2009). This excludes many non-Christian students who participate in religious student organizations (e.g. Muslim Student Association). Data on the "mentoring environment" of all student organizations, regardless of religious preference, is important in determining how to best serve and support these organizations in helping students develop their spirituality.

In addition, the few studies that have focused on spirituality have mainly been qualitative studies (Bryant, 2004; Lowery, 2000; Parks, 2000). This study used quantitative methods to broaden the understanding of spirituality among college students at universities and colleges. Finally, this study is one of the few that used Parks' (2000) theory of mentoring communities to better understand the spiritual environment that college students are experiencing. Findings from this study determined if having Parks' elements of a mentoring community matters in the spiritual development of students in a religious student organization.

The findings from this study are critical in increasing institutions' knowledge of how religious student organizations build their spiritual community and how students in those communities perceive the groups' spiritual support. It is the researchers hope that this study has helped minimize the fear that some institutions place on spirituality by providing more information on how these religious organizations operate and inform institutions about the nature of spirituality as distinct from promoting a "state religion". Unfortunately, some researchers have declared that some settings within higher education have created a negative environment for learning because of the lack of understanding and empathy for a student's quest for spirituality (Krauthammer, 1998; Schultz, 2005; Speck, 1997). It is important to remember it is the spiritual development, not the religious development, which is the focus for institutional support and without this support higher education will be ignoring one major part of the student's holistic development. As Chickering, Dalton, and Stamm (2006) stated, "when spirituality is relegated to sacred occasions and places, colleges and universities compel many students to dissociate one of the most motivating and integrating forces in their lives from their academic goals and endeavors" (p. 170). Therefore, institutions of higher education can and should embrace the development of spirituality and they can do this without promoting a religion, perhaps by supporting these religious organizations.

The Student Personnel Point of View (American Council on Education, 1949), one of the core documents of higher education, states that the importance of education is to focus on the student's holistic development, including spirituality. Unfortunately, this is not always the case as spirituality is frequently not seen as many institutions shy away from spiritual development. The intent of this emphasis in research is to provide colleges

and universities with more information about spiritual development in "mentoring communities" and not to promote the delegation of responsibility for spiritual development to organizations without any thought for the different types of spiritual support these organizations might offer. Walters (2001) even stated that institutions need to take a closer look at these religious student organizations, so that the organizations have proper guidance to help foster spiritual development. With an improved understanding of religious student organizations and their functions, student affairs officers will be able to assist those organizations more effectively and purposefully.

Definition of Terms

The following terms were used throughout the study. A through explanation of religion and spirituality are mentioned in detail since these two terms are highly personal and subjective.

- *Active Membership*: Webster's College Dictionary (2001) defines membership as "the state of being or status as a member within an organization" (p. 898). Active membership, therefore, will imply more than just the status as a member but actively participating in the organization's activities (i.e. going to worship, community service activities, attendance at scheduled meetings, social gatherings, etc.).
- *Advisor/Mentor*: Advisors and Mentors are used interchangeably throughout this study. An advisor or mentor will be defined by a professional staff member who gives counsel to the group and makes recommendations concerning the organization of the religious student organization. Advisors/Mentors typically

work closely with the student leadership of the organization, although they are not limited to that.

- *Christian religious student organizations*: Christian religious student organizations will be defined by their belief in the divinity of Jesus as the son of God.
- *Majority religious student organizations*: Majority religious groups will be defined as any group that is Christian regardless of their denomination within Christianity.
- *Mentoring Community*: A mentoring community will be defined as groups of individuals who challenge and support each other in order to increase their holistic development (e.g. spiritual development).
- *Minority religious student organizations:* Minority religious groups will be defined as any group that is non-Christian.
- *Non-Christian religious student organizations*: Non-Christian religious student organizations will be identified as those religious student organizations who do not believe in the divinity of Jesus as the son of God.
- *Religion*: Defining the term religion can be difficult. The difficulty of defining religion was summed up by J. Milton Yinger who stated that "any definition of religion is likely to be acceptable only to its author" (as cited in Chickering, Dalton, & Stamm, 2006, p. 39). Nevertheless a definition must be used in order to better understand the study group, religious student organizations. Bryant (2004) defined religion as "a commitment to a supernatural power that is

expressed through ritual and celebration both individually and within the context of a faith community" (pp. 32-33).

- *Religious Student Organization*: Communities of individuals with a shared system of beliefs that participate in religious activities like praying, faith sharing, and community building activities (Bryant, Choi & Yasuno, 2003). Religious student organizations encompass many different student organizations which might deal with spiritual issues in one way or another. However, because of the magnitude of student organizations at colleges and universities, religious student organizations sought out for this study will be:
    - Recognized by the university or college as a registered student organization
    - Centered around a goal or mission which deals with spiritual fulfillment
    - A gathering place for students with a shared system of beliefs
    - A gathering place for prayer/meditation/reflection/worship
- *Spirituality*: Mayhew (2004) explained that defining spirituality is problematic in that the different definitions of spirituality are very subjective so it may not be something that can be perfectly defined for every individual. Unfortunately, conducting research on an ambiguous definition without trying to define it would create more problems than solve. Fortunately, several researchers (Bryant, Choi, & Yasuno, 2003; Bryant, 2004; Jablonski, 2001; Rodgers & Love, 2007), have used the spirituality definition proposed by Love and Talbot (1999). Using Love and Talbot's definition as a guidepost, spirituality has been defined for this study

as a personal process of making meaning of the world through the exploration or development of a relationship with a Higher Being or Power.

- *Student Organization*: Defined as any college organization whose membership and leadership is predominately student based, hold regular meetings on or off campus, and actively recruits college student membership for continued existence.

Organization of the Study

The organization of this dissertation study revolves around five chapters that detail the mentoring environment as described by Parks (2000) for spiritual development in religious student organizations. Chapter one gave an overview of the problem, purpose, and operational definitions of the study. Following this chapter, a comprehensive review of the literature regarding spirituality in higher education institutions will be highlighted. There will also be a thorough review of the theoretical framework (Parks) that guides this study. In chapter three, a detailed description of the methodology for the research design will be presented and how the data will be analyzed. Chapter four will provide more information regarding the quantitative data and will go into detail the results from the statistical analysis. Finally, in chapter five conclusions will be drawn from the data analysis as well as suggestion for further research into spirituality and religious student organizations.

CHAPTER TWO

Review of Literature

Literature pertaining to religious student organizations and spiritual development of traditional aged college students was reviewed. The purpose of this research is to gain a better understanding of the environmental elements religious student organizations have adopted to help support spiritual development. In order to accomplish this, the study will determine the relationship between Parks' (2000) theory of mentoring communities and the students' perception of their mentoring community in the religious student organization.

To better understand the scope of this study, a thorough literature review revolved around four main areas that help clarify the dimensions of religious student organizations as they pertained to spiritual development. The first section will examine the literature to see how "spirituality" and "religion" are defined and measured, but more importantly, how college students defined spirituality and religion and how students gave meaning to these two complex terms. This information will help clarify how students in religious organizations understand their personal spiritual development.

The next section of the literature review will explore the multifaceted relationship of spirituality and higher education. In particular, it focuses on why spirituality is so important to higher education; it examines the increased quests of college students towards spiritual fulfillment, and looked at some recent findings of spirituality among college students. This information is critical in explaining why higher education should be involved with the spiritual development of their students and how religious student

organizations get involved with that spiritual formation. In addition, there is also an exploration of spiritual development theories that predominantly focus on traditional-aged college students and a thorough look at the limited research on non-Christian spirituality in higher education.

The third section centers on religious student organizations. In particular, it emphasized the manner in which they fulfilled students' hunger for spirituality in their communities, the importance they play within higher education, and who might be joining these organizations. In addition, this section also investigates some of the complex issues that institutions of higher education have had (and continue to have) with religious student organizations. This review helps clarify why research was limited for religious student organizations in higher education.

The final section examines Parks' (2000) theory of mentoring communities, which was highlighted to be used as the theoretical framework for this research. Specifically, it reviews the environmental elements of a mentoring community which Parks claimed were important in the development of spirituality. Parks' research helped guide this research study in that an effective evaluation system was developed to better understand how religious student organizations mentor students during their spiritual development.

Association of "Spirituality" and "Religion"

It is important to distinguish between spirituality and religion. Many people use the two terms interchangeably and although they might have similar meanings, they do not mean the same to students or to researchers (Tisdell, 2003). Researchers have shown

that some students were more comfortable with the term spirituality than with the term religion (Cherry, DeBerg, & Porterfield, 2001; Cook, 2000; Dalton, 2001). Students perceived spirituality as more open and not completely defined and as something they are on a journey to discover, whereas religion was inculcated by their parents or other authority figures and was not something that they chose. It is important to understand that religion is not necessarily negative and spirituality positive. Many people found spirituality through religion and religious networks, although some found spirituality without religion (Bryant, 2004).

Chickering, Dalton, and Stamm (2006) reflected that religion used to be associated with personal transcendence and helping people make meaning of their lives, which is how many people now define spirituality, yet scholars and researchers, in trying to distinguish between the two terms, moved religion to be connected to religious institutions or churches, while spirituality was described to be more individualistic and personal (Hill, et al., 2000). Even though spirituality and religion are defined differently, by researchers they still embodied similar concepts such as the concept of the sacred and the search for meaning (Hill, et al.). Chickering, Dalton, and Stamm also mentioned a study at Indiana State University which concluded that "most students viewed the concepts of religiousness and spirituality as separable but significantly overlapping" (p. 88). Even though students seemed to be on a quest to find themselves through spirituality they may be doing that through religious practices (Cherry, et.al; Stamm, 2003). Rainey (2006) interestingly, noted that more than 50% of faculty have indicated that higher education should help students develop values and self-understanding, which are a part of spiritual development. Yet only 30% of the faculty believed higher education should be

concerned with spiritual development. Tisdell (2003) stated that it is the term of spiritually that seemed to make many faculty uneasy. Spirituality is perceived as a very personal experience in which the individual was "making meaning" of the world. Therefore, many faculty may have perceived that to be solely an individual student's responsibility and not something that should be brought up in the classroom for discussion and dialogue. Religion on the other hand, is more of a community experience where the community helps support the individual on their spiritual quest.

The assumptions and propositions of spirituality from Love and Talbot (1999) were used in defining spirituality for this study. Spirituality is defined as a personal process of making meaning of the world through the exploration or development of a relationship with a Higher Being. Some researchers may disagree with this proposition, as it clearly omitted those students who may not believe in a higher power. Chickering, Dalton and Stamm (2006) expressed that spirituality was also a part of atheists' lives, for atheists were also searching for meaning and "are trying to discover how to be fully human" (p. 8). However, for the purpose of this study, spirituality is only viewed from the perspective of students within religious student organizations, all of which believe in a Higher Being or power.

Importance of Spirituality in Higher Education

Spiritual development is no longer a growth process that is only experienced in churches, synagogues, mosques, or campus ministers' offices. It is now a renewed part of the lexicon of institutions of higher education, a part that many institutions choose to ignore. While many higher education institutions did not perceive the importance of

spirituality in universities and colleges, students came to colleges and universities hungry with a need for spiritual fulfillment (Wolfe, 2002). In fact, a key national study which illustrated this hunger for spirituality of college students was the Higher Education Research Institute (HERI) (2005, 2007) study on *College students' search for meaning and purpose*. This study provided good reasons that higher education institutions should focus on the spiritual development of their students. The report concluded:

1) college students were shown to have heightened levels of spiritual exploration and interest;
2) students were actively searching for places within college and university settings to explore their spirituality further.
3) Eighty percent of students have an interest in spirituality, 76% of students search for meaning and purpose in life, and 47% consider it essential or very important that there are opportunities to help them grow spiritually (HERI).

However, preliminary results for a re-testing of the freshmen as juniors indicated that as a student continued through college, there was a significant decline in attending a religious service from high school (52%) to junior year in college (only 29%) (HERI, 2006). This supported findings by other researchers, (Cherry, De Berg, & Porterfield, 2001; Lee, 2002), who stated that "being religious" declined throughout a college career. Conversely their findings also revealed that while students became less active in religious activities when they entered college, their commitment to spirituality actually increased (Bryant, 2009; Cherry, et al.). Even though earlier findings reported by Pascarella and Terenzini (1991) suggested that the importance of religion actually declined in students' lives throughout their college career, more updated research from Pascarella and

Terenzini (2005) suggested that the values and attitudes of religiousness may actually increase or stay the same throughout college. Although the HERI study did mention that faculty were not participating in spiritual discussions in the classroom, some research has indicated that faculty do implicitly develop students' spirituality since many of the discussions in the classroom revolve around topics that encompass spirituality (i.e. meaning-making, social justice, developing a clear identity, etc.) (Rodgers & Love, 2007). Indeed, Tisdell (2003) even suggested that spirituality was something that was always present in higher education but that was not often acknowledged.

Spiritual Development Theories

Even though higher education may have turned their back on the spiritual development of college students, many researchers began providing theories to explain the spiritual developmental process that many college students were experiencing. These theorists helped provide a solid foundation for spiritual development. Unfortunately, many researchers have failed to look at religious student organizations and how spiritual developmental theories can be used to help nurture those religious student organization's spiritual communities.

Nash (2001) suggested a narrative approach in dealing with students and spirituality. These narratives are powerful stories that provide insight to the student during his or her spiritual journey and give a rough typology of the type of student who is struggling with their spirituality. This typology departed from the mentality of progressive stages of development and focused more on the diverse ways students display spirituality. Pascarella and Terenzini (2005) helped to define typology models by stating

that "type models focus on differences in the ways individuals perceive their world or respond to it" (p. 45). Nash, through qualitative research done from 4 college courses he taught between 1998-2000, defined six spiritual narratives that students tell while in college in their search for meaning; orthodoxy, wounded belief, mainline belief, activism, exploration, and secular humanism. "Orthodoxy" referred to narratives where "Truth is unimpeachable, absolute, and final" (p.71). They do not question their faith or religious background. "Wounded belief narratives" were based on understanding the suffering in the world as it relates to their spirituality. Students who tell "mainline narratives" were comfortable with their own spiritual development and at the same time comfortable with other people's spirituality. However, they would rather not question or challenge their faith as it seems to threaten their stability in their spirituality. "Activism narratives" describes the narrative who works through their own religion or spirituality towards social justice and inclusiveness. They were less concerned about the dogma or tradition of religion and more connected to the community service that a religion may bring. The students under the "exploration narratives" were still searching for answers to their spirituality and find themselves looking more into Eastern religions than the Western traditional religions. Finally, the students who told "secular humanism narratives" looked to themselves to find answers to their spirituality and typically ignored supernatural forms of religion (Nash). Unfortunately, Nash's theory does not provide suggestions on how religious student organizations should operate in regards to spiritual formation.

Still another type of spirituality typology of college students was recently suggested by Lindholm, Bryant, and Rogers (2007) at the Joint Conference of American

College Personnel Association and National Association of Student Personnel Administrators in Orlando, Florida. Lindholm, et al. mentioned four different spiritual typologies for college students: religiously decided, spiritually identified, spiritual quester, and religious skeptic. Religiously decided students, similar to Nash's orthodoxy narrative, were ones who are strongly devoted to their faith and work to follow all of the teachings of their religion. Spiritually identified students were students who have formed their beliefs through thorough reflection. Spiritual questers, on the other hand, were still searching for their answers and may be satisfied to be constantly searching for meaning and purpose. Finally, religious skeptics were students who were very critical of religion and seek truth through science. This new typology provided a new look at spiritual development and encouraged the value of individual differences in spiritual perspectives.

Elizabeth Tisdell (2003) offered the idea that spiritual development is not linear and the developmental stages do not work. Instead, spiritual development was more of a spiral shape. She argued that as adults progress through spiritual development, most spiral back "to remember the life-enchanting elements of their religious tradition and their culture of origin while developing a more meaningful adult spirituality" (Tisdell, p.104). This "spiraling back" allowed adults to retrieve spiritual concepts from their childhood and place them in context with new ideas, experiences, and meaning from their adult life, which seemed to help the adult progress on their spiritual journey. Although many of Tisdell's participants were older (forties and fifties) than traditional aged college students, this "spiraling back" was important to understand, as many college students were able to reflect on their childhood, start to question which spiritual traditions they had as a child, and which ones were still relevant as a young adult. However, this theory

still does not seem to fit the mold of traditional-aged college students and their spiritual development.

Sharon Parks Spirituality of the Young Adult

This leads us to Sharon Parks (2000) and her work specifically with traditional-aged college students in spiritual development. She explored a stage where most theorists did not venture, the young adult. Her research and exploration provided higher education with a good background to creating environments that are supportive of spiritual growth. It was these environments that Parks called "mentoring communities" in which religious student organizations can be evaluated, and it was the catalyst for which this study analyzed religious student organizations and the environment they created for spiritual development.

Even though it was Parks' (2000) theory of "mentoring communities" that is the framework for this study (which will be discussed later), it is important to understand her four-stage model of spiritual development, as it gave a quality analysis of what traditional-aged college students were struggling with during spiritual development. Parks' (1986, see also Love, 2001) four-stage model (see below) consisted of teenager/adolescent, young adult, tested adult, and mature adult. These stages included three forms of faith which were: forms of knowing (the cognitive part of faith), forms of dependence (focused on how people's feelings and relationships affect faith), and forms of community (focused on the importance of communal links with one another in faith). See Figure 1. The forms of community are the main theoretical areas from which religious student organizations can be examined to determine how they encourage

students to develop spirituality. The following brief review describes Parks' (2000) four stage model:

Figure 1

Sharon Parks (1986) four-stage model of spiritual development

	Teenager/Adolescent	**Young Adult**	**Tested Adult & Mature Adult**
Forms of Knowing	Authority figure has knowledge	Construct own sense of faith	Okay not to know it all
Forms of Dependence	Dependent upon Authority figure – can move to counterdependence	Inner dependent	Inter-dependent
Forms of Community	Conventional & Diffuse	Mentoring Communities	Open to "other"

The first stage is adolescent; "This was a time of great ambiguity and uncertainty for individuals in their journey of faith development" (Love, 2001, p. 10). In forms of knowing, the authority figures tell the adolescents what they should know about their faith. This authority figure doesn't have to be a person. It can be a doctrine or a book (i.e. Koran, Bible, etc.). When shaken from their all-knowing authority, the student may shift in their spirituality development and accept all spiritual ideas as good as any other (Love, 2001). In forms of dependence, the person is dependent upon the authority figure. Their feelings are affected by what the authority figure is feeling. Students may later

experience counter dependence, which is the movement by the person against all authority (Love, 2001). In forms of community, adolescents may form two communities: conventional and diffuse. The conventional communities are mostly homogeneous, and members follow a set of cultural norms and rules. As the authority figure loses clout with adolescents, they move towards a diffuse community, which expands their community boundaries. Individuals do not attach themselves to any specific community but see themselves as a part of many communities (Love, 2001).

Stage two of Parks' model discussed the young adult. This is the stage where most traditional college-aged students were. Parks was one of the few theorists who actually developed a stage between adolescence and adulthood. In forms of knowing, students were starting to construct their own sense of faith which helped them make meaning of the world. In forms of dependence, students started to "listen within, with new respect and trust for the truth of his or her own insides" (Parks, 2000, p. 78). In forms of community, students found the most help with their fragile but healthy faith development through mentoring communities. Parks (2000) declared that the community in which young adults entered must offer challenge and support so that the student emerged with a strong sense of confidence in their own faith (Parks).

In the final two stages, tested adult and mature adult, Parks (2000) spent less time defining these. However, some mature seniors may be in the tested adult and mature adult stage, which was why it was important to understand these higher stages as many student affairs professionals interact with graduate students as much as traditional students (Love, 2001; Bryant, 2004). In forms of knowing, the tested adults and mature adults understood that they "do not know it all" and they became more at peace with

themselves through this understanding. In forms of dependence, adults in this stage felt more and more confident in their own abilities and knowledge but still recognized the importance of maintaining close relationships that helped form faith development (Parks, 2000). In forms of community, the tested adults form a community where they felt most comfortable in sharing their faith development. The mature adult welcomed other communities who might not share the same outlook on life (Bryant, 2004; Love, 2001).

Non-Christian spirituality in higher education

Unfortunately, much of the theoretical research on spirituality has been conducted with Christian groups and little research had been done in the higher education community regarding the non-Christian spiritual development of students. Many of the spiritual development theories had only examined Christian students and it was unclear if these theories even related to students who explored their spirituality through non-Christian traditions like Judaism, Islam, or Hinduism. In fact, some research has shown that students who identified with these minority religious groups (i.e. Judaism, Islam, Hinduism) had a higher probability of spiritual decline than students who affiliated with majority religious groups (Bryant & Astin, 2008). Speck (1997) had even suggested that some students who associated with the minority religion suffered educationally because of discrimination and prejudice that was seen through misinformed dialogue and a general lack of respect in the classroom that was not handled correctly by the faculty member. Yet administrators and researchers were still concerned about the spirituality of students from non-Christian backgrounds (Fisherman, 2001). Ochs (1991) went on to clarify that even though Judaism spirituality might look different than Christian spirituality, it was still extremely important and present in the Jewish student's life and

should be something that was given support to maintain growth. Regrettably, it is still unclear how non-Christian spirituality could be similar or dissimilar to Christian spirituality and what, if any, factors needed to be present in order for healthy spiritual growth to occur in the non-Christian population, specifically if Parks (2000) theory of mentor communities for spiritual development will even relate to non-Christian groups. This question directly related to this study in determining if Christian religious student organizations had the same environmental elements as non-Christian religious student organizations regarding spiritual growth.

Introduction to Religious Organizations

One must first understand the history of higher education to better understand the historical beginnings of religious student organizations. Since the beginning of higher education, spirituality has permeated the walls of institutions. In fact, spirituality was the main reason many colleges were created, as most colleges' sole purpose was to graduate new clergymen (Cherry, DeBerg, & Porterfield, 2001). One of the first institutions in the United States, Harvard University, was founded by the Congregational Church in 1636 (Rudolph, 1990). Many so called "secular" institutions, state colleges and universities even have Christian traces. Many had clergy presidents and faculty and mandatory daily chapel attendance (Rudolph; Marsden, 1994). Some of this spiritual history can be seen at certain public institutions today which still have chapels on their campuses (Stamm, 2003). The student life on campus even centered on religion and faith as the formation of Campus Y's and other religious student organizations began to take shape in the mid-nineteenth century and give college students a group for social and faith gatherings outside the classroom (Lowery, 2000).

However, in the early twentieth century, institutions started moving away from the influence of religion and toward a more scientific and research based truth. Numerous factors contributed to this movement in higher education; the rise of research based institutions vs. private institutions, the Industrial Revolution and its desire for more scientific research courses, the emergence of liberal Protestantism vs. traditional Protestantism, and the increase of religious diversity in the United States (Chickering, Dalton, & Stamm, 2006; Lowery, 2000; Marsden, 1994). Theological Christian courses were removed from the curriculum and religious organizations took an even larger role in teaching the Christian moral philosophy to students (Chickering, Dalton, & Stamm). This secularization movement pushed religion, and spirituality along with it, from the mainstream of thought, because they were seen as unscientific and lacking value except in religious studies' classrooms or organizations (Cherry, DeBerg, & Porterfield, 2001; Marsden, 1994; Stamm, 2003). This secular and scientific movement continued to grow throughout higher education for many years.

It is interesting to note that around the same time that Marsden (1994) stated that religion was eradicated from public American universities and colleges, other religious organizations began to take shape at these institutions. Jones (2005, cited in Magolda & Gross, 2009) comments that religious organizations, especially ones with a paid staff, started to fill the void left by the secularization of academia. Charters were formed for the Wesley Foundation (Methodist Organization) at the University of Illinois in 1913 (Heritage Landmark of the United Methodist Church, 2004), Hillel (Jewish Organization) at the University of Illinois in 1923 (Hillel, n.d.), and InterVarsity Christian Fellowship at the University of Michigan in 1938 (InterVarsity, n.d.), with the purpose of community

development and spiritual development within their specific religious belief. These are just a few of the many religious organizations that were formed in the United States.

About the same time the Immigration Act in 1965 became law and diversified the United States with increasingly more non-Judeo-Christian immigrants, Hindu, Buddhist, and Islamic organizations were being formed at universities across the country (Stamm, 2003). The Muslim Student Association became fully chartered in 1963 at the University of Illinois (Muslim Student Association, n.d.). Its purpose is to empower and to organize students who are interested or practice Islam to have an organization of support (Muslim Student Association). Not surprisingly, the birth of religious organizations gave non-religious schools and some religious schools even more reason to distance themselves from spirituality and religiousness since religious organizations gave students the opportunity to explore their faith.

Importance of religious student organizations and higher education

Religious student organizations were formed in the hopes of supporting students in their spiritual search. Bryant, Choi, and Yasuno (2003) acknowledged that institutions which have religious student organizations on campus helped foster spiritual development, especially in first-year students, for those who joined those organizations. They explained that many groups of students struggled with spirituality because they were away from their family, which was a solid foundation for them. Whipple (1996) asserted that many student activities, including student organizations, helped foster value development through community development. In fact, for some students the only connection they had to their school, besides the classroom, has been through their campus

approved religious organization (Hulett, 2004; Jablonski, 2001; Schulz, 2005). Research has shown that religious student organizations may also help the student develop through the stages of spiritual development since "involvement in spirituality-enhanced activities during college is strongly linked to a deepened sense of spirituality across all types of students" (Kuh & Gonyea, 2006, p. 46). However, recent research has suggested that certain non-majority religious students, particularly Jewish students, are less interested in spirituality and their religious student organization may be more for social and community gatherings than for spiritual need (Bryant, 2006). Walters (2001) maintained that institutions need to take a closer look at these student religious organizations so that the religious organizations have proper guidance to help foster spiritual development.

Characteristics of students within these religious student organizations

Who are these students joining religiously affiliated organizations on campus? Unfortunately, there has been limited research on who might comprise the membership of certain religious student organizations. Still, with the various researches on spirituality and religiousness among college students, an "educated deduction" about membership could be made. First, the findings of the HERI report (2005) asserted that 73% of students looked toward spirituality or religion to help develop their identity. Therefore, it may be assumed that students joining religious organizations are searching to develop their identity. It was also stated in the HERI report that more than 50% of college students tried to integrate spirituality in their lives. So it could be assumed that many students who explored their spirituality through religious means (ex: attending a religious retreat, praying, going to church, etc.) might have searched out organizations which promoted these types of activities. Another marker that revealed more about the

membership of religiously affiliated organizations was the political persuasion of the student. As stated earlier in this literature review, liberally inclined students were less likely to be religious (Bryant, Choi, & Yasuno, 2003; HERI, 2004; Lee, 2002). It was important to point out that even though liberal students were less likely to join a religious organization, it does not mean that one would not be exposed to liberal thinking in religious organizations (Bryant, 2004). As Bryant declared in her study, "religious group participants endorse a wide array of views that do not neatly align with either a strictly liberal or conservative political orientation" (p. 271).

Another possibility to determine who was joining religious student organizations focused on past religious experience. Students who had been a part of religious organizations or religious activities (i.e. going to church or synagogue) before going to college were more likely to participate in a religious organization in college (Bryant, 2004; Lee, 2002). Assuming that students in religious organizations experience religiousness and/or spirituality in their organization, then presumably there would be students with high degrees of self-esteem and better mental health than non-religious college students (Hofius, 2004).

Current Issues with Religious Student Organizations and Higher Education

Many students at a variety of higher education institutions conceal their religious beliefs and associations (i.e. membership in a religious student organization) for fear of retaliation by faculty and staff (Hulett, 2004). Some researchers have even suggested that because of the unwelcoming environment for spiritual dialogue, students are turning towards religious groups for spiritual development, and this seems especially true for

conservative Christian students (Schultz, 2005). This is directly in contrast to the missions of many higher educational institutions' missions regarding the development of the whole student. The Student Personnel Point of View (American Council on Education, 1949), one of the core documents of higher education, even stated the importance of education that emphasized the student's holistic development, including spirituality. Nevertheless, higher education remains cautious when dealing and interacting with religious student organizations; this is especially true for public institutions (Hoppe & Speck, 2005; Jablonski, 2001).

One possible reason why Student Affairs officers might be concerned about religious student organizations on their campus may be that some of the religious student organizations were found to be similar to cults (Scott, Buehler, & Felder, 2001). One organization called the Self Knowledge Symposium in North Carolina has recently been under fire for being accused of brainwashing students (Rooney, 2003). Increased attraction to cults and cult-like groups has grown popular in years past (Blunt, 1992; Elleven, Kern, & Claunch, 1998). This, understandably, concerned some administrators regarding the possibility that some religious student organizations were more cult-like than spiritual in nature (Love & Talbot, 1999).

Legal Issues Related to Religious Student Organizations

Another area of concern for many student affairs officers are the legal issues regarding religious student organizations, especially with public institutions. The complication of being a state school working with a religious organization makes these issues more burdensome and awkward. The belief that separation of church and state

means that religious student organizations should be held at "arms length" is incorrect. At public institutions, religious student organizations enjoy a number of privileges that are given to all student organizations. However, that hasn't always been the case. In 1972, the Board of Curators at University of Missouri-Kansas City (UMKC) created a policy that prohibited the use of the university buildings or grounds for activities many would say are common or synonymous with religious student organizations, those being religious worship or teaching (Kaplan, 1995). In 1977, a recognized religious student group, Cornerstone, continued to conduct their meetings on university grounds for activities that included worship and teaching and was denied permission to use any university meeting spaces or facilities. In response, 11 members of Cornerstone sued UMKC, alleging that the university had restricted their free exercise of religion and freedom of speech under the First Amendment. The university felt it was obligated to restrict support due to what is outlined in the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment, which states that "*Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion.*" After the District Court found in favor of UMKC, the Appellate Court reversed the District Court's decision. The appellate court said the activities were protected under the Free Speech Clause of the First Amendment and the university's restrictive policy was a content-based restriction on their religious speech (Kaplan). Moreover the discussion claimed that religious student organizations can neither be given special privileges or be withheld from privileges enjoyed by all other student organizations based on content. Of course, UMKC appealed the decision to the US Supreme Court. After hearing the case, the Supreme Court found in favor of Cornerstone and agreed with the Appellate Court in its reasoning (*Widmar v. Vincent,* 1981). In

determining its decision, the Supreme Court looked to see if the facilities that Cornerstone was using were used by other student organizations for speech issues. The court found that the facilities were used by many student organizations and thus "created a forum open to speech activities" (Kaplin & Lee, p. 526). Therefore, the university couldn't exclude one group because of its content, even if allowing that group could possibly advance a religious belief for the court stated "It is possible -- perhaps even foreseeable -- that religious groups will benefit from access to University facilities. But this Court has explained that a religious organization's enjoyment of merely "incidental" benefits does not violate the prohibition against the "primary advancement" of religion" (*Widmar*, 1981, p. 9). The court went on to say that the university didn't have to create a facility where student organizations could hold events and practice free speech but because it did it had to follow the Free Speech Clause. Although the court did acknowledge that the state of Missouri did have a compelling interest in preserving the separation of Church and State, the court said that by allowing Cornerstone access to the facilities wasn't necessarily advancing a religion but inhibits religion in expressing themselves. This proved to be a landmark decision and was one of the first cases in which the courts had to weigh the value between the Free Speech Clause and the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment. This case ensures access to public facilities at a public institution for religious student organizations. In addition, the university or college is not assumed to support the messages communicated during those religious meetings (Kaplan & Lee).

Another issue frequently associated with religious student organizations is the common practice of distributing student activity fees. Some question if a state school can

give activity fee money (public money) to a religiously affiliated student organization. This question came to the forefront in two important legal cases: *Rosenberger v. University of Virginia, 1995* and *Board of Regents v. Southworth, 2000*. The Rosenberger case involved Wide Awake Publications (WAP), a recognized religious student organization at the University of Virginia that printed a magazine to facilitate discussion about Christian viewpoints (*Rosenberger v. University of Virginia,* 1995). The University of Virginia had a policy in place that excluded certain organizations (fraternities, sororities, political, religious organizations and those that have exclusive membership policies) from receiving money dispersed by the student government collected from the student activity fee. Due to this policy, WAP was denied funds that would support the publication of one of their issues. WAP sued the school, claiming this to be discrimination in violation of their rights. After several years of appeals, the Supreme Court ruled, in a close five-to-four decision, that the policy constituted viewpoint discrimination and that restricting free speech was not necessary to comply with the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment. Furthermore, the court concluded that the activities fund wasn't created to support a religion, it was created to help all student organizations regardless of what speech it supported and by denying a religious student organization funding based on what they might say is a violation of the free speech and doesn't mean the university is supporting their religion (*Rosenberger v. University of Virginia,* 1995).

The *Board of Regents v. Southworth* case is also a significant one regarding student activity fees and religious student organizations. The University of Wisconsin system is one of many school systems and institutions that require full-time students to

pay a student activity fee in addition to tuition. However, in 1994-95, some students and alumni filed suit against the university, claiming that a mandatory student activities fee violated their rights to free speech and free association granted to them under the First Amendment. The students who filed the suit said their fee would inherently be used to fund political or ideological viewpoints and groups that profess and disseminate beliefs contrary to their own. The case went all the way up to the US Supreme Court, which reversed an earlier decision of the Court of Appeals and District Court. In its opinion, the Supreme Court said that:

> (1) the First Amendment permits a public university to charge students a mandatory student activity fee that is used to fund a program to facilitate the free and open exchange of extracurricular student speech, where (a) the university's mission is served by providing students with the means to engage in dynamic extracurricular discussions of philosophical, religious, scientific, social, and political subjects, and (b) there is viewpoint-neutrality in the allocation of funding support to student organizations that engage in such speech; (2) the university's viewpoint-neutrality requirement in the process for reviewing and approving allocations from the student activity fund and the student services fund was sufficient, for First Amendment purposes, to protect the rights of objecting students; and (3) a remand was necessary and appropriate to resolve the question of the First Amendment validity of the student referendum mechanism, which appeared to permit the exaction of fees in violation of the viewpoint-neutrality principle. (*Board of Regents v. Southworth,* 2000, summary ¶ 2)

In the end, as long as the process of rewarding student activity fee funds is viewpoint neutral to the content and is serving part of the university's mission, the act of requiring student activity fees is permissible and thus acceptable to distribute to religious student organizations. Although this case was not directly about religious student organizations the effect of this decision was vital for all religious student organizations at institutions of higher education. If the Supreme Court did not overturn the Court of Appeals' decision, the process for religious student organizations to get funding would become much more difficult and close to impossible at some institutions.

Finally, one of the biggest issues to recently flood the court systems is the issue of membership within a religious student organization. Many universities and colleges are now requiring all student organizations to sign their non-discrimination policy when registering at the institution. This non-discrimination policy usually involves an agreement that student organizations will not discriminate based on various characteristics as it relates to membership and/or leadership within the organization. This non-discrimination policy has become an issue with many religious student organizations in which membership is limited to students who share similar beliefs. Some religious student organizations are refusing to sign the university non-discrimination policies, believing it would violate their rights secured by the First and Fourteenth Amendments to the Constitution; yet institutions of higher education think it is a compelling state interest to eradicate discrimination within their campus (Barlett, 2004; *Chronicle of Higher Education*; 2003; McMahon, 2006).

There are three significant legal cases involving religious student organizations and non-discrimination policies; *Christian Legal Society v. Walker* (2006), *Alpha Iota*

Omega v. Moeser (2006) and *Christian Legal Society v. Mary Kay Kane* (2006/2009). The *Christian Legal Society v. Walker (2006)* and the *Christian Legal Society v. Mary Kay Kane* (2006/2009) are the most recent and most relevant since it was heard by the United States Court of Appeals, while the *Alpha Iota Omega v. Moeser (2006)* was heard only by the District Court.

The *Christian Legal Society v. Walker* case took place at Southern Illinois University at Carbondale (SIUC). The Christian Legal Society (CLS), during the 2004-2005 academic year, was one of seventeen recognized student organizations at the SIUC law school. "CLS is a nationwide association of legal professionals and law students who share (broadly speaking) a common faith-Christianity. Members are expected to subscribe to a statement of faith and agree to live by certain moral principles" (*Christian Legal Society v. Walker*, 2006). Some of those certain moral principles have to deal with members' sexual behavior. Strictly speaking, homosexual acts are forbidden, as well as other sexual acts. The law school dean received a complaint about CLS membership policies, which stated that it prohibited homosexuals from becoming voting members. The law school dean approached CLS and asked them to change its membership policies. Christian Legal Society refused and the dean repealed CLS's registration status on the basis that it violates the Affirmative Action/Equal Employment Opportunity policy and the school's non-discrimination policy. As a result of their dismissal as a registered student organization, they were "denied access to law school bulletin boards, representation on the law school's website or in its publications, the liberty to refer to itself as the SIUC chapter, stripped of their faculty advisor, free use of the SIUC School

of Law auditorium, access to the law school's list-serve, and any funds provided to registered student organizations" (*Christian Legal Society v. Walker*, 2006).

In response, CLS filed a lawsuit against the school's claim that SIUC was violating their First Amendment rights of free association, free speech and free exercise of religion. The District Court denied their request. Christian Legal Society appealed to the United States Court of Appeals-Seventh Circuit, and in a two-to-one decision, the appeals court reversed the lower court's decision and said there was a violation of First Amendment rights to CLS. The court concluded that forcing CLS to take members that CLS does not want violates their freedom of association rights. "When the government forces a group to accept for membership someone the group does not welcome and the presence of the unwelcome person affects in a significant way the group's ability to advocate its viewpoint, the government has infringed on the group's freedom of expressive association" (*Christian Legal Society v. Walker*, 2006). In addition, the appeals court concluded there was a violation of free speech rights, as the university tried to limit the forum of what CLS can voice when it comes to homosexuality.

The court clearly states that the First Amendment trumps all other membership discrimination practices an organization might put into practice. State schools need to review their non-discrimination policies and their policies pertaining to membership in student organizations. This is important because it protects the diversity of student organizations on college campuses. Many student organizations, not just religious ones, would be in jeopardy of losing their identity if non-discrimination were higher than the First Amendment. Multicultural organizations would be forced to let people in that didn't believe in their diversity spirit. Single sex organizations would be forced to let people of

the opposite gender into their organizations. The diversity of thoughts and ideas would be shared only in "underground" organizations or in the classroom.

However, the *Christian Legal Society v. Mary Kay Kane* (2006/2009) was recently heard by the federal court of appeals that directly contradicts the Walker case. In this case, the courts insisted that constitutional rights were not violated by forcing student organizations to sign the non-discrimination policy. Instead the non-discrimination policy was deemed as view-point neutral and reasonable and thus did not violate a student organizations free speech rights. This ruling only continues to exasperate the confusion administrators have in determining what rights religious student organizations might have, since both federal appeals courts counteract each other. These are only a few examples of some of the legal issues surrounding religious student organizations and higher education.

Theoretical Framework for this study

As mentioned before, it was the forms of community from Parks' (2000) four stage theoretical model that "mentoring communities" emerged, and thus gave higher education a foundation to evaluate and advise religious student organizations when creating an environment for spiritual development. Parks theorized that mentoring communities needed to have seven different environmental elements in order to offer students the greatest chance for spiritual development.

These seven environmental elements are:

a) Network of Belonging, which gave students a space where they felt comfortable and supported to explore their spirituality.

b) Big-Enough Questions, are questions that expanded students' thinking. The mentoring community created an environment where big questions about faith, purpose in life, meaning are encouraged and nourished.

c) Encounters with Otherness, gave students an opportunity to interact with other people that "different" from themselves. "Encounters with otherness are the most powerful sources of vital, transforming questions that open into ways of making meaning that can form and sustain commitment to the common good" (Parks, 2000, p. 139).

d) Habits of Mind invoked the spiritual community to promote dialogue, strengthen critical thinking, assist the ability to connect and organized thoughts, and give time for reflection.

e) Worthy Dreams gave the students in the environment the ability to imagine themselves in the adult world. "A worthy dream is an imagination of self as adult in a world that honors the potential of the young adult soul" (Parks, 2000, p.146).

f) Access to Images is the element where the student had access in the spiritual environment to images of suffering, wonder, hope, transformation, self, and the interrelatedness of the world.

g) Communities of Practice, these were practices of hearth, which was "where we are warmed in both body and soul" (Parks, 2000, p. 154). It was also practices of table where we gathered together to share meals together. They were also places where people gathered together to create a community.

These seven elements were the theoretical foundation for this research. Parks' theoretical framework was chosen as the foundation of this study because it was one of the few spiritual theories which gave researchers guideposts by which organizations can be evaluated and studied. The seven environmental elements proposed by Parks provided communities, who work to develop spirituality for their members; this could be used as a tool in which they could maximize the potential for students to grow spiritually. Unfortunately, research on religious student organizations has not used Parks' theory of "mentoring communities" to establish what environmental elements in which these communities might excel and struggle to provide for their student members. This research used this knowledge in order to better understand religious student organizations and also to develop a way in which religious student organizations could be evaluated and thus be cultivated to become a community in which spiritual development grows and flourishes.

However, Parks' (2000) theory did not come without some severe limitations. She used a majority of Caucasian and Christian students in her studies and it was unknown whether her theories could be used universally, which begged to question if her theories could be used for non-Christian students and their specific faith development (Chickering, Dalton, & Stamm, 2006; Mayhew, 2004). This was another reason why this study was developed, so Parks' theory of mentoring communities can be "tested" on non-Christian religious student organizations.

"Mentoring communities" in religious student organizations

No research has been conducted to determine if Parks' (2000) theory of mentoring communities relates to religious student organizations. However, a review of literature

available from religious student organization web sites offered an insight into how Parks' theory connected to religious student organizations.

The first requirement for establishing a mentoring community was to create a "network of belonging" (p. 135). The mentoring communities helped create a network of belonging by creating a safe and welcoming environment which helped support and challenge the student at whatever spiritual development stage they were experiencing (Parks). These communities helped encourage the development of inner-dependence (Parks, 2000). As Tisdell (2003) explained, it was "creating an environment and a space where people can bring their whole selves into the learning environment and acknowledge the powerful ways they create meaning through their cultural, symbolic, and spiritual experience, as well as through the cognitive" (p. 42). Some religious student organizations had several statements that supported the idea of creating a network of belonging. The Hillel's mission was to "maximize the number of Jews doing Jewish with other Jews" which is basically saying bringing Jews together to create a meaningful and supportive community (Hillel: Who, What Where, Why, n.d., ¶ 2).

A mentoring environment must be an environment that facilitates and welcomes "big-enough questions" (Parks, 2000, p.137). These were questions that challenge and explore the inner spirituality of college students. Questions might include "Who do I really want to become?" or "Is there a master plan?" or "What is my religion and do I really need one?" or "What is society, or life, or God asking of me?" (p.137). "Big questions" pertained to developing a critical mind. Students were encouraged to ask these questions while also sometimes understanding that no one can answer these questions except the person asking them (Parks). In an observational study, Bryant

(2004) noticed that a particular Christian religious organization which she was studying actually developed a day where students were encouraged to ask all sorts of challenging questions from faith to purpose in life. The results were that students were developing a critical mind that could answer "big questions" about faith and spirituality. Hammer-Kossey (2003) even affirms the importance of creating an environment for Jewish faith seeking students where they are allowed to ask questions of faith that will ultimately lead to a growth in spirituality. The Hindu Student Organization even stated that they attempt to explore their faith through open forums, debates, and guest speakers (Hindu Student Organization – University of Southern California, n.d.).

Still another element in which mentoring environments offered students spiritual development opportunities was through the opportunity to encounter otherness (Parks, 2000). As students learned about the differences among other faiths of worship it may have helped them solidify their own spirituality. According to Parks, in the communities where diversity of new ideas and thoughts were welcomed that spurred spiritual development. Lindholm agreed with the idea of giving students opportunities to interact with other faiths from research conducted from the HERI report, in an interview conducted by Bryant (2009). Bryant suggested that students who did interact with "otherness" actually saw greater spiritual growth than students who did not have much interaction with religious and spiritual diversity. Safi (2005) went on to state the importance of spiritual diversity and knowledge for spiritual growth of the Muslim student and how students of an Islamic faith needed to push for truth regardless where it may be found. Magolda and Gross (2009) further stated how these dialogues and interaction with "otherness" would enhance even the most conservative religious

organization. Unfortunately, most religious organizations are homogeneous in race, religion, and age and encounters with diverse faiths or ideas are probably limited, especially in evangelical organizations (Magolda & Gross). Yet Bryant (2004) claimed there did not seem to be any delay to a student's development of cultural awareness by joining a religious organization. Lee (2002) also noted that encounters with others from different beliefs did not play a major role in determining if a college student would have stronger or weaker religious convictions. However, she suggested student affairs professionals should encourage students to participate in activities (i.e. community service projects or study abroad) which will give them the opportunity to encounter otherness. Most religious organizations do provide opportunities of community service within their chapters. For example, Habitat for Humanity, a ministry based on the conviction of following the teachings of Jesus Christ through service, has worked countless hours on building houses for low-income families (Habitat for Humanity: A Christian Ministry, n.d.).

Mentoring communities were also found to engage students in "habits of mind" (Parks, 2000, p.142). Habits of mind are about creating a healthy behavioral response of dialogue, critical & holistic thought, and contemplation. The communities that develop "habits of the mind" are communities that encourage dialogue of faith and spirituality, combined with critical thinking skills and time to reflect upon the dialogue. Dialogue is critical between the advisor or faculty of the community and the students. Mentoring consists of listening and speaking clearly about feelings, thoughts, and ideas. These environments encouraged the continued practice of helping students develop these important "habits of the mind." It is the advisors of these organizations who must

oversee continued dialogue with students so that they can listen to the students' spiritual journey and become guides for them along the way (Magolda & Gross, 2009). Walters (2001) pointed out student religious organizations that did not have a professional advisor or faculty advisor seemed to have a lack of guidance and organization. Students had a much higher level of satisfaction if a religious organization either had a paid staff member or devoted volunteer advisor.

Another aspect of mentoring communities was that it helped students form "worthy dreams" (Parks, 2000, p. 146). A worthy dream helped students place themselves in the world with a vocation or calling. Many students might come to a religious organization in pursuit of a dream. They may look for a place to better understand how their religious beliefs coincide with those of the outside world. Several student organizations encouraged their members to develop worthy dreams so they could envision themselves becoming missionaries to the world. One example of this was in the Fellowship of Christian Athletes' vision statement which promoted placing one's self in the world as either an athlete or coach to positively impact others for Jesus Christ (Fellowship of Christian Athletes, n.d.). Another example of this is when students give "talks" during a religious organization meeting about a "calling" that they have received during the year. They then share this "calling" with others so that other people in the religious organization can better understand their own vocation or calling (Magolda & Gross, 2009).

"Mentoring community is itself a community of imagination, offering images of truth, transformation, positive images of self and of the other, and images of interrelatedness" (Strange, 2001, p. 63). Religious student organizations are filled with

stories that spur optimism and show the positive aspects of what it means to fully embrace one's beliefs. The history alone for most of these organizations was remarkable and rich with images of hopefulness and unexpected growth. The Wesley Foundation had no money when it started and its founder worked continually to raise money to minister to college students and eventually raised enough money to build a Wesley Foundation building in 1920 specifically for the college ministry (Heritage Landmark of the United Methodist Church, n.d.). Bill and Vonetter Bright founded Campus Crusade for Christ at the University of California in Los Angeles in 1951, and in nine short years it had spread to more than 40 campuses and two countries (Campus Crusade for Christ, n.d.). Tisdell (2003) went on to state that women especially looked for positive spiritual symbols to help them develop in this patriarchal world. This information is important for many religious student organizations so they can surround themselves with images and symbols that show the importance and powerful presence of women in spirituality.

Finally, Parks (2000) proposed that a mentoring environment should be a place where students engaged in "practices of hearth, table and commons" (p. 154). Hearth refers to a place of warmth and comfort. It was where students "hang out" and talk and reflect on the world. Many religious organizations offer a place of comfort like a lounge or chapel, or meditation area where students were encouraged to talk or just sit and relax (Parks). Most Newman Centers for Catholic students were buildings built for students to "hang out" and just be comfortable. The University of Missouri-St. Louis Newman Center was no exception, as it offers a large common area with couches, television, and a fully stocked kitchen (Newman Center: Virtual Tour, n.d.). The practice of the table was very similar to the practice of hearth. It was a place where students "learn delayed

gratification, belonging, commitment, and ritual" (Parks, 2000, p. 156). Simply put, it was a place where people eat and enjoy fellowship with one another. Several religious organizations promoted activities that share dialogue and fellowship over food. Chi Alpha at the University of Missouri-Rolla, a Christian Fraternity, organized a dinner and fellowship every other Friday (Chi Alpha at the University of Missouri-Rolla, n.d.). Lastly, the practice of establishing a commons area is important in a mentoring community. This place of commons is where students could go to hear stories of inspiration or worship as a group. Religious student organizations are often well developed and therefore can establish places for students to worship or meditate. The question that still needs to be answered is whether these environmental elements, which Parks' (2000) stated are so important to spiritual communities, are truly present in religious student organizations.

Conclusion

This literature review examined four areas of spirituality and its influence on religious student organizations. The first section considered how traditional aged college students defined religion and spirituality. A definition of spirituality was solidified in the work of Love and Talbot (1999). The second section answered the question of why this topic of spiritual development and religious organizations was important and was answered through the obvious growing hunger for spirituality among college students as illustrated by the HERI report (2004). The exploration of faith development theory developed by Sharon Parks (2000) and the typology of Nash (2001) and Lindholm, Bryant, and Rogers (2007) has grounded student affairs in a strong knowledge of spirituality. In addition, information was reviewed on non-Christian spirituality and the

lack of research available for non-Christian religious student organizations. In fact, non-majority religious research (i.e. Buddhism, Islam, Hinduism, etc.) in higher education was significantly lacking (Bryant, 2006). Further research was needed in the area of non-majority religious student groups to better understand their spiritual development needs. The third section centered on the development and purpose of religious student organizations. Also the question of why student affairs departments were reluctant to establish close connections with religious student organizations was evident through the legal battles presented and questions of ethical practices within the religious student organizations. Finally, Parks' (2000) theory of mentoring communities and the guidelines to establish those communities which are "a network of belonging, big-enough questions, encounters with otherness, important habits of mind, worthy dreams, access to key images, concepts, and practices that mediate these gifts" (p. 135) was specifically examined as the theoretical framework for this study. Parks' research was further enhanced to help establish guidelines and evaluation tools for religious student organization as they facilitate spiritual development within their community. Overall, the research suggested the need to explore how religious student organizations (regardless of Christian or non-Christian) form a spiritual community and how Parks' theory of mentoring communities can help facilitate a way to improve those religious and spiritual communities.

CHAPTER 3

Methodology

This chapter outlines the selection of subjects, design of the study, explanation of the instruments, data collection procedures, and the statistical techniques that were used to analyze the data. Students are coming to colleges and universities hungry for some type of spiritual fulfillment, and this quest is clearly seen in the Higher Education Research Institute (HERI) (2005, 2007) study on *College Students' Search for Meaning and Purpose*. Yet, many institutions are not providing the necessary spiritual development for a variety of reasons (i.e. separation of church and state, not seen as an academic issue, unsure on how to guide student's spiritually, etc.) (HERI, 2007; Rainy, 2006; Nuss, 2003; Stamm, 2003; Cherry, Deberg, Porterfield, 2001). Some students are consequently finding their spiritual development by joining religious student organizations (Magolda & Gross, 2009). However, little is known about the type of spiritual environment that these religious student organizations create or how higher education can assist them to help students develop spiritually. This research is needed because little research has been done on how religious student organizations help college students to grow spiritually.

The purpose of this study was to gain a better understanding of the environmental elements, as defined by Parks' (2000) theory of mentoring communities that religious student organizations have adopted to help support spiritual development. Understanding the spiritual environment in these religious student organizations may help student affairs administrators and professional staffs who advise these organizations effectively assess the programs and services that these religious organizations offer students and therefore

create more effective environments for spiritual development. In order to accomplish this, the intent of the study was to determine the students' perception of their community in the religious student organization, according to Parks' (2000) theory of mentoring communities. This information then assisted the researcher in determining if a relationship existed between the environmental elements present in the organization, as stated by Parks', and the members' spirituality score as reported by the Spiritual Well-Being scale (Ellison, 1983). The research questions guiding this study were:

1. Is there a difference in students' perceptions of their spirituality among students in Christian vs. non-Christian religious student organizations? Within the Christian religious student organizations, is there a difference between those religious student organizations with a specific denomination versus organizations that are non-denominational?
2. Are students who label themselves more involved with a particular religious student organization score higher on spirituality measurements (i.e. Spiritual Well-Being Scale) than students who label themselves as being less involved with the religious student organization?
3. Are Parks' (2000) mentoring environmental elements present in religious student organizations? If so, is there a relationship between the student's perception of Parks' mentoring community elements within the religious student organization and the students' individual spirituality score?
4. Do students that identified more of Parks' (2000) mentoring environmental elements (i.e. Network of Belonging, Big Enough Question), in their religious

student organization have higher levels of spirituality than those students who identified less mentoring elements present in their religious student organization?

Research Design

In order to address the research questions proposed in this study, the researcher chose a quantitative design in order to start to balance out much of the qualitative research done on religious student organizations (i.e. Magolda & Gross, 2009; Bryant, 2004; Lowery, 2000; Parks, 2000). Sharon Parks' (2000) theory on mentoring environments for spiritual development was the framework for this study. Little or no research has been conducted regarding Parks' theory of mentoring environments, so this was an original design.

Setting and Participants

The participants in this study were undergraduate college students who were actively involved in Christian and non-Christian religious student organizations. The participants came from three different universities in the Midwest, two private and one public. All three universities were accredited four-year institutions and one of the private universities is affiliated with a religious denomination, while the other one was not affiliated with any religious denomination. The reasons these three universities were chosen for this study was the sample size of religious student organizations and the convenience in getting access to the students at these universities. These universities were identified as formally recognizing several religious student organizations. In an informal review of the universities web sites, 16 Christian based religious student organizations, 2 Muslim religious student organizations, and 4 Jewish religious student

organizations were identified as possible research population samples. Therefore, the data collected from these universities offered the best opportunity to collect the most information from a variety of religious student organizations. The religious student organizations solicited for this study were all recognized by the university as a registered student organization. Official recognition by the university was useful for this study as it allowed the researcher to identify those religious organizations through web sites and campus postings.

Specific numbers of the overall population of participants were not known, as membership in those organizations changes from semester to semester. Therefore, it was also difficult to say with certainty how many could have responded to the questionnaire.

All students within each of the religious student organizations identified were given the opportunity to participate in this study. Only those students who volunteered to respond to the questionnaire were surveyed; however, those students who had an active membership within the religious student organization were analyzed with more scrutiny. In order to identify students who were "actively involved" and students who were not, a self reported score of participation in the religious student organization was asked in the questionnaire (See Appendix B).

Instrumentation

The following two instruments were used for this study: Spiritual Well-Being Scale (Ellison, 1983), and a measurement tool, the Religious Student Organization Environmental Questionnaire, this measurement tool was created by the research based on Parks' (2000) theory of mentoring communities and the environmental elements in

those mentoring communities. The first instrument, the Spiritual Well-Being Scale, was developed by Craig Ellison and Raymond Paloutzian in 1982. It is a 20 question survey with a six point Likert scale ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree" (See appendix A for a copy of the survey). This assessment has become a staple in religious and spiritual studies and was one of the more popular ones in the field of psychology of religion and spirituality (Hill, 2005). The Spiritual Well-Being Scale measures two dimensions of spirituality. They include an individual's relationship with God, also called "religious well-being," and the individual's satisfaction with their life and their purpose in life, also called "existential well-being" (Ellison, 1983). The instrument was used to obtain an overall "spiritual well-being" score. A higher score represented a higher level in religious or existential well-being and thus a better overall understanding of the individual's perception of their spirituality. This was a continuous variable instrument where the highest that one can score is a 120 and the lowest score is a 20. Therefore, a range of 20-40 reflected a low spiritual well-being, a range of 41-99 reflected a moderate spiritual well-being, and a range of 100-120 reflected a high spiritual well-being (Paloutzian & Ellison, 1991). Reliability for this scale was high with a test-retest reliability of .93 and an internal consistency of .89 (Ellison, 1983). There was also a high construct validity and was seen to have positive correlations with Purpose of Life test and the Spiritual Assessment Inventory (Hall & Edwards, 2002).

The second instrument used in this study was the Religious Student Organization Environmental Questionnaire. A copy of the questionnaire can be viewed in Appendix B. This questionnaire was developed by the author of this study to measure the participants' perception of the religious student organization environment in relation to

Sharon Parks' elements of a mentoring community for spiritual development (Parks, 2000). There are three sections to this instrument. The first section collected demographic and spiritual background data from the participant taking this questionnaire. The second section of this questionnaire collected the level of involvement of the participants within the religious student organization. Students gave a self rating from 1 to 10 (1 being the least and 10 being the highest) regarding their own active participation within the religious student organization. The involvement section of the questionnaire was divided into four categories: social (hanging out, playing games, eating meals together, etc.), worship (going to church, retreats, praying, singing, etc.), service (community service, mission trips, fundraising, etc.), and faith discussions (speakers, studying a sacred text, dialogues of faith, etc.). The accumulation of these categories determined an average score of "active involvement" that was utilized to answer some of the research questions. The final and third section of this questionnaire asked questions pertaining to the elements of a mentoring environment (See Appendix B). This measurement was not a continuous variable, thus it did not have an overall score. Instead the measurement was broken down into the seven groups related to each of the seven elements of a mentoring environment (such as, Network of Belonging, Big Enough Questions, Encounters with Otherness, etc.). Each element had at least four questions from a 4 point Likert type scale. A high score was a 16; low score could have been a 4, except for Communities of Practices as this had five questions and had a high score of 20 and a low score of 5. The Communities of Practices had five questions because this environmental element related to three components (Practice of Hearth, Practice of the Table, and Practice of the Commons) and it was recommended by Dr. Sharon Parks, who

is an expert in the field of spirituality and the main theorist that this study was exploring, to add one more question to this element. These seven groups were individually summed to give an indicator of how prevalent one of the mentoring elements (i.e. Habits of Mind) was present in the religious student organization.

The survey has been reviewed by Dr. Sharon Parks, who is an expert in the field of spirituality and the main theorist that this study was exploring. Her positive review gave expert validity to this measurement. In addition, a pilot test was conducted using undergraduate students at a Midwest university in a religious student organization. Two weeks later, the pilot group was re-tested to obtain a reliability score for the questionnaire. The reliability scores for the questionnaire was .931 through a test and re-test pilot group.

Data Collection Procedures and IRB Approval

All institutional research boards for the selected universities were contacted and provided a copy of the research proposal. Following IRB approval, a face-to-face or phone meeting with the advisor and/or student organization president of each religious student organization at the institutions was arranged in order to inform them of the research, to answer any questions they might have, and to garner their support. This meeting was also critical in explaining how this research could benefit religious student organizations by offering them a chance to evaluate themselves in order to provide a more developed environment that supports spirituality.

After obtaining support from the advisor and/or student organization president, a time and date was then agreed upon to administer the survey and spiritual assessments at

one of their religious student organization meetings. The meetings varied for each of the religious student organizations, some were more social gatherings while others were more worship gatherings. The researcher went to the meeting in person to administer the instruments and to answer questions the participants might have about the study. It was felt that a personal administration of the survey would yield a better response rate than to send the questionnaires using an online tool in which participants could have simply delete or ignore it when they received it. The Spiritual Well-Being Scale (Ellison, 1983) and, the Religious Student Organization Environmental Questionnaire was then distributed to the selected college students in the various religious student organizations. The scale and questionnaire was hand-delivered to students in the religious student organizations since most of the colleges and universities used in the study were in close proximity. This was beneficial since questions and concerns can be addressed before distributing the instruments. Participants were told that their participation was voluntary and that they can choose not to participate in the study. Participants' information remained anonymous. Each one was identified using a number system. This helped the researcher to track the survey and the spirituality assessment when analyzing the data. Completing the survey and spirituality assessments took approximately 25 minutes.

Design/Statistical Analysis

This study used a cross-sectional survey design in order to compare and contrast the different groups in the study. An alpha level of .05 was used throughout the statistical analysis.

Research Question 1: Is there a difference in students' perceptions of their spirituality among students in Christian vs. non-Christian religious student organizations? Within the Christian religious student organizations, is there a difference between those religious student organizations with a specific denomination versus organizations that are non-denominational?

Data Analysis: An analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to see if there was a significant difference between Christian and Non-Christian groups and denomination and non-denominational Christian groups in regards to their perception of their spirituality.

Research Question 2: Are students who label themselves "more involved" with a particular religious student organization score higher on spirituality measurements (i.e. Spiritual Well-Being Scale) than students who label themselves as being "less involved" with the religious student organization?

Data Analysis: An analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to see if there was a statistical significant difference with involvement and spirituality scores.

Research Question 3: Are Parks' (2000) mentoring environmental elements (i.e. Network of Belonging, Big Enough Questions, Habits of Mind, etc.) present in religious student organizations? If so, is there a relationship between the student's perception of Parks' mentoring community elements within the religious student organization and the students' individual spirituality score?

Data Analysis: A correlation analysis of the variables was administered to determine Parks' elements of a mentoring spiritual environment and the score of spirituality, using

the Spiritual Well-Being scale, among the students within that environment, which helped answer research question number three.

Research Question 4: Do students that identified more of Parks' (2000) mentoring environmental elements (i.e. Network of Belonging, Big Enough Question), in their religious student organization have higher levels of spirituality than those students who identified less mentoring elements present in their religious student organization?

Data Analysis: An analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to see if there was a significant difference among the students who identified more elements present in their religious student organizations than those students who identified less elements present religious student organizations.

Limitations of Design

The limits of this design relate to the participants in this study. Since this is a convenience sample, most of the students that were measured were from Christian religious student organizations. This did limit the comparisons between non-Christian and Christian religious student organizations, as there were only two non-Christian groups measured. In addition, some students who might have been actively involved with the religious student organization may not have been present the time that the survey and spirituality assessments were given. Finally, it is important to note that generalizations to the entire religious student organization population cannot be inferred and should only represent those specific Midwest university religious student organizations and the students who participated in those organizations.

Delimitations

There were several delimitations to this study. The first was that this study only surveyed religious student organizations from three universities in the Midwest. In addition, this study only focused on religious student organizations, as outlined earlier in this chapter. Surveying other student organizations and their spiritual development and mentoring community elements was beyond the scope of this study. This study was also limited to major religious student organizations that were supported by a national organization who was interested in the religious student organization's outreach. Finally, it was important to note that this study only dealt with perceptions of students. Although perceptions of students could reflect reality, it was important to understand there may be some disparity between the two.

Summary

This chapter has given a through overview of the research design. The settings and participants were described in detail as well as the procedures used in selecting the participants. The instruments that were used have been presented as well as comprehensive description of how the collection of data was extracted. The statistical analysis was also given that directly answered the research questions. Finally, the limits and delimitations of the study were discussed.

CHAPTER FOUR

Analysis of the Data

The purpose of this study was to gain a better understanding of the spiritual environmental elements (i.e. Communities of Practice, Access to Images, etc.), as defined by Parks' (2000) theory of mentoring communities, that religious student organizations have adopted to help support spiritual development. This study was important because understanding spiritual environmental elements in religious student organizations may help student affairs professionals to assess the programs and services that these organizations offer students and therefore creating a more effective environment for spiritual development. This chapter presented data that was collected through two instruments; Spiritual Well-Being Scale (Ellison, 1983) and the Religious Student Organization Environmental Questionnaire created by the author of this dissertation. The information presented in this chapter was organized into several sections: a) an overview of the data analysis procedures, b) a descriptive statistical analysis of the study sample and the study instruments, and c) the analysis utilized to investigate the research questions. The research questions for this study are:

1. Is there a difference in students' perceptions of their spirituality among students in Christian vs. non-Christian religious student organizations? Within the Christian religious student organizations, is there a difference between those religious student organizations with a specific denomination versus organizations that are non-denominational?

2. Are students who label themselves more involved with a particular religious student organization score higher on spirituality measurements (i.e. Spiritual Well-Being Scale) than students who label themselves as being less involved with the religious student organization?
3. Are Parks' (2000) mentoring environmental elements present in religious student organizations? If so, is there a relationship between the student's perception of Parks' mentoring community elements within the religious student organization and the students' individual spirituality score?
4. Do students that identified more of Parks' (2000) mentoring environmental elements (i.e. Network of Belonging, Big Enough Question), in their religious student organization have higher levels of spirituality than those students who identified less mentoring elements present in their religious student organization?

Overview of the Research Design

The participants in this study were undergraduate college students who were actively involved in Christian and/or non-Christian religious student organizations. The participants came from three different universities in the Midwest, two private and one public. A total of 22 religious student organizations at the three universities were identified through a search of each of the institution's student organization website.

After institutional research board approval (See Appendix C), the advisors of each religious student organization were contacted in fall 2010 by email and phone to have their religious student organization participate in the quantitative study, with only 10 of the 22 organizations consenting to participate in the study. A face-to-face or phone

meeting was set up with the advisor to answer any questions about the research. Once verbal approval from the advisor was given, a meeting time was established to ask the students within that religious student organization if they would participate in the study. At the meeting, a brief explanation of the research was given to the students and questions were answered. The students who wanted to participate in the study then signed the IRB consent form (See Appendix D) and the two measurement instruments (Spiritual Well-Being Scale and Religious Student Organization Environmental Questionnaire) were administered.

The Spiritual Well-Being Scale is a 20-question survey that measures two dimensions of spirituality. They include an individual's relationship with God, also called "religious well-being," and the individual's satisfaction with their life and their purpose in life, also called "existential well-being" (Ellison, 1983). The instrument was used to obtain an overall "spiritual well-being" score. The Religious Student Organization Environmental Questionnaire was developed to measure the participants' view of their religious student organization's environment in relation to Sharon Parks' elements of a mentoring community for spiritual development (i.e. Big Questions, Worthy Dreams, etc.) (Parks, 2000). Demographic and spiritual background data was collected within this questionnaire (See Appendix B). Surveys were administered in person and the students took the measurement tools with pen or pencil. The length of time each student took to take the surveys ranged from approximately 15 minutes to as long as 40 minutes.

After the data was collected, the data was transferred to the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS, version 18.0) for statistical analysis. Descriptive statistics

were run in order to get an overall picture of the population being tested. Of the 10 religious student organizations responding to the survey two (20%) were non-Christian (religious student organizations who do not believe in the divinity of Jesus as the son of God) student organizations and eight (80%) were Christian based organizations. The two non-Christian student organizations were from the same religious group but at different institutions. Similarly, there were two Christian religious groups that were from the same group but from two different institutions. In addition, within the Christian organizations, four were denominational (50%) and four were non-denominational (50%); therefore the study is based on three groups (non-Christian, non-denominational and denominational). One hundred and seven students responded to the two measurement instruments with only three not answering all of the questions, thus a response rate of 97%. The three respondents that did not answer all of the questions in the questionnaire were still used for demographic purposes as this helped broaden the view of the demographic data but they were not used for statistical analysis since not all of the questions were answered (N = 104). It is unknown what the overall membership population in each of the religious student organizations is since participation can fluctuate by month-to-month. Many of these religious student organizations do not have regular "meetings" where an accurate number might be obtained and the numbers fluctuate depending on the activities such as scripture reading or prayers or worship.

Presented in Table 1, are the frequencies and percentages of the population for this study. All demographics were collected from the Religious Student Organization Environmental Questionnaire. The results revealed the population by gender were 55% female and 45% male. However, when looking at the three different religious groups

(Non-Christian, Denominational Christian, and Non-Denominational Christian) the Denominational Christian groups had a majority of women take the survey, over 80%, while the non-Christian groups had a majority of males at over 68%. The participants ages varied from 18 years to 34 years old, (M = 21.24, Mdn = 21), however, the majority (91%) were between the ages of 18 to 24. Religious preference also varied with the three most popular religious preference being Roman Catholic (18%), Islamic (19%), and non-denominational Christian (22%). It is important to note that even though some students may participate in a particular religious organization it does not mean that they were part of that religious faith, for example some Roman Catholics were not part of the Roman Catholic religious student organization but the non-denominational group.

One of the demographic questions asked students about their belief in God. The majority of students (98%) responding to this question reported a strong belief in God, while only a small percentage (2%) were just unsure if God exist (See Table 1).

Table 1

Frequency Counts and Percentages of Gender, Age, Belief in God, & Religious Preference of Students involved in a Religious Student Organization (N = 107)

Variable	*n*	Percent
Gender		
Male	48	44.9
Female	59	55.1

Table 1 (continued)

Variable	*n*	Percent
Age		
18	16	14.95
19	12	11.21
20	18	16.82
21	21	19.63
22	12	11.21
23	13	12.15
24	5	4.67
25 or Older	10	9.35
Belief in God		
Yes	105	98.13
Unsure	2	1.87

Table 1 (continued)

Variable	*n*	Percent
Religious Preference		
Baptist	9	8.41
Church of Christ	7	6.54
Islamic	21	19.63
Lutheran	7	6.54
None	4	3.74
Non-Denomination Christian	25	23.36
Other Christian	7	6.54
Other Religion (not Christian)	3	2.80
Presbyterian	4	3.74
Roman Catholic	20	18.69

The participants were also asked questions regarding their perceptions on how important spirituality was to them and how religious they view themselves. The responses to these questions were constructed using a four-point Likert scale. From the students who responded to the Religious Student Organization Environmental

Questionnaire, 95% reported that spirituality was important or very important to them. There were also a high percentage of students who rated themselves as a religious or very religious person (81%) (See Table 2).

In addition, the participants were asked what their involvement was with religious services, spiritual retreats, and community service before joining the religious student organization. More than 67% of the students reported attending religious services frequently, with 47.7% attending at least once a week or more before joining the religious student organization. However, over half of the students (58%) have not or rarely attended a religious retreat or camp. Yet community service work was fairly evenly split, with 32.7% answering that they have rarely done or have only done community service work a few times a year and 35.6% answering that they have done community service at least once a week or more (See Table 2).

Table 2

Frequency and percentage of spirituality importance and how religious they view themselves (N = 107)

Variable	*n*	Percent
Spirituality		
Not very important to me	2	1.9
Not important to me	3	2.8
Important to me	14	13.1

Table 2 (continued)

Variable	*n*	Percent
Spirituality (continued)		
Very important to me	88	82.2
Religiosity		
Not a very religious person	8	7.5
Not a religious person	12	11.2
A religious person	49	45.8
A very religious person	38	35.5
Attending Religious Services (before joining)		
1 – Rarely	13	12.1
2 – A few times a year	10	9.3
3 – Once a month	12	11.2
4 - At least once a week	21	19.6
5 - Once a week or more	51	47.7

Table 2 (continued)

Variable	*n*	Percent
Attending religious/spiritual camps or retreats (before joining)		
1 – Never	37	34.6
2 – Once	25	23.4
3 – Twice	16	15.0
4 – Once a year	10	9.3
5 – Twice a year or more	19	17.8
Doing community service (before joining)		
1 – Rarely	11	10.3
2 – A few times a year	24	22.4
3 – Once a month	34	31.8
4 – Every other week	16	15.0
5 – Once a week or more	22	20.6

Participants were asked why they chose to join the religious student organization, how often they met as a group, and how long they have been a part of the group (See

Table 3 for responses). Very few of the respondents stated they joined the group because an advisor invited them (11.2%), while the majority (71.1%) joined because of social or connection reasons (i.e. “a friend invited me” or “I was looking for a place like my group at home”). The students surveyed were also relatively new to the group with 72% having a length of involvement with the group for two years or less. In fact, 10.3% of the respondents had been involved with the group less than a month. When asked how often they meet as a group, the majority (86.9%) of the students surveyed responded at least once a week.

Additionally, students were asked questions about their religious student organization advisor or leader for the group. Questions ranged from how confident they were in the advisor to whether they see the advisor as a spiritual leader for them. Of the students who were surveyed, 80% indicated a very high confidence or confidence in their advisor/leader of their religious student organization. When asked if there were opportunities to meet with an advisor to reflect on their spiritual journey, 64.5% responded yes while only 7.5% responded no and 21.5% responded occasionally. However, it was a fairly even split when asked if there was an advisor or mentor for them in their religious student organization for their spiritual journey (See Table 3), with 46.7% indicated there was no advisor for them and 50.5% indicated there was an advisor for their spiritual journey. Interestingly, when asked if there was a mentor/advisor for them outside of this group for their spiritual journey 58.9% responded “Yes” while only 39.3% responded “No” (See Table 3). Having an advisor or mentor that leads the group can be very important to the spiritual development of the students in the religious student

organization and those organizations that have no advisor or limited leadership may be at a disadvantage in creating a mentoring environment that support spirituality.

A final question was asked to determine how valuable the participant perceived their involvement within the religious student organization. Students were asked to rate on a 10 point Likert scale (1 being the lowest and 10 being the highest) on how much they agree with the statement "I am a better person because I have participated in this organization." The majority of respondents (70%) reported a high or very high positive impact that the student organization has had on their life (See Table 3). Thus students involved in these religious student organizations generally have high regard for the impact and importance it plays on their life.

Table 3

Reasons why students joined, length of involvement, how often they meet, their perceptions of the groups advisor/leader & the positive impact the group had on them (N = 107)

Variable	*n*	Percent
Joined the group because:		
A friend invited me	42	39.3
The advisor invited me	12	11.2
I was looking for a place like my group at home	34	31.8

Table 3 (continued)

Variable	*n*	Percent
Other	17	15.9
Didn't answer	2	1.8
Length of involvement		
Less than a month	11	10.3
One semester	26	24.3
One year	18	16.8
Two years	22	20.6
Three years	13	12.1
Four years	9	8.4
More than four years	5	4.7
Didn't answer	3	2.8
Often do you meet as a group		
More than once a week	36	33.6
Once a week	57	53.3
Twice a month	5	4.7

Table 3 (continued)

Variable	*n*	Percent
Once a month	8	7.5
Didn't answer	1	0.9
Confidence in your advisor		
Very Confident	53	49.5
Confident	33	30.8
Somewhat Confident	15	14.0
Confidence in your advisor (continued)		
Not Confident	1	0.9
There is no advisor or leader of this group	3	2.8
Didn't respond	2	2.0
Opportunities to meet with advisor to reflect on our spiritual journey		
Yes	69	64.5
No	8	7.5
Occasionally	23	21.5

Table 3 (continued)

Variable	*n*	Percent
Not on a spiritual journey	4	3.7
Didn't respond	3	2.8
Is there a mentor/advisor for you in this group for your spiritual journey?		
Yes	54	50.5
No	50	46.7
Didn't respond	3	2.8
Is there a mentor/advisor for you outside of this group for your spiritual journey?		
Yes	63	58.9
No	42	39.3
Didn't respond	2	1.9

Table 3 (continued)

Variable	*n*	Percent
Positive impact the religious student organization has had on you		
1 - No positive impact	2	1.9
2-3 - Low positive impact	2	1.9
4-5 - Below average positive impact	12	11.2
6-7 - Above average positive impact	15	14.1
8-9 - High positive impact	31	28.9
10 - Very high positive impact	44	41.1
Didn't respond	1	0.9

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics were used to ensure normality of distribution by examining skewness and kurtosis values for the Spiritual Well-Being scale and the self-development instrument scoring Parks' (2000) theory of mentoring communities. Tabachnick and Fiddell (2007) state that skewness and kurtosis values are expected with a small sample size. Spiritual Well-Being scores and their self-rated spirituality score were negatively

skewed. Kurtosis values for the Spiritual Well-Being scores and their self-rated spirituality score were positive.

Research Question 1: Difference in students' perception of their spirituality among the different religious student organizations and specifically within the Christian religious student organizations

The first research question asked if there is a difference in students' perceptions of their spirituality among students in Christian vs. non-Christian religious student organizations. In addition, within the Christian religious student organizations, is there a difference between those religious student organizations with a specific denomination versus organizations that are non-denominational? An analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to see if there was a significant difference among the three types of religious student organizations (Non-Christian, denominational Christian, and non-denominational Christian) and their self-reported spirituality score. This self-reported score was asked on the Religious Student Organization Environmental Questionnaire. It asked the participant to rate their spirituality on a Likert scale of 1 to 4, with 1 being spirituality is not very important to them to 4 being spirituality is very important to them. The spirituality scores for non-Christian religious organization students (M = 3.64, SD = .790), denominational Christian religious organization students (M = 3.54, SD = .811), and non-denominational Christian religious organization students (M = 3.90, SD = .305) were then compared to see if there was a statistical significant difference. Levene's test for homogeneity showed that the assumption of equality of variance among the three groups was not violated (F_{Levene} = 16.074).

Table 4

ANOVA data of students' self-rating of spirituality and the different religious student organizations (N = 107)

	Sum of Squares	*df*	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	2.740	2	1.370	4.078	0.02*
Within Groups	34.942	104	.336		
Total	37.682	106			

* p < 0.05, **p. <01, ***p<.001

When the ANOVA was conducted there was a statistically significant difference in self-reported spirituality scores for the three groups: (F (2, 106) = 4.078, p = .020). There are statistically significant differences among the means of the three different religious student groups (Non-Christian, Denominational Christian, and Non-Denominational Christian (See Table 4). To better identify the specific statistical differences, a Tukey HSD post hoc test was run among the three religious groups. When the post hoc comparison was run it was revealed that there were no statistically significant differences in spirituality scores between the non-Christian groups and the Denominational Christian group or between the non-Christian groups and the non-Denominational Christian. Table 5 shows the only comparison that was significant was between the Denominational Christian groups and the Non-denominational Christian groups ($M_{\text{non-den \& den}}$ = .360, p = .026) (Denominational are the groups associated with a

particular religious community or church, while non-denominational groups are not tied to a particular community or church). Thus, the Non-denominational Christian groups rated that their spirituality was more important to them than the Denominational Christian group. It is important to note that it doesn't mean that the Non-denominational Christian group had a higher spirituality just that they saw their spirituality as being more important to them than the Denominational Christian group. It could be that the Denominational Christian group didn't focus as much on individual spirituality but more on the religiosity aspect of their spirituality. Many denominational groups have rituals, canons, and structures in place that could be as important to them as their spirituality and thus not a exclusive focus. Although one might assume that the non-Christian groups might not rate their spirituality as important as the Christian groups there was no evidence to support that assumption. This shows that non-Christian groups can care and do care just as much about their spirituality as Christian groups do.

Table 5

Tukey HSD Comparison of personal spirituality score among the three different religious groups

Religious Student Organization		Mean Diff	Std. Error	Sig.
Non Christian	Denominational Christian	.098	.168	.829
	Non-denominational Christian	-.262	.145	.172
Denominational Christian	Non Christian	-.098	.168	.829
	Non-denominational Christian	-.360	.136	.026*
Non-denominational Christian	Non Christian	.262	.145	.172
	Denominational Christian	.360	.136	.026*

* p < 0.05, **p <.01, ***p<.001

Research Question 2: Involvement and spirituality

Research question two asked, if students who label themselves more involved within their religious student organization score higher on the Spiritual Well-Being scale than students who label themselves as being less involved within the religious student

organization. Data was analyzed by ANOVA to see if there was a significant difference in spirituality scores between students who label themselves **more involved** in their religious student organization than with students who labeled themselves **less involved** in their religious student organization.

In addition, students rated themselves on the degree to which they actively participate in the religious student organization. This was measured using a 10-point Likert scale, based on four questions of social, worship, service, and faith involvement. The maximum score for the four involvement categories possible was 40. These four involvement categories were averaged to get a score of "active involvement." In order to determine a high involvement and lower involvement an analysis on the "active involvement" scores determined that the median was a 7.00 (M = 6.623, SD = 2.017) (See Table 6). Therefore, a score of 7.00 or higher indicated high involvement and a score of 6.99 or lower was low involvement. A comparison of high involvement and low involvement was then run using an analysis of variance (ANOVA). Homogeneity of variance was assumed due to a nonsignificant Levene's Test for Equality of Variance value (F_{Levene} = .029). Levene's test is used when the sample sizes are small and the distributions are not normal (Mendenhall & Sincich, 2003).

Table 6

Involvement scores (*N* = 107)

Variable	*n*	Percent
1-3.99	12	11.2
4-6.99	40	37.4
7-10	55	51.4

Note: Involvement scores were determined by the sum and average of four involvement categories (social, worship, service, and faith).

As seen in Table 7, there were no statistical significant differences in scores with involvement in the non-Christian groups, denominational Christian groups, or non-denominational Christian groups. The three groups are more similar in spiritual well-being and involvement than not similar. This indicates that students who participate more with a religious student organization do not necessarily have higher levels of spirituality than students who do not participate as much. Therefore, involvement doesn't necessarily mean that one will have higher spiritual development. Involvement to some students might be more for social aspects instead of spiritual ones.

Table 7

Summary of ANOVA for Spiritual Well-Being Scale and Involvement within the religious student organization (N = 107)

Religious student organization		Sum of Squares	*df*	Mean Square	F	Sig.
NC	Between Groups	464.705	11	42.246	.759	.672
	Within Groups	556.250	10	55.625		
	Total	1020.955	21			
DC	Between Groups	3745.149	16	234.072	1.905	.164
	Within Groups	1105.967	9	122.885		
	Total	4851.115	25			
NDC	Between Groups	4551.188	24	189.633	1.582	.108
	Within Groups	4075.117	34	119.856		
	Total	8626.305	58			

Note: NC = Non-Christian; DC = Denominational Christian; NDC = Non-denominational Christian.

Research Question 3: Relationship between Parks' mentoring community elements and students' spirituality score

The third research question asked "Are Parks' (2000) mentoring community elements present in religious student organizations? If so, is there a relationship between the student's perception of Parks' mentoring community elements within the religious student organization and the students' individual spirituality score?" Parks' (2000) elements of a mentoring community (Network of Belonging, Big-Enough Questions, Encounters with Otherness, Habits of Mind, Worthy Dreams, Access to Images, and Communities of Practice) were calculated through a series of questions in a self-developed survey. Each element had at least four questions from a 4-point Likert type scale. A high score was a 16; low score could have been a 4, except for Communities of Practices as this had five questions and had a high score of 20 and a low score of 5. The Communities of Practices had five questions because this environmental element relates to three components (Practice of Hearth, Practice of the Table, and Practice of the Commons) and it was recommended by Dr. Sharon Parks, who is an expert in the field of spirituality and the main theorist that this study was exploring, to add one more question to this element. All of the students rated at least some aspects of Parks' elements in the religious student organization they belonged to, however some rated some aspects higher than others. Therefore the first part of the research question that asked if Parks' environmental elements are present in religious student organizations the simple answer is yes but the rate in which these elements are present depends upon the person and the religious student organization. In order to answer the second part of this research question that asks if there was a significant relationship between their Spiritual Well-

Being score and the environmental elements of a mentoring community a correlation analyses of the variables in a mentoring community, as perceived by the students, were then compared with their spirituality score on the Spiritual Well-Being Scale (N = 104). Three scores were taken out of this statistical analysis as they did not answer all of the questions to get an accurate score of the environmental elements present in the religious student organization.

As seen in Table 8, Network of Belonging, Encounters with Otherness, Habits of Mind, and Access to Images showed a positive correlation while Big Enough Questions, Worthy Dreams, and Communities of Practice had no significant correlation with the Spiritual Well-Being score of the students. Interestingly, among the three religious groups non-Christian group members had no significant relationship between their spirituality score and any of Parks' mentoring elements. While non-denominational members showed significant statistical correlation with all of Parks' mentoring elements and denominational Christian members showed significant statistical correlation with just four of the seven environmental elements (Network of Belonging, Big Enough Questions, Habits of Mind, and Access to Images). This indicates that non-Christian religious student organization members' spirituality, based on the Spiritual Well-Being scale, is not correlated or related to Parks' environmental elements of a mentoring community. So even though Parks' elements could be present in a non-Christian religious student organization they may not impact the spiritual development of those members as much as in Christian religious groups. However, in the non-denominational Christian organizations all of the environmental elements from Parks' are closely related to the spirituality of its members. While the denominational Christian only see four out of the

seven as having significance to their spirituality. This could indicate that non-Christian groups do not look at spirituality as the same as Christian groups (Non-Denominational and Denominational), and therefore they do not see the importance of those environmental elements that Parks' claims is important or why they would need to be present at all. These findings are consistent in for research question one in that the non-Christian groups possibly see spirituality differently than the Christian groups.

Table 8

Correlational Analysis: Spiritual Well-Being and Parks' mentoring community elements (N = 104)

	SWS (n=104)	SWS for NC (n=20)	SWS for DC (n= 25)	SWS for NDC (n=59)
NB	.252**	.139	.457*	.303*
BEQ	.185	.081	.632**	.342**
EO	.329**	.197	.072	.474**
HM	.236*	.188	.452*	.382**
WD	.179	.059	.123	.417**
AI	.458**	.125	.660**	.452**
CP	.168	.108	.237	.334**

Note: *$r < .05$, two-tailed; **$r < .01$, two-tailed; NC = Non-Christian; DC = Denominational Christian; NDC = Non-Denominational Christian; SWS = Spiritual Well-Being Scale; NB = Network of Belonging; BEQ = Big Enough Questions; EO = Encounters with Otherness; HM = Habits of Mind; WD = Worthy Dreams; AI = Access to Images; CP = Communities of Practice (Parks, 2000).

Research Question 4: Do the students that have identified more of Parks' (2000) mentoring environmental elements, in their religious student organization have higher levels of spirituality than those students who have identified less of the mentoring environmental elements present? Is there is statistical difference between the two groups?

Finally, in order to answer the final research question on whether students who identified more environmental elements had a higher spirituality scores than students who identified less environmental elements present, the scores from Spiritual Well-Being scale were given a rank of low (20-40), moderate (41-99), and high (100-120). This ranking was developed by Paloutzian and Ellison (1991), the creators of the Spiritual Well-Being scale. No participants in this study were in the low spirituality score of 20-40 (See Tables 9 & 10). Therefore, the "moderate" spirituality group ($n = 28$) was compared with the "higher" spirituality group ($n = 76$) using an ANOVA (See Table 11).

Table 9

Spiritual Well-Being Scale results (N=104)

Religious Student Organization	Spiritual Well-Being Rank	*n*
Non-Christian	Moderate	1
	High	19
Non-Denominational Christian	Moderate	15
	High	44
Denominational Christian	Moderate	12
	High	13

Note: Spiritual Well-Being Scale was ranked moderate (41-99) and high (100-120). There were no low scores in this study.

Table 10

Descriptive Statistics of Parks' environmental elements with Spiritual Well-Being Scale (N=104)

Environmental Elements	Spiritual Well-Being Scale	*M*	*SD*
Network of Belonging	Moderate	12.61	2.283
	High	13.84	2.261

Table 10 (continued)

Environmental Elements	Spiritual Well-Being Scale	*M*	*SD*
Big-Enough Questions	Moderate	13.57	2.026
	High	14.05	2.309
Encounters with Otherness	Moderate	10.64	2.818
	High	11.87	2.323
Habits of Mind	Moderate	12.93	2.567
	High	13.74	2.516
Worthy Dreams	Moderate	13.32	2.568
	High	13.74	2.288
Access to Images	Moderate	12.64	2.585
	High	14.21	1.843
Communities of Practice	Moderate	16.07	2.981
	High	16.91	2.624

Note: Spiritual Well-Being Scale - Moderate (*n*=28), High (*n*=76).

There was significant statistical difference between the means for the Spiritual Well-Being Scale for Network of Belonging, Encounters with Otherness, and Access to Images (See Table 11). Although students generally have "moderate" to "high" spirituality well-being, the students that are part of religious student organizations who indicate more of the mentoring environmental elements of Network of Belonging, Encounters with Otherness, and Access to Images have significantly higher spirituality scores on the Spiritual Well-Being Scale than students who perceive less of those particular elements in that organization. The other four elements (Big-Enough Question, Habits of Mind, Worthy Dreams, and Communities of Practice) did not have any statistically significant difference between the Spiritual Well-Being scores. This indicates that Network of Belonging, Encounters with Otherness, and Access to Images might play a more significant role in spiritual development than the other four environmental elements. It could indicate that these three environmental elements (Network of Belonging, Encounters with Otherness, and Access to Images) are seen as more important than the other four elements by the students in those religious student organizations.

Table 11

Summary of ANOVA for Spiritual Well-Being between moderate and high levels of spirituality among the various environmental elements of a mentoring community (N=104).

Environmental Element		Sum of Squares	*df*	Mean Square	F	Sig.
NB	Between Groups	22.029	1	22.029	4.287	.041*
	Within Groups	524.086	102	5.138		
	Total	546.115	103			
BEQ	Between Groups	4.738	1	4.738	.946	.333
	Within Groups	510.647	102	5.006		
	Total	515.385	103			
EO	Between Groups	30.733	1	30.733	5.063	.027*
	Within Groups	619.113	102	6.070		
	Total	649.846	103			
HM	Between Groups	13.368	1	13.368	2.089	.151
	Within Groups	652.594	102	6.398		
	Total	665.962	103			

Table 11 (continued)

Environmental Element		Sum of Squares	*df*	Mean Square	F	Sig.
WD	Between Groups	3.531	1	3.531	.631	.429
	Within Groups	570.844	102	5.597		
	Total	574.375	103			
AI	Between Groups	50.286	1	50.286	11.79	.001***
	Within Groups	435.060	102	4.265		
	Total	485.346	103			
CP	Between Groups	14.316	1	14.316	1.931	.168
	Within Groups	756.212	102	7.414		
	Total	770.529	103			

*p<.05; **p<.01; ***p<.001;

Note: NB = Network of Belonging; BEQ = Big Enough Questions; EO = Encounters with Otherness; HM = Habits of Mind; WD = Worthy Dreams; AI = Access to Images; CP = Communities of Practice (Parks, 2000).

Summary

The analyses of the data revealed that there were statistically significant differences in the participants' self-reported spirituality score between denominational Christian and non-denominational Christian religious student organizations, yet no difference between non-Christian organizations and Christian organizations. Therefore, students in non-Christian religious groups are more similar to the Christian religious groups when it comes to the importance of spirituality. However, the non-denominational Christian students placed a higher importance of spirituality in their lives than the denominational Christian students. There was no statistical significant difference in spirituality among students who were more involved with their religious student organization than students who were less involved. Just because a student was actively involved in the religious student organization the findings of this study did not reveal that they were more spiritual than those who were not as highly involved. In addition, Parks' (2000) elements of a mentoring community were found to be present in all of the religious student organizations. Yet, only four of the elements (Network of Belonging, Encounters with Otherness, Habits of Mind, and Access to Images) had a statistically significant correlation with spirituality among the members in that religious student organization. However in a closer examination of the statistical data there was, in fact, no statistical correlation with Parks' elements of a mentoring community in non-Christian religious student organizations. Thus Parks' theory may not be appropriate for non-Christian groups in assessing their spiritual environment. The correlation was only found in Christian religious student organizations, which could be an indicator that non-Christian students view their spirituality differently than Christian students. Finally, in a

comparison of "moderate" spirituality and "high" spirituality and Parks' mentoring environmental elements, students who indicated more of the mentoring environmental elements of Network of Belonging, Encounters with Otherness, and Access to Images have statistically higher spirituality scores than students who do not perceive those elements present in the religious student organization. A more detailed discussion of the findings is presented in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE

Summary and Discussion

Higher education institutions have long held the distinction and responsibility of preparing students for the challenges of the broad world. This is accomplished by establishing a rigorous curriculum aimed at helping students develop their intellect and critical thinking skills. Yet students are searching for more than intellectual development when coming to colleges and universities (HERI, 2005 & 2007). They are searching for "inner" development, which includes spiritual growth. Unfortunately, students are often not finding paths of spirituality in the walls of higher education institutions (Astin, Astin, & Lindholm, 2011; Nuss, 2003; Stamm, 2003; Cherry, Deberg, & Porterfield, 2001). Some students have then turned to religious student organizations (i.e. Campus Crusade for Christ, Newman Centers, Muslim Student Association, Hillel, etc.) to get the spiritual guidance and support they need and want. For years, these religious organizations have asserted their missions to cultivate spirituality in students, yet little is known about the effectiveness of their activities and environments on creating spiritual growth.

The spiritual development theories of Sharon Parks (1986, 2000) can be used to better explore the spiritual environments that these religious student organizations construct. Parks' research provided higher education with a strong foundation for creating environments supportive of spiritual growth. Parks called these environments "mentoring communities" which organizations can use as a guide in developing their community or for them to assess their own environments. Parks theorized that mentoring communities needed to have seven different environmental elements in order to offer

students the greatest chance for spiritual development. These seven environmental elements are: 1) Network of Belonging, 2) Big-Enough Questions, 3) Encounters with Otherness, 4) Habits of Mind, 5) Worthy Dreams, 6) Access to Images, and 7) Communities of Practice.

Few studies have been completed to examine the environments of religious student organizations and what impact they might have on spiritual development among their student members. Research that has been conducted has mainly focused on evangelical Christian groups and overlooked other religions of faith (Bryant, 2004; Cook, 2000; Lowery, 2000; Lowery & Coomes, 2003; Magolda & Gross, 2009). Information on the mentoring environments (Parks, 2000), regardless of religious preference, is important in determining how to best serve and support these organizations in helping students develop their spirituality. Also, little research has been done concerning those elements of a mentoring community, to determine if this theory is a good measure for all religious student organizations. In addition, adding quantitative research to a heavily saturated field of qualitative research can help broaden the understanding of spirituality among college students.

The purpose of this study was to gain a better understanding of the environmental elements that religious student organizations have adopted to help support spiritual development by using Parks' (2000) theory of mentoring communities as a model. Understanding the environmental complexities of religious student organizations will help administrators and professional staff who advise these organizations by providing them with the support they need. This study used the Spiritual Well-Being Scale (Ellison, 1983) to determine a spirituality score. A self-created measurement called the

Religious Student Organization Environmental Questionnaire was used to evaluate which environmental elements of Parks were present in each religious student organization.

The sample in this study included 107 participants enrolled in a Midwestern university.

Summary of the Results

Parks' (2000) elements of a mentoring community give a strong illustration of what a religious student organization could be. This study was to provide a glimpse of the impact religious student organizations have on students' spiritual development and to determine if elements of Parks' mentoring community were present in that development. The findings for this study suggest:

- Non-Christian groups have no difference in self spirituality rating than Christian groups. However, denominational groups seem to significantly rate themselves lower in spirituality than non-denominational groups.
- More active involvement within the religious student organization did not correlate to higher levels of spirituality scores.
- Four elements (Network of Belonging, Encounters with Otherness, Habits of Mind, and Access to Images) showed a positive correlation with spirituality scores. In non-Christian groups, there did not seem to be any relationship between Parks' elements and spirituality.
- Students that are part of religious student organizations who indicate more of the mentoring environmental elements (Parks, 2000) of Network of Belonging, Encounters with Otherness, and Access to Images have significantly higher

spirituality scores on the Spiritual Well-Being Scale than students who perceive less of those particular elements in that organization.

Differences in spirituality among the religious student organizations

The first research question posed that there was a difference in students' perceptions of their spirituality among Christian and non-Christian religious student organization members. Research has revealed that non-Christian groups have a higher probability of spirituality loss, than groups that associate with a Christian faith (Bryant & Astin, 2008). This means that students that are non-Christian typically have lower levels of spiritual well-being or spiritual fulfillment than Christian students in higher education. However past research was inconsistent with the findings of this study in that there were no differences between spirituality among the students in non-Christian religious student organizations and Christian religious student organizations. The Christian and non-Christian groups in this study were actually more similar to each other than dissimilar in regards to spirituality. In fact, the students in the non-Christian group actually rated themselves higher on the Spiritual Well-Being scale than students in a denominational Christian group. Recent research has suggested that Islamic and other non-Christian students have a higher than average score of "spiritual questing," which is the search for meaning and purpose that persists through their college career (Astin, Astin, & Lindholm, 2011). Basically, how students define spirituality for themselves could explain this high spirituality score. The students in the non-Christian group could view spirituality very differently than students in a denominational group.

Research has revealed that spirituality and religion are viewed differently by students (HERI, 2005). However, the Denominational Christian group, because they are tied directly to a specific denominational religious community, could be focused more on the religious aspect of spirituality and less on the individualistic side thus the lower spirituality score on the Likert scale. In fact, research revealed that spirituality is very individualistic whereas religion is more community based (Tisdell, 2003). This could emphasize that the denominational groups are more interested in community building instead of spirituality building because they are closely tied to a religious community that have a mission to promote their specific faith. Although it is important to point out that all of the groups still rated themselves high on the 4.0 scale, which asked about the importance of spirituality in their life. Moreover, many of the non-denominational students, who participated in this study, could have already placed a high importance on spirituality and thus a high rating before joining the religious student organization. Of the 107 participants of this study, 47.7% attended religious services once a week or more before joining the religious student organization. So the members that were joining or did join were already highly involved with their faith.

Involvement and spirituality

The second research question asked about how involvement within the religious student organization could impact spirituality. Are students that participate frequently in the religious student organization rating themselves higher in spirituality than students who do not participate as frequently? Students rated themselves by answering four questions related to involvement areas; social involvement (i.e. hanging out, social hours,), worship involvement (i.e. attending religious services), service involvement (i.e.

community service, service trips), and faith involvement (i.e. faith discussions, scripture readings & reflections). The involvement questions were averaged to get an overall score of involvement within the religious student organization. It was hypothesized that students who labeled themselves more involved within the religious student organization would then have a higher spiritual well-being. Yet this was not the case. There was no significant difference on the Spiritual Well-Being Scale (Ellison, 1983) for those students who labeled themselves as being more involved than those students who labeled themselves less involved. Even though researchers have indicated that a shared sense of community can help foster spiritual growth (Bryant, 2004; Chickering, Dalton, & Stamm, 2006; Hulett, 2004; Parks, 2000), it does not state the type of involvement that one must have in the community. The involvement for some students may be less but more meaningful. For example, some students could have labeled themselves as highly involved within the religious student organization but only used the religious student organization as a social community and not as a community for spiritual development. Although involvement in a spiritual/mentoring community can be important, it may not be, and most likely is not, the sole factor for growth in spirituality, thus no significant difference in the study. This finding related to some research that had suggested involvement in religious student organizations can increase the ***religious*** commitment of the participant but not necessarily the ***spiritual*** growth (Astin, Astin, & Lindholm, 2011). In fact, the Higher Education Research Institute (2007) has shown that religious involvement for college students actually decreases during their college years. This was also evident in this study as the length of involvement for students in the religious student organizations was fairly new. Seventy-two percent of the students had been a part of the

group for two years or less, and it is possible that they have not yet become disinterested in religious involvement.

It is important to note, however, that the distribution of the scores of involvement is still fairly high. So even though the two groups were labeled low involvement and high involvement the median point was 7.00. Therefore the data is somewhat skewed and a more accurate comparison of very low involvement vs. high involvement might have different results.

Mentoring community elements (Parks, 2000) and spirituality within the religious student organizations

Understanding how involvement within the religious student organization impacts spirituality is helpful for advisors and administrators of these organizations, but it is also important to examine the environment within the religious student organization to see if aspects of that environment play a role in the development of spiritual growth with students. Sharon Parks (2000) theorized communities that specialize in spiritual growth should have seven environmental elements present (Network of Belonging, Big-Enough Questions, Encounters with Otherness, Habits of Mind, Worthy Dreams, Access to Images, and Communities of Practice). These important environmental elements could offer a guide to religious student organizations as they create the environment for the student participants. The third research question for this study specifically explored if Parks' environmental elements were correlated to the student's spirituality score.

Upon examination of the data for this study, the results revealed that only four of the seven environmental elements showed any correlation to spirituality. The four that

showed this correlation were Network of Belonging, Encounters with Otherness, Habits of Mind, and Access to Images, while the other three, Big Enough Questions, Worthy Dreams, and Communities of Practice had no significant correlation to the students' spirituality scores, according to the Spiritual Well-Being scale. Consequently based on the study's findings, it can be assumed that some of Parks' environmental elements of a mentoring community may not be as important to some students in a religious student organization for their spirituality. However, with further statistical analysis a major difference between the three religious groups became apparent. Non-Christian groups had no significant relationship between their spirituality score (Spiritual Well-Being) and any of the seven environmental elements. This means that Parks' mentoring environmental elements for spiritual development may not be as important to students in those organizations as it is for Christian religious organizations. Non-Christian religious student organizations may develop the environment with their organization much differently than Christian religious organizations. Non-Christian religious student organizations could be more focused on the religious and ritual aspect of spirituality for its members. For example, they might view daily prayers or reading the Koran just as (or more) important than "Asking Big Questions." If this is the case then Parks' theory, which used a majority of Christian students as part of the research (Chickering, Dalton, & Stamm, 2006), may not be the most appropriate model for non-Christian religious student organizations when looking for a way to improve their organization's environment.

Looking closer at the four environmental elements that did show a correlation to spirituality (Network of Belonging, Encounters with Otherness, Habits of Mind, and Access to Images) it can be assumed that those four elements are seen as more important

to the students within the religious student organizations in this study. Tisdell (2003) explained that having a safe environment where students feel comfortable sharing their entire self is critical in spiritual development. As a result, students in this study had a need of belonging in order to stimulate spiritual growth. Thus it is reasonable to understand why Network of Belonging had a correlation as students need to feel connected to the organization in order to explore spirituality that could be very personal. It can also be assumed then that the findings in this study were like those of other researchers who found that groups or organizations that gave a sense of "belonging" were able to help students explore and reflect on their spiritual journey (Chickering, Dalton, Stamm, 2006).

In addition, Encounters with Otherness is about the blending of different avenues of faith and welcoming that difference. In fact, Parks (2000) stated that encounters with otherness "are the most powerful sources of vital, transforming questions that open into ways of making meaning that can form and sustain commitment to the common good" (p. 139). Yet, it is unclear if the students who perceived elements of Encounters of Otherness were just seeing the "otherness" as someone who was already part of their group but practiced their faith a little differently. Whereas Parks' described otherness as someone "outside one's own tribe" and not really part of the religious student organization. Researchers have suggested that students in more evangelical religious groups usually do not collaborate with students who are not of different faiths (Magolda & Gross, 2009). Thus the Encounters with Otherness are assumed to be more within the group and not outside the group.

Habits of Mind are about creating a normalcy among the students where dialogue, critical thinking, holistic thought, and the power of contemplation are necessary tools to explore meaning and questions of purpose. Research has stated that students who have the opportunity to reflect, ask questions, and discuss their faith typically have shown higher levels of spiritual growth (Astin, Astin, & Lindholm, 2011). Yet usually these communities are lead by a faculty member or professional staff trained to facilitate and guide these "habit of mind".

Finally, Access to Images was seen as correlated to spirituality. Access to Images is about imagining the self in the world full of suffering, hope, transformation, and wonder but most importantly being able to see how the person's spirituality reacts to the world that is filled with suffering but at the same time has limitless beauty and happiness. As Parks' (2000) stated "a great mentoring environment skirts neither suffering nor wonder; rather, its holds them in a dynamic paradox" (p. 149). The religious student organization groups that had more opportunities to imagine oneself in the world and even interacting with the world (through community service or service trips) were able to see how their faith played in this paradox world. Out of all of the seven environmental elements this is the one that really needs a mentor or guide or advisor to help walk you through the difficult part of meaning and how it relates to the world. Some of the religious student organizations had no mentor or advisor and just gathered together in prayer, worship, or social community. It is not surprising therefore to see that the non-Christian religious student organizations did not find any correlation to this. This is important to realize as the advisor plays a critical role in developing the mentoring community environment (Parks, 2000). If the non-Christian groups do not have that

mentor or advisor then they could be at a disadvantage when it comes to creating a spiritual environment within their organization.

What about the other three environmental elements? As stated earlier there were no correlations with Big Enough Questions, Worthy Dreams, or Communities of Practice. Yet it is important to note that even though a correlation was not statistically evident it did not mean that these environmental elements were not present in the religious student organization. It just meant that there was not statistical evidence to link the students' spirituality with these three environmental elements. It could be assumed that Big-Enough Questions, Worthy Dreams, and Communities of Practice were just not as important for the students in this study or even more of a possibility that these elements might need an advisor or mentor to lead them through these elements. Almost half of the respondents (46.7%) indicated there was not a mentor or leader of the religious student organization to which they belonged. These three elements rely heavily on a mentor to ask tough questions, help provide a vision for a dream, or challenge and inspire students to finding meaning in the world (Parks, 2000). Without a purposeful advisor Big-Enough Questions may never get asked. Without an advisor it may be difficult to have a student see themselves in the adult world away from college life as outlined in Worthy Dreams. Without an advisor Communities of Practice may not happen purposefully and be forgotten as an important part of spiritual growth and it taken more for granted.

Finally, research question four asked if those students who identified more of the mentoring environmental elements had higher levels of spirituality than those who identified less of the mentoring elements. The research showed that three of the mentoring environmental elements (Networking of Belonging, Encounters with

Otherness, and Access to Images) had a statistically significant difference between those students who had high levels of spirituality and those who had moderate levels of spirituality when compared with the environmental elements. It can be assumed that students who have high levels of Spiritual Well-Being perceive more of these three environmental elements within their student organization and thus benefit more from these elements and in return have a high level of spirituality. This related well to research question three as it had already highlighted a correlation of Network of Belonging, Encounters with Otherness, and Access to Images. It was reasonable to assume then that students within a religious student organization who feel more a part of the religious student organization, have opportunities to encounter other types of faith or spirituality, and have a mentor who is able to help them imagine themselves in the world with all of its complexities and dynamics will have a significant spiritual development than those students who do not have that opportunity.

Implications

Religious student organizations are a welcoming and supportive place for many college students looking for a sense of meaning and purpose. It is important however that adequate support and resources be given to these organizations, who many times feel disconnected from the higher education system (Lowery, 2000).

This study has shown that non-Christian groups are just as passionate about spirituality as Christian groups. Therefore, it is unfair and bias to think of these non-Christian religious groups as uninterested in spiritual development. In addition, the study has demonstrated that involvement does not mean a fast path to spiritual enlightenment.

It could be more about the type of involvement that the student plays within the religious student organization or the type of mentoring the student receives from the leadership within the religious student organization.

Finally, a very important implication from this study is the impact that Parks' theory of mentoring communities could have on religious student organizations. The study has shown that Parks' theory could be an excellent tool to help religious student organizations assess the environment they are creating within the group, especially for Christian based group. However, it should be used with caution with non-Christian groups as there appears to be a discrepancy in what non-Christian religious student organizations deem as important and what the theory calls for in a mentoring environment. Therefore, more research is needed to better understand the environmental elements that non-Christian groups have in place for spiritual development. Higher Education must not assume that what can be a good evaluation tool for Christian groups will also be a good tool for non-Christian groups.

Recommendations for Student Affairs Officers

There are several recommendations that student affairs professionals can use to assist them in dealing with and working with religious student organizations that have come out of this study. The first is to understand that spiritual development is happening in our own lives and in the lives of students around us (Love, 2001; Lowery & Coomes, 2003; Astin, Astin, & Lindholm, 2011). In order to better serve students who might be struggling with their spiritual development, student affairs needs to understand what theory-based challenges are for students and what they can do to help the students

advance to the next stage. As mentioned earlier in the literature review, spirituality can be seen as a part of the holistic developmental process and opportunities exist for colleges and universities to take action to assist students in developing these assets, which are well within their educational missions (Zullig, Ward, & Horn, 2006). Several important books that come out in the past five years that should be required reading for any graduate student going into the student affairs profession (Chickering, Dalton, Stamm, 2006; Astin, Astin, & Lindholm, 2011). These books, such as *Spirituality in Higher Education* or *Cultivating the Spirit*, can provide a solid foundation for some of the theories of spirituality as well as the opportunity to challenge their own spirituality. Furthermore, this study illustrates the importance of understanding Parks' theory of mentoring communities as a framework to guide religious student organizations. Although the research in this study may question the relationship that Parks' elements have on spirituality or for non-Christian religious student organizations, it doesn't mean that they are less important. These seven environmental elements can help religious student organizations, regardless of faith, look at themselves in a unique and different way and ask themselves, "What is the purpose of this organization?" "Are we doing what we say we want to do?" "Are we providing adequate opportunities for spiritual growth or are we continuing to do the same activities that we have done for several years?". In short, it gives these religious student organizations a method to measure themselves for growth. With so many students searching for meaning during college we cannot just assume that religious student organizations are giving it to them. As this research has shown involvement alone doesn't mean high spirituality. At the same time we cannot use this

information as a tool to criticize them but a tool to support them to become the spiritual group that changes lives.

An another recommendation is to understand that many students involved with these organizations feel like "outsiders" and do not feel connected to the university (Magolda & Gross, 2009; Schultz, 2005; Lowery & Coomes, 2003; Walters, 2001). Student affairs professionals need to reach out to these students and understand that they too contribute to the diversity of the campus environment that is so important. It is especially important to reach out to the non-Christian groups as many of those students struggle to find a "Network of Belonging" (Bryant & Astin, 2008). As seen in this study, non-Christian groups did not relate to any of Parks' mentoring community environmental elements. Therefore, they might need more support and guidance from higher education institutions since there is limited information to lead them. In addition, the non-Christian student organizations may have limited leaders and advisors to mentor them in their spirituality, witnessed in this study, and it may be up to the student affairs professional to find a suitable advisor in the community or even assume that role if appropriate.

The final recommendation is to work with advisors and staff of religious student organizations and find ways in which the university or college can help build the mentoring communities within those organizations. No longer can higher education put aside the spiritual development of students for, as Love and Talbot (1999) explained, spiritual development for college students is not just important but critical. It is also in our nature and essence to build spirituality with our students because as Jablonski (2001) notes in one of the founding documents of students affairs, the *Student Personnel Point of View*, plainly affirms the importance of helping students through spiritual development.

As mentioned earlier in this study, growth in spirituality leads to positive psychological health, a deeper civic responsibility, more awareness of racial/ethnic diversity, better adjustment to college, more satisfaction of life, and less likely to use illicit drugs (HERI, 2005; Low & Handal, 1995; Zullig, War, & Horn, 2005).

Limitations

Although every effort was made to minimize any limitations in this study, limitations still occur and should be noted. One of the limitations is the low number of participants in this study. With only 107 participating, this isn't a large enough quantitative study to make any generalizations about the population at large. The lack of large sample numbers for spirituality studies continues to be a challenge for this research field (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). Having more students participate in this study could have affected the outcomes of some of the research questions especially with involvement. With more students participating there could have been a better distribution of involvement scores with more students closer to the bottom than the top.

Another limitation for this study existed in the sample population. The student participants were derived from only four-year higher education institutions in the Midwest. This might be completely different if done in the South or North were the religious and spiritual focus of the community might be different.

This study also used a specific spirituality measurement called the Spiritual Well-Being Scale (Ellison, 1983). Even though it has a high validity further research should be done to test to see if a different spirituality measurement tool would result in different results. Additional spirituality measurements continue to be created and are possibly

better utilized for traditional aged college students (Astin, Astin, & Lindholm, 2011). Another recommendation for this study would be to do a thorough analysis of the Religious Student Organization Environmental Questionnaire. Although the questionnaire was reviewed by Dr. Sharon Parks, the central theorist in this study, it has not undergone an extensive review for validity and reliability. This could be a tool that advisors or leaders of religious student organizations could use to assess the effectiveness of the environment that they are creating in the religious student organization. However, more analysis and study on this questionnaire is needed before it can be widely used as a tool for assessment purposes.

Finally a limitation of this study was the limited religious faith background of the non-Christians. All of the non-Christians in this study were of the Islamic faith. Although every effort was made to include a Jewish and Hindu religious student organization the research was unsuccessful in surveying those populations.

Suggestions for Future Study

This research would have benefited from a mixed study. The quantitative research in this study can only test perceptions of the students and only look at one particular day and time in the life of that religious student organization. A qualitative study would have been able to observe and interview focus groups to get a better determination if parts of Parks' mentoring elements were truly present in the religious student organization.

It would be interesting to do this study with a non-religious student organization to get a base score of spirituality. For example, even though the denominational group

had the lowest (of the three groups) score for spirituality, I would suspect that they would still be higher than a group that doesn't focus on spirituality like a basketball team or the programming board or the student government association yet without a base line this cannot be determined.

One of the troubling aspects discovered during this study was that many of the participants did not have a spiritual mentor to have discussions or guidance in faith and purpose/meaning. 46.7% of the participants stated there was not a mentor/advisor for them in this group for their spiritual journey. In fact, it was noted that some of the religious student organizations didn't have much of an advisor at all. Sometimes the advisor was just someone that could use their name so they can be a registered student organization with the university or college. In fact, some of the environmental elements results could have been affected for a lack of a purposeful advisor or leader. Student Affairs professionals need to develop strong advisors for these religious student organizations so they are not left to fend for themselves, which in many times can be a hostile environment (i.e. people not understanding their conservative look on religion) (Schultz, 2005). Therefore, future research should look into the impact that advisors or mentors play in creating the spiritual environment for these religious student organizations.

As indicated in the limitations, more of an effort to get a more diverse non-Christian student sample would benefit this study. All of the non-Christians sampled were Islamic and it is unclear if the results would be similar for other non-Christian faiths like Judaism or Hinduism. It would also be interesting to see how an atheistic group might view the environmental elements of Sharon Parks.

Finally, more research is needed in learning about non-Christian groups and their spirituality. As revealed by this study, Non-Christian groups' spirituality is most likely viewed differently than Christian religious student organizations. This is not to say that non-Christian religious student organizations' spirituality is considered lower than others but just that they view it and develop it in a unique way. In fact, this study revealed that students in a non-Christian group actually viewed their spirituality as more important to them than students in a Denominational Christian group. This study has opened the door to encourage more quantitative and qualitative studies for these non-Christian groups so that colleges and universities can support them, so they in return can support their own student members.

Conclusion

Are religious student organizations a high-quality environment for spiritual development for traditional-aged college students and is Parks' theory of mentoring communities a good tool to assess those environments? In general, the students involved in these religious student organizations had a high level of spiritual well-being. Non-Christian groups have just as much concern for their spirituality as Christian groups. In addition, high involvement in those religious student organizations doesn't necessarily mean higher spiritual well-being. Parks' theory of mentoring communities could be an important guide in helping religious student organizations reflect and assess the environment they are creating within the group. Indeed Parks' theory for mentoring communities seemed to be present in all of the environments that were measured although it is unclear how important all of the elements of the mentoring community are

to non-Christian groups. Student Affairs administrators should not assume that all religious student organizations have the guidance needed to help students grow in their quest for meaning as it was evident that some groups had little or no professional advisor.

With the tools that Parks' has given us in helping create a mentoring environment in spiritual communities, higher education has an obligation to support and work with these organizations. Although Parks' theory may not be the most appropriate for Non-Christian groups, it nevertheless helps start the conversation of what a non-Christian spiritual environment should be. It is time to reach across the campus and extend a hand to those religious student organizations who for years have been working to cultivate spiritual development in their members. It is my hope that this study is one step in extending that hand of support.

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Appendix A – Spiritual Well-Being Scale

SWB Scale

For each of the following statements circle the choice that best indicates the extent of your agreement or disagreement as it describes your personal experience:

SA	=	Strongly Agree	D	=	Disagree
MA	=	Moderately Agree	MD	=	Moderately Disagree
A	=	Agree	SD	=	Strongly Disagree

1.	I don't find much satisfaction in private prayer with God.	SA	MA	A	D	MD	SD
2.	I don't know who I am, where I came from, or where I'm going.	SA	MA	A	D	MD	SD
3.	I believe that God loves me and cares about me.	SA	MA	A	D	MD	SD
4.	I feel that life is a positive experience.	SA	MA	A	D	MD	SD
5.	I believe that God is impersonal and not interested in my daily situations.	SA	MA	A	D	MD	SD
6.	I feel unsettled about my future.	SA	MA	A	D	MD	SD
7.	I have a personally meaningful relationship with God.	SA	MA	A	D	MD	SD
8.	I feel very fulfilled and satisfied with life.	SA	MA	A	D	MD	SD
9.	I don't get much personal strength and support from my God	SA	MA	A	D	MD	SD
10.	I feel a sense of well-being about the direction my life is headed in.	SA	MA	A	D	MD	SD
11.	I believe that God is concerned about my problems.	SA	MA	A	D	MD	SD
12.	I don't enjoy much about life.	SA	MA	A	D	MD	SD
13.	I don't have a personally satisfying relationship with God.	SA	MA	A	D	MD	SD
14.	I feel good about my future.	SA	MA	A	D	MD	SD
15.	My relationship with God helps me not to feel lonely.	SA	MA	A	D	MD	SD
16.	I feel that life is full of conflict and unhappiness.	SA	MA	A	D	MD	SD
17.	I feel most fulfilled when I'm in close communion with God.	SA	MA	A	D	MD	SD
18.	Life doesn't have much meaning.	SA	MA	A	D	MD	SD
19.	My relation with God contributes to my sense of well-being.	SA	MA	A	D	MD	SD
20.	I believe there is some real purpose for my life.	SA	MA	A	D	MD	SD

Appendix B

Religious Student Organization Environment Survey

Instructions

1. Please respond to each statement below by filling in the oval completely with your answer or by writing in your answer.
2. You may use a pencil or black or blue pen.
3. Please be as honest as possible. Your answers will be completely confidential.

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1. Your sex: ☐ Male ☐ Female
2. Hold old will you be on December 31 of this year? (please fill in the blank) _____
3. How many credit hours will you have completed by December 31 of this year? _____
4. What is your current major? (If you do not have one write down "undecided")

   _____
5. Current religious preference:

   ☐ Baptist ☐ Southern Baptist ☐ Buddhist ☐ Church of Christ ☐ Eastern Orthodox ☐ Hindu ☐ Islamic ☐ Jewish ☐ LDS (Mormon) ☐ Episcopalian ☐ Lutheran ☐ Methodist ☐ Presbyterian ☐ Roman Catholic ☐ Seventh Day Adventist ☐ Unitarian/Universalist ☐ United Church of Christ/Congregational

   ☐ Other Christian – Please specify _____

   ☐ Other Religion – Please specify _____

   ☐ None
6. Do you believe in God? ☐ Yes ☐ Not Sure ☐ No
7. My spirituality is: Rating Scale: 1 (not very important to me) to 4 (very important to me).
8. I regard myself as a: Rating Scale: 1 (not a religious person) to 4 (very religious person).

9. Before joining the religious student organization to what degree were you involved with:
    a. Attending religious services - Rating Scale: 1 (rarely) to 5 (once a week or more)
    b. Religious/spiritual camps or retreats - Rating Scale: 1 (never) to 5 (twice a year or more)
    c. Community Service activities - Rating Scale: 1 (rarely) to 5 (once a week or more)

Please answer the following questions in regards to the religious student organization that you are currently participating in.

10. On a scale of 1to 10 (1 being the lowest and 10 being the highest), how would you rate your own participation in the organization for:
    - Social Activities (hanging out, having meals together, etc.) _____
    - Worship Activities (participation in religious services, prayer groups, retreats, etc.) _____
    - Service Activities (community service, mission trips, etc.) _____
    - Faith Discussions (Koran/Bible/Torah studies, dialogues of faith, speakers, etc.) _____

11. On a scale of 1 to 10 (1 being the lowest and 10 being the highest), how much do you agree with the following statement? I am a better person because I have participated in this organization? ____

12. I first joined this group because:

    ☐ A friend invited me ☐ The advisor invited me ☐ I was looking for a place that would be like my group at home ☐ Other

13. How often do you meet as a group?

    ☐ More than once a week ☐ Once a week ☐ Twice a month
    ☐ Once a month ☐ Twice a semester ☐ Once a semester

14. How long have you been involved with this religious student organization?
    ☐ Less than a month ☐ A semester ☐ One year ☐ Two years
    ☐ Three years ☐ Four years ☐ More than four years

15. How confident are you in your religious organization's advisor/leader?
    ☐Very Confident ☐ Confident ☐ Somewhat Confident
    ☐ Not Confident ☐ There is no advisor or leader of this group

16. Are there opportunities for you to meet with a mentor/advisor/leader and reflect on your spiritual journey? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Occasionally ☐ I am not on a spiritual journey

17. When you are in conversation with the mentor/advisor/leader, who does the most talking?
    ☐ You ☐ Mentor/advisor ☐ Not sure

18. When you are in conversation with the mentor/advisor/leader, who does the most listening?
    ☐ You ☐ Mentor/advisor ☐ Not sure

19. Is there a person in the group that you consider a mentor for your spiritual journey?
    ☐ Yes ☐ No

20. Do you have a spiritual advisor or mentor outside of this religious student organization?
    ☐ Yes ☐ No

Scale of 1-4. 1 = Strongly Disagree, 4 = Strongly Agree. All questions are pertaining to your involvement with this religious student organization.

Network of Belonging

21. In times of crisis, I turn to this religious organization for support.
22. I feel a sense of belonging when I participate in activities within this religious group.
23. I have close friends within this religious group.
24. This religious organization is a place where I can be myself.

Big Enough Questions

25. There are opportunities to ask questions about my faith life within the religious organization.
26. When I have a question about my faith I feel comfortable sharing those questions within the religious organization.
27. Discussion or debate about faith is encouraged within the religious organization.
28. I have never felt put down for asking a question that challenges the religious part of the student organization.

Encounters with Otherness

29. There are opportunities to connect with other religious student organizations through various activities.
30. I have been encouraged to explore other faith practices that might stimulate my spirituality.
31. This religious organization encourages me to meet, respect, learn from, and care for people outside the organization who are different from myself.
32. I have met religious organizations who differ from my own faith.

Habits of Mind

33. There are opportunities to mediate and reflect on my spirituality.
34. The religious student organization has taught me or encouraged me to be self-reflective.
35. The religious student organization has developed my ability to think critically about my spirituality.
36. The leaders of the religious student organization are positive mentors for my spiritual journey.

Worthy Dreams

37. I feel that my unique gifts/talents are recognized and welcomed in my religious student organization.
38. I have been challenged to think about my "purpose in life", while in the religious student organization.
39. I feel that I am invited to participate in the leadership of my religious student organization.
40. I am encouraged to share stories or listen to other's stories about their spiritual "calling".

Access to Images

41. While participating in this religious student organization I feel there are many positive images of hope that I can relate to.
42. Stories and talks within the religious student organization encourage me to fully explore and embrace my beliefs.
43. When the religious student organization prays, worships, and/or mediates together I feel a strong connection to everyone within the group.
44. When the religious student organization prays, worships, and/or mediates together I feel a strong connection to God or Spirit.

Community of Practice

45. There are many opportunities within this religious student organization to socialize together as a community.
46. There are opportunities to worship/mediate together in this religious student organization.
47. I am often inspired by participating in this religious student organization.
48. There is usually a time of eating together before/after our meetings or worship or discussions.
49. The singing and music in this group is very important to me.

50. Please add any comments that you think might be important.

Appendix C – Institutional Research Board Approval

University of Missouri St. Louis

OFFICE OF RESEARCH ADMINISTRATION

Interdepartmental Correspondence

Name: David Gill

Title: Spirituality in Religious Student Organizations

The chairperson of the Human Subjects Committee for UM-St. Louis has reviewed the above mentioned protocol for research involving human subjects and determined that the project qualifies for exemption from full committee review under Title 45 Code of Federal Regulations Part 46.101b. The time period for this approval expires one year from the date listed below. You must notify the Human Subjects Committee in advance of any proposed major changes in your approved protocol, e.g., addition of research sites or research instruments.

You must file an annual report with the committee. This report must indicate the starting date of the project and the number of subjects to date from start of project, or since last annual report, whichever is more recent.

Any consent or assent forms must be signed in duplicate and a copy provided to the subject. The principal investigator must retain the other copy of the signed consent form for at least three years following the completion of the research activity and they must be available for inspection if there is an official review of the UM-St. Louis human subjects research proceedings by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office for Protection from Research Risks.

This action is officially recorded in the minutes of the committee.

Protocol Number	Date	Signature - Chair
100430G	5-11-10	

Appendix D – Consent Form

Division of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies

One University Blvd.
St. Louis, Missouri 63121-4499
Telephone: 314-686-2350
E-mail: cgill@fontbonne.edu

Informed Consent for Participation in Research Activities
Mentoring Spirituality in Religious Student Organization at University Campuses

Participant _____ HSC Approval Number 100430G

Principal Investigator David Christopher Gill PI's Phone Number 314-686-2350

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1. You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by David Christopher Gill and Dr. Patricia Boyer (faculty advisor). The purpose of this research is to determine the type of spiritual environment within religious student organizations.

2. a) Your participation will involve
   - Taking one spirituality questionnaire: the Spiritual Well-Being Scale. You will also take a short questionnaire about your involvement in the religious student organization. The questionnaires will be given to you by David Gill.
   - All questionnaires will be taken by hand (pencil and paper).
   - Your information on the questionnaires will remain anonymous. However, a number system will be used to help track the data to a specific religious student organization. The religious student organization's name will be kept anonymous.

   Approximately 200 participants may be involved in this research. Participants will be recruited from two Midwest universities. From these two universities, eleven religious student organizations will be targeted for this research.

   b) The amount of time involved in your participation will be approximately 30 minutes.

3. There are no anticipated risks associated with this research.
4. There are no direct benefits for you participating in this study. However, your participation will contribute to the knowledge about developing spirituality among college students and may help religious student organizations better understand how they mentor students through spiritual fulfillment.
5. Your participation is voluntary and you may choose not to participate in this research study or to withdraw your consent at any time. You may choose not to answer any questions that you do not want to answer. You will NOT be penalized in any way should you choose not to participate or to withdraw.
6. By agreeing to participate, you understand and agree that your data may be shared with other researchers and educators in the form of presentations and/or publications. In all cases, your identity will not be revealed. In rare instances, a researcher's study must undergo an audit or program evaluation by an oversight agency (such as the Office for Human Research Protection). That agency would be required to maintain the

confidentiality of your data. In addition, all data will be stored on flash drive that will be kept in a secure location by the principal investigator. The data from the instruments will be kept for approximately one year after the instruments are taken.

7. If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study, or if any problems arise, you may call the Investigator, (David Christopher Gill at 314-686-2350) or the Faculty Advisor, (Dr. Patricia Boyer at 314-516-7396). You may also ask questions or state concerns regarding your rights as a research participant to the Office of Research Administration, at 314-516-5897.

I have read this consent form and have been given the opportunity to ask questions. I will also be given a copy of this consent form for my records. I consent to my participation in the research described above.

Participant's Signature	Date	Participant's Printed Name
Signature of Investigator or Designee	Date	Investigator/Designee Printed Name