ABSTRACT

Faith-Based Higher Education and the Religiosity
of Christian College Students

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While many Christian colleges and universities in the United States have lost their

religious character over time, members of the Council for Christian Colleges and

Universities (CCCU) actively seek to make Christian identity their defining feature. This

dissertation begins by examining students from CCCU colleges and universities to

determine how the Christian identity of their institution influences their college choice

and satisfaction. Next, this dissertation examines the religious preferences that influence

students' choice of college congregation, thereby further revealing the religious values of

Christian college students. Finally, this dissertation examines how characteristics of these

institutions themselves, such as evangelical homogeneity, the integration of faith and

learning, and the availability of spiritual mentors influence the faith lives of students. The

results from this dissertation suggest that the religious identity of these colleges and

universities is very important to students, and that students who base their choice of

college on its Christian identity are more likely to be satisfied with

their experiences. Another key finding is that denominational affiliation is relatively unimportant to these students when choosing both their college and their college congregation. Finally, this dissertation finds that institutional characteristics do indeed influence the faith lives students, especially the availability of spiritual mentors. This dissertation concludes by discussing how these findings affect this sector of Christian higher education that seeks to maintain a vibrant religious identity.

Faith-Based Higher Education and the Religiosity of Christian College Students

by

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A Dissertation

Approved by the Department of Sociology

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Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of
Baylor University in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree
of
Doctor of Philosophy

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DEDICATION

To Melissa - for her love and support as I finished my dissertation

CHAPTER ONE

Higher Education from a Christian Worldview

The decline of religious influence on college and university campuses has marked the history of religious education in the United States. Many of the first colleges and universities were founded by Christian denominations, including institutions such as Harvard and Yale (Ringenberg, 2006). Some public colleges and universities even gave preference to religion. For example, in the mid-19th century the University of Wisconsin held mandatory chapel services, while the University of Michigan gave deference to mainline Protestant denominations when appointing department chairs (Ringenberg, 2006). Religious preference eventually ceased at public institutions, and even religious colleges and universities began to experience declines in religious influence on campus. Around the same time institutions such as Harvard, Yale, and Princeton began to elect non-ministers as college presidents, and replaced the ministers who served on their governing boards with lawyers and businessman (Ringenberg, 2006). Scholars such as George Marsden (1994) and James Burtchaell (1998) chronicled this decline, describing how colleges and universities separated from the religious influences of their founding. Works by thinkers such as Hegel, Nietzsche, and Darwin questioned the authority of Christian thought that once held a privileged status on campus (Burtchaell, 1998). While some colleges and universities rid themselves of all religious influence, others adopted a progressive Christian ethos characterized by an emphasis on the ethical teachings of Jesus as opposed to the traditional doctrines of Christianity (Ringenberg, 2006).

Even though religious decline has dominated the story of Christian higher education in the United States, some evangelical Christian colleges and universities have resisted this decline and retained their religious identity by integrating religious faith into nearly every aspect of campus life. Colleges and universities such as these actually seem to be thriving in recent years, as made evident by recent increases to their enrollment ("CCCU Reports Surging Enrollment for Christian Higher Education," 2005). This dissertation draws upon a large, national sample of Christian colleges and university students belonging to the Council for Christian Colleges and Universities (CCCU) to examine the efficacy of Christ-centered higher education. Specifically, this dissertation examines the factors that influence the decisions of students to attend CCCU institutions. How do students rate the importance of their college's or university's Christian identity compared to other factors such as academic reputation, proximity to home, and available financial aid? Secondly, this dissertation examines whether students attending CCCU colleges and universities are satisfied with their college experience in various academic and spiritual dimensions. Finally, this dissertation examines whether CCCU colleges and universities are effectively able to influence the faith lives of their students. What characteristics of Christian colleges and universities allow them to act as moral communities that influence the religious beliefs and practices of their students?

The Council for Christian Colleges and Universities

Even though religion seems to hold little sway on many college campuses, religious colleges and universities still represent a sizeable proportion of the total number of colleges and universities in the United States. Of the 4,409 degree-granting colleges and universities, 900 were religiously affiliated in 2010 ("Profile of Post-Secondary

Education," 2010). A wide spectrum exists among religious colleges and universities in the United States; some have a more nominal religious affiliation, while others strive to integrate religious faith into every aspect of campus life (Benne, 2001). One organization of Christian colleges and universities that aims to maintain institutional religious identity is the Council for Christian Colleges and Universities (CCCU). The impetus for the CCCU traces back to the 1960s, when *Christianity Today* editor Carl Henry called for evangelicals to become more involved in higher education. In response, Christian leaders sought ways to support evangelical Christian higher education, eventually creating the Christian College Consortium in 1971, which helped to support 10 evangelical colleges (Patterson, 2001). A few years later Christian educators began to see the need for more representation at the national level, and created the Christian College Coalition to represent Christian higher education (Patterson, 2001). The Christian College Coalition and Christian College Consortium evolved into different arms of the same organization, eventually falling under the same name of Council for Christian Colleges and Universities (CCCU) in 1999 (Patterson, 2006).

Today the CCCU has 119 members, and seeks to "advance the cause of Christ-centered higher education and to help institutions transform lives by faithfully relating scholarship and service to biblical truth" ("Council for Christian Colleges and Universities profile," 2014) The CCCU plays an active role in supporting its members, offering over 100 programs and services that help to affirm the missions of its members, including sponsoring study abroad programs, advocacy, and volunteer opportunities ("Council for Christian Colleges and Universities profile," 2014), though its most defining feature is its strict standards for membership. In order to gain admittance to the

CCCU, colleges and universities must have a Christ-centered mission that integrates faith into academic and student life programs, as well as require faculty members and administrators to confirm their personal relationship with Jesus Christ (Litfin, 2004). Members of the CCCU are not nominally Christian; instead they place strong emphasis on affirming and strengthening their religious identity on campus. Organizations such as the CCCU set forth ambitious guidelines for the purpose and mission of Christian higher education, inviting institutions that share this mission to band together to promote unapologetic religious faith, quality scholarship, and faith-filled learning.

One of the key characteristics of the CCCU and its member institutions is a commitment to the *integration of faith and learning*. This phrase describes the commitment of these institutions to approach all academic pursuits from the perspective of faith. Specifically, this viewpoint states that the purpose of pursuing academic knowledge is to discover truth, and that truth is discovered only by acknowledging that all truth is God's truth (Harris, 2004). Using this starting point, colleges and universities are still able to approach topics that are seemingly contradictory to religious faith, but they draw conclusions that fit within a Christian worldview (Hamilton and Mathisen, 1997). One reason Christian students and their parents may be drawn to such colleges and universities that integrate faith and learning is because they fear the negative effects of secular thinking at non-Christian colleges and universities (Dockery and Thornberry, 2002).

Previous Research on the Council for Christian Colleges and Universities

The integration of faith and learning distinguishes CCCU colleges and universities from other types of institutions in the United States. Despite their

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distinctiveness, CCCU institutions still strive to attain high academic standards and equity with secular colleges and universities. The CCCU conducts a variety of research on its member institutions, allowing for comparisons with other colleges and universities on traditional student outcomes such as retention and graduation rates, as well as other metrics such as faculty salaries and student tuition ("Research and assessment," 2014). Some members of the CCCU also participate in the Comprehensive Assessment Project (CAP), which measures characteristics such as student spiritual formation, satisfaction, engagement, and learning outcomes, among other measures ("Comprehensive Assessment Project," 2014).

More recently the CCCU commissioned a large-scale study of its member institutions in order to learn more about how students and faculty view their institution's denominational affiliation, as well as how denominational affiliation influences the institution's policies. A three-part study was conducted in 2012, which surveyed students, faculty, and directors of institutional research. Some of the findings from this study were published in the journal *Christian Higher Education*, and suggested that denominational affiliation is generally not a high priority among students and faculty (Davignon, Glanzer, & Rine, 2013; Rine, Glanzer, & Davignon 2013). Students and faculty still highly valued their college's or university's generic Christian identity, but viewed the institution's particular denomination as less important. In addition to collecting survey data on the importance of institutional denominational affiliation, this study also measured students' personal religious beliefs and practices, the factors that influenced their college choice, their choice of college congregation, and their satisfaction with their college. The student survey was administered at 31 CCCU colleges and universities, with 6318 undergraduate

students completing the survey. This survey is one of the largest studies of students at CCCU colleges and universities, and will be used to examine the following topics relating to student religious faith and their experiences at their college or university.

College Choice and Satisfaction

The importance of metrics such as student satisfaction is not unique to Christian colleges and universities. What does make these Christian colleges and universities unique is their commitment to integrating religious faith into every aspect of the higher education experience, but how successful are CCCU colleges and universities at attracting future students and satisfying current students? The CCCU has recognized the importance of knowing the reasons students choose to attend their member institutions, and contracted higher education consulting firm Noel-Levitz to conduct marketing research to learn these reasons. This research was conducted in both 2000 and 2009, with the 2009 study finding that matriculants to CCCU colleges and universities rated preparation for future career as the top reason for college choice, followed the quality of their academic program of interest ("CCCU 2009 Noel-Levitz market research," 2010). These findings are in contrast to student rankings from the 2000 study, where the integration of faith and learning was ranked as the top reason for college choice, followed by Christian atmosphere ("CCCU 2009 Noel-Levitz market research," 2010). This utilitarian view of college education is also prevalent among the general public, as a recent Pew survey found that 47% believe the main purpose of college is to prepare for a job, while only 39% believe the main purpose should be personal and intellectual growth ("Is college worth it?," 2011).

These differences are certainly compelling, but it should be noted that the sample size for the 2009 portion of the Noel-Levitz study is somewhat small (n=401). Also, the Noel-Levitz study also does not account for the actual characteristics of the college or university attended by these student respondents. The academic quality and religious ethos of these campuses may have different effects on students' reported reasons for college choice. This dissertation will address these limitations in Chapter Two by measuring both student responses and the academic and religious characteristics of each student's college or university. In addition, this dissertation will extend the Noel-Levitz's 2009 study by examining the relationship between reasons for college choice and student satisfaction. The Christian identity of CCCU colleges and universities is one of the main factors that distinguish them from other institutions, but students base their college choice on more than their institution's Christian identity. A number of other factors may influence a student's college choice, including the institution's academic reputation, cost and financial aid package, proximity to home, and parental influence. This dissertation examines all of these factors to determine which are most influential to the college choice of students who attend CCCU institutions.

Chapter Two will also examine whether students who based their college choice on these factors are satisfied with their college experience in these areas, as well as whether they are satisfied with their college experience overall. Academic reputation and Christian identity are among the most influential factors for students attending these colleges (Davignon, Glanzer, & Rine, 2013), but how satisfied are students in these same areas? This chapter will specifically examine whether a relationship exists between students' college choice and their satisfaction with their institution's integration of faith

and learning, availability of spiritual mentors, interaction with faculty, relevance of coursework, and overall satisfaction with their college or university. Student satisfaction is increasingly viewed as important in higher education, as it is connected to student retention rates (Shreiner, 2009). All of these questions about college choice and satisfaction will be examined in Chapter Two.

Student Values

Chapter Three will examine the religiosity of students who attend these colleges and universities. Members of the CCCU exist to educate Christian college students, and understanding this demographic will help these institutions to better meet the spiritual and educational needs of their students. Recent research has examined the religious beliefs and practices of emerging adults, suggesting they are becoming more generically Christian and sometimes struggle to articulate a cohesive worldview about religion and morality (Smith and Snell 2009). It is well-established that the religious practices of emerging adults taper off during emerging adulthood (Petts, 2009; Uecker, Regnerus, & Vaaler, 2007). Concurrently, some claim that Christianity is becoming more juvenile itself by allowing values from popular culture to taint expressions of faith (Bergler, 2012). Is there any evidence that these cultural trends influence students at CCCU colleges and universities?

One way to examine the religiosity of these students is to examine their reasons for attending church. Smith and Snell (2009) have noted that emerging adults tend to have less cohesive worldviews than the rest of the population. Is there any evidence that this cultural trend influences CCCU students' choice of college congregation? This population of Christian college students is highly religious, meaning that many of them

still attend church during college. What congregational characteristics influence their choice of congregation? Is there any evidence that these students base their choice of congregation on personal religious preferences, or do they choose their congregation based on a firm commitment to a particular denomination? Chapter Three will specifically examine whether the pastor's preaching ability and theology, as well as the congregation's style of worship, denomination, and available programs influence students' choice of congregation. These results may be of interest to educators at Christian institutions as they seek to create programs to encourage the spiritual development of their students.

Institutional Characteristics

Finally, this dissertation will examine the extent to which CCCU colleges and universities influence the faith lives of their students. Many students choose to attend these institutions because CCCU members strive to actively integrate faith into academic coursework, as well as provide opportunities for student spiritual development. How successful are CCCU colleges and universities at influencing religious beliefs and practices of their students? In general, college students are the least religious demographic in the United States (Smith & Snell, 2009), and as Clydesdale (2007) notes, college students tend to "put religion on the shelf" during college, only to be retrieved later in life. Does the same phenomenon hold true for CCCU students, albeit to a lesser extent? Recent research examining faith development among Christian college students suggests that peer relationships (Ma, 2003), advancement in academic class (Welch & Mellberg, 2008), and whether religion courses are taught by a full-time faculty all influence student spiritual development (Hilton III & Plummer, 2013). However, no

large-scale studies have examined how characteristics of Christian colleges and universities actually affect the faith lives of students.

Chapter Four will examine the ability of CCCU colleges and universities to affirm the religious beliefs and practices of their students through the lens of Moral Communities Theory (Durkheim, 1912; Stark, 1996). Moral communities are groups that strongly influence the beliefs and practices of their members, and some research suggests that colleges and universities can act as moral communities that influence the religious beliefs and practices of their students (Hill, 2009). CCCU colleges and universities are unique because they unabashedly promote religious belief and practice, but how successful are they at influencing the faith lives of their students, and which characteristics are most successful? Recent iterations of Moral Communities Theory (Regnerus, 2003; Stark, 1996) suggest that homogeneity is an important aspect of creating moral communities, so this dissertation will examine whether evangelical homogeneity helps CCCU colleges and universities be effective moral communities, as well as the extent to which the integration of faith and learning and the availability of spiritual mentors influence the religious beliefs and practices of students. Chapter Four from this dissertation will examine the extent to which CCCU colleges and universities act as moral communities and the characteristics that enable them to be effective moral communities.

CHAPTER TWO

Factors Influencing College Choice and Satisfaction

Higher education in the United States has historically had a strong connection to

Christianity, as many of the first private colleges and universities were founded by

Christian denominations (Burtchaell, 1998). While some of these institutions are still

influenced by their founding denomination, others have slowly distanced themselves

from the faith-based influences of their founding (Marsden, 1994). This separation has

led some colleges and universities to disaffiliate from their founding denomination, while

others have retained their religious identity while lessening the scope of its influence.

Many colleges and universities disengaged from the denomination because they began to

view religious faith as being at odds with their desired mission (Burtchaell, 1998).

Evidence suggests this separation is especially pronounced at research-based institutions,

because faculty members are more sympathetic to their academic disciplines and its

norms than the religious norms of their institution, thereby making them less likely to

integrate faith and learning (Gleason, 1995; Lyon et al., 2005). Colleges and universities

that have chosen to retain their religious identity also experience pressure from others in

academia. Some critique the very idea of Christian higher education by suggesting that

individual subjects such as chemistry and psychology do not benefit from a faith-based

perspective, and that a faith-based approach actually hinders the objectivity necessary for

good scholarship (Kuklick, 1996). A few recently founded Christian colleges and

universities have even omitted Christian identifiers from their official names (Woodrow,

2004), perhaps reflecting an attempt to minimize the judgment of outsiders who might perceive Christian colleges and universities as being less credible.

Despite these trends towards declining religious influence, some faith-based colleges and universities have maintained their emphasis on religious faith while providing a quality education (Benne, 2001; Hamilton & Mathisen, 1997). Many of these institutions are experiencing increasing student enrollment, making evangelical higher education one of the fast growing segments in higher education ("CCCU reports surging enrollment for Christian higher education," 2005). Despite a shift towards more specialized training in higher education, these colleges and universities thrive by attracting students who desire a liberal arts education that is rooted in religious faith. Faculty members at these institutions generally affirm their institution's religious identity by integrating faith and learning, and also supporting the hiring of other faculty members who affirm the institution's mission (Parker et al., 2007). Despite some academic resistance to religious influence, this sector of higher education fills a niche by embracing the integration of religious faith and learning. This leads to the question of how these colleges and universities are able to attract students and sustain themselves in today's academic marketplace. What are the reasons students choose to attend Christian colleges and universities? Are these reasons related to their satisfaction with various aspects of their college experience?

Christians and Higher Education

Some Protestant Christians in the United States have historically had a strained relationship with higher education, perhaps due to the rift between the modernists and the fundamentalists (Noll, 1994). Despite increased evangelical intellectualism in recent

years (Wolfe, 2000), some Christians still assume that non-sectarian higher education will secularize their children (Baker 2007). Initial research seemed to confirm these fears that higher education secularizes students (Caplovitz & Sherrow, 1977; Hunter, 1983), but recent research has challenged this assertion. Even though students often experience declines in religiosity during college, emerging adults who do not attend college actually experience greater declines in religiosity, suggesting that college attendance is not driving declines in religiosity (Mayrl & Uecker, 2011; Regnerus & Uecker, 2006; Uecker, Regnerus, & Vaaler, 2007). The decline in religious belief and practice for emerging adults is most likely due to changes in the life course, and many college students are likely to return to religious belief and practice later in life (Desmond, Morgan, & Kikuchi, 2010; Petts, 2009).

The assumed effect of secular higher education on religious faith is important to Christian higher education, because many Christians are still distrustful of mainstream higher education (Dockery & Thornberry, 2002). Even though non-sectarian institutions do not directly secularize students, many Christians consider attending faith-based colleges and universities because they offer a more comprehensive college experience by focusing on the moral development of their students (Glanzer & Ream, 2009; Langer, Hall, & McMartin, 2010). Research also suggests that cost, financial aid, and academic reputation are the top factors that influence college choice among students at private 4-year colleges and universities (Noel-Levitz, 2012). In addition to these institutional characteristics, many students are also influenced by their friends and parents (Alvarado & Lopez Turley, 2012; Bouse & Hossler, 1991; Broekemier & Seshadri, 1999). Students are indirectly influenced by their parents, who influence higher education ambitions and

choices regarding saving money to fund their college choice (Bouse & Hossler, 1991).

Unsurprisingly, parents and students emphasize different criteria for choosing a college, as students are more likely to consider friends and social life when choosing a college (Broekemier & Seshadri, 1999).

Religious factors may also influence college choice, as students' perceptions of college tend to be influenced by the religious subcultures of their upbringing (Tweedell, 1987). Wiese and Townsend (1991) examined whether church congregations encourage students to attend a college or university that is associated with the congregation's denomination, and found that congregations with a more cosmopolitan orientation were less likely to encourage students to attend a college or university from the same denomination as the congregation. People with literal views of the Bible also tend to be more skeptical of science (Evans, 2013), perhaps indicating that students with literal views of the Bible will be more likely to choose a college that integrates the pursuit of academic knowledge with religious faith.

The Council for Christian Colleges and Universities (CCCU) has also investigated the influences of college choice by contracting education consulting firm Noel-Levitz to study the reasons students choose CCCU colleges and universities. In 2000 CCCU students ranked integration of faith and learning as their top reason for college choice, followed Christian atmosphere, while in 2009 CCCU students rated preparation for future career and quality of their academic program of interest as the top reasons for college choice ("CCCU 2009 Noel-Levitz market research," 2010) However, this Noel-Levitz study had a relatively small sample size (n=401), and did not correlate these rankings to institutional differences in ethos and quality across the CCCU. This

dissertation uses a larger sample of students across a wide variety of CCCU colleges and universities to examine the influences of college choice among CCCU students. Was their choice based primarily on their institution's religious identity, or was it secondary to other factors such as financial assistance and academic reputation? This dissertation also expands on the 2009 Noel-Levitz study by measuring institutional characteristics of these CCCU colleges and universities to account for important differences in academic quality and religious ethos.

Another relevant aspect of the college experience is student satisfaction. Student satisfaction is often influenced by grades and students' perceived learning (Pike, 1991; Pike, 1993), as well as factors such as faculty preparedness and students' social integration (Thomas & Galambos, 2004). Student satisfaction is also related to student retention (Schreiner, 2009), which increases its value in the eyes of college administrators. Student social integration is consistently one of the most important factors influencing student outcomes such as retention (Astin, 1978; Tinto, 1987). Social integration is also important for retaining students at Christian colleges and universities (Burks & Barrett, 2009). Spiritual integration is also related to retention (Morris, Smith, & Cejda, 2003), providing additional impetus for Christian colleges and universities to facilitate spirituality among their students. However, it may be challenging to foster faith on campus as many students may have differing preferences and expectations regarding their college's or university's Christian ethos. Some may expect strict behavioral standards, while others may prefer a Christian ethos that allows for more freedom and personal exploration during college. There is also much diversity within Christianity in terms of belief and practice, which creates challenges for Christian colleges and

universities as they encourage academic approaches that affirm religious belief. Nevertheless, members of the CCCU strive to integrate religious faith into nearly every aspect of campus life. This chapter also examines student satisfaction with Christian colleges and universities that seek to integrate religious faith into a quality educational experience. How satisfied are students with their experiences at CCCU colleges and universities?

Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1 builds upon these previous studies by exploring how students' own religious characteristics might affect the factors that influence their college choice. Students whose personal religious identity matches those of the college or university would seem to be more likely to base their college choice on their institution's religious identity, while perhaps placing less emphasis on other factors such as academic reputation than students whose religious identity does not closely match their college or university's religious identity.

Hypothesis 1a: Evangelical students and students who read the Bible literally will be more likely to base their college choice on the institution's Christian identity.

Hypothesis 1b: Evangelical students and students who read the Bible literally will be less likely to base their college choice on the institution's academic reputation.

Hypothesis 2 examines whether students who base their college choice on the institution's religious identity are satisfied with their college experiences. Religious identity is often the defining feature of Christian colleges and universities, and recent growth in enrollment among CCCU members ("CCCU reports surging enrollment for

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Christian higher education," 2005) might suggest that these colleges' and universities'
distinctive approaches are meeting the needs of their students.

Hypothesis 2: Students who base their college choice on the institution's Christian identity will be more satisfied with their overall college experience, as well as with the faith-based characteristics of their college or university.

Students who based their college choice on their institution's Christian identity may also be even more satisfied if they sense that their college truly provides a Christian environment. One institution-level characteristic that may help to provide a robust Christian environment is the percentage of evangelical Christians on campus.

Hypothesis 3: Students who base their college choice on Christian identity will be more satisfied at colleges and universities that better integrate faith and learning and have a higher concentration of evangelical Christians.

Data

A survey of students who attend institutions that are members of the Council for Christian Colleges and Universities (CCCU) is used to examine the influences of college choice and satisfaction among students at Christian colleges and universities. The CCCU is an organization that restricts membership to institutions that have a strong Christian identity, as made evident by its mission "to advance the cause of Christ-centered higher education and to help our institutions transform lives by faithfully relating scholarship and service to biblical truth" ("Council for Christian Colleges and Universities profile," 2014). Even though these institutions generally exhibit a strong Christian ethos, this ethos varies in terms of scope and expression. CCCU colleges and universities vary on whether they require statements of faith, mandatory chapel attendance, and faculty and

administrators to affiliate with certain denominations (Glanzer, Rine, & Davignon 2013; Hill, 2009; Sinclair et al., 2012).

Each member institution from the CCCU was invited to participate in the survey, with 31 of the 118 colleges and universities agreeing to participate. There does not appear to be any systemic bias based on the institutions that chose to administer the survey, as this sample includes colleges and universities that represent a wide spectrum of sizes, denominations, and regions of the country. However, this sample is not perfectly representative of the population of CCCU colleges and universities, which is one potential limitation of this study. Nevertheless, this sample is sufficient to draw initial conclusions regarding the reasons students choose to attend CCCU institutions and how these reasons relate to their satisfaction with their college or university.

The survey asked a variety of questions regarding students' personal faith beliefs, practices, and identities, as well as how their faith intersects with their experiences and perceptions of their college or university. A total of 6318 undergraduate students completed the survey via the online survey platform Qualtrics, representing a response rate of 12%. While this response rate it does not necessarily indicate nonresponse bias (Groves, 2006). The students who chose to answer the survey also seem to be fairly representative of the sample of institutions,[1] but to correct for any potential bias the descriptive statistics of this analysis (Table 1) are weighted to reflect the true composition of each institution in terms of race and sex. The multivariate analyses are weighted because weighting generally improves the estimates of multi-level models (Pfeffermann et al., 1998).

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[1] The sample is 69% female, compared to 71% of the population. The sample is 83% white, compared to 88% of the population.

Measures

The primary dependent variables ask students to rate the reasons that might have influenced their decision to attend their college. The possible responses include "I was offered financial assistance," "I was attracted by the Christian identity of this college," "the college's denominational affiliation," "the college has a very good academic reputation," "I wanted to live near home," and "my parents wanted me to come here." The possible responses to these survey items included "very important," "somewhat important," and "not important." These responses are recoded into a binary variable that compares "very important" to "somewhat important" and "not important."

In addition, student satisfaction with various areas of campus life is included as a dependent variable. Students were asked to "please rate your satisfaction with your college in each area." The areas included "quality of interaction with faculty," "relevance of coursework to everyday life," "integration of faith and learning in coursework," "ability to find a spiritual mentor," and "overall college experience." Each of these items is measured on a five point scale from "very satisfied" to "very dissatisfied." While some of these measures do not relate directly to hypothesis 3, they will be included for exploratory analysis. Satisfaction with "overall sense of community" is also included as a control variable, as social integration has been shown to strongly influence student retention (Astin, 1978; Tinto, 1987).

Several other institution-level control variables are included in the regression models. The year of the institution's founding (measured in 10s), whether it is located in the south, and its size (measured in 100s) will be included as control variables. In addition, the average SAT score of the incoming freshman class (measured in 100s) will

be included as a proxy measure for academic reputation (Mixon, Lyon, & Beaty 2004; Schmitz 1993). Mixon, Lyon, and Beaty found that SAT scores and faculty salaries were the best proxies for academic reputation, but this analysis will only use SAT scores, as this measure seems more relevant to student outcomes. The percentage of students and faculty (measured in 10s) who identify as both "Bible-believing" and "born-again" is also included as a proxy measure for Christian identity. These institutions are primarily evangelical, and "Bible-believing" and "born-again" are identifiers that often indicate evangelicalism (Hackett & Lindsay, 2008). Faculty measures of religious identity were obtained through a survey (n=2762) that was commissioned through the same research study.

Aggregate measures of political orientation, denominational ethos, and student satisfaction with faith and learning will be used to account for campus-wide levels of these factors. Faculty ratings of denominational ethos on campus will be used as a control variable in the models that examine the influence of denominational ethos on student college choice. Denominational ethos is measured through the question "to what degree does your institution emphasize its denominational identity in these areas?...Campus ethos." Possible responses include "none," "low," "medium," and "high." Finally, the analyses will include a control variable measuring the institution's political orientation. Students rated the political orientation of their college or university through the question "regarding political statements or positions in general, how would you characterize…[your] college or university?" The seven possible responses on this scale range from "extremely liberal" to "extremely conservative," with higher values indicating a more conservative political orientation.

In addition to these institution-level predictors and control variables, individual-level control variables will be included in these models, including the student's race (white=1), sex (female=1), academic class (compared to being a freshman), and father's education. Father's education is measured on a five point scale, representing those who did not complete high school, high school graduates, some college, college graduates, and those who completed postgraduate work. Father's education is a proxy measure for social class, which may influence college choice (Hearn 1991). In addition, views of the Bible are taken into account, identifying whether respondents believe that the Bible is the literal Word of God, the Word of God but not always literal, the Word of God when one reads it in faith, or an ancient book of legends. These responses were reversed scored on a scale from 1 to 4 for analysis. Finally, the oft-used RELTRAD categorization controls for religious tradition by categorizing religious affiliations and denominations into the categories "evangelical," "mainline Protestant," "Black Protestant," "Catholic," "Jewish," "other," and "none" (Steensland et al., 2000). There were so few Jewish students in this sample that they are included in the "other" category. These measures of religious tradition are included in all of the models, with "evangelical" as the reference category.

Analytic Strategy

Multi-level modeling allows for institutional characteristics to be modeled simultaneously with individual characteristics. The students from this sample are nested within different colleges and universities, meaning their individual characteristics may not have the same influences as students from other institutions. This warrants employing multi-level models, which were estimated using SAS's PROX GLIMMIX.

This analysis begins by examining the reasons that influenced students to attend their college or university. This section reports the percentages of student ratings of the factors that influenced their college choice, including academic reputation, Christian identity, denominational identity, parental influence, and proximity to home. Next, multi-level models will be used to conduct exploratory analysis of the individual and institution-level characteristics that influence college choice. Individual-level characteristics may be of most interest, but institution-level characteristics must be accounted for as institutions differ substantively in terms of religious identity, academic quality, and other characteristics. Finally, this analysis will examine whether students who based their college choice on various institutional characteristics are satisfied with their college experience in these areas. If so, this would seem to suggest that these Christian colleges and universities are indeed providing a college experience that fits the needs of their students. This analysis will examine interaction effects between the student preferences and measures of those characteristics on campus to determine whether institutions that provide a better experience relating to student preferences lead to greater student satisfaction. For example, are students who chose their institution based on its Christian identity more likely to be satisfied if their institution fosters a more robust Christian environment?

Results

Table 2.1 reports the weighted frequencies for the reasons that influenced students to attend their college or university. Table 2.1 depicts the percentage of students who rated each characteristic as "very important" to their college choice.

Table 2.1   Descriptive Statistics of College Choice and Satisfaction

Response	%
"Very important" to college choice	
Financial assistance	71.9%
Christian identity	70.5%
Academic reputation	63.3%
Close to home	23.7%
Denominational identity	13.2%
Parents influence	9.3%
"Very satisfied" with…	
Interaction with faculty	58.9%
Overall satisfaction	49.3%
Faith + learning integration	47.7%
Availability of spiritual mentors	30.4%
Relevance of coursework	29.0%

Weighted data

Financial assistance was the top reason that influenced students to attend their college or university, with 71.9% rating it as "very important" to their college decision. Christian identity was rated nearly as high as financial assistance, with 70.5% of respondents indicating that financial assistance was "very important" to their decision. Academic reputation was also highly important to students' decision, with 63.3% rating it as very important. The final three measures were much more limited in their influence of college choice. Only 23.7% of students claimed that living close to home was very important to their college decision, 13.2% claimed the institution's denomination was very important to their decision, and 9.3% claimed the influence of their parents was very important to their college choice.

Next, the analysis models how individual-level characteristics predict these influences, holding constant institution-level characteristics. Some of the variance in college choice is related to differences between institutions. Table 2.2 shows the

intraclass correlations for each of the dependent variables, which represents the
percentage of the variance in the dependent variable that is explained at the institution-
level.

Table 2.2   Intraclass Correlations for Dependent Variables

Importance in college choice	ICC
Christian identity	0.11
Financial assistance	0.12
Academic reputation	0.14
Proximity to home	0.14
Denominational affiliation	0.16
Parent's influence	0.07
Satisfaction with…	
Faith + learning integration	0.12
Availability of spiritual mentors	0.08
Relevance of coursework	0.06
Interaction with faculty	0.07
Overall satisfaction	0.07

As Table 2.2 shows, the variance in college choice explained at the institution-
level ranges from 7% to 16%, thereby affirming the necessity of multi-level modeling.
The results from this analysis of the influences of institution and student characteristics
on reasons for college choice are presented in Table 2.3.

The first model examines the characteristics that influence whether a student
claims that their institution's Christian identity was "very important" to their choice of
institution. As might be expected, students with literal interpretations of the Bible are
more likely to claim that the Christian identity of their institution influenced their college
choice. White students and women students were also more likely to claim that Christian
identity influenced their decision to attend. In addition, students from colleges or

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universities in the south are less likely to claim that Christian identity was "very important" to their college choice. Juniors and seniors were less likely than freshman to claim that they based their college choice on their college or university's Christian identity. In testing Hypothesis 1a, evangelicals were more likely than nearly all other religious traditions to claim that they based their college decision on Christian identity. Black Protestant was the only religious tradition that was no less likely to claim that Christian identity was very important to their college choice.

The second model examines influences on claiming academic reputation was very important to their college choice. Students with literal interpretations of the Bible are also more likely to say that academic reputation influenced their college choice. In addition, women were also much more likely to claim that academic reputation influenced their decision. Being a senior, junior, and father's education also had a negative effect on students claiming that academic reputation influenced their college choice. Only Black Protestants were more likely than evangelicals to claim that they based their college choice on academic reputation. Students from institutions with higher average SAT scores were also more likely to claim that academic reputation was "very important" to their college choice.

Model 3 of this exploratory analysis examines the characteristics that influence whether financial assistance was "very important" factor in one's college choice. White students were less likely to claim that financial assistance played a large role in their college choice, while women were more likely to say that financial assistance was "very important" to their college choice. Father's education, which is a proxy measure for social class, also predicted whether financial assistance influenced student college choice.

Table 2.3   Demographic Predictors of Influences of College Choice

Variables	Christian Identity	Academic Reputation	Financial Assistance	Close Home	Denom.	Parents
Intercept	1.03***	0.45***	0.97***	-1.20***	-2.41	-2.43***
Institutional characteristics						
% Born again/Bible bel.	2.39***					
Average SAT (100s)		0.52***				
Denominational ethos					0.75*	
Size of institution	-0.04	0.03	0.07	-0.05	-0.14	0.14*
Year of Founding (10s)	0.00	-0.03	0.03	0.02	0.00	0.05**
Institution in South	-0.36**	0.27	0.05	-0.07	0.27	0.11
Individual characteristics						
Biblical literalism	0.35***	0.12***	-0.01	0.09*	0.24***	0.01
Race (White=1)	0.22**	0.02	-0.24**	-0.03	-0.06	-0.37***
Sex (Female=1)	0.40***	0.36***	0.24***	0.23***	0.09	0.05
Senior	-0.42***	-0.31***	-0.07	-0.11	-0.44**	-0.12
Junior	-0.36***	-0.20*	-0.16	-0.07	-0.44**	0.00
Sophomore	-0.18	-0.02	-0.11	0.01	-0.22	-0.13
Father's education	-0.08**	-0.19***	-0.10***	-0.16***	-0.07***	0.11**
Mainline Protestant	-0.34***	0.09	0.00	0.22*	-1.22***	-0.04
Black Protestant	0.22	0.68**	-0.22	0.15	0.39	0.56*
Catholic	-1.37***	0.20	0.10	0.73***	-0.95*	-0.21
Other	-1.33***	-0.58*	0.25	0.09	-14.55	-0.16
None	-2.46***	-0.20	-0.37	-0.06	-14.13	0.64
N=	6009	6003	6002	6002	3999	5999
Institution-level variance explained	40.2%	32.2%	12.5%	12.5%	22.9%	31.1%
-2 Log Likelihood	6368.2	7088.5	6626.1	6098.3	2827.7	3492.2

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001
Weighted analysis

Model 4 examines how proximity to home influences college choice. Few students claimed that living close to home was an important factor that influenced their college choice, but students with literal views of the Bible and women students were more likely to consider attending college close to home, while father's education was associated with students being less likely to claim that staying close to home was an important factor. Catholics were also more likely than evangelicals to claim that living close to home was "very important" to their college choice.

Model 5 examines the influence of the college or university's denomination in college choice. Few students claimed that denomination was a major influence in their decision, but students with literal views of the Bible were more likely to claim denomination as an influencing factor, while juniors, seniors and father's education again had negative effects. Unsurprisingly, Catholics were also less likely than evangelicals to claim that denomination was "very important" to their college choice. One important institution-level factor is the level of denominational ethos on campus, which is associated with students claiming that denomination was very important to their college choice. The final model from Table 2.3 examines the role of parents. Few students also claimed that parental influence played a strong role in their decision to attend their college, with white students being even less likely to claim this influence. Father's education was associated with increases in parental influence. In addition, parents played a larger role in the college choice process for students who attend colleges or universities that were founded more recently.

Next, this analysis examines whether these reasons for college choice affect student satisfaction with various aspects of campus life. Table 2.4 reports the institutional and individual effects, and Table 2.5 includes interaction effects between student preferences and actual levels of academic quality and religiosity on campus, to see if campuses with varying levels of these measures influence satisfaction differently.

Table 2.4 shows that students who claim that Christianity identity influenced their college choice were more likely to be satisfied with both the integration of faith and learning on campus and the availability of spiritual mentors on campus, as well as be satisfied overall. Those who chose to attend their institution because of its academic

reputation were also more likely to be satisfied with   the integration of faith and learning on campus. Sophomores, juniors, and seniors were less likely than freshman to be satisfied with the integration of faith and learning.

Table 2.5 examines whether higher levels integration of faith and learning and academic quality lead to even greater student satisfaction. Contrary to Hypothesis 3, the interaction effect between this preference and faculty ratings of the actual integration of faith and learning was not statistically significant, suggesting that students are not more satisfied with the integration of faith and learning on campuses who integrate of faith and learning to a greater extent.

Similarly, greater availability of spiritual mentors did not lead to increased satisfaction. Students who based their college choice on the institution's Christian identity were more likely to be satisfied with the availability of spiritual mentors, but the interaction effect between this preference and the actual level of Christian ethos on campus was not statistically significant, meaning that a more Christian environment does not seemingly lead students to be more satisfied with the availability of spiritual mentors.

Table 2.5 also examines satisfaction with different types of academic measures. Model 3 examines satisfaction with the relevance of coursework to daily life. Students who claim that academic reputation influenced their decision to attend their institution were more satisfied with the relevance of coursework, but the interaction between basing college choice on academic reputation and actual academic prestige (as conceptualized by average SAT scores) was not statistically significant. This suggests that students who based their college choice on academic reputation are not any more satisfied with the relevance of coursework to daily life at colleges and universities who have higher

Table 2.4   Multi-Level Model Predicting College Satisfaction

Variables	Faith + Learning	Spiritual Mentors	Relevant Coursework	Faculty Interaction	Overall Satisfaction
Intercept	-0.08	-0.87***	-0.98***	0.39***	-0.01
Important to college choice…					
Christian identity	0.93***	0.69***			0.91***
Academic reputation	0.53***		0.80***	0.61***	0.68***
Financial assistance					-0.06
Proximity to home					-0.02
Parent's influence					-0.10
Institutional Control Variables					
% Born again/Bible bel.		-1.44*			-0.73
Average SAT (100s)			0.00	0.04	-0.01
Actual faith/learning int.	-0.57				
Sense of community					1.19***
Conservative College	0.55***	0.52***	0.12	0.09	0.14
Size of institution	-0.09	-0.06	-0.02	-0.04	-0.10**
Year of Founding (10s)	0.02	0.01	-0.02	0.01	-0.01
Institution in South	0.04	0.25**	0.26**	0.21*	0.13*
Individual Control Variables					
Biblical literalism	0.01	0.01	0.04	0.07*	0.06
Race (White=1)	-0.07	-0.07	-0.21**	0.20**	0.06
Sex (Female=1)	0.11	0.01	-0.04	-0.02	0.05
Senior	-0.40***	-0.39***	-0.02	0.42***	-0.13
Junior	-0.30***	-0.22*	-0.13	0.32***	-0.14
Sophomore	-0.18*	-0.09	-0.15	0.08	-0.10
Father's education	-0.01	-0.07**	-0.07**	0.03	0.03
Mainline Protestant	0.07	0.02	0.16	-0.03	-0.13
Black Protestant	0.44*	0.25	0.83***	0.45*	0.46*
Catholic	0.17	0.36*	0.13	-0.04	0.02
Other	-1.18**	-0.79*	-0.92*	-0.27	-0.59
None	-1.14**	-0.62	-0.90*	-0.46	-0.69*
N=	5978	5977	5981	5980	5962
Institution-level variance expl.	36.2%	53.6%	44.8%	26.1%	^
-2 Log Likelihood	7282.4	6808.2	6642.4	7578.2	7374.7

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001
^ Model not significant
Weighted analysis

Table 2.5 Multi-Level Model Predicting College Satisfaction (Interactions)

Variables	Faith + Learning	Spiritual Mentors	Relevant Coursework	Faculty Interaction	Overall Satisfaction
Intercept	-0.08	-0.87***	-0.98***	0.39***	-0.02
Interactions					
Average SAT * Academic rep.			0.00	0.00	0.01
% Bib. Bel/born ag. * Christ. ID		-1.16			1.20
Faith, learning * Christ. ID	0.85				
Important to college choice…					
Christian identity	0.93***	0.69***			0.93***
Academic reputation	0.53***		0.80***	0.59***	0.66***
Financial assistance					-0.05
Proximity to home					-0.02
Parent's influence					-0.09
Institutional Control Variables					
% Born again/Bible bel.		-1.39*			-0.80
Average SAT (100s)			0.00	0.04	-0.01
Actual faith/learning int.	-0.57				
Sense of community					1.21***
Conservative College	0.55***	0.51***	0.11	0.09	0.16
Size of institution	-0.09	-0.06	-0.02	-0.04	-0.09**
Year of Founding (10s)	0.02	0.01	0.00	0.01	-0.01
Institution in South	0.04	0.26**	0.26**	0.21*	0.12
Individual Control Variables					
Biblical literalism	0.01	0.01	0.04	0.07*	0.06*
Race (White=1)	-0.07	-0.07	-0.21**	0.20**	0.06
Sex (Female=1)	0.11	0.01	-0.04	-0.02	0.05
Senior	-0.40***	-0.39***	-0.02	0.42***	-0.14
Junior	-0.30***	-0.22**	-0.13	0.32***	-0.14
Sophomore	-0.18*	-0.08	-0.15	0.08	-0.10
Father's education	-0.01	-0.07**	-0.07**	0.03	0.03
Mainline Protestant	0.07	0.02	0.16	-0.03	-0.13
Black Protestant	0.43*	0.24	0.83***	0.46*	0.48*
Catholic	0.18	0.37*	0.13	-0.04	0.02
Other	-1.17**	-0.76	-0.90*	-0.27	-0.60
None	-1.15**	-0.60	-0.90*	-0.45	-0.70*
N=	5978	5977	5981	5980	5962
Institution-level variance expl.	36.4%	53.0%	44.7%	26.6%	^
-2 Log Likelihood	7281.4	6805.4	6642.4	7577.2	7370.1

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001
^Model not significant
Weighted analysis

academic reputations. Model 4 from Table 2.5 examines student satisfaction with their interaction with faculty. Students who base their college choice on academic reputation were more likely to be satisfied with their interactions with the faculty, but this effect was not compounded at institutions with grater academic prestige.

Overall satisfaction follows the same trend as the previous models. Basing college choice on Christian identity and for academic reputation was related to greater overall satisfaction, but these effects were not compounded by institutions that have a greater Christian ethos or better academic reputation. Students are also less satisfied overall at larger colleges and universities. Students from the "none" category are also less satisfied at these institutions (compared to evangelicals). Social integration (as measured by satisfaction with the level of community) was one of the strongest predictors of overall satisfaction at these institutions.

Discussion

Similar to students attending non-sectarian private colleges and universities, students from CCCU institutions base their college choice on financial assistance and academic reputation. Where students from CCCU institutions differ is that they place a similar amount of emphasis on an institution's Christian identity, despite the fact that the institution's denominational affiliation is relatively unimportant to college choice. There are notable differences in the demographics of students who claim that these factors influenced their choice of college. In support of Hypothesis 1a, students who hold literal views of the Bible and evangelicals were generally more likely to value the Christian identity of their institution. Contrary to Hypothesis 1b, students with literal views of the Bible were also more likely to base their college choice on academic reputation as well,

and evangelicals showed little difference in importance of academic reputation compared to other religious traditions. Students at colleges and universities in the South were less likely to claim that Christian identity influenced their college choice, perhaps because students in the "Bible Belt" do not view local public colleges as being hostile to religious faith. White students and women were also more likely to indicate that their institution's Christianity identity influenced their college choice.

Few students claimed that their institution's denominational identity was an important influence of their college choice, with Catholics being even less likely to claim that denomination affiliation influenced their college choice. These CCCU institutions are primarily evangelical in their religious ethos, which explains why Catholics are less likely to base their college choice on their college or university's denominational affiliation. Catholics were also more likely to indicate that proximity to home was an important factor that influenced their college choice. Seemingly, these colleges and universities can attract students from across the country because of their evangelical identity, but they also attract local students who prefer to attend college relatively close to home, even if their religious tradition does not closely match the ethos of their college or university. This finding may help colleges and universities in their efforts to market themselves to local students. By better understanding the religious diversity that exists on their own campuses, these institutions can perhaps better cater to students whose college choice was not primary based on the institution's Christianity identity, while still maintaining a distinctive Christian identity.

Identifying factors besides "Christian identity" that influence college choice may also help these colleges and universities to market themselves to potential students.

Parents seemingly had more influence for students who attend colleges and universities that were founded more recently. In addition, white students and students from higher social classes (as measured by father's education) were less likely to indicate that financial assistance was a very important factor in their college choice. Even though financial assistance is one of the top factors that influences college choice, academic reputation and Christian identity were given similar importance, perhaps suggesting that students are willing to bear a higher college cost to attend CCCU colleges and universities that value their religious identity.

This analysis also examined whether students are satisfied with their college experience. Overall, students seem to be satisfied with the religious and academic characteristics of their institutions. In support of Hypothesis 2, students who base their college choice on Christian identity were more likely to be satisfied with the integration of faith and learning and the availability of spiritual mentors. This finding that students who desire a strong Christian environment are indeed more satisfied in these areas affirms that these colleges and universities are providing students with the religious environment they desire. In addition, students who claimed that academic reputation was an important influence of their college choice were also more likely to be satisfied with the relevance of coursework and their interactions with faculty. Interestingly, the actual academic quality of these institutions did not influence students' satisfaction with these academic characteristics. Institutions that lack academic prestige (measured by SAT scores) can still provide quality academic experiences for students who base their college choice on their institution's academic reputation. Overall satisfaction was also strongly influenced by students who claim that academic reputation and Christian identity

influenced their college choice, meaning that two of the primary reasons why students attend these institutions is related to student satisfaction.

This analysis also examined whether colleges and universities that have a greater percentage of evangelical students and more academic prestige lead to even greater satisfaction among students in these areas. Somewhat surprisingly, they do not. Contrary to Hypothesis 3, colleges and universities with high concentrations of born-again students and faculty do not lead students to be more satisfied with the institution or its faith characteristics, and institutions with higher levels of academic prestige do not lead to greater satisfaction in academic experiences. Seemingly, students desire a baseline level of Christian ethos with an academic environment that provides meaningful academic experiences in terms on interacting with faculty and taking relevant courses. Colleges and universities that meet this baseline seem to satisfy their students' expectations; surpassing these expectations does not seem to lead to greater student satisfaction.

Conclusion

Christian colleges and universities fill a unique niche by providing faith-based higher education for students. This research examined the reasons students chose to attend these colleges and universities, finding that the majority of students base their college choice on the availability of financial assistance, as well as the institution's Christian identity and academic reputation. Christian colleges and universities seem to be successful at meeting the needs and preferences of their students, as made evident by the fact that students who base their college choice on academic reputation and Christian identity are satisfied with their experiences. This bodes well for the future of Christian

higher education, as long as there remains a market of students who prefer a college environment that integrates faith and learning.

These findings also demonstrate the importance of faith-based colleges and universities who seek to retain a strong religious identity. Throughout history many colleges and universities that were founded by religious denominations have sought to diminish the influence of religion on campus in order to gain acceptance in mainstream academia. However, there are still many students who prefer a college environment with a strong Christian ethos and are satisfied when one is provided. Maintaining a strong religious identity seems to benefit Christian colleges and universities by attracting students, while also challenging students to integrate their religious views with academic knowledge. Many emerging adults experience decreases in religiosity during their college years (Petts, 2009; Smith & Snell, 2007), and faith-based colleges and universities have a unique opportunity to foster the spiritual growth and development of their students. By successfully integrating faith and learning, Christian colleges and universities can model ways of integrating religious faith into other areas of life.

Limitations

One limitation of this research concerns the sample of schools that chose to participate in this study. While there appears to be no evidence of response bias based on the institutions that comprise the sample, the sample may not be completely representative of the entire CCCU. Another limitation of this study is the use of proxy measures such as the level of Christian ethos on campus. Christian ethos is almost surely related to the percentage of faculty and students who are Bible-believing and born-again, but it is difficult to gauge the accuracy of this proxy measure for the strength of Christian

ethos on campus. The interactions with these proxy measures were statistically insignificant in every case, and may to some degree be influenced by how closely they represent the constructs they seek to measure.

CHAPTER THREE

Religious Preferences and Church Attendance

Recent research identifies emerging adults as the least religious age-cohort in the United States (Smith & Snell, 2009). Religious practice may be compulsory while living at home during adolescence (Smith & Denton, 2005), but many emerging adults become less religious when leave home. Past research attributed this religious decline to college attendance, believing that the college environment challenges religious beliefs, leading to declines in religious belief and practice (Caplovitz & Sherrow, 1977; Hunter, 1983). However, recent tests of this hypothesis suggest that college is not the primary cause of religious decline among emerging adults, as made evident by the fact that emerging adults who do not attend college generally have greater decreases in religiosity compared to those who do attend college (Mayrl & Uecker, 2011; Regnerus & Uecker, 2006; Uecker, Regnerus, & Vaaler, 2007). Emerging adults seem to naturally tend towards religious inactivity during this life stage, yet many return to religious practice later in life (Desmond, Morgan, & Kikuchi, 2010; Petts, 2009).

This decline in religious practice among emerging adults has become a point of emphasis for many Christian ministers, who often tailor their approach to emerging adults in an attempt to curb this decline in religiosity (Bomar, 2009; Lutz, 2011). Some employ age-specific ministries to reach emerging adults, while others frame Christianity in seeker-friendly and relevant terms (Ellingson, 2007). This approach is sometimes referred to as the emerging church movement, which de-centralizes Christianity by placing greater emphasis on individuals, as opposed to denominations or congregations

(Bader-Saye, 2006; Gibbs and Bolger, 2005; Packard, 2012). This shift towards seeker-friendly Christianity suggests that religious suppliers are becoming increasingly aware of the needs and preferences of individuals, and are leaving behind traditional approaches to better appeal to religious consumers.

This interpretation is consistent with approaches to Rational Choice Theory that suggest people seek to maximize personal benefits when making religious choices (Roof, 2001). In response, religious suppliers within the emerging church choose to market themselves to Christians who prefer a congregation that focuses on them as individuals, appealing to them in ways that conventional congregations do not (Bickle & Howerton, 2004). Despite the fact that appealing to individual preferences may be the catalyst that drives emerging church movement, very little is known about the specific preferences of religious consumers.

One demographic of new religious consumers is Christian college students. Even though many college-aged emerging adults eschew religious practice (Smith & Snell, 2009), students who attend institutions from the Council for Christian Colleges and Universities (CCCU) often place high importance on religious faith and attend church during their college years. Many of these students attended church with their families before college, but college is their first opportunity to truly choose their own church congregation. This research seeks to better understand the religious preferences of Christian college students, as well as how these preferences relate to religious choices. How do religious preferences influence choice of church congregation and frequency of church attendance among Christian college students?

Rational Choice Theory and Religion

Rational Choice Theory has directed the course of the sociology of religion in recent years by suggesting that individuals are rational actors who base their religious choices on costs and benefits (Iannaccone, 1995; Iannaccone, 1997). Rational Choice Theory examines supply-side topics such as religious organizations, as well as demand-side topics such as the preferences and tastes of individuals. While many agree that religious demand is relatively stable at the societal-level and that supply-side changes are what lead to aggregate religious change (Stark & Finke, 2000), other have suggested that stable demand also applies to individual explanations of religious behavior. As Iannaccone puts it,

> Over time, most people modify their religious choices in significant ways, varying their rates of religious participation and modifying its character, or even switching religions altogether. Following assumption of stable preferences, the rational choice theorist is almost never content to explain such choices with reference to changed tastes, norms, or beliefs. (Iannaccone, 1995, p. 77).

Rather, rational choice theorists explain changes in religious choices as occurring because of changes in the costs and benefits on religion (Iannaccone, 1995). Others challenge the assumption of stable preferences (Loveland, 2003; Sen, 1993; Warner, 1993) by noting that individual preferences for religion may be influenced by forces such as social status (Sherkat & Wilson, 1995) and interaction with relatives (Loveland, 2003). Sherkat and Wilson claim that preferences are constrained by people's location in the social world, especially because of the tendency for preferences to converge towards the familiar (1995).

Untangling the relationship between religious supply and demand is a difficult task as both operate simultaneously to influence religious choice. The interplay between

religious supply and demand is illustrated through the phenomenon of megachurches, which seek to meet people's needs in an engaging and relevant manner through services that are often elaborate productions (Brook, 2013). Many megachurches also offer a variety of services including day care centers, schools, sports programs, and fitness centers (Karnes et al., 2007). Such services allow megachurches to sustain their membership, and even increase the religious capital of members who might otherwise not be very invested in the congregation (von der Ruhr & Daniels, 2011). Megachurches hold such sway in their religious markets that when they move into community they have a similar effect as Wal-Mart, creating competition with smaller churches and forcing them to improve, find a niche, or close (Wollschleger & Porter, 2011).

Rational Choice Theory describes niches as "market segments of potential adherents sharing particular religious preferences (needs, tastes, and expectations)." (Stark & Finke, 2000, p. 195), and perhaps megachurches are best understood as filling a niche in the religious economy. While some might study the emergence of megachurches through a supply-side perspective, religious demand and individual preferences are still an important influence of megachurches. Megachurches are usually located in urban, wealthy communities (Karnes et al., 2007), which might seem to suggest that there is only a market for them in such communities. However, megachurches are also "profit maximizing firms" (Iannaccone, 1997, p. 39), meaning that they locate in the areas that provide the most potential to attract potential attendees. Rural and low-income populations may prefer the style of megachurches, but megachurches may not choose to supply these populations, indicating that the location of megachurches is not necessarily a good proxy for their demand. The best way to understand religious demand is through

directly measuring individual preferences, yet studies that take a demand-side approach often fail to directly measure religious preferences (Loveland, 2003).

One important area of religious choice is the choice of church congregation. In the past choice of congregation may have based mainly on denomination, but this choice has become more complex as recent research suggests that denominationalism is losing its salience among Christian college students (Davignon, Glanzer, & Rine, 2013). This study seeks to directly measure the individual religious preferences of Christian college students, as well as learn how these preferences influence students' choice of college congregation and frequency of church attendance.

Hypotheses

This study begins by examining how religious tradition and other demographic variables influence preferences relating to church congregation. No hypotheses will be offered for how demographic variables influence church preferences, as this portion of the analysis is mostly exploratory and there is no available research to date on this topic. However, the first hypothesis explores how religious tradition influences church preferences. This hypothesis is based on Iannaccone's theory of religious human capital, which suggests that personal characteristics, including knowledge and experiences, influence how people create and understand religious commodities (1990). Religious human capital may even influence denominational mobility, as people who switch denominations tend to do so in ways that maintain their religious human capital (Iannaccone, 1990). Recent research affirms this assertion by suggesting that when switching denominations people tend to choose a denomination that is similar to their current denomination (Sullins, 1993). Understood in light of the theory of religious

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human capital, it seems that people who were socialized into more distinctive denominations would be more likely to choose a congregation from the denomination of their upbringing because their religious human capital does not transfer as easily to congregations from other denominations.

Hypothesis 1 explores how religious tradition might influence the preferences of Christian college students when choosing a church congregation, suggesting that Catholics will be more likely to view their choice of congregation as relatively fixed, choosing to attend a local congregation that shares their denominational affiliation. While the preaching ability of the pastor and style of worship may be important to them, it seems that they would be more likely to choose a congregation based on its denomination, and accept the pastor's preaching ability and the congregation's style of worship. Conversely, evangelical Protestants seem less likely to be tied to any one denomination, and may be more likely to shop for a congregation based on the pastor's preaching ability and the congregation's worship style. Religious beliefs are also highly important to evangelicals (Hackett & Lindsay, 2008), so it seems they would place higher emphasis on the pastor's theology when choosing a congregation, while Catholics may assume that the pastor's theology reflects the theology of the denomination.

Hypothesis 1: Christian college students who are Catholics will be more likely than evangelicals to place emphasis on attending a church from a particular denomination.

Hypothesis 1a: Alternatively, Christian college students who are evangelical will place higher emphasis on other characteristics such as the congregation's style of worship, preaching ability of the pastor, and theology of the pastor.

Hypothesis 2 examines how the respondent's preferences for church congregation might affect whether the congregation they attend during college matches the denomination of their home church. Research has suggested a "status quo bias" in religious choices, meaning that choices are strongly influenced by the reference point (Chaves & Montgomery, 1996). In this case, the reference point is the denomination of their home church. On the other hand, leaving home to attend college may present students with their first opportunity to truly choose a congregation that suits their own religious preferences, rather than those of their parents. This may lead some students to choose a congregation from a different denomination than that of their home congregation. Hypothesis 2 examines how congregational preferences may influence whether respondents attend a church congregation from the same denomination as their home church.

Hypothesis 2: Christian college students who place high importance on their congregation's denomination and the theological beliefs of the pastor will be more likely to attend a church that has the same denomination as their home church.

> *Hypothesis 2a: Students who place a high importance on the congregation's style of worship and preaching ability of the pastor will be less likely to attend a church that has the same denomination as their home church.*

Students who are strongly socialized into the denomination of their parents should be more likely to base their choice of congregation on denomination, and will be more likely to attend a college congregation from the same denomination as their home church. On the other hand, students who place more emphasis on characteristics that might vary greatly between congregations (even within the same denomination), such as style of

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worship and preaching ability of the pastor, may be more likely to "church shop" for congregations that fit these criteria, even if they are not from the same denomination as their home church.

Church preferences might not only influence choice of church congregation, but it may also influence frequency of church attendance. Stark and Finke state in Proposition 75 that "to the degree that religious economies are unregulated and competitive, overall levels of religious participation will be high" (Stark & Finke, 2000, p. 201). According to this proposition's reasoning, competitive religious economies with many choices can better satisfy people's preferences, thereby increasing religious participation. This reasoning may also apply to church shopping. Christian college students who choose their church congregation based on its denomination may be less likely to church shop, and therefore may experience decreases in religious participation if their other religious preferences are not satisfied at a congregation within their denomination. Other Christian college students who church shop might discover congregations that better match their preferences, thereby increasing their religious participation. Hypothesis 3 examines how church preferences might influence changes in the respondent's church attendance since they began college.

Hypothesis 3: Christian college students who place a high importance on the style of worship and preaching ability of the pastor will be more likely to maintain or increase church attendance since they began college.

> *Hypothesis 3a: Students who place high importance on their congregation's denomination will be more likely to experience decreases in church attendance since they began college.*

Data

Data from a survey of Christian college students is used to examine these hypotheses regarding church preferences and religious choices. In the fall of 2012 a survey was administered to institutions from the Council for Christian Colleges and universities (CCCU), with 31 of the CCCU's 118 member institutions agreeing to participate. The colleges and universities that agreed to participate in the survey span many different denominations and sizes, and there appears to be no systemic bias based on the institutions who participated in the survey. Students received an email through their student email address inviting them to take an online survey via the survey platform Qualtrics, with 6318 undergraduate students completing the survey.

The CCCU represents a particular segment Christian higher education, and therefore this sample of students is not completely representative of all Christian college students in America. The CCCU is an organization that seeks "to advance the cause of Christ-centered higher education and to help our institutions transform lives by faithfully relating scholarship and service to biblical truth" ("Council for Christian Colleges and Universities profile," 2014), and this sample contains mostly Protestant respondents who place a high priority on their personal faith (Davignon, Glanzer, & Rine, 2013). However, this sample may be ideal for studying choice of church congregation. As college students these respondents may be freely choosing their church congregation for the first time, as they are distanced from the social pressures of family. CCCU students are also relatively religious, and many are interested in choosing a congregation and attending religious services, unlike many of their peers at secular colleges and universities. Nevertheless, while this sample may be a sufficient starting for examining how specific preferences

influence choice of church congregation, the ability to generalize these findings beyond this sample is limited.

Dependent Variables

The first dependent variable measures whether the denomination of the respondent's home church matches the denomination of the church they chose to attend in college. This measure includes 23 general religious affiliations and denominations, and only measures whether the denomination of the student's college congregation matches the general denomination of their home congregation. For instance, there is one category for Baptist, meaning this measure does not differentiate between specific denominations within larger denominational traditions.

This analysis also examines how church preferences influence changes in the frequency of church attendance. Respondents were asked "since you began college how has the frequency of your participation in the following activities changed?...church attendance." Possible responses include "significantly decreased," "decreased slightly," "remained the same," "increased slightly," and "significantly increased." The distribution of the responses is relatively normal, and the responses were coded into three categories describing whether the respondent's church attendance increased, stayed the same, or decreased. Attempts to analyze this survey question using multinomial logistic regression violated the proportional odds assumption, so these three categories were combined into a binary variable that compares maintenance and increases to decreases in church attendance.

Church Preferences

This analysis measures church preferences by asking respondents to rate the importance of factors that influenced their choice of college congregation. Only students who indicated that they attend church in college responded to these questions. Respondents rated the importance of the "style of worship," "theology of the pastor or college pastor," "preaching ability of the pastor or college pastor," and "denomination of the church." In addition, respondents were also asked to rate how the "strength of the college ministry" and "programs and ministries offered by the church (beyond the college ministry)" influenced their choice of college congregation, although no hypotheses are offered for these factors. The respondents rated the importance of each of these factors on a five point scale that allowed respondents to rate these preferences as "not important at all," "not very important," "somewhat important," "very important," and "very important."

Control Variables

The respondent's academic class (e.g. freshman, sophomore, etc.), gender, race (white vs. nonwhite), and father's education were used as control variables. A standard measure of Biblical literalism was also included, as well as whether the respondent's parents belong to the same general denomination. Parents more effectively transmit their religious views to their children when they share the same denomination (Bader & Desmond, 2006), which perhaps influences respondents' choice of college church and frequency of attendance. In addition, the religious tradition of these college students was controlled for using the RELTRAD measure (Steensland et al., 2000).

Method

This analysis begins by presenting the frequencies of college church preferences in Table 1, which are weighted to reflect the actual race and gender composition of the population. Next, each hypothesis is tested using logistic regression. The results from Hypotheses 1 and 1a are presented in Table 2, which examines how religious tradition and other demographic variables influence preferences for congregation. Hypotheses 2 and 2a are presented in Table 3, which examines whether the respondent has chosen to attend a congregation from the same denomination as their home church. Hypotheses 3 and 3a are presented in Table 4, which examines whether different preferences for college congregation influence changes in the respondent's church attendance since they began college. Initial findings revealed that one model from Table 3 exhibited high levels of multicollinarity, which switched the direction of some of the effects. When RELTRAD was removed from the model the multicollinearity disappeared, without substantively affecting the other predictors.

Results

Students at Christian colleges and universities consider many different factors when choosing which church to attend while they are in college. The weighted frequencies for each of the available survey items regarding preferences for college church attendance are presented in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1   Importance of Factors When Choosing College Church

Variables	Not at all	Not very	Somewhat	Very	Extremely
Style of worship	3.3%	5.8%	30.4%	38.7%	21.8%
Preaching ability of pastor	1.7%	3.4%	22.8%	45.9%	26.2%
Theology of pastor	1.8%	2.8%	14.6%	38.9%	41.9%
Denomination of church	8.1%	21.0%	42.8%	19.2%	9.0%
Strength of college ministry	8.4%	21.7%	35.3%	24.9%	9.7%
Other ministries offered by church	7.5%	20.1%	36.2%	25.9%	10.3%

Weighted frequencies

The results show that the theology of the pastor is the most important preference, with 80.8% of respondents claiming that the pastor's theology is very or extremely important to their choice of congregation. This affinity for the pastor's theology did not translate to rating denomination as an important criterion for choosing a church congregation. Only 28.2% of respondents claimed that the church's denomination was a very or extremely important factor when choosing which church to attend in college. The preaching ability of the pastor and the style of worship were both moderately important to respondents, with 72.1% and 60.5% of respondents claiming that these respective factors were very or extremely important to them. Conversely, the ministries offered by churches were less important to these college students when choosing a church, with 34.6% rating the college ministry as very or extremely important, and 36.2% rating the church's ministries as a whole as being very or extremely important in their decision of which church to attend. These basic findings suggest that theology is important, but that these Christian college students care far more about the theology of the pastor than the specific denomination of the church itself. Characteristics of the church service such as the style of worship and the preaching ability of the pastors were also important, while the different types of ministries offered by the church were relatively unimportant.

Table 3.2 models the effects of religious tradition and demographic variables on church preferences. As the results show, upperclassmen consistently have fewer preferences compared to freshmen, perhaps because upperclassmen may have already chosen a congregation and the reasons choice now seem less salient. In addition, women tended to have higher preferences than men for each factor. Biblical literalism also led to higher preferences for each category except for style of worship and preaching ability of the pastor. Father's education was associated with increased preferences for the theology of the pastor, but it also was associated with lower preferences for the denomination of the church, the strength of the college ministry, and ministries programs overall.

In support of Hypothesis 1, religious tradition significantly influenced church preferences. Catholics place a strong emphasis on denomination, but place lower levels of preference on the preaching ability of the pastor and the theology of the pastor compared to evangelicals. Mainline Protestants were less likely to place emphasis on denomination than evangelicals, while showing no significant difference with evangelicals in terms of style of worship and the preaching ability of the pastors. Mainline Protestants were also less likely place high emphasis on the theology of the pastor compared to evangelicals.

The importance of these different church preferences is also likely to influence one's choice of church congregation, as many students are likely choosing their church congregation for the first time. Table 3.3 displays an analysis examining whether these college students attend a congregation from the same general denomination as their home church.

These religious preferences are entered into the model in steps to determine if different types of key predicting variables have significant effects before the final model.

The first step involves stylistic characteristics of the church service itself, including the

style of worship and the preaching ability of the pastor. The second step involves the

framework of beliefs set forth by the congregation, including measures of the pastor's

Table 3.2   Logistic Regression Predicting Church Preferences

Variables	Style of worship	Pastor's preaching	Pastor's theology	Church denom.	College ministry	Other ministries
Biblical literalism	1.02	1.11	1.43***	1.22***	1.24***	1.16**
Parents same denomination	1.02	1.13	1.24*	1.33***	1.01	0.88
Sophomore^	0.85	0.88	1.06	0.85	0.73***	0.82*
Junior^	0.68***	0.79*	1.27*	0.62***	0.59***	0.74***
Senior^	0.63***	0.74**	1.39**	0.59***	0.50***	0.80*
Race (white=1)	1.11	1.22	1.27*	0.98	0.76**	0.75**
Gender (female=1)	1.67***	1.75***	1.37***	1.20*	1.45***	1.34***
Father's education	0.94*	0.97	1.14***	0.90***	0.84***	0.86***
Mainline Protestant	1.09	0.86	0.61***	0.61***	0.90	0.90
Black Protestant	1.49	0.77	0.93	1.21	1.50	2.21**
Catholic	0.77	0.44***	0.28***	2.61***	0.99	0.59*
Other	0.69	0.53	0.32***	0.76	0.40	0.51
None	0.52	0.30*	0.27*	0.65	1.21	0.87
n=	4642	4637	4639	4635	4640	4634
Hosmer and Lemeshow	0.71	0.91	0.65	0.79	0.35	0.47

*<.05, **<.01, ***<.001
^Compared to freshman
Unweighted

theology and the importance of the church's denomination. The third step measures the

influence of different ministries that the church might offer, including college ministry

and other ministries offered by the church. The final step combines all of these influences

into one regression model. As might be expected, those who rate the denomination of the

church as highly important are more likely to attend a college church that has the same

general denomination as their home church. In addition, those who rate style of worship

difference being that there was no significant effect of the preaching ability of the pastor

Table 3.3   Models Predicting Attending Same Denomination as Home Church

Variables	1	2	3	4
Preferences				
Style of worship	1.05			0.88***
Preaching ability of pastor	0.98			1.00
Theology of pastor		1.00		0.99
Denomination of church		1.65***		1.67***
Strength of college ministry			1.09*	1.02
Other ministries offered by church			1.03	1.00
Control variables				
Biblical literalism	0.98	0.97	0.97	0.94
Parents same denomination	1.42***	1.40***	1.42***	1.34***
Sophomore^	1.14	1.20*	1.16	1.20*
Junior^	0.92	1.02	0.96	1.02
Senior^	0.93	1.04	0.97	1.05
Race (white=1)	1.23*	1.27**	1.26*	1.25*
Gender (female=1)	0.89	0.82**	0.86*	0.83**
Father's education	1.01	1.03	1.02	1.03
Mainline Protestant	0.45***		0.44***	0.49***
Black Protestant	0.59		0.56	0.49*
Catholic	0.88		0.91	0.64
Other	0.25*		0.26*	0.29*
None	0.73		0.73	0.65
N=	4412	4406	4409	4370
Hosmer and Lemeshow	0.20	0.13	0.39	0.07

*<.05, **<.01, ***<.001

^Compared to freshman
Unweighted

as being important are less likely to choose a congregation from the same denomination as their home church. These results nearly perfectly support Hypothesis 1, with the only on whether the respondent attends a college church from the same denomination as their home church. Respondents whose parents share the same denomination are also more likely to attend a church congregation from the same general denomination as their home church.

Table 3.4 Models Predicting Maintenance or Increase in Church Attendance

Variables	1	2	3	4
Preferences				
Style of worship	0.91*			0.89**
Preaching ability of pastor	1.12*			1.07
Theology of pastor		1.02		0.99
Denomination of church		1.10**		1.07
Strength of college ministry			1.02	1.00
Other ministries offered by church			1.22***	1.23
Control Variables				
Biblical literalism	1.19***	1.18**	1.22**	1.16**
Parents same denomination	0.95	0.93	0.96	0.95
Sophomore^	0.94	0.84	0.86	0.85
Junior^	0.86	0.87	0.90	0.89
Senior^	0.84	0.87	0.88	0.88
Race (white=1)	1.22*	1.21*	1.26*	1.25*
Gender (female=1)	1.01	0.98	0.95	0.96
Father's education	1.02	1.03	1.04	1.03
Mainline Protestant	1.24*	1.26*	1.24*	1.26*
Black Protestant	0.93	0.91	0.85	0.84
Catholic	2.13**	2.01**	2.29**	2.12**
Other	0.60	0.63	0.61	0.67
None	0.35	0.36	0.40	0.39
N=	4608	4600	4602	4564
Hosmer and Lemeshow	0.33	0.43	0.35	0.87

*<.05, **<.01, ***<.001
^Compared to freshman
Unweighted

Church preferences may also affect changes in the frequency of church attendance since college began. Table 3.4 displays the results of this analysis. In the first model, respondents who place high importance on the congregation's style of worship are less likely to maintain or increase church attendance, while the preaching ability of the pastor had a slight, positive effect on maintaining or increasing church attendance. In the second model, having higher preferences for the denomination of the church also leads to slight

increases in church attendance. Those who place importance on the church's ministries as a whole are more likely to experience increases in church attendance. In the final model, only preferences for the congregation's style of worship had a significant effect on church attendance.

Discussion

Rational Choice Theory has focused mainly on supply-side influences of religion, but individual preferences are also important for explaining religious choice. Table 3.1 reveals the specific church preferences that influence Christian college students' choice of congregation, suggesting that Christian college students are likely to base their choice of congregation on the pastor's theology and preaching ability, as well as the style of worship. Hypothesis 1 was supported as Catholics were more likely to choose their congregation based on its denomination. Hypothesis 1a also received very limited support; evangelicals were not more likely to identify style of worship and the preaching ability of the pastor as criteria for choosing their congregation compared to other religious traditions, but they were more likely to base their choice of congregation on the theology of the pastor. Only Black Protestants were as likely as evangelicals to choose their congregation based on the theology of the pastor.

This study also tested how individual preferences might influence church attendance and choice of college church. The findings generally suggest that individual preferences do indeed predict choice of church congregation and frequency of church attendance. Hypothesis 2 and 2a were firmly supported, with the analysis suggesting that students who base their choice of congregation on denomination being more likely to attend a church of the same denomination of their home church, while those who

emphasize the style of worship are less likely to choose a congregation from the same denomination as their home church. The reason for these relationships may be that these college students grew up attending a church that matched the preferences of their parents, but during college they finally gained freedom to choose a church that fits their own religious preferences. As Table 3.1 shows, this sample of college students places a relatively high importance on characteristics of the church service such as the style of music and the preaching ability of the pastor. Preferring a congregation that matches these preferences may lead Christian college students to church shop, making them more likely to choose a congregation from a different denomination than their home church.

Hypothesis 3 also suggests that students who place high importance on these certain congregational characteristics will be more likely to maintain or increase their church attendance in college. Consistent with previous applications of Rational Choice Theory to religious choice (Stark & Finke, 2000), religious consumers with many available options to meet their religious preferences might experience increases in religious participation. The results provide only partial support for Hypotheses 3 and 3a, and in some cases are directly contrary to these hypotheses. In accord with Hypothesis 3 the preaching ability of the pastor may lead to increases in church attendance, but those who place importance on the style of worship are actually less likely to maintain church attendance. In addition, choosing a congregation based on its denomination was not associated with decreases in church attendance. In fact, in Model 2 placing high importance on denomination was actually associated with maintenance and increases in church attendance. These finding as a whole are somewhat surprising, as style of worship seems to be one way that congregations seek appeal to emerging adults. While style of

worship may be an important characteristic of church services, perhaps it is not enough to help emerging adults to continue to attend church. If emerging adults are to remain active participants in a church congregation, they may need more substantive content from their church congregation as they form their own religious identities. Offering a relatable style of music and service may not be enough to sustain church attendance for Christian college students.

Conclusion

These findings provide important additions to the literature. First, these findings affirm the importance of individual preferences in predicting religious choices. Previous research suggests that social influences may affect religious preferences (Loveland, 2003), and college student's preferences seem to vary based on academic classification, gender, and religious tradition. The assumption of stable demands is useful for societal-level studies of religion, but this study explores variations in religious demand at the individual-level, demonstrating the importance of preferences by showing how they influence religious choice.

Second, these individual preferences influence whether college students choose to attend a church from the same denomination as their parents. Many college students seek to form their own religious identities during college (Astin, Astin, & Lindholm, 2011), but some may be more likely than others to attend a church from a different denomination than their home church. Seemingly, students who place higher emphasis on the preaching ability of the pastor and the style of worship at the church are most likely to shop for a church congregation during college compared to other students who place greater importance on denomination.

Finally, this analysis examined the effects of church preferences on the frequency of church attendance. Do students whose congregational preferences are conducive to church shopping (i.e. pastors preaching ability, theology, and the congregation's style of worship) attend church more frequently than those who base their choice of congregation on denomination? The results suggest that placing high importance on the style of worship may actually lead to decreases in the frequency of church attendance. Perhaps college students who prefer a certain worship style are unable to find a congregation that meets their preferences, thereby tempering their church attendance. Another explanation may be that college students who are developing their religious identities need substantive religious content, and not merely a congregational style that fits their preferences. Seeking a certain religious style at the expense of religious substance may not be enough to sustain religious participation.

The decline in church attendance for emerging adults has been well documented (Smith & Snell, 2009), and many congregations aim to reach emerging adults through new styles of church services. This phenomenon reveals the attempts of congregations to satisfy the religious demands of emerging adults and others who might be less likely to attend church. However, this research suggests that placing importance on congregational style may lead to choosing a congregation from a different denomination, as well as declines in church attendance. Congregations who specifically minister to emerging adults may consider appealing only to their stylistic preferences, but providing substantive religious content to emerging adults as they seek to solidify their own personal religious beliefs and identity.

Limitations

  This sample is not representative of Christian college students as a whole, and many respondents may have been required to attend church with their family before college. If this is the case, it creates difficulties for drawing conclusions regarding the relationship between church preferences and changes in church attendance since college began. In addition, this analysis was unable to account for the religious markets in the locations where these students attend college. There may be few available congregations that satisfy the preferences of these college students, perhaps causing some to experience decreases in religiosity. Nevertheless, this research sheds light on the church preferences of Christian college students and affirms the importance of studying individual religious preferences.

CHAPTER FOUR

Christian Colleges and Universities as Moral Communities

Recent research has examined the religiosity of adolescents and emerging adults (Smith & Denton, 2005; Smith & Snell, 2009), focusing on the role of higher education in the faith lives of emerging adults (Mayrl & Oeur, 2009). Initially, higher education was commonly perceived to secularize students and discourage religious belief rather than provide an environment conducive for religious growth (Caplovitz & Sherrow, 1977; Hunter, 1983). Despite initial findings that seemed to affirm this assertion, new research has recently challenged this claim. Even though college students experience declines in religiosity as a whole during their college years, emerging adults who attend college actually experience smaller declines in religiosity compared to peers who do not attend college (Mayrl & Uecker, 2011; Regnerus & Uecker, 2006; Uecker, Regnerus, & Vaaler, 2007). Much of the decline in religiosity that occurs during the college years has been attributed to the life cycle, with many emerging adults returning to religious belief and practice later in life (Desmond, Morgan, & Kikuchi, 2010; Petts, 2009).

Higher education has the potential to be an important influence of spiritual growth, despite emerging adults being the least religious age group in the United States (Smith & Snell, 2009). Generally, teenagers have not abandoned the religion of their parents completely, but rather their beliefs degenerate into what has been termed moralistic therapeutic deism (Smith & Denton, 2005). Smith and Snell later noted that as teenagers become emerging adults they move away from moralistic therapeutic deism and become increasingly certain of their religious beliefs (2009), perhaps presenting

higher education with the opportunity to play a vital role in their spiritual development as students create their own personal identities (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). Indeed, Astin, Astin, and Lindholm's (2010) research suggests that many students develop spiritual and religious identities during their college years, along with other types of learning and development that occur during post-secondary education.

Colleges and universities play a vital role in the moral development of their students, specifically by facilitating their quest for meaning (Glanzer & Ream, 2009).While many non-sectarian institutions have no qualms about encouraging a broad moral development of their students, faith-based institutions fill a niche in higher education by not only encouraging broad moral development, but also by directly encouraging the religious beliefs and practices of their students. This emphasis on encouraging faith is one of the characteristics that attract students to faith-based colleges and universities (Gonyea & Kuh, 2006; Ma, 2003). Many evangelical and Bible colleges encourage religiosity and moral behavior by requiring their students to sign statements of faith, maintain certain standards of behavior, and attend campus chapel (Hill, 2009; Sinclair et al., 2012). Nevertheless, changes in student religiosity during college differ by institution, suggesting that some colleges and universities may be more effective than others at encouraging the religious belief and practice of their students. What institutional characteristics enable faith-based colleges and universities to successfully foster the religious beliefs and practices of their students?

Moral Communities

The ability of faith-based colleges and universities to influence student religiosity is best understood through the concept of moral communities (Durkheim, 1912; Stark,

1996). Stark's (1996) conceptualization of moral communities suggests that religion is a group property measured by the proportion of the community that is actively religious. This sparked many studies of crime and delinquency that view religion as a vital aspect of a community's ecology (Cochran & Akers, 1989; Elifson, Peterson, & Hadaway, 1983; Tittle & Welch, 1983; Welch, Tittle, & Petee, 1991). Regnerus (2003) furthered Stark's original conception of Moral Communities Theory by suggesting that religious ecology is similar to a toggle switch that activates religious activity only when one is already religious. Regnerus' research implies that the mere concentration of those who favor religion will not lead to the inevitable creation of a moral community, but rather the community must be mostly homogenous and practice social control of its members (2003).

The concept of moral communities also applies to institutions of higher education, which play a prominent role in the faith lives of college students (Hill, 2009; Hill, 2011). Both sectarian and non-sectarian institutions act as moral communities to the extent that they encourage moral development in their students. Recent research has focused on how colleges and universities facilitate the faith of their students (Hill, 2009; Small & Bowman, 2011) with Hill's work suggesting that evangelical and Bible colleges function as moral communities by fostering an ethos that encourages faith. Moral communities may even be present on a smaller scale at non-sectarian colleges, when evangelical Protestants band together to oppose the ethos of the broader campus community (Magolda & Gross, 2009). Conservative Protestant groups are especially successful at forming moral communities because of their emphasis on compliance with group norms and morality (Ammerman, 1987; Peterson & Donnenwerth, 1997); this fact is made

evident by evangelical moral communities successfully helping their college students avoid declines in religious beliefs and attitudes (Penning & Smidt, 2002).

What exactly are the characteristics of Christian colleges and universities that enable them to function as moral communities? Students from evangelical institutions, particularly members of the Council for Christian Colleges and Universities (CCCU), tend to have higher levels of religious participation and church attendance than students from non-sectarian institutions (Hill, 2009). These higher levels of religiosity may be attributed in part to moral communities that exist on these campuses, which Hill (2009) hypothesizes are strengthened by formal and informal interactions among students and faculty. However, a measure of this concept was not available in Hill's analysis. Many other institutional characteristics including policies, denominational identity, and religious demographics of students and faculty may influence whether or not these institutions are effective moral communities. Moral Communities Theory also suggests that homogeneity is an important group-level characteristic (Regnerus, 2003). Greater homogeneity allows groups to build the common ties, language, and symbols that facilitate social control over its members. However, anecdotal evidence suggests that denominationally affiliated institutions are enrolling fewer and fewer students who share the denomination of the institution (Ross, 2011). This finding has been confirmed in a recent study of the denominational affiliation of students from the CCCU's member institutions (Glanzer, Rine, & Davignon, 2013), but the effects of this decline in denominational homogeneity remain to be seen. In addition to homogeneity, other institutional characteristics may help to create moral communities. Conservative Protestant colleges and universities take pride in maintaining their Christian identity

through the integration of faith and learning, mandatory chapel attendance, and provision of spiritual mentorship and Christian community (Swezey & Ross, 2012; Sinclair et al., 2012; Woodrow, 2006). Do these and other hallmark characteristics of Christian colleges and universities influence the faith lives of students?

Hypotheses

Mayrl and Oeur note that research on religion and higher education often neglects potential between-institution effects when studying the influences of student religious belief and practice (2009). This research addresses this gap in the literature by examining how institutional characteristics of Christian colleges and universities enable them to create successful moral communities. Characteristics such as religious homogeneity, the availability of spiritual mentors, and the integration of faith and learning will be examined to see how they influence the religious beliefs and practices of students.

The first hypothesis tests the extent to which religious homogeneity enables Christian institutions to be effective moral communities. The institutions from the sample fit the ethos of evangelicalism, thereby suggesting that the proportion of evangelicals on campus is the most accurate measure of religious homogeneity for this sample. *Hypothesis 1: As the percentage of evangelical students on campus increases, the institution will become a more effective moral community, thereby leading to maintenance and increases in religiosity.*

The second set of hypotheses will test whether the availability of spiritual mentors is an important characteristic of moral communities. Hill (2009) suggested that formal and informal interactions between students and faculty may strengthen moral communities, and one way these interactions may take place is through spiritual

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mentorship. Spiritual mentors at Christian colleges and universities encourage students to be religious, even when peers may be placing less importance on religious belief and practice. Spiritual mentorship may especially be related to individual forms of religiosity such as personal prayer and Bible reading. College students may participate in group religious practices because others do so, but spiritual mentors may be needed to encourage them to maintain individual forms of religiosity.

Hypothesis 2: Greater availability of spiritual mentors on campus will lead to maintenance and increases in religiosity, especially individual religious.

The third set of hypotheses tests how moral communities influence religious beliefs. Hill (2011) established that faith-based institutions slow the decline in religious belief, but it remains to be seen how institutional characteristics might influence religious beliefs. Non-sectarian institutions generally seem to avoid deeper existential questions (Astin, Astin, & Lindholm, 2011), even as students seek answers to existential and spiritual questions during college. Many Christian colleges and universities actively seek to integrate of faith and learning (Swezey & Ross, 2012), which may strengthen students' religious beliefs. Hypothesis 3 examines how the integration of faith and learning might bolster religious beliefs. By integrating religious faith with academic coursework, these colleges and universities may affirm the religious beliefs of students.

Hypothesis 3: Institutions that integrate faith and learning will be more effective moral communities that help their students to maintain religious belief.

While these hypotheses suggest that one institutional characteristic may be the primary influence specific forms of religiosity, religious outcomes may in fact be influenced by several institutional characteristics.

Data

These hypotheses will be tested using data from a survey administered to undergraduate students attending institutions that are members of the Council for Christian Colleges and Universities (CCCU). The CCCU includes 118 member institutions from the United States, representing nearly 350,000 students ("Council for Christian Colleges and Universities profile," 2014). These member institutions represent many different denominations, including institutions with no denominational affiliation. All 118 institutions were invited to participate, with 31 institutions agreeing to administer the online survey to their students. These 31 institutions represent a wide range of sizes and denominations, and there appears to be no systemic bias based on the institutions that agreed to participate in the survey. In addition, the goal of this research is not to generalize particular findings to faith-based institutions, but to identity institutional characteristics that foster moral community. While these findings may apply to other faith-based colleges and universities, the ability to generalize these findings is limited by the uniqueness of the CCCU and the institutions that chose to participate in the survey.

The surveys were administered by email in fall 2012 and 6318 undergraduate students completed the online survey. The research department of each institution sent the invitation email containing the survey link. Email invitations were sent to the entire student body, but this analysis only includes undergraduate responses.

Dependent Variables

The dependent variables include measures of change in religious practice since the respondent began college, including church attendance, Bible study attendance, Bible reading, and personal prayer. To measure changes in religious practice, the students were

asked, "Since you began college, how has the frequency of your participation in the following activities changed?" The possible responses are "significantly decreased," "decreased slightly," "remained the same," "increased slightly," and "significantly increased." For the analysis, these responses were re-coded into binary categories that measure whether the student maintained or increased their religiosity, versus decreases in religiosity.[2]

In addition, this analysis will examine the respondent's religious beliefs, specifically their acceptance of certain supernatural phenomena. The respondents were asked, "In your opinion, does each of the following exist?" The items listed were "God," "Heaven," "Hell," "Satan," "Demons," and "Angels." The possible responses were "absolutely," "probably," "probably not," and "absolutely not." Factor analysis of these six items yields a standardized Cronbach's alpha of .93, suggested that these measures are highly correlated and could be combined into one measure. A large majority of respondents responded "absolutely" to every item, suggesting they be combined into a binary variable that compares respondents who answered "absolutely" on all six items to those who did not. Table 4.1 shows the means for all recoded dependent variables.

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[2]   Separate analyses were run to examine the effects of moral communities on increases in religiosity (compared to decreases and maintenance of religiosity), and these results are included in the appendix. Initially, the analysis used an ordinal outcome variable that measured decreases, remaining the same, and increases in religiosity, but SAS's proc glimmix currently has no way to test the proportional odds assumption in multinomial logit (Wang, Xie, & Fisher, 2012), and SAS's proc LOGISTIC suggested that the proportional odds assumption was violated in many of the models, warranting separate analyses using binary outcomes.

Table 4.1   Descriptive Statistics of Dependent Variables

Variables	Range	Mean
Maintenance or increase in…		
Church attendance	0-1	.72
Bible reading	0-1	.83
Bible study	0-1	.80
Prayer	0-1	.84
Increase in…		
Church attendance	0-1	.25
Bible reading	0-1	.53
Bible study	0-1	.40
Prayer	0-1	.57
Supernatural belief	0-1	.82

Weighted

Independent Variables

This analysis will test the effects of several institutional characteristics on student religiosity. As previously noted, the literature suggests that homogeneity is an important aspect of moral communities (Regnerus, 2003). Previous research has measured homogeneity by incorporating the percentage of many different religions and religious traditions into one measure (Gault-Sherman & Draper, 2011). However, this measure is not well-suited for this student population since nearly all survey respondents identified as Protestant. Additionally, the majority of students at these colleges and universities (77.5%) belong to religious traditions classified as evangelical by the RELTRAD categorization (Steensland et al., 2000). This suggests evangelicalism may be the best way for this analysis to measure homogeneity on campus. Nevertheless, there is certainly no shortage of debate over the proper way to define and measure evangelicalism (Hackett and Lindsay 2008). Most definitions rely on denominational affiliation (Steensland et al.,

2000), adherence to certain beliefs (Hackett & Lindsay, 2008), or self-identification with labels such as "born-again" (Gallup & Castelli, 1989). The percentage of students at each institution who identify as evangelical (according to RELTRAD) will be used as a measure of homogeneity, with institutional means ranging from 37.5% to 90.8%. In addition, the percentage of students who identify as both "Bible-believing" and "born-again" will be used as a second measure of homogeneity. As noted earlier, being "born again" is one method of measuring evangelicalism, and affinity for the Bible is another characteristic of evangelicals (Smith, 2000). The percentage of students at each institution who are both "born-again" and "Bible-believing" ranges from 35.6% to 82.9%.

Previous literature has also suggested that interactions among students and faculty may play a role in the success of moral communities (Hill, 2009). The level of spiritual mentorship will be used to measure one potential influence of these formal and informal interactions. Respondents were asked to rate their satisfaction with the availability of spiritual mentors on a five point scale from "very dissatisfied" to "very satisfied." The mean level of spiritual mentorship at each institution will be used as a proxy for the availability of spiritual mentorship on campus. In addition, the religious ethos on campus may also influence student religiosity. The integration of faith and learning will be used to measure the religious ethos set forth by the institution. Students were asked to rate their satisfaction with the integration of faith and learning at their institution, and institution-level means will be used to predict changes in religiosity.

In addition to these key independent variables, several control variables will be added to the model. The student's gender, race (white vs. non-white), academic

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classification (1=freshman, 2=sophomore, 3=junior, 4=senior), father's education, and religious tradition (compared to Evangelical) will be added to the model as individual-level control variables. In addition to these individual-level controls, several institution-level controls are included. The size of each institution as measured by its enrollment is included, since smaller institutions may be better equipped to function as moral communities than larger institutions. Also, the percentage of the student population that is female, the year the institution was founded, and whether the institution is located in the South are included as institution-level controls.

Method

To test the effects of institution-level measures on student religiosity, multi-level models will be employed using SAS's PROC GLIMMIX. All of the multi-level models are weighted to reflect the race and gender composition of each institution, as weighting generally improves the estimates of multi-level models (Pfeffermann et al., 1998). The analysis presented in the following tables models the maintenance or increase of religiosity against decreases in religiosity. In addition, analyses modeling increases in religiosity against maintenance and decreases in religiosity are presented in the appendix, with the findings briefly mentioned in the results section. Utilizing an ordinal outcome variable did not seem advisable as there was evidence that the proportional odds assumption was violated. The method of multi-level modeling will mirror the method suggested by Wang, Xie, and Fisher (2012) in their work detailing how to use SAS to fit multi-level models. Null models will be run to determine whether there is sufficient variance between institutions. Then the key independent variables and controls will be

entered into the model as fixed effects to determine whether they have any significant

effects on the dependent variable.

Results

To determine whether there is sufficient variance in the dependent variables at the

institution-level, the intraclass correlation coefficient (ICC) will be determined. The

intraclass correlation coefficient measures the amount of variance in the dependent

variable that is explained at the institution-level. The ICCs for each of the dependent

variables of interest are displayed in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2   Intraclass Correlation Coefficients

Variables	ICC
Increase or maintenance of…	
Church attendance	0.07
Bible reading	0.09
Bible study attendance	0.09
Prayer	0.06
Supernatural belief	0.17
Increases in….	
Church attendance	0.10
Bible reading	0.08
Bible study attendance	0.12
Prayer	0.07

The ICC's for these variables of interest range from .06 to .17, which warrants

using multi-level modeling to examine the effects of institutional characteristics on the

religiosity of college students. The results from the analysis of institutional characteristics

on the change in church attendance are presented in Table 4.3. The first model tests

Hypothesis 1 by examining whether evangelical (RELTRAD) homogeneity influences

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religiosity. The second model also tests Hypothesis 1 by examining whether the second

measure of evangelical homogeneity, the percentage of students who are born-again and

Bible-believing, influences religiosity. The third and fourth models test Hypothesis 2 by

modeling the effects of spiritual mentorship and the integration of faith and learning,

respectively. Finally, the fifth model includes all institution-level predictors.

Table 4.3   Multi-level Models Predicting Maintenance or Increase in Church Attendance

Variables	1	2	3	4	5
Intercept	1.02***	1.04***	1.04***	1.02***	1.06***
Institution level					
% Evangelical	-0.17				-1.04
% Born again/Bible bel.		0.86			0.54
Spiritual mentorship			1.09**		0.93*
Faith and learning				0.57*	0.20
Size (1000s)	-0.10	-0.13*	-0.06	-0.10	-0.09
Year founded (10s)	-0.01	-0.02	-0.01	-0.02	-0.01
% Women	0.17	0.87	-1.15	0.27	-0.32
South	0.04	0.05	-0.08	0.06	-0.04
Individual level					
White	0.08	0.07	0.08	0.08	0.08
Female	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Academic class	-0.10***	-0.09***	-0.09***	-0.09***	-0.09***
Father's education	-0.02	-0.02	-0.01	-0.02	-0.01
Mainline Protestant	-0.01	-0.01	-0.01	-0.01	-0.01
Black Protestant	0.22	0.22	0.21	0.23	0.22
Catholic	0.46*	0.47*	0.45*	0.48*	0.46*
Other	-0.26	-0.24	-0.25	-0.24	-0.25
None	-0.67**	-0.67**	-0.67**	-0.66**	-0.67**
Institution-level variance explained	15.6%	24.1%	40.7%	27.4%	48.7%
-2 Log Likelihood	6787.6	6785.03	6778.5	6783.5	6775.4

Note: Unstandardized coefficients are reported. *p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001
Final model: n=6009

As Table 4.3 indicates, neither measure of evangelical homogeneity predicts

maintenance or increase in church attendance. The availability of spiritual mentorship

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had significant, positive effects on church attendance in both Model 3 and the final model. The availability of spiritual mentorship is measured on a four point scale, meaning that for each one point increase in the availability of spiritual mentorship on campus, the odds of maintaining or increasing church attendance since starting college increased on average by 2.53 times ($e^{0.93}$=2.53). The integration of faith and learning had a significant, positive effect on increases or maintenance in church attendance in Model 4, but not in the final model. As might be expected, as students advance in academic class they become less likely to maintain or increase church attendance. Catholics at CCCU institutions are also more likely to maintain or increase church attendance as compared to evangelicals.

Table 4.4 examines maintenance and increases in Bible reading. Evangelical homogeneity as measured by religious tradition and the integration of faith and learning had no significant effects on maintenance or increases in Bible reading, but the percentage of students on campus who describe themselves as both born-again and Bible-believing did have a positive effect in model 2. Again, spiritual mentorship helped to maintain or increase Bible reading in Model 3 and in the final model. Academic class had negative effects on Bible reading, while Black Protestants were more likely to maintain or increase Bible reading since starting college.

Table 4.5 examines the effects of institutional characteristics on attending Bible study. Neither measure of homogeneity had significant effects on changes in attendance in Bible study. The integration of faith and learning also had no effect, while spiritual mentorship had a significant effect in the final model. The same results were also found

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in Table 4.6, with the availability of spiritual mentorship being the only institutional characteristic that had significant effects on maintenance or increases in personal prayer.

Table 4.4   Multi-level Models Predicting Maintenance or Increase in Bible Reading

Variables	1	2	3	4	5
Intercept	1.68***	1.69***	1.68***	1.66***	1.73***
Institution level					
% Evangelical	-0.53				-1.64
% Born again/Bible bel.		1.41*			1.62
Spiritual mentorship			1.38**		1.20*
Faith and learning				0.68	-0.13
Size (1000s)	-0.05	-0.09	0.02	-0.04	-.06
Year founded (10s)	0.00	-0.02	0.00	-0.01	-0.01
% Women	-0.29	0.82	-2.04	-0.22	-0.3
South	-0.11	-0.11	-0.28*	-0.10	-0.23
Individual level					
White	0.22*	0.21*	0.22*	0.22*	0.21*
Female	0.16*	0.16*	0.16*	0.16*	0.16*
Academic class	-0.08*	-0.08*	-0.08*	-0.08*	-0.08*
Father's education	0.04	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.03
Mainline Protestant	-0.02	-0.02	-0.02	-0.02	-0.03
Black Protestant	1.26***	1.27***	1.24***	1.27***	1.25***
Catholic	0.25	0.27	0.24	0.27	0.24
Other	-0.75**	-0.72*	-0.74*	-0.73*	-0.74*
None	-0.68**	-0.67**	-0.67**	-0.67**	-0.68**
Institution-level variance explained	3.6%	9.6%	20.0%	7.8%	30.8%
-2 Log Likelihood	5252.2	5248.3	.5244.1	5249.1	5039.0

Note: Unstandardized coefficients are reported. *p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001
Final model: n=6015

The analysis thus far has focused exclusively on changes in religious practice since the respondent started college, but moral communities may also function to encourage religious belief. Among all the dependent variables, religious belief had the highest amount of institution-level variance (.17). The effects of institutional characteristics on religious belief are examined in Table 4.7. The results show that the

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Table 4.5   Multi-level Models Predicting Maintenance or Increase in Bible Study

Variables	1	2	3	4	5
Intercept	1.46***	1.47***	1.47***	1.45***	1.50***
Institution level					
% Evangelical	-0.59				-1.18
% Born again/Bible bel.		0.72			0.85
Spiritual mentorship			1.38**		1.37**
Faith and learning				0.41	-0.18
Size (1000s)	-0.02	-0.04	0.04	-0.02	0.00
Year founded (10s)	0.00	-0.01	-0.01	-0.01	-0.22
% Women	0.67	1.22	-1.05	0.70	0.32***
South	-0.25	-0.26	-0.42**	-0.25	-0.40**
Individual level					
White	0.32***	0.32***	0.32***	0.32***	0.32***
Female	-0.12	-0.12	-0.12	-0.12	-0.12
Academic class	-0.18***	-0.18***	-0.18***	-0.18***	-0.18***
Father's education	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.02
Mainline Protestant	-0.06	-0.06	-0.06	-0.06	-0.06
Black Protestant	0.83**	0.84**	0.82**	0.84**	0.82**
Catholic	0.37	0.39	0.37	0.39	0.36
Other	-0.55	-0.54	-0.54	-0.54	-0.55
None	-0.86***	-0.85***	-0.85***	-0.85***	-0.85***
Institution-level variance explained	1.0%	3.6%	20.0%	4.0%	22.7%
-2 Log Likelihood	5705.0	5704.3	5696.7	5704.1	5695.2

Note: Unstandardized coefficients are reported. *p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001
Final model: n=6014

percentage of students who are born-again and Bible-believing, the availability of

spiritual mentorship, and the integration of faith and learning all predicted religious

belief. In the final model, homogeneity as measured by the percentage of students

who are born-again and Bible-believing and the availability of spiritual mentorship

retained their significant effects on religious belief. In addition, being evangelical

significantly influenced religious belief compared to being Catholic or Mainline

Protestant.

Table 4.6   Multi-level Models Predicting Maintenance or Increase in Prayer

Variables	1	2	3	4	5
Intercept	1.72***	1.73***	1.73***	1.71***	1.76***
Institution level					
% Evangelical	-0.09				-0.91
% Born again/Bible bel.		1.02			1.07
Spiritual mentorship			1.29**		1.20**
Faith and learning				0.53	-0.17
Size (1000s)	-0.02	-0.06	0.03	-0.02	-0.02
Year founded (10s)	-0.01	-0.02	-0.02	-0.02	-0.02
% Women	0.17	1.01	-1.42	0.26	-0.31
South	-0.01	-0.01	-0.17	0.00	-0.15
Individual level					
White	0.03	0.02	0.03	0.03	0.03
Female	0.09	0.09	0.09	0.09	0.08
Academic class	-0.08*	-0.08*	-0.08*	-0.07*	-0.08*
Father's education	0.05	0.05	0.05	0.05	0.05
Mainline Protestant	-0.05	-0.05	-0.04	-0.05	-0.05
Black Protestant	0.44	0.45	0.42	0.45	0.42
Catholic	0.25	0.27	0.23	0.26	0.23
Other	-0.88**	-0.86**	-0.88**	-0.86**	-0.88**
None	-1.32***	-1.31***	-1.31***	-1.31***	-1.31***
Institution-level variance explained	4.3%	13.1%	35.6%	11.3%	51.9%
-2 Log Likelihood	5040.06	5036.8	5028.4	5037.1	5025.6

Note: Unstandardized coefficients are reported. *p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001

Final model: n=6019

Effects on Increases in Religious Practice

This analysis also examined whether institutional characteristics can lead to increases in religious practice, as opposed to merely avoiding decreases in religious practice (see appendix for tables). Similar to previous findings, spiritual mentorship led to increases in church attendance and prayer in the final models. Religious homogeneity seemed to play a larger role in influencing increases in religious practice as compared to maintaining or increasing religious practice. The percentage

of students who are born-again and Bible-believing had significant effects on increases in Bible reading, attending Bible study, and prayer, while having no significant effect on church attendance.

Table 4.7   Multi-level Models Predicting Religious Belief

Variables	1	2	3	4	5
Intercept	1.66***	1.79***	1.71***	1.68***	1.82***
Institution level					
% Evangelical	3.67				-.43
% Born again/ Bible bel.		5.53***			6.24***
Spiritual mentorship			1.77*		1.16*
Faith and learning				2.26***	-0.71
Size (1000s)	0.11	-0.09	0.17	0.09	-0.07
Year founded (10s)	0.03	0.01	0.01	0.04	0.00
% Women	-2.39	2.56	-3.91	-1.52	1.80
South	0.08	0.18	-0.09	0.20	0.02
Individual level					
White	-0.20*	-0.23*	-0.19*	-0.20*	-0.24*
Female	0.34***	0.34***	0.34***	0.34***	0.34**
Academic class	-0.14***	-0.14***	-0.14***	-0.14***	-0.14***
Father's education	0.06	0.05	0.07*	0.06	0.06
Mainline Protestant	-0.93***	-0.94***	-0.93***	-0.94***	-0.94***
Black Protestant	0.40	0.42	0.38	0.39	0.41
Catholic	-1.30***	-1.30***	-1.32***	-1.30***	-1.32***
Other	-1.94***	-1.91***	-1.95***	-1.94***	-1.91***
None	-4.22***	-4.22***	-4.23***	-4.21***	-4.23***
Institution-level variance explained	10.5%	50.8%	13.5%	28.1%	58.2%
-2 Log Likelihood	4839.3	4811.9	4838.6	4828.7	4807.3

Note: Unstandardized coefficients are reported. *p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001
Final model: n=5989

Discussion

This research examines the characteristics of Christian colleges and universities that enable them to act as moral communities and encourage religious belief and practice. The results suggest that upperclassmen are more likely to experience decreases in

religious belief and practice. Which institutional characteristics might be effective in curtailing these decreases in religiosity? The results of this study suggest limited support for Hypothesis 1, as there was no significant effect for the percentage of students who are evangelical on religious belief and practice. Rather, the percentage of students who are born-again and Bible-believing does influence religious belief, and to some extent religious practice. This form of religious homogeneity is more likely to predict increases in religious practice, as opposed to avoiding decreases in religious practice. These results are also noteworthy because they suggest that religious homogeneity has less to do with affiliation and more to do with personal disposition. These Christian colleges and universities are able to be effective moral communities not because of the students who belong to evangelical denominations, but rather because of the presence of students from all religious traditions who are born-again and Bible-believing. This finding also relates to literature that suggests a decreasing salience of denominational affiliation among Christian college students (Davignon, Glanzer, & Rine, 2013). Perhaps this decrease in denominational salience also affects moral communities. Being members of the same denomination or religious tradition is not enough to create moral community. Rather, those with certain beliefs and disposition, of any denomination, can form an effective moral community.

In support of Hypothesis 2, other institutional characteristics besides homogeneity seem to be influential characteristics that help Christian colleges and universities to be effective moral communities. The availability of spiritual mentors strongly influenced student religiosity, and helped students avoid decreases in church attendance, Bible study attendance, Bible reading, and prayer. Many of these Christian colleges and universities

also pride themselves on integrating faith and learning, though Hypothesis 3 received limited support as the integration of faith and learning only predicted religious belief when other predictors were not included. While religious homogeneity plays a limited role in sustaining religious belief and practice, institutional factors such as spiritual mentorship and the integration of faith and learning seem to more effectively help Christian college students maintain or increase prayer, Bible reading, church attendance, and religious belief.

This finding has notable implications for administrators in Christian higher education, as it seems that controllable institutional characteristics are the primary components of successful moral communities. Characteristics such as the integration of faith and learning and providing spiritual mentors are unique to faith-based institutions, and allow them to play an important role in the faith development of college students. While secular institutions may reference religious beliefs in the classroom, Christian institutions may do so in a way that fosters religious belief and practice among students. The effect of spiritual mentorship was one of the strongest findings of this research, affirming the importance of the role of spiritual mentorship for Christians who seek to maintain religious belief and practice during college. While students who attend non-Christian institutions may need to take initiative to seek out Christian organizations on campus to find spiritual mentorship, Christian colleges and universities are able to actively foster spiritual mentorship on campus. The findings relating to evangelical homogeneity may also influence admissions decisions for institutions actively seeking students who are in accord with their institution's ethos. Rather than seeking students based on denomination or religious tradition, labels such as "born-again" and Bible-

believing" seem more important in creating a moral community, no matter the student's religious tradition. Even though the trend of students experiencing decreases in religiosity as their academic career progresses occurs at Christian institutions as well, this analysis suggests that institutions can slow this decline when they act as effective moral communities.

Conclusion

The findings from this study have implications for religion, higher education, and Moral Communities Theory. Hill (2009) suggested that de facto pluralism on non-sectarian campuses might help religious minorities to flourish, perhaps because exposure to differing worldviews challenges some college students to develop their religious beliefs and spirituality. If true, this finding might seem to suggest that homogeneity is not as important as originally thought for encouraging the practice of faith. Indeed, research has suggested the somewhat paradoxical ideas that both pluralistic environments (Stark, 2000) and homogeneous environments may sometimes serve to encourage religious belief and practice (Hill, 2009), albeit in different ways. This research adds to the discussion by measuring the institutional effect of religious homogeneity, with results suggesting that religious homogeneity does affirm beliefs and practices. Homogeneity had relatively strong effects on religious beliefs, but it had smaller effects on religious practice. Perhaps homogeneity is important on a smaller scale, and pluralism more important on a larger scale. If society is pluralistic, then homogenous religious groups that are united against the perceived antagonism of larger society may best encourage religious belief and practice. Hill's (2009) findings suggest this may be case on non-sectarian campuses. Conversely, students in religiously homogeneous environments may

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maintain their religious beliefs, but struggle to find the motivation to maintain religious practice without the perceived threat of pluralism. Future research might further clarify the relationship between homogeneity, pluralism, and religiosity by measuring perceptions of the world outside of the moral community. If Christian college students view the outside world as threatening to their worldview, then perhaps they would be more likely to maintain or increase religious beliefs and practices, even while embedded in a religiously homogeneous environment that does little to challenge their faith.

Limitations

One limitation of this research involves the sample of CCCU institutions. While there is no evidence that the results are biased based on the colleges and universities that chose to participate in this study, any attempts to generalize these findings are limited by the CCCU members that comprise the sample. Nevertheless, this research sought to examine how institution-level characteristics might influence student religiosity, and there was evidence from this limited sample of CCCU institutions that institution-level characteristics do indeed influence student religiosity.

Another limitation of this research is the measurement of changes in religious practice. The survey was cross-sectional and relied upon students' self-reports of how their religious practice changed since they started college, as opposed to actually recording each student's religiosity at different points in time. As a result, this analysis was unable to determine if student religiosity undergoes non-linear changes during college. Future research might paint a more accurate picture of how institution-level characteristics influence the religious practices of students by studying a panel of students throughout their entire college career.

CHAPTER FIVE

Conclusion

This dissertation examined the efficacy of Christian colleges and universities in the United States that maintain a vibrant religious identity. Many colleges and universities have curtailed religious influence and expression on campus, but members of the CCCU have resisted this trend, touting religious identity as one of their hallmark features. Nevertheless, CCCU colleges and universities must remain attentive to the role of religious faith on their campuses, to ensure a vibrant religious environment and guard against religious decline. Previous research examining college choice and faith development at CCCU colleges and universities has been plagued by small sample size, and did not measure the effects of institutions themselves ("CCCU 2009 Noel-Levitz market research," 2010; Ma, 2003). This dissertation addressed these limitations by conducting a large-scale study of students at CCCU colleges and universities. Institutional characteristics were also measured, thereby accounting for meaningful differences between CCCU colleges and universities and revealing the characteristics that successfully influence students' decision to enroll, as well as their satisfaction and faith development during college.

Chapter Two of this dissertation examined the reasons why students chose to attend their colleges or university. The CCCU noted that its enrollment has grown substantially in recent years ("CCCU Reports Surging Enrollment for Christian Higher Education," 2005), and results from Chapter Two seem suggest there remains a strong demand for colleges and universities with a firm faith commitment, as Christian identity

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was one of the top factors that influenced students' college choice. The results from Chapter Two also suggest that an institution's denominational affiliation played a relatively small role in students' college choice. While particular denominations and religious traditions may provide a strong Christian ethos that attracts students, it is not the institution's denominational affiliation itself that influences the college choice of CCCU students.

Ratings of student satisfaction at CCCU colleges and universities also support the notion of continuing demand for Christian higher education. Overall, students are satisfied with the Christian ethos, academic offerings, and general experiences at their colleges and universities. Students who indicated that Christian identity was very important to their college choice were also more likely to be satisfied with their experiences at their college or university. The fact that CCCU colleges and universities are providing a Christian environment that meets the spiritual needs and preferences of their current students seems to suggest they will attract students who seek a Christian environment during college.

Chapter Three addressed the religious characteristics of Christian college students by examining the preferences that influence their choice of college congregation. Recent research has examined the religiosity of emerging adults, concluding that emerging adults generally hold less cohesive worldviews regarding morality and religion (Smith & Snell, 2009). This chapter examined the preferences that influence choice of college congregation, to determine whether Christian college students are more likely to base their choice of congregation on non-confessional factors such as worship style, preaching ability of the pastor, and church programs, as opposed to the pastor's theology or the

denomination of the church. The results suggest that the most important factors that influence students' choice of college congregation are the pastor's theology and preaching ability; the congregation's style of music was somewhat important, while the congregation's denomination and the programs it offers were relatively unimportant. These findings suggest that students place high emphasis on theological beliefs, but not necessarily the default beliefs of their congregation's denomination. Seemingly, students at these colleges and universities are willing to consider congregations from many different denominations, as long as the pastor ascribes to certain theological beliefs.

Chapter Four examined the characteristics that allow CCCU colleges and universities to be effective moral communities that influence the religious beliefs and practices of their students. Students and their parents are often attracted to the religious ethos of these institutions (Dockery & Thornberry, 2002), which endeavor to cultivate a Christian environment that facilitates the spiritual growth of their students. The findings from Chapter Four suggest one of the key institutional characteristics that influence student religious growth is the availability of spiritual mentors. The integration of faith and learning also influenced students' religious beliefs and practices, though not to the same extent as the availability of spiritual mentors. Somewhat surprisingly, institutions with a higher percentage of evangelical students on campus were *not* more likely to maintain the religiosity of their students. These findings suggest that if CCCU colleges and universities are to facilitate the spiritual development of their students they should not only integrate faith and learning, but provide opportunities outside of the classroom for students to receive spiritual support. When students receive spiritual mentorship from faculty, staff, and peers, they are more likely to maintain their religiosity in college,

which is one of the primary reasons students choose to attend CCCU institutions in the first place (Dockery & Thornberry, 2002).

Implications

The findings from this dissertation have important implications for members of the CCCU as they seek to fulfill their missions of providing Christ-centered education. For instance, the findings regarding the importance of denomination may influence how CCCU colleges and universities view the integration of faith and learning. Many CCCU colleges and universities are wary of the threat of secularization and diminished religious identity (Burtchaell, 1998; Marsden, 1994), thereby stressing the integration of faith and learning as a means to retain distinctive Christian identity (Dockery, 2007; Dockery & Thornberry, 2002; Dovre, 2002; Litfin, 2004; Hamilton & Mathisen, 1997). However, some scholars have questioned whether denominational approaches to particular academic subjects are truly important:

> [Does Notre Dame] they teach a Roman Catholic chemistry? . . .Would Calvin College actually devote itself to a Presbyterian anthropology or worry that Episcopal psychology should get a hearing? Should historians of the Reformation be primarily identified as Protestant, French or female? (Kuklick, 1996; p. 82)

Similarly, some students who are committed Christians may fail to see the purpose of attending a college or university that emphasizes a particular denominational approach. Students may even fail to see the importance of attending a religious college, if they can find religious communities on secular campuses. This dissertation reveals that students place a high emphasis on their institution's Christian identity, rating it one of the most important factors that influenced their college choice. However, only 13.2% of CCCU students rated the denominational affiliation of their institution as being very important to

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their college decision. The good news for CCCU colleges and universities is that students are attracted to their Christian identity, but the sobering news is that students seem to place little emphasis on the importance of denominational approaches, such as "Presbyterian anthropology" or "Episcopalian psychology." This means CCCU colleges and universities affiliated with a particular denomination may attract future students from a wider range of denominations, but fewer students may base their college choice mainly on denominational affiliation.

Students who place low emphasis on their college or university's denominational affiliation are not necessarily unconcerned with particular religious doctrines. Chapter Three examined the preferences that influencing choice of college congregation, and found that the pastor's theology and preaching ability were the most important influences of college congregation. Similarly, denomination had relatively little influence on students' choice of church. Instead, students place a high emphasis on theology. Theological beliefs seem to be important on a case-by-case basis, as opposed to acceptance of all denominational beliefs. This is important for those CCCU colleges and universities with denominational affiliations who have historically drawn higher percentages of students from their sponsoring denomination (Rine, Glanzer, & Davignon, 2013). If CCCU colleges and universities can uphold a broader set of theological beliefs that appeal more students, they may be able to attract new students from outside of their denominational affiliation who would have been unlikely to enroll in the past.

Placing high emphasis on Christian identity may attract students who are serious about their faith, but how are CCCU colleges and universities able to influence the faith lives of their students? Chapter Four addresses this question by examining which

characteristics of CCCU colleges and universities enable them to act as moral communities that influence the religious beliefs and practices of their students. Despite the fact that integration of faith and learning is one of the most salient aspects of these Christian colleges and universities, results showed relatively little impact on the religious beliefs and practices of students. In contrast, the availability of spiritual mentors had the largest influence on student religious beliefs and practices, while the level of evangelical homogeneity and integration of faith and learning on campus had smaller effects. The integration of faith and learning provides an important approach to learning that helps to maintain the religious identity of the college or university, but the availability of spiritual mentors had greater power to influence the religious beliefs and practices of students. CCCU colleges and universities continuing to emphasize the integration of faith and learning might consider emphasizing spiritual mentorship as a more powerful way to facilitate the spiritual development of their students during college.

CCCU Colleges and Universities Changing the World

Recruiting and developing students who fit the mission of CCCU colleges and universities seems to be vital to an institution's success, especially since many focus primarily on undergraduate instruction, rather than faculty scholarship (Dockery & Thornberry, 2002). CCCU administrators such as Dockery and Thornberry envision a model of Christian higher education where students are equipped to engage the rapidly changing world by applying a Christian worldview to whatever they encounter. Preparing students to engage the world from a Christian worldview may help these colleges and universities to achieve their mission of changing the world. James Hunter (2010) noted that many Christian colleges and universities who emphasize religious identity have been

relegated to the fringe of mainstream academia, thereby having little influence on society's culture. Many Christians hope to enact cultural change by changing the hearts and minds of people, but Hunter (2010) claims that culture is created and maintained by elites who hold positions of power within society. In higher education, large, prestigious, and nearly always secular research-intensive institutions are at the center of cultural creation. How can CCCU colleges and universities hope to compete in such a cultural field? With a few exceptions, most CCCU colleges and universities are not well-equipped to compete with large, research-intensive universities. Rather, CCCU colleges and universities have the unique opportunity to influence the world through other means besides research-intensive scholarship.

One area Christian colleges and universities might enact cultural change and build prestige is through the preparation and placement of their students into successful and influential careers. One institution succeeding in this model is Patrick Henry College in Virginia, which despite only being founded in 2000, has become known as "God's Harvard" because of its successful placement of students in Washington D.C. internships (Rosin, 2007). Christian colleges and universities who excel at student preparation and development may not only increase their own prestige, but could produce alumni who are ambassadors of the institution and of Christ to the world. As Michael Lindsay's (2008) book *Faith in the Halls of Power* notes, evangelicals have already successfully entered certain centers of cultural power, thereby gaining influence through their elite status. Dockery and Thornberry agree that "the world needs Christian businessmen and women, teachers, nurses, physicians, social workers…the world needs Christ and will receive him at the hands of graduates who are prepared to live and work anywhere in the world"

(2002, p. 389). CCCU colleges and universities are in a unique position to prepare students for lives of service to the church and the world. This dissertation suggests that CCCU colleges and universities can indeed transform students' lives when they act as strong moral communities.

<div align="center">*Directions for Future Research*</div>

While this dissertation research has added to the study of Christian colleges and universities, there are still several areas for future research that could improve upon current scholarship. One major finding of this dissertation revealed how institution-level characteristics of CCCU colleges and universities influence the faith lives of students. Future research might advance this area of study by identifying other important institutional characteristics of Christian colleges and universities, and developing more nuanced measures of these constructs. For instance, future research might identify and measure hallmark characteristics of CCCU colleges and universities such as religious curriculum, chapel policies, or service requirements to better understand how institutional factors influence the faith lives of students.

Future research might also build upon this dissertation by undertaking an in-depth analysis of how spiritual mentorship influences the religious beliefs and practices of students. One of the main findings from Chapter Four was that spiritual mentorship had a larger influence on student religiosity than the integration of faith and learning and evangelical homogeneity. Perhaps future research could provide more detail into how spiritual mentorship affects the faith lives of students. Are student, faculty, or staff mentors most effective at influencing students' faith? Is spiritual mentorship formal, or is it a more informal type of spiritual accountability? Future research could also examine

the types of ministries and outreaches campuses provide to assist students in their spiritual journeys. By discovering which types of mentorship have the largest influence on students, CCCU colleges and universities might better minister to their students and facilitate their faith development during college.

Future research might also consider tracking a panel of students throughout college to determine how their faith lives evolve throughout college. One consistent finding from Chapter Four was that upperclassmen were less likely to maintain or increase their frequency of religious practice since college began. This dissertation, however, relied upon students' self-rating to determine whether their religiosity increased or decreased since they began college. By tracking a panel of students throughout college, future research might better measure and identify class-specific opportunities for facilitating spiritual growth throughout college.

Conclusion

The history of Christian higher education in the United States has been characterized by declining religious influence. While many Christian colleges and universities have experienced declining religious influence in recent years, some still maintain and nurture their Christian identity. Colleges and universities such as those in the CCCU have found a niche in higher education by attracting students who place equal importance on spiritual and academic development. CCCU institutions have recently experienced growth in their enrollments ("CCCU Reports Surging Enrollment for Christian Higher Education," 2005), and this dissertation suggests that students are strongly attracted to the vibrant Christian identities of these colleges and universities. As these institutions create their visions for the future, they should acknowledge the

important role they hold in the lives of students. While maintaining a Christian identity

and continuing to integrate faith and learning are integral to the missions of these colleges

and universities, sending well-trained graduates into the world may be the most critical

way that these colleges and universities transform the world. By further emphasizing

spiritual growth and preparing students to excel in their future careers, these institutions

might truly achieve their mission through the success of their graduates who carry their

degree into the world.

APPENDIX

Table A.1. Multi-level Models Predicting Increase in Church Attendance

Variables	1	2	3	4	5
Intercept	-1.15***	-1.14***	-1.14***	-1.15***	-1.10***
Institution level					
% Evangelical	-0.65				-0.88
% Born again/ Bible bel.		0.39			1.19
Spiritual mentorship			1.09*		1.26**
Faith and learning				0.10	-0.62
Size (1000s)	-0.03	-0.04	0.02	-0.03	-0.02
Year founded (10s)	0.03	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.02
% Women	1.22	1.47	-0.20	1.17	0.53
South	0.17	0.16	0.03	0.16	0.00
Individual level					
White	-0.16*	-0.16*	-0.16*	-0.16*	-0.16*
Female	-0.09	-0.09	-0.09	-0.09	-0.09
Academic class	-0.08**	-0.08**	-0.08**	-0.08**	-0.08**
Father's education	-0.15***	-0.16***	-0.16***	-0.16***	-0.15***
Mainline Protestant	0.31***	0.31***	0.31***	0.31***	0.31***
Black Protestant	0.22	0.23	0.21	0.22	0.20
Catholic	0.66***	0.67***	0.66***	0.67***	0.65***
Other	0.06	0.07	0.07	0.07	0.06
None	-0.55	-0.54	-0.53	-0.54	-0.54
Institution-level variance explained	24.1%	25.3%	37.7%	24.6%	41.5%
-2 Log Likelihood	6366.4	6366.1	6360.2	6366.7	6357.4

Note: Unstandardized coefficients are reported. *p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001

Final model: n=6009

Table A.2.   Multi-level Models Predicting Increase in Bible reading

Variables	1	2	3	4	5
Intercept	0.09	0.15**	0.12*	0.10*	0.14
Institution level					
% Evangelical	1.68				-0.25
% Born again/Bible bel.		2.38***			1.71*
Spiritual mentorship			0.95*		0.49
Faith and learning				1.21***	0.40
Size (1000s)	0.04	-0.05	0.07	0.03	-0.01
Year founded (10s)	-0.01	-0.02	0.00	-0.01	-0.01
% Women	-1.31	0.85	-2.24	-0.84	-0.16
South	0.00	0.03	-0.10	0.05	-0.03
Individual level					
White	0.01	-0.01	0.02	0.01	0.00
Female	0.08	0.07	0.07	0.07	0.07
Academic class	0.05	0.05	0.04	0.05	0.05
Father's education	0.00	-0.01	0.00	-0.01	-0.01
Mainline Protestant	0.01	0.00	0.01	0.00	0.00
Black Protestant	0.29	0.29	0.27	0.29	0.28
Catholic	-0.11	-0.10	-0.13	-0.11	-0.12
Other	-0.36	-0.35	-0.37	-0.35	-0.35
None	-2.36***	-2.36***	-2.36***	-2.35***	-2.36***
Institution-level variance explained	9.2%	39.5%	14.3%	38.6%	49.2%
-2 Log Likelihood	7856.1	7839.5	7854.1	7842.1	7835.1

Note: Unstandardized coefficients are reported. *p<.05, **p<.01,
***p<.001

Final model: n=6015

Table A.3.   Multi-level Models Predicting Increase in Bible Study

Variables	1	2	3	4	5
Intercept	-0.40***	-0.36***	-0.38***	-0.39***	-0.33***
Institution level					
% Evangelical	1.37				0.58
% Born again/Bible bel.		1.60*			2.86*
Spiritual mentorship			0.55		0.64
Faith and learning				0.37	-1.12
Size (1000s)	0.03	-0.03	0.04	0.02	-0.04
Year founded (10s)	0.00	0.00	0.01	0.01	-0.01
% Women	-2.13	-0.63	-2.63	-1.90	-0.66
South	-0.21	-0.19	-0.26	-0.18	-0.29
Individual level					
White	0.18**	0.18**	0.19**	0.19**	0.18**
Female	-0.07	-0.07	-0.07	-0.07	-0.07
Academic class	-0.12***	-0.12***	-0.12***	-0.12***	-0.12***
Father's education	0.10***	0.10***	0.10***	0.10***	0.10***
Mainline Protestant	-0.09	-0.10	-0.09	-0.09	-0.09
Black Protestant	-0.09	-0.09	-0.09	-0.09	-0.09
Catholic	-0.29	-0.29	-0.30	-0.29	-0.29
Other	-1.26***	-1.26***	-1.27***	-1.27***	-1.26***
None	-1.94***	-1.94***	-1.94***	-1.94***	-1.94***
Institution-level variance explained	11.5%	17.3%	10.9%	10.9%	21.2%
-2 Log Likelihood	7552.0	7548.6	7552.2	7552.4	7545.6

Note: Unstandardized coefficients are reported. *p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001

Final model: n=6014

Table A.4.   Multi-level Models Predicting Increase in Prayer

Variables	1	2	3	4	5
Intercept	0.28***	0.33***	0.31***	0.29***	0.33***
Institution level					
% Evangelical	1.60				0.00
% Born again/Bible bel.		2.12***			1.41*
Spiritual mentorship			1.11**		0.70*
Faith and learning				1.11***	0.33
Size (1000s)	0.05	-0.04	0.08	0.04	0.02
Year founded (10s)	-0.01	-0.02	0.00	-0.01	-0.02
% Women	0.27	2.21*	-0.85	0.70	0.86
South	0.00	0.02	-0.12	0.04	-0.08
Individual level					
White	-0.04	-0.05	-0.03	-0.04	-0.05
Female	0.08	0.08	0.08	0.08	0.08
Academic class	0.07**	0.07**	0.07**	0.07**	0.07**
Father's education	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.01	0.02
Mainline Protestant	-0.03	-0.04	-0.03	-0.04	-0.04
Black Protestant	-0.05	-0.05	-0.07	-0.05	-0.07
Catholic	-0.03	-0.03	-0.06	-0.04	-0.05
Other	-0.61*	-0.60*	-0.63*	-0.61*	-0.61*
None	-2.72***	-2.72***	-2.73***	-2.71***	-2.71***
Institution-level variance explained	5.1%	38.3%	17.6%	39.3%	61.6%
-2 Log Likelihood	7739.9	7725.6	7735.0	7726.7	7717.6

Note: Unstandardized coefficients are reported. *p<.05, **p<.01,
***p<.001

Final model: n=6019

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