



Spirituality

Meaning

Religion

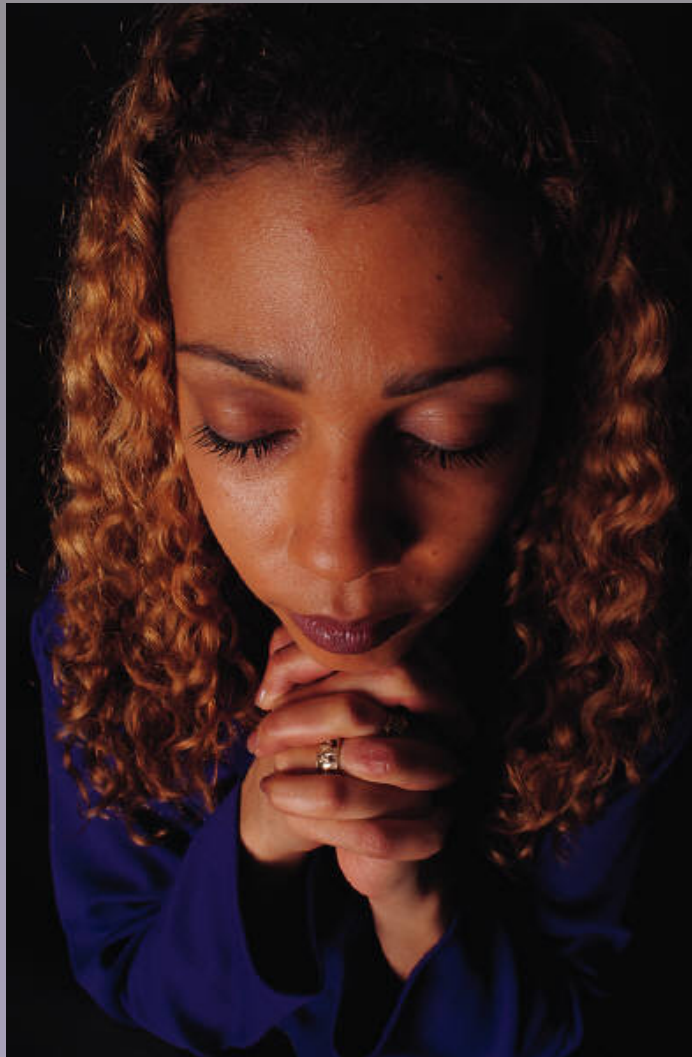
Faith

Christian Students on Campus

Privileged or Oppressed?



Sarah



A strong Christian, Sarah doesn't feel that she can talk about her faith with friends who are "spiritual, but not religious," so she has reluctantly stopped going to church.



May

May attends a progressive mainline Christian church and is moderately liberal. She becomes frustrated when talking about her faith, only to be labeled by others as a right-wing fanatic.





Peggy

Peggy was raised in a conservative Christian home and identifies herself as an evangelical Christian. She feels ostracized by her professors and classmates. She is also pregnant and afraid to tell anyone.





Joan



Joan is Holly's Jewish roommate, and she's tired of Holly's constant venting about liberal professors and peers. This spring, she will have to choose between attending class and observing faith holidays on three occasions.



Greg

Greg (left) is dating Bob (right), the associate pastor at his church. Greg is active on campus and president of the GLBT organization. He feels



that he must keep his Christian identity “closeted” on campus in order to remain popular and keep his leadership role.



Today's Session

- Brief review of research and theory
- Dialogues
 - What is Christian privilege?
 - Thinking and Rethinking Theory
 - Future Questions for Exploration
 - Best Practice – Ideas and Examples



My Assumptions

- Religion is an important expression of difference
- Religion and spirituality, though interrelated, are distinct
- Understanding religious pluralism is a vital component of (if not prerequisite for) building campus communities that value diversity



What is Christian Privilege?





Some Important Questions

- Can the privileged be marginalized? If so, how? What does it look like?
- Should addressing issues related to spirituality be part of the work of student affairs professionals?
- What about religious issues?



What Research Tells Us

- Students tend to change their religious beliefs to align more closely with those of the faculty and the student body.
 - Astin, 1975, 1993; Bryant, Choi, & Yasuno, 2003; Clark et al., 1972
- Religion and spirituality are predictive factors for student development.
 - Schafer, 1990, 1997; Stewart, 2002



What Research Tells Us

- Religion can be a predictive factor for academics and cognitive development.
 - Hoffman, 2001, 2003; Lottes & Kuriloff, 1992; Walker & Dixon, 2002
- Religion can be a predictive factor for retention and graduation rates.
 - Astin, 1975, 1993; Hoffman, 2001, 2003; Velez, 1985



What Research Tells Us

- Religion and Spirituality, though interrelated, are distinct constructs with distinct relationships to student outcomes.
 - Hoffman et al., 2005; Schafer, 1997



Potential Theory Applications

■ Spiritual Development

- Fowler, 1981; Love & Talbot, 1999; Parks, 2000

■ Organization Theory – Power

- Kanter, 1979

■ Whiteness Models

- Delgado & Stefancic, 1997; Fine et al. 2004

■ Pluralism

- Eck, 1993 (www.pluralism.org)



In Small Groups

- Break into Small Groups Based on Topics or Questions:
 - Thinking and Rethinking Theory
 - Future Questions for Research and/or Exploration
 - Best Practice – Ideas and Examples
 - Others???



Final Thoughts – Religion

- We need to do more with religion, not less – Why?
 - It is a real expression of difference
 - Organized religion may not be for everyone, but I believe it could be beneficial for more people than it is.
 - This practice honors community, including voices from the margin and the center.



Final Thoughts – Community

- Building authentic community is a messy business
 - To welcome fundamentalist Christians on the condition that they do not try to change others is not unlike the practice of some Christians who would welcome gays and lesbians so long as they remain celibate.
 - In order to change someone, you must first be open to being changed by them – that is the character of love.



Final Thoughts – Love

- Love one another
 - The strange work of love is to destroy that which is against love
 - The test for love's application is in the beloved – is she more healthy, more whole, more able to act as a subject; is he more loving?