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Running head: STUDENTS' SPIRITUALITY AND RELIGIOSITY

The Quest of a Lifetime: How the First Year of University of Richmond Life Affects
Students' Spirituality and Religiosity.

Honors Thesis

In

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Abstract

First year university students' religious and spiritual beliefs and attitudes were investigated over the course of the year. The survey used was largely made up of a subset of questions from the CSBV survey created by HERI and adapted and administered via Survey monkey software to 153 first year students in the Fall Semester and 74 first year students in the Spring Semester at the University of Richmond. Students pray less and self-reflect more, are more likely to agree that the universe arose by chance, less likely to believe that 'only religion can truly explain existence', less likely to find religion personally helpful, and they are less likely to feel certain about the existence of God after one year. Students shift from religiosity or spirituality.

The Quest of a Lifetime: How the First Year of University of Richmond Life Affects
Students' Spirituality and Religiosity.

American culture today seems to sport a bit of controversy when it comes to the topic of religion. 67% of Americans surveyed in the latest Gallup poll say that religion is losing its influence on American life (Gallup, n.d.); but can religion really be ignored as we move into the future of psychology? Even more diverse than ever before, the country is grappling with the religious jihad that threw New York into devastation 8 years ago and Pentecostal charismatic mega churches in the mid west shocking moderate America with their far right political stances and enthusiastic youth (as seen in the popular documentary *Jesus Camp* in 2006). The Jonas Brothers, teen pop stars, proclaim their Christian pledge to the public to wait until marriage to have sex all while college students seem more likely to be going to yoga class than church on Sunday. Despite Gallup poll participants' seeming lack of faith in religion, reports show that 54% and 26% of Americans say that religion is very important or fairly important respectively in their own lives (Gallup, n.d.). Religion and spirituality seem to be journeys for many people rather than a fixed set of beliefs over a lifetime. Therefore, it is important to explore the spiritual needs and development.

The first year of University life is often a huge transition for young people. They are no longer living with their parents or guardians and they have more autonomy and responsibility. Students may also be exposed for the first time, through academics or social groups to new ideas, cultures, beliefs and moral systems. When studying first year students at many diverse universities, Chickering and McCormick (1973) found that despite major differences among institutions and students, the direction of growth was

similar in each place. First year students were varied, yet they overall became much more autonomous, aware, integrated, aesthetically sensitive, tolerant, and liberal in religious views, and less concerned about material possessions as they moved through the college experience (Chickering & McCormick, 1973). It is likely that current students are exposed to an even wider breadth of diversity today; therefore, it is possible that this research is still relevant to university students.

Religion and Spirituality is an important part of many college students' lives. Schipper (2009) found that of the 20 men in his study, 19 reported that spirituality influenced their decisions about sexual activity. Livingston and Cummings (2009) also followed 9 young women in professional education programs and documented how they used their spirituality to cope with life transitions. The students' spiritual activities were private and nontraditional (e.g. meditation, prayer, being in nature), and most of them reported that their spirituality helped them deal with their life transitions.

Walker (2008) concluded that community college leader's benefit from spiritual and religious practice and this outlet helps them seek to increase their leadership effectiveness and to preserve themselves despite the demands and challenges associated with their positions. Findings from the Higher Education Research Institute also show better than average grades, increased charitable involvement, increased self-esteem, and positive growth in self-rated health in students with high levels of religious involvement (Astin, Astin, Lindholm, & UCLA's HEI, 03-10).

Some view spirituality as "a human phenomenon" that "exists, at least potentially, in all persons" (Elkins et al., 1988, p. 8), they defined spirituality as "a way of being and experiencing that comes about through awareness of a transcendent dimension

characterized by certain identifiable values in regard to self, others, nature, life, and whatever one considers the Ultimate” (p. 10)

Spirituality is defined by UCLA and the Higher Education Research Institute as “a multifaceted quality. It involves an active quest for answers to life’s “big questions”, a global worldview that transcends ethnocentrism and egocentrism, a sense of caring and compassion for others coupled with a lifestyle that includes service to others, and a capacity to maintain one’s sense of calm and centeredness, especially in times of stress” (Astin, Astin, Lindholm, & UCLA's HEI, 03-10).

Religion is described as the narrow construct, the institutional and static, whereas spirituality is more encompassing, personal, relational and dynamic (Zinnbauer et al., 1999). Sometimes the two terms, though very much alike are starkly polarized. Spirituality offers a broader view of well-being than religion in many cases. Still, Pargament (2005) has been influential in studying the field of religion through psychology and defines religion as, “Religion will be defined in this article as “a search for significance in ways related to the sacred”.

French philosopher and Jesuit priest Teilhard de Chardin famously said, “We are not human beings having a spiritual experience. We are spiritual beings having a human experience.” Miller states that according to Zinnbauer, Pargament, and Scott (1999), Western culture is becoming more interested in the topic of spirituality, as opposed to religiousness. Similarly, researchers in the social sciences are also focusing their studies on spirituality, particularly on the personal, transcendent and relatedness aspects of spirituality, also known as spiritual experiences (Miller, 2005). According to Boston University’s department of counseling psychology and religion, the meanings of being a

religious person and being a spiritual person are currently the subject of much debate. In fact, the official professional organization in the field, (Division 36 of the American Psychological Association) recently conducted a much-contested vote about whether to change names from "Psychology of Religion" to "Psychology of Religion and Spirituality" (Boston University. n.d.).

There is a growing amount of research on Spirituality in the past ten years. In the 2005 book, *The Spiritual Revolution: Why religion is giving way to Spirituality*, sociology of religion researchers examine why traditional forms of religion are giving way to a more holistic spirituality. Researchers suggest that the number of people attending religious services in the United States has dropped by about 50% in the 50 years. A Gallup poll from 2006 found that 25% of Americans report that they have switched from one religious preference to another or moved away from religion altogether in their lifetime (Gallup, n.d.).

This phenomenon has spanned the width of popular culture and can be seen on college campuses. In 2003, UCLA teamed up with the Higher Education Research Institute and launched a study titled, "Spirituality in Higher Education: Students' Search for Meaning and Purpose". This work sought to demystify the spirituality of college students. They found that today's college student not only showed high levels of spiritual interest and involvement, but also demonstrated a high level of religious tolerance and acceptance (UCLA & HERI, 2003). The study also examined "the role that college plays in facilitating the development of students' spiritual qualities." Among other results they found that, "Although religious engagement declines somewhat during college, students' spiritual qualities grow substantially" (Astin, Astin, Lindholm, & UCLA's HEI,

03-10). Perhaps the next generation will be highly interested in the diversity that spirituality allows for.

In this current study we collected data that would help to understand the extent and reasons why changes in religiosity and spirituality may occur within the college student population on the University of Richmond campus. We attempted to identify whether those changes were a shift from religiosity to spirituality and if any beliefs were altered in as short a period of time as a student's first year. It is hypothesized that many students' spiritual and religious practices and/or beliefs would be affected by new experiences during their first year of University and that this change would mimic the popular shift from religion to spirituality.

Method

Participants

Four hundred first year University of Richmond Students (200 first year men and 200 first year women over the age of 18) were randomly selected for participation by the registrar. 153 students responded to the first survey and 74 students responded to the second survey. 60% of the students who participated in the second survey also participated in the first survey.

Even though 40% of the participants were not the same in the second part of the survey, demographics were similar, therefore; results were used for the full 74 students. 59% of participants were female in the Spring Semester and 56% were female in the fall. 9% of participants were international in the fall and 4% in the spring. For current religious preference in both surveys, Roman Catholic and None were the highest categories of identification. 15% of students in the fall and 12% of students in the spring

identified themselves as students of color. 79% of students in the fall and 74% of students in the spring identified themselves as white or Caucasian. 0% in the fall and 2% in the spring identified as biracial and 5.3% in the fall and 11% in the spring identified as other. Students who choose other specified that they were of Asian or Latino heritage.

Materials

The survey used is largely made up of a subset of questions from the College Students' Beliefs and Values Survey created by the Higher Education Research Institute. The survey was adapted and administered via Survey monkey software. It is comprised of 23 multiple choice questions and one open ended question. Topics covered include demographics, political views, and attitudes and beliefs concerning religiosity and spirituality.

Procedure

The survey was administered by email in the first month of the fall semester and again at the beginning of April in order to measure any changes in attitudes concerning student's spirituality and/or religiosity within the first year class over the course of their first year on campus. Students did not receive payment, but participation did fulfill research participation class requirements for some students. For each survey administration (i.e., Fall and Spring), Students were given 1 initial email and then 2 additional email reminders encouraging them to participate in the study, but participation was fully voluntary.

Results

The first section of the survey focuses on demographics and political views. Though students generally defined themselves as moderate, their political views seemed

very inclusive. (Figure 1.) There is no significant difference between the Fall and Spring Semester for either of the questions sited.

Next, students were asked to what degree they agreed with certain statements. When prompted, "The universe arose by chance" there was a significant decrease in the mean values between the Fall Semester (3.02) and the Spring (2.7) $p=.043$. This shift in agreement is easy to see in figures 2a. and 2.b and shows that students in the Spring Semester agree more that the universe arose by chance than students in the fall semester.

When prompted, "While science can provide important information about the physical world, only religion can truly explain existence", the results increased in disagreement mean values between the Fall Semester (2.51) and the Spring Semester (2.82). This increase approached significance with $p=.058$ (see Figure 3).

When prompted, "Being committed to introducing people to my faith", results significantly increased in extent to which participants do not describe themselves. Mean values between the Fall Semester (2.46) and the Spring Semester (2.69) increased with $p=.023$ (see Figure 4). And when students were asked if they felt obligated to follow their parents' religious practices, In the Fall Semester 6.4% of students said they related to a great extent where as 0% of students in the Spring Semester said that they related to a great extent.

When prompted, "I find religion to be personally helpful", the mean values between the Fall Semester (2.22) and the Spring Semester (2.67) significantly increased in disagreement $p=.006$ (See Figure 5).

By the Spring Semester, students are slightly less likely to pray several times a week or daily and are more likely to practice self reflection several times a week or daily.

(see Figure 6) The increase is not significant for self-reflection, but for prayer; there is a significant decrease between the average means of the Fall and Spring Semester ($p=.016$).

Students were asked, "Do you believe in God?" There was a significant difference in the means between the Fall semester (1.43) and the Spring Semester (1.64) $p=.045$. With 1 meaning 'Yes', 2 meaning 'Not Sure', and 3 meaning 'No'. Thus, there was a trend toward greater uncertainty and negative answers (see Figure 7).

Students also gave their own definitions of spirituality at the end of the survey. Here is a sample of those answers, for a full list (see Appendix A).

Everything, Nothing, Hope, Love, Faith, Moral compass, Being best friends with God, A growing experience, I don't know, Something we naturally have, Loving Nature, To feel part of a community, To find meaning in everyday actions, loving and being loved, The belief that someone or something is looking after us, Truth to self, Being connected to everything around you, Trusting in and loving a higher being, Individuality, belief that everything in life happens for a reason

Students also consistently rated 'A sense of community' and 'Being intellectually stimulated' as the most important qualities of their spiritual journey. In the fall, 82% of students felt a sense of community was important for their spiritual journey and in the spring 78%. In the fall 85% felt that being intellectually stimulated was important for their spiritual journey and in the spring 92%. Having mentors was also rated highly. Ironically students responded that the least important aspect of their spiritual journey was to examine religious texts critically with 39.2% in the fall semester, and 39% in the spring semester describing the quality as important in their spiritual journey.

Despite these changes and shifts that emerged in the data, the majority of students in both testing groups explicitly expressed that they did not feel their religious beliefs would change or had changed. When prompted, "I do not expect my religious convictions

to change in the next few years”, 81.8% of students in the fall and 75.4% of students in the spring agreed.

Discussion

Results suggest that the hypothesis is supported. Students' spiritual and religious beliefs are changing even over as short a period of time as a school year. After one year at the University of Richmond, students are more likely to agree that the universe arose by chance or could have arisen by chance. They are less likely to believe that 'only religion can truly explain existence', and less likely to feel "committed to introducing people" to their faith. They are less likely to find religion personally helpful, and they are less likely to feel certain about the existence of God. Despite all of these changes, the students do not explicitly report changes and are still very interested in Spirituality.

It is possible that as students learn more about diverse worldviews they tend to shift to a more inclusive and all encompassing version of spiritual beliefs. Students also seem to be shifting from more traditionally religious practices towards more 'spiritual' experiences (Prayer to Self-reflection). A trend from certainty of belief to uncertainty or acceptance of other ideas and possibilities also emerges in the data.

Shifts and changes may be the product of natural growth and development. In her book, *Common fire: Leading lives of commitment on a complex world*, Parks suggests that, all of life consists of seeking, arranging, and patterning meaning. Faith, Parks specifies, consists of "meaning making in its most comprehensive dimensions"—both the act of composing meaning and being composed by meaning (Parks, 20). Faith to Parks is the pursuit of meaning and faith through development.

She goes on to claim the need for an in-between life stage where young adults learn from uncertain commitments. In this stage, the young adult is transitioning from relying on parents and authorities to gaining the ability to make decisions independently. During this period, the young adult needs a mentoring community that “offers a network of belonging in which young adults feel recognized as who they really are, and as who they are becoming. It offers both challenge and support and thus offers good company for both the emerging strength and the distinctive vulnerability of the young adult” (95).

As the Chaplaincy in particular seeks to be a community of spiritual support, the data from this survey may help to shed light on the needs of young adults on the University of Richmond campus. The data from the study will be shared with such programs as the dean's offices, CAPs, and the Chaplaincy. The findings from this study may also help inform future studies on college student spirituality.

Despite the short time period of college experience and the small sample size of the data, especially within the second semester testing, significant results were found. This outcome suggests that a larger sample size given over a longer period of time could yield even more significant results. Data from this project and participant contact information will be held in order for further research to be conducted on this specific sample group in the future, perhaps in their senior year.

According to the data, student participants are largely interested in spirituality and religiosity. It was very interesting to see that students rated ‘being intellectually stimulated’ as the most important aspect of their spiritual journey. Perhaps University Chaplaincies should incorporate intellectual quest into programs for students. It seemed

contradictory that students wanted intellectual stimulation and yet did not want to 'examine religious texts critically'. After discussing this with a very small focus group, it seemed as though students were not as afraid to question religious texts as they were willing to disregard the authority of texts all together. Students seemed to want to find their own way. They want to put together their beliefs and they do not want some one to try and push beliefs and tradition on them.

The small focus group session consisted of two first year men. Because data was limited, these results were not reported, however the students' opinions seemed to develop patterns worth discussing briefly. Both of these students expressed that their most difficult challenge was reconciling new social experiences with their religious beliefs, particularly the use of alcohol. These two students want to hold on to some aspects of their previous religious identity because they feel as though their religion connects them largely to their family and to their culture. Consistent with survey results, students seemed to report that their parents were more traditionally conservative, and students want to identify themselves as moderate. They even express socially liberal ideals on hot topic political issues. Because of this disconnect, it may be difficult for students to connect with their parents and their parents' religious beliefs especially when removed from their parentally supervised environment.

Future research could explore these specific areas of conflict and to what extent students felt the impacts of particular changes and experiences. It also seems as though students are not noticing these subtle changes in themselves, at least in the first year of their education. In the future it may be helpful for researchers to assess students in some kind of implicit manner. It would also be helpful for researches to conduct more

extensive focus groups in order to further explore the data collected from the survey. For a sample of focus group questions see Appendix B.

Lastly, if students are interested in pursuing a more intellectual and or spiritual quest, the Chaplaincies should prepare to accommodate the explorations and growth that students will encounter in their first year. Students who feel alone and disillusioned by conventional religious practices may fall through the cracks of traditional programming. And while it is important to support students in the religious capacity it is also important for those students who do not identify with a religion to be offered the opportunity to explore their spirituality. Three very interesting directions to base future research regarding alternative spiritual development include Buddhist modernism, spiritual atheism and nature-based spirituality (see Appendix C).

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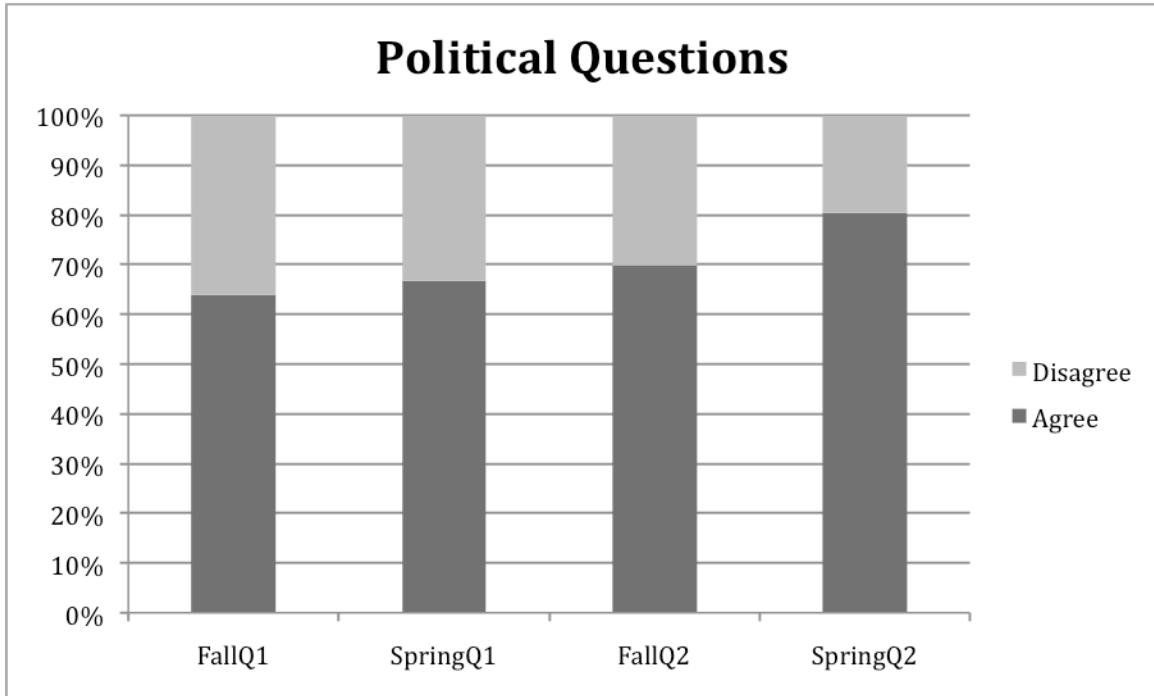
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Figure 1. Political Questions



Q1: Abortion should be legal

Q2: Same-sex couples should have the right to legal marital status

Figure 2a and 2b. The Universe Arose by Chance

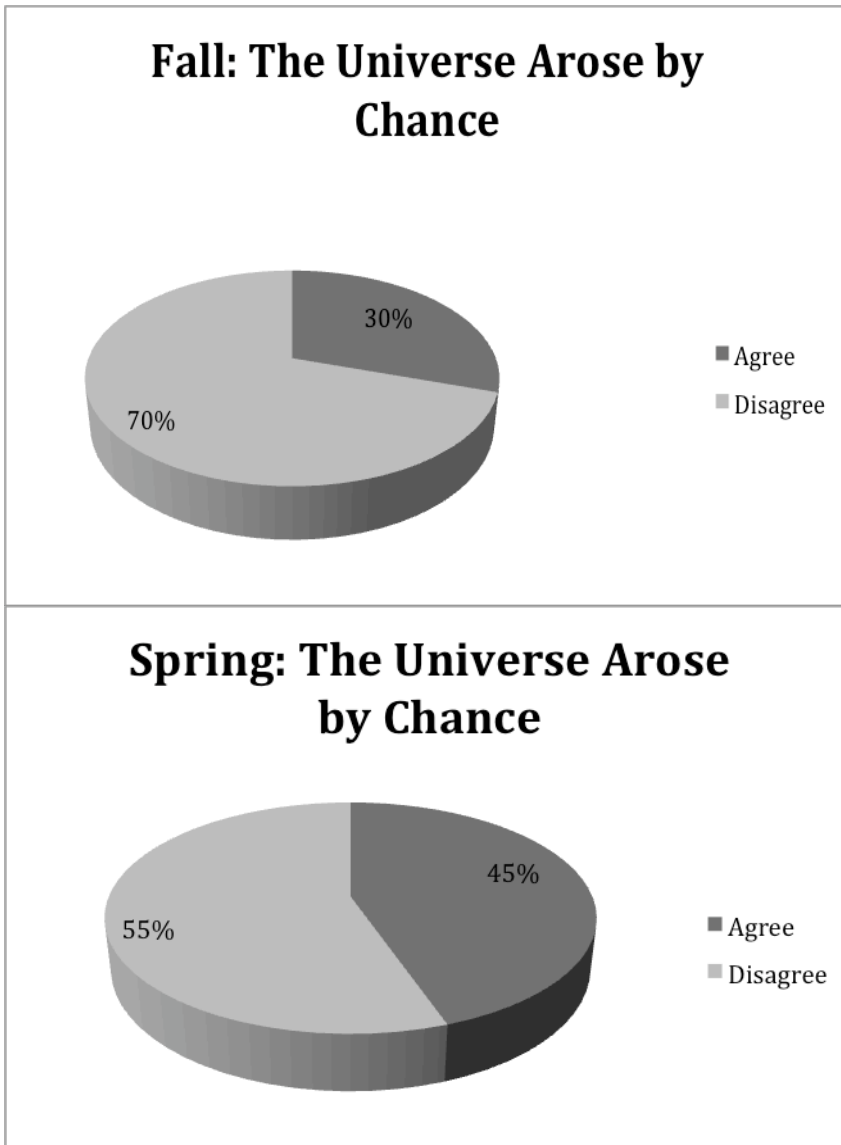


Figure 3. Only Religion Can Truly Explain Existence

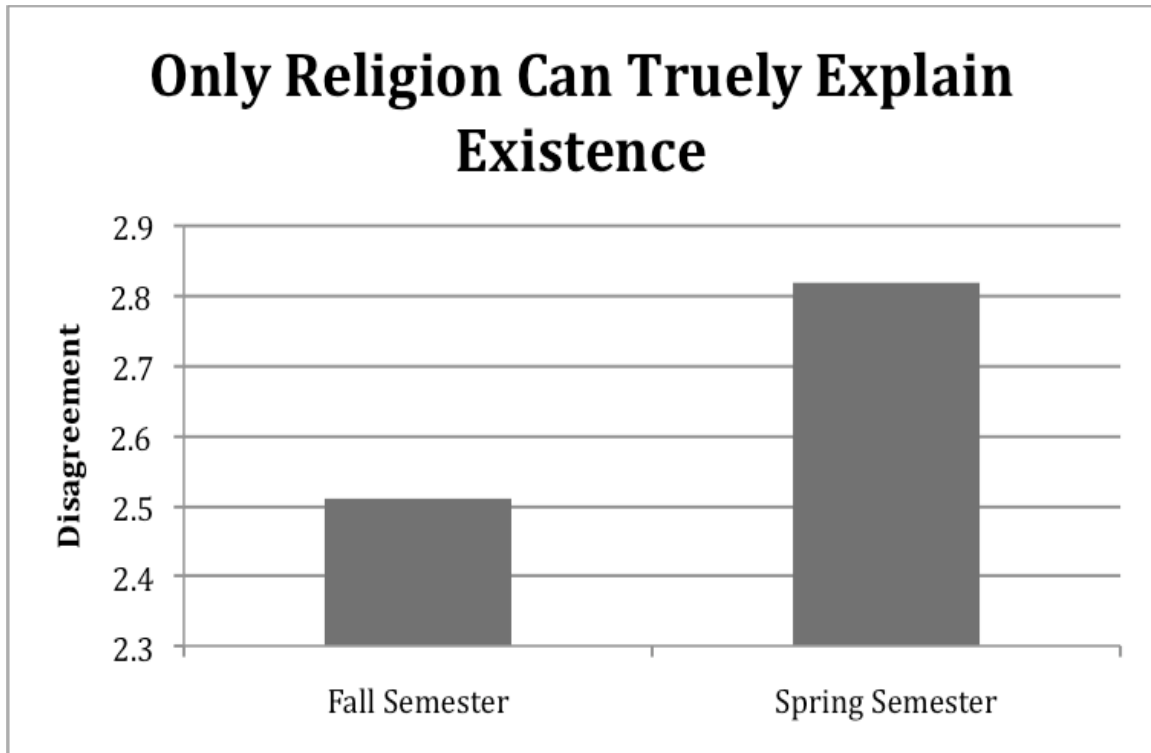


Figure 4. Evangelical Tendencies

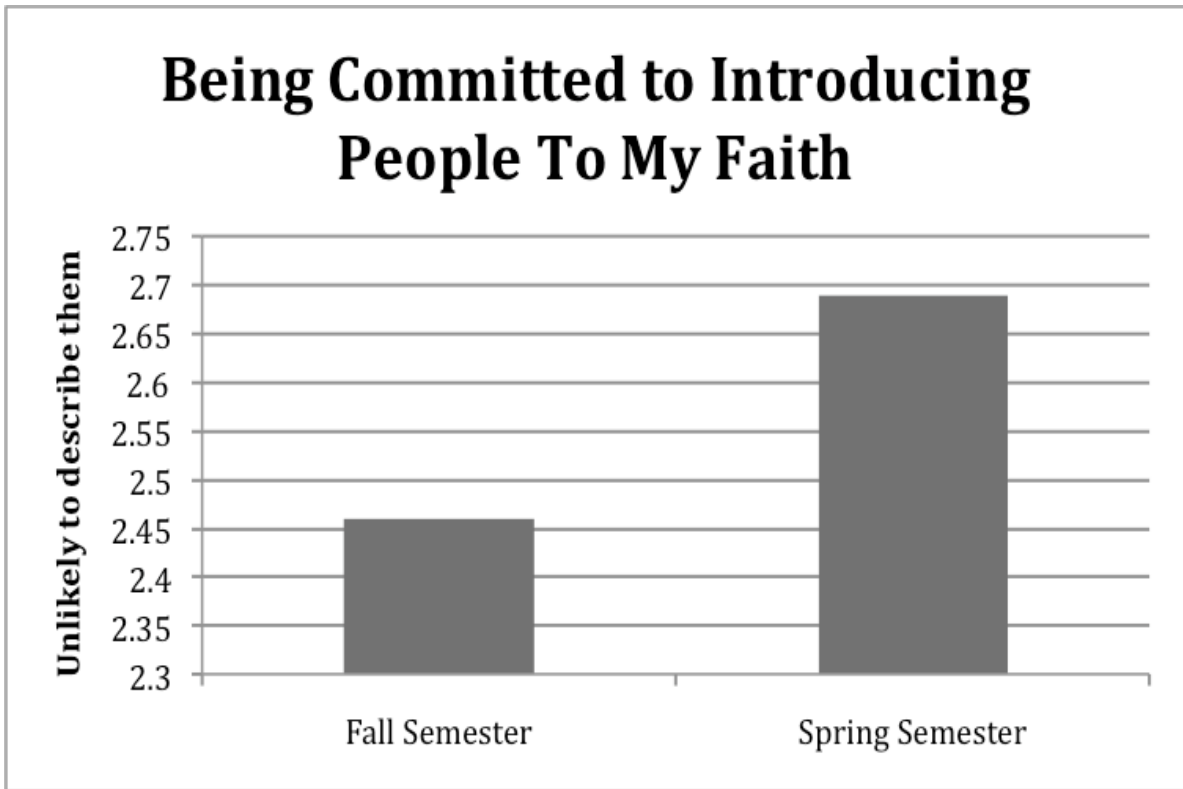


Figure 5. I Find Religion to be Personally Helpful

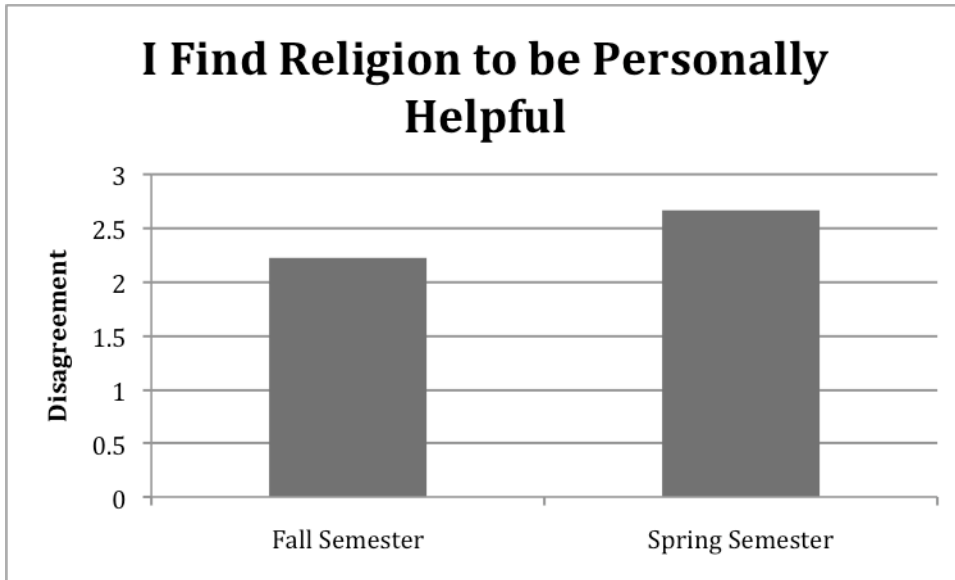


Figure 6. Frequency of Prayer and Self Reflection

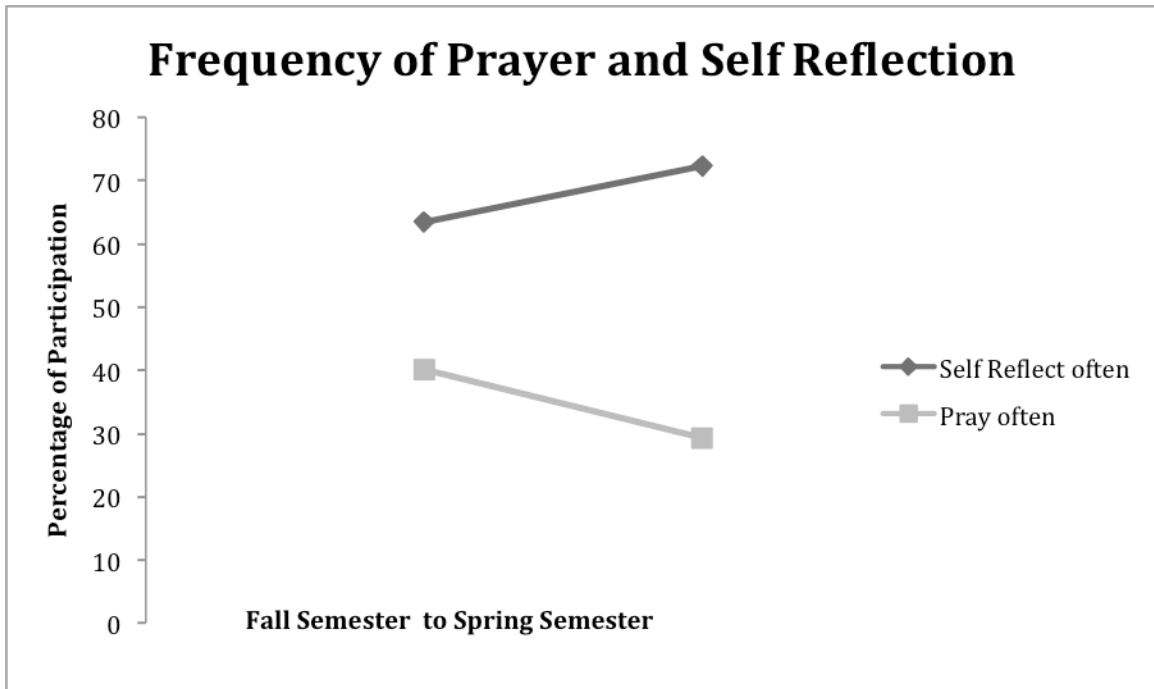
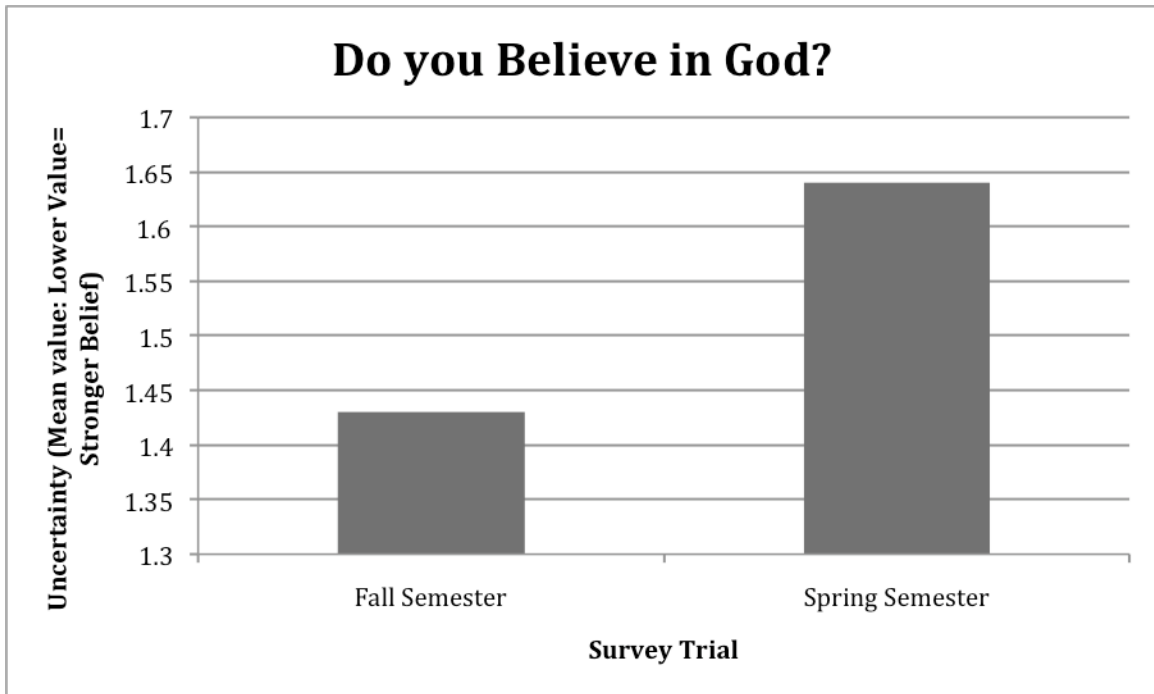


Figure 7. Uncertainty and Belief in God



Appendix A

Full list of open ended question answers: What does spirituality mean to you?

1. identifying, acknowledging, and accepting your own self
2. mystery, purpose
3. Trust, faith, guidance, value
4. It is believing in yourself and being true to your actions.
5. safety
6. Spirituality is more than a way of life or a purpose for life, it IS life.
7. A lot, but not everything
8. Belief in the unexplainable
9. Nothing
10. I'm not sure
11. Nothing
12. Spirituality is something that each person has to find on their own and be open minded about.
13. Believing is some force that is a part of everything
14. Spirituality refers to ones belief in a greater force, greater purpose in life. Spirituality does not refer to any particular religious creed or HOW one should live his/her life.
15. guidance, aid, and trust
16. Believing in something, even if no major religion is there to recognize what it may be that you feel. It just seems like something must be there to some extent.
17. Connected with others
18. It doesn't
19. everything
20. To me, it means having some sort of religious beliefs.
21. I don't know. It's a very vague word and I've never known what it meant.
22. believing in something bigger than yourself without necessarily conforming to religion
23. To me, spirituality is very distinct from religiosity. You can be spiritual and have religion and you can also be very spiritual and not have religion. Spirituality is about emotion and connection and exploration and learning and feeling and being. Religion is about deciding to follow a set of rules and beliefs to somewhat forego the freedom of exploring spirituality without holding back, for a community of individuals who all act as if they have the same set of beliefs.
24. Truth to self; it's as much an external guidance as it is realizing the answers within.
25. N/A
26. Finding faith in yourself rather than in an institution
27. Faith in God
28. believing in something that is larger than yourself and trusting that thing
29. I think of spirituality as something outside of religion. Spirituality is a search within oneself, as opposed to religion, which is an external search.
30. distinguishing what is right and wrong. having and following morals at all times.
31. I don't really know.
32. Finding God
33. Finding wholeness and contentment and security with the world and all it offers
34. Understanding oneself and finding a purpose.
35. It is knowing that there is a purpose to everything we do- that compassion and love come from a deeper source than the brain alone.
36. Spirituality is the connection believers in Christ share with Him and His spirit. After asking God to be your savior, you are asking Him to be present in your life and daily influence your choices. We are all spiritual beings and are always serving someone. By choosing Christ, I am choosing to serve Him with my spiritual self and join in a union with Him.
37. Being connected to everything around you.
38. nothing
39. Believing in a higher power
40. Trusting in and loving a higher being
41. satansrapture.com
42. Belief in life and embracing its sanctity
43. It means making up whatever you want to believe and hiding from reality.
44. Spirituality is a way to survive the crucial world
45. very little
46. faith in a higher power
47. Everything
48. nothing
49. You spelled "intellectually" wrong.
50. Simply having a hope that there is something greater than us out there
51. nothing
52. Having a connection with God--being able to pray to Him and look to Him for guidance
53. moral compass
54. having a relationship with God through Jesus by the Holy Spirit inside of me
55. security and experience
56. Not taking your opportunities for granted
57. Sense of strenght and guidance, that you would be lead to good.
58. Believeing what is true for you
59. It is not a big part for my life.
60. The ability for a person to look within and see the God in them and let it lead their way
61. religion and hope
62. it is what defines me
63. A belief in God
64. The belief in God
65. having a personal relationship with God and Jesus Christ instead of a religious lifestyle that often deals with tradition over relationship.
66. Knowing that nobody else can truly comprehend what it is to be me as an individual; it means that on one level or another I'm set apart from other humans.
67. While trying my best to be successful in this world, making sure that all matters aside make a better person of myself and lead my life to the right direction.
68. i believe that everything in life happens for a reason and that is the extent of "spirituality" for me
69. Spirituality is living a good and moral life so at the end you can be satisfied with yourself. Religion is not spirituality but simply a means of reassurance for people about what comes after death and a way to go about living a good life.
70. knowing who you truly are
71. Having someone there who is watching out for you. Things in life never go as planned, but when problems arise there is always a place to turn for help.
72. believing in someone or something
73. It is living your life the way you think you ought to. You are making yourself into a better human being as you strive to become spiritual. I don't see it as being connected to religion at all because religion focuses more on there being a "God"-like person and how to be pleasing to him.
74. believing in something bigger
75. finding where you fit in the world and being happy there.
76. You cannot stay on the summit forever; you have to come down again. So why bother in the first place? Just this: What is above knows what is below, but what is below does not know what is above. One climbs, one sees. One descends, one sees no longer, but one has seen. There is an art to conducting oneself in the lower regions by the memory of what one saw higher up. When one can no longer see, one can at least still know. --Rene Daumal
77. everything
78. idk
79. love
80. Being best friends with God!
81. there's some outside force that empowers people to be better people, to find meaning in everyday actions
82. becoming confident in oneself and bettering the world; achieving self-actualization.
83. Spirituality is the belief in the unknown, that there is something out there beyond us, but to me this just a defense mechanism to take the fear out of the unknown
84. a growing experiance
85. a deep understanding of your inner self
86. Purpose
87. not much
88. My relationship with God
89. God is Spirit, and those that worship Him must worship in Spirit and in Truth
90. Spirituality is when you can not only believe in something, but truly feel and see it in the world around you.
91. Spirituality means that one has faith in a higher being and wants to find their purpose in life. It is a quest for truth and mental/emotional peace of mind
92. a sense of security with yourself and your life
93. Having a personal relationship with my God. Besides going to church and fellowshiping as a group, spirituality covers my personal one-on-one relationship with God
94. Spirituality means seeking understanding of a being that is higher than yourself

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95. Belief in what cannot be seen and acting on those beliefs for a greater good. 96. love 97. Belief in a High Power
98. Individuality 99. Life 100. There is a greater supernatural power than myself, and I am subject to its will.
101. Faith in a higher being. 102. Being comfortable and happy with everything around you, loving nature.
103. Reflecting upon life and the differences one can make to better himself and society. 104. Loving God and loving your neighbors as yourself
105. Religion
106. Romans 12:2 says, "Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will."
107. I have faith and that's all that matters to me personally. 108. Being a good person 109. Love 110. Living a good, positive life
111. spirituality is the search for meaning in life 112. currently, nothing 113. Nothing.
114. Seeking the answers to all the great questions of life and trying to find a personal ideology that you accept, and defending it to make sure you really believe it, and modifying it as you learn / as is necessary so that you still believe it. (whether it aligns with any particular religion or not). Basically the idea that there is more to life than biological processes, and trying to figure out what that 'more' is for you.
115. Leading a moral life of doing good deeds, reflection on oneself and always trying to change for the better, and accepting others for who they are.
116. Belief in something beyond your physical self 117. everything 118. Finding wholeness and contentment and security with the world and all it offers
119. A divine power. 120. simply put, spirituality means loving and being loved 121. Spirituality is acknowledging God's greatness and allowing that to rule your life
122. understanding of love and faith 123. having faith in something 124. whatever you believe in 125. The belief and certainty in the future.
126. it means having a personal relationship with God 127. love
128. It means taking time to reflect on things that you believe in, and weaving those morals and beliefs into your everyday life.
129. having a sense of determination and knowledge for the "end." being happy with what you have done with yourself
130. Having a sense of peace and understanding with some kind of power
131. To feel part of a community and in touch with God. To feel protected and have faith in a higher being to take care of me and save the rest of humanity.
132. A sense of faith in oneself and in some sort of higher power or belief, that is a guide for how to live one's life.
133. My definition of spirituality is the way you believe you should live your life in the context of a greater community, a greater world.
134. A greater sense of identity and assurance in life. 135. knowing that you exist because of a greater being
136. Trying to live a life that would make your Heavenly Father proud. 137. Spirituality is my connection to the world and my belief in morality and being a better person.
138. it means to seek the glory of god and put his will above my own
139. To me, spirituality is the following of my religion Catholicism in my day to day life as I go through the struggles and joys each day
140. faith 141. connection to the world around 142. Nothing 143. Being one with God. 144. Something we naturally have
145. belief that there are greater forces at work than humanity and nature. Something that transcends the physical world 146. love
147. Praying 148. A chance for the future. 149. having a healthy relationship with God The Father
150. It means living life the right way; by whatever your beliefs are.
151. Spirituality to me is the belief that we are all connected, that someone or something is looking after us, and that we believe strongly and have faith, but do not necessarily follow the tenets of a particular religion.
152. To me, spirituality means to feel connected with something deeper, larger than the physical being. 153. hope
154. Spirituality means, to me, that you believe in a force outside yourself; this term is very vague, and thus can be applied to anyone, regardless of their beliefs (so long as they believe that there is a greater force). Can be applied to any religious person.
155. its means feeling connected with God and being filled with His grace
156. To me, spirituality and religion do not come hand in hand. If you are religious, you are most likely spiritual, but a person can easily be spiritual and not religious. To me, spirituality means believing in humankind and the good we can accomplish.
157. Nothing

Appendix B.

Sample Focus Group Questions:

- 1) How would you define your spiritual or religious identity? And how important is religion and spirituality to you?
- 2) Did you feel like any of your beliefs, spiritual or not were challenged or affirmed by class discussions or readings?
- 3) Do you feel like your beliefs have changed at all since you have been at the University of Richmond? If so why?
- 4) Do you expect your religious convictions to change at all in the next few years?
- 5) 85.2% of participants said that 'being intellectually stimulated' was important in their spiritual journey. However, 60.8% said that 'examining spiritual texts critically' was unimportant and that 71% said that 'having complete faith and certainty in their beliefs' was important. What do you think of this contradiction?
- 6) Do you agree or disagree with the following statement, 'to be truly religious, a person must accept all the teachings of his/her faith'?
- 7) Many participants described their current views about spiritual/religious matters as "seeking". How do you interpret this? What do you think participants are seeking, what are you 'seeking'?
- 8) 82.4% of survey participants said that a 'sense of community' was important in their spiritual journey. What would that community look like here on campus?
- 9) Is there any resource or group you wish existed on campus for you spiritually?
- 10) Who do you turn to for spiritual guidance?
- 11) When asked if they agreed that 'most people can grow spiritually without being religious' 78.6% of participants agreed strongly or somewhat. 93.5% agreed that 'non-religious people can lead lives that are just as moral as those of religious believers'. Does this surprise you considering that many participants identified themselves as religious, and many religions exclusively claim salvation?

Appendix C.
Ideas for Spirituality Programs and Research

Buddhist Modernism

A large amount of people could potentially relate to a 'spiritual' Buddhist modernism is a great example of integration and modern, western interpretation of a traditional religion into a more universal spirituality that can be used to help people reach their optimum well-being. "At present, Buddhism is first and foremost, for us, a kind of therapy" (Droit, Roger-Pol, 2003) Buddhist modernism does not have the institutional structure of traditional religion. Experience, intuition and reason are much more important than tradition. Choice and interpretation shape the individual's experience with Buddhist modernism. Individuals may accept and reject aspects as they feel necessary.

Buddhist modernism is incorporated into western individuals, often middle to upper class educated individuals, lives in various ways. These incorporations still often hold some of the traditional teachings of Buddhism. Some philosophers feel that, "More than a religion or a philosophy it is a combination of medicine and spiritual teaching." People are able to incorporate Buddhist ideas into their lives in a modern way in which they can relate to. For example a Physicist may go to a protestant church on Sundays, and to meditation retreats. Some may simply want to achieve peace and psychological health through meditation (Droit, Roger-Pol, 2003). For example, mindfulness exercises are now adapted from Buddhism and used to "reduce stress, control anxiety, manage physical pain, and treat depression and post traumatic stress disorder," and "books on Buddhism fill the bookstores, while middle-class Americans gather for informal Buddhist meditation on college campuses and Unitarian churches.

Spiritual Atheism

. The Center for Spiritual Atheism describes their view of spirituality as, “(at the very least) to nurture thoughts, words, and actions that are in harmony with the idea that the entire universe is, in some way, connected; even if only by the mysterious flow of cause and effect *at every scale*”. Spiritual Atheists also recognize a form of God, “Spiritual Atheists *generally* recognize the *word* “God” as a personal name that has been given to the collective personality of the infinite and eternal universe; just as your personal name is the name that has been given to your individual personality” (*The Center for Spiritual Atheism*. (n.d.).

Nature-based Spirituality

With a growing environmental conscious many people including students are becoming reconnected to the outdoors. In a Florida newspaper, Bron Taylor, professor of religion and nature at the University of Florida, is quoted as saying, “Nature-related spiritualities have become increasingly widespread and influential as environmental consciousness has spread worldwide. What we are finding increasingly is a blending of spiritualities of belonging and connection to nature with contemporary science” (Brumley, 2010).