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How do Students of Minority Religions Engage with their Faith During College?:

A Review of the Literature

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Abstract

The purpose of this research interest group is to understand how college students practicing minority religions are engaging with their faith during their undergraduate years. Major themes throughout the paper will explore how students are developing their religious identities and how student affairs professionals and faculty members are aiding in students' religious identity development. This literature review analysis will explore what colleges are doing to support students of minority religions and pose solutions so that all students can feel safe to practice their faith on campus.

1

How do students of minority religions engage with their faith during college?:

A Review of the Literature

Religion is a complicated identity. It is personal, providing values and core beliefs that dictate a person's decisions and influencing their worldview. Religion is also systemic and governs many societies' calendars, laws, and cultural norms. For these reasons, people find talking about religion to be challenging, especially when a person may have to confront the privilege of adhering to the dominant faith group in the United States, Christianity. Separating one's personal experience with their religious beliefs from the systematic oppression of Christianity is difficult. The purpose of this literature review is to seek to understand how students of religious minorities engage with their faith during college. Below is a list of research questions:

- What are the experiences of students of minority religions on college campuses?
    - How do students practice their faith?
    - How do students experience personal growth in their religious identity and faith?
- What are colleges and universities currently doing to provide support to student who practice minority religions?

In order to begin this process, recognizing that within the context of the United States, Christianity is the privileged and dominant faith group needs to be acknowledged as a truth. As a result, all other religious identities are oppressed within the context of the United States. This literature review will not include the experiences of students who identify as Atheist or Agnostic because these identities are without religion or faith. These students are also marginalized because they are seen as having no core values or moral compass (Goodman & Mueller, 2009; Mueller, 2012).

Historical Context

The first colleges in the United States were built for training new clergy and had a religious affiliation as a result. The significant growth of higher education was due to Protestant faiths wanting to build their own college (Rudolph, 1990; Thelin, 2011). As colleges received increased federal funding, they felt pressure to adhere to the "separation of church and state" and shed their religious affiliation. As a result, colleges and universities became more secular in their iconography, curriculum, and research (Ahmadi & Cole, 2015). Not only have universities changed, so have the students who attend them. The number of students who identify as Atheist or Agnostic has increased significantly in recent years (Bowman, Felix, & Ortis, 2014). Additionally, the college student demographic has become more racially, ethnically, and religiously diverse. More students come to college identifying as Muslim, Jewish, Buddhist, Hindu, Sikh, Mormon, Unitarian, and others than ever before.

Experiences of Students of Minority Religions

Because religion is a personal experience, everyone experiences their faith differently. Having similar or different rituals influences how faith is felt and perceived. This is true across religious identities and faith practices. In the same vein, experiences of oppression and marginalization can be different but have similar effects and elicit similar feelings. This section will examine several religions including Islam, Judaism, Buddhism, and Hinduism.

Islam

Islam is the second most practiced religious identity in the world and the third most practiced religion in the United States of America (Cole & Ahmadi, 2010). Considering Islam is the fastest growing religion globally (Cole & Ahmadi, 2010), one may think plentiful resources are available on college campuses for Muslim students. In reality, most Muslim students experience Islamophobia through micro-aggressions, fear, and distrust (Cole & Ahmadi, 2010; Joshi, 2013; Mir, 2014; Rockenbach, Mayhew, Bowman, Morin, & Riggers-Peihl, 2017). Additionally, Muslim students tend to be more socially conservative (Bryant, 2006) per their religious teachings of modesty (Mir, 2014) and acceptable Godly behavior (Rockenbach et al., 2017). Islamophobia fueled stereotypes and misinformation about Muslim people, which then trickled into college communities. As a result, many campuses are at best host to a chilly and unwelcoming environment for Muslim students (Rockenbach et al., 2017) and at worst are places where students experience violence (Joshi, 2013). Most Muslim people living in the United States also identify as being a person of color. The intersection of race and religion also plays a role in the general distrust and unwelcome environments that Muslim Americans face (Cole & Ahmadi, 2010; Rockenbach et al., 2017).

Eighty-five percent of Muslim students report engaging in the act of prayer, and 57 percent engage in prayer daily. Almost all Muslim students report a belief in God. Many believe that the purpose of religion is to find answers to life's mysteries, and their greatest spiritual quest is to follow the plan that God has for them (Bryant, 2006). Cole and Ahmadi (2010) found that Muslim students are more likely than their Jewish and Christian peers are to attend diversity and cultural events. Given their participation, presence, and oppression on campus, providing Muslim students with resources, prayer space, and religious role models will increase their engagement on campus and religious identity development (Cole & Ahmadi, 2010; Rockenbach et al., 2017). Embracing Muslim students will create more inclusive campus environments (Rockenbach et al., 2017).

Judaism

One of the first lessons Jews learn about themselves is that people want to kill Jews (Blumenfeld & Klein, 2009). Jews have been persecuted for centuries. They have been expelled from many communities because of their differing beliefs from Christians (Hilberg, 2013). Most students know about Jews because they were the victims of the Holocaust (Blumenfeld & Klein,

2009). Historically, Jews are perceived as religious and cultural outsiders, and with recent expression of anti-Semitism on college campuses and an insurgence of "Neo-Nazism" in the media, they continue to feel unwelcome (Mayhew, Bowman, Rockenbach, Selznick, & Riggers-Piehl, 2018).

Jewish students struggle to find opportunities to learn about themselves and their culture outside of historical accounts of atrocious violence (Blumefeld & Klein, 2009). Compared to other religious groups, Jewish students are the most likely to perceive anti-Semitism on college campuses. Additionally, students of other religious beliefs are more likely to have hostility towards Jewish students if they believe the stereotypes about them (Mayhew et al., 2018). Goren (2014) discusses the problematic nature of having to qualify religious leaders by putting a religious identity in front of their title. To call someone a "Jewish Chaplain" calls attention to its otherness, as if to say "Chaplain" automatically implies Christianity. In this way, colleges and university signal to students of minority religions that they are outsiders who do not belong.

Another challenge that Jewish students face is the notion of race. Ashkenazim Jews are from Eastern Europe and tend to be white, but "Jewish" has been identified as a race. Because of the Jewish Diaspora, Jewish people are many races across the globe. Identifying with a "Jewish race" is empowering for some Jewish people and for others, acknowledging a "Jewish race" provides justification for the Holocaust (Blumenfeld & Klein, 2009). This complex racial identity adds to the confusion that Jews and others have about culture and religious practices. Blumenfeld and Klein (2009) report that many college administrators are ignorant about Jewish practices, and Goren (2014) indicates Jewish students feel excluded from fully participating in their college experience because of their religious holidays and the difficulty of finding a Jewish community. Christian symbolism and school calendars are ways in which Jewish students are marginalized by Christian hegemony (Goren, 2014).

However, Goren (2014) argues that while Jewish students face oppression, they also have privileges afforded to them that students with other religious identities are not. One of these privileges is a birthright trip to Israel. Jewish students travel to Israel with other Jews to connect to their culture free of charge. Some institutions have started offering college credit or money to Jewish students who come to Jewish classes to learn Hebrew and cultural values. Lastly, many schools are actively trying to recruit Jewish students to their universities (Goren, 2014).

While Jewish students may have an "advantaged marginalization" (Goren, 2014), they still require religious support, opportunities to practice their faith on campus, and spiritual leaders to aid in their development (Blumenfeld & Klein, 2009; Goren, 2014; Mayhew et al., 2018). After all, Jewish students who participate in Hillel feel a greater sense of belonging to their institution than those who do not (Blumenfeld & Klein, 2009).

Buddhism

Buddhist persecution in the United States took place in the 1940s when Japanese Americans were forced into internment camps. Many white Christians believed that practicing Buddhism was un-American, and as a means of survival, many Japanese Americans converted to Christianity and destroyed their Buddhist possessions (Williams, 2013). Buddhist students experience the intersection of their race and religion, and Western Christians make them feel like an outsiders because their religious beliefs and practices are unknown (Joshi, 2013). Another challenge that Buddhist students face is finding communities to practice their faith, and will often move to places that have a support network nearby (Amorini, 2016).

Buddhist students indicate high self-rates of compassion and believe their greatest spiritual quest is to discover who they are (Bryant, 2006). As a result, many scholars found that Buddhist students strive to find purpose in their life and then work towards that purpose. Buddhist students are goal oriented and choose career paths that involve helping others (Amorini, 2016; Sharma & De Alba, 2018). They believe their greatest purpose in life is to contribute to world peace and bring happiness to humanity (Sharma & De Alba, 2018). Buddhist students manage their stress well because their religious practice of mindfulness helps to keep them grounded in the present. They acknowledge their thoughts and recognize them as distractions form their daily lives. Being able to meditate helps Buddhist students persist to achieving their goals (Amorini, 2016; Sharma & De Alba, 2018).

Hinduism

Hindu students often feel like outsiders because their religious beliefs and practices do not fit into any of the understood values of Christianity. Often, Hindu practices are "Christianized" so that Westerners can make sense of their faith traditions (Chander, 2013; Joshi, 2013). Many Hindu students are first generation Americas, immigrants, and not white, so the intersection of race and religion amplifies the oppression they face on a daily basis (Joshi, 2013).

In order for Western Christian students to make sense of Hinduism, Hindu students' practices are boiled down into concepts such as "mass", "hymns", and "Chaplains". Hinduism is not a monolith, and there are different cultural norms in how Hindus practice their faith. Christianizing the faith makes it challenging for Hindu students to explain their beliefs to their peers (Chander, 2013). Often, Hindu students are asked if Diwali, the festival of lights, is like Christmas (Chander, 2013; Joshi, 2013). Because Hinduism is not an Abrahamic faith, it is seen in opposition to other faiths (Chander, 2013).

Analysis

The purpose of this analysis is to highlight the similarities and differences of students of religious minorities. Because students of minority religions are not a monolithic group, this analysis will highlight some of the major themes found within the research regarding students of minority religions.

Historical impacts. Several historical events trigger systemic oppression of students of minority religions. Jewish people endured expulsion from their holy lands and the Holocaust (Blumenfeld & Klein, 2009). Japanese American Buddhists endured internment camps (Williams, 2013). Muslim Americans still face Islamophobia in the aftermath of 9/11 (Cole & Ahmadi, 2010). In all cases, these events serve to cause fear of the other and uphold the default religion as Christianity.

Christian hegemony. Regardless of the number of students who practice each religious faith, Christian dominance is pervasive throughout students of minority religions' collegiate experiences. Holidays do not align with the Christian calendar, so many students must choose between attending class and paying respect to a holiday (Goren, 2014). Buddhism and Hinduism are not part of an Abrahamic faith system, so these faiths are Christianized for Christians to make sense of the practices (Blumenfeld & Klein, 2009; Chander, 2013; Goren, 2014; Joshi, 2013; Williams, 2013). A lack of understanding about faith traditions leads to a lack of university support (Blumenfeld & Kelin, 2009; Bryant; 2006; Chander, 2013; Cole & Ahmadi, 2010; Goren, 2014; Mayhew et al., 2018; Rockenbach et al., 2017; Sharma & De Alba, 2018).

Outsiders in their own land. Students of minority religions often have the grapple with the intersectionality of their race and religion. Hindus, Muslims, Buddhists, and Jews experience racism but in different ways. Hindus, Muslims, and Buddhists are usually not white, so Westerners assume they are immigrants who do not belong (Joshi, 2013). Jews, who have a range of racial identities, must navigate the complex racial identity of being Jewish and something else (Blumenfeld & Klein, 2009). Regardless, to be non-white and non-Christian in the United States is to be un-American (Williams, 2013).

Role of suffering. Bryant (2006) found that all students of minority religions indicated "pain and suffering are essential to becoming a better person," (p. 20). Between half to 70 percent of within groups believed this to be true (Bryant, 2006). Buddhist students are most likely to buy into this concept, and many scholars discuss struggle being integral to faith and spirituality development (Amorini, 2016; Sharma & De Alba, 2018).

Importance of community. Every piece of scholarship around the experiences of students with minority religions highlights the important role that institutions can play in making students feel like they matter and belong. Additionally, scholars indicate the importance of having a faith community where peers can rely upon each other. Students are more likely to experience spiritual development if they have a faith community and spiritual leaders they can trust (Amorini, 2016; Blumenfeld & Kelin, 2009; Bryant; 2006; Chander, 2013; Cole & Ahmadi, 2010; Goren, 2014; Mayhew et al., 2018; Rockenbach et al., 2017). College administrators need mass education around the beliefs, values, and practices of students of minority religions. By understanding the basics of each faith practice, administrators can support students through challenging times. Lastly, institutions need to create spaces where students can practice their faith together and provide programming and human resources to support students in their

spiritual and faith developments (Blumenfeld & Kelin, 2009; Bryant; 2006; Chander, 2013; Cole & Ahmadi, 2010; Goren, 2014; Mayhew et al., 2018; Rockenbach et al., 2017).

Religious Identity Development

This section will look at how college students develop their religious identity. I will explore what students are specifically doing to engage with their faith and what those faith practices look like. This section will focus on the individual experience of faith identity development to understand the diversity within their experiences.

Personal Growth and Development in Religion

Most people consider themselves spiritual beings, and religious beliefs help people manage multiple stressors (Reymann, Fialkowski, & Stewart, 2015). Understanding how students of minority religions make meaning of their religious identity during college will allow faculty and staff to understand how to provide support.

Students of minority religions experience a decrease in their religious engagement during their undergraduate years. Scholars Bowman and Small (2010, 2012, 2013) have found through multiple studies that students practicing minority religions do not feel as strong of a sense of belonging as Christian students. While they may not be as engaged as Christian students may, they seem to accept their minority status. Students of minority religions usually experience their minority status prior to college, which leads to such responses (Bowman & Small, 2013). Not surprisingly, Catholic students at Catholic universities experience the greatest religious support and engagement (Bowman & Small, 2013), whereas students of minority religions were most likely to have greater gains at secular institutions where they are free to explore their options, and are not likely in the majority (Bowman & Small, 2010). Overall, students who identify as religious gain the most religiously and spiritually when attending non-Catholic Christian institutions (Small & Bowman, 2012). A lack of opportunity to discuss religious identity on campus leads many students to feel this way.

Ultimately, students need to feel like people care about them, including caring about their religious identity. Reymann, Fialkowski, and Stewart (2015) stated the possibility that students connected to God or the divine feel they have a greater purpose in life, while Bryant, Choi, and Yasonu (2003) report that students want to be spiritual regardless of declared faith, and that "religious participation and spirituality tended to predict one another," (p. 738). Institutions can improve ecumenical campus climate by encouraging faculty to engage in dialogue with students and for students to have a space and place to practice spirituality and religiosity (Small & Bowman, 2012). Because religiosity is so personal, students need academic role models to aid in their faith development and academic purpose, therefore faculty need to be engaged in students' religious identity development (Bowman & Small, 2010; Bowman & Small, 2013; Reymann et al., 2015; Small & Bowman, 2012). Self-understood spirituality increased through activities, and professionals are encouraged to provide opportunities for students to connect and have dialogue

around religion and spirituality (Bryant et al., 2003). Professionals are encouraged to create spaces on campus for students to practice religious and spiritual rituals so that they may have an opportunity for growth (Bowman & Small, 2010).

Another interesting finding is that women and students of color experienced more ecumenical worldview because they used spirituality to be connected to their experiences. Some speculate that people who have marginalized identities are more likely to do this because of how they engage with the world on a regular basis (Mayhew, 2012). Reymann and colleagues (2015) hypothesize that women experience greater faith maturity than men, and state that institutions should be prepared to assist students to mature in their faith tradition by encouraging ecumenical development.

Faith Engagement and Practices

Engagement is a theoretical term used by many scholars. In the context of this paper, engagement refers to the amount of time and effort invested by a student and the resources and the invested human capital into learning opportunities for the students (Wolf-Wendel, Ward, & Kinzie, 2009). In their implications for future practice, several scholars point to the importance of colleges and universities developing resources for students to talk about religion, faith, and spirituality (Hartley, 2004; Koenig, 2015; Rennick, Toms-Smedley, Fsher, Wallace, & Kim, 2013). This indicates that many institutions do not have such resources available for students to engage in dialogue. Hartley (2004) explains the history of religion within the context of higher education. While first colleges intended to provide religious education, they moved towards a secular vision. Now that students are looking to their institutions to provide religious and spiritual development, the structures are no longer in place.

As students move through their college experience, they are less likely to engage in religious actions (Hartley, 2004; Rennick et al., 2013). Students living on campus are less likely to attend church services regularly than students who live with their parents and commute to classes (Hartley, 2004). Koenig (2015) identified that students' belief in God also decreases during their collegiate years. However, students increasingly identify with being spiritual and express a desire to explore their spirituality (Astin, Astin, & Lindholm, 2011; Hartley, 2004; Koenig, 2015; Rennick et al., 2013).

Students' ability to learn may be impacted but their faiths' teaching about the world, especially in cases of science and sociology (Jacobsen & Jacobsen, 2018). They identified five educational functions of religion that can influence how a student learns and connect faith to learning. They encourage faculty to implement these techniques in their classrooms to increase students' open-mindedness and critical thinking skills (Jacobsen & Jacobsen, 2018). Mvududu and Larocque (2008) used Hope Theory to determine if students engaged in religious practice were less anxious when taking a statistics course. While their data was not statistically significant enough to make a claim in either direction, they did indicate that internalized religious commitment leads to lower levels of anxiety when taking courses (Mvududu &

Larocque, 2008). Some scholars are indicating the importance of integrating faith teachings into coursework to increase learning and decrease anxiety (Jacobsen & Jacobsen, 2018; Mvududu & Larocque, 2008).

The connection between faith and spirituality directly translates to students' spiritual development. One of the benefits of spiritual development is increased cognitive development and open-mindedness (Astin et al., 2011; Koenig, 2015). Rennick and colleagues (2013) found that students with different intersecting identities have different needs in their expression of their religious and spiritual development; therefore, institutions need to have multiple means of supporting this development. Additionally, marginalized students have the greatest connection to their faith as a means of peace and hope (Hartley, 2004). Spiritual development is a process that must be supported for it to grow (Koenig, 2015).

Student Success and Engagement: Religious Perspective

In order to understand how students of minority religions are engaging with their faith effectively on college campuses, knowing how the college is engaging these students is important. Student affairs professionals work in multiple functional areas across campus to engage students to ensure their success. This section will look at what colleges and universities are doing to engage students who practice minority religions and what students within their groups are doing to support each other.

Engagement of College Administrators

One pitfall that administrators can fall into is putting "religious minorities" in a group and treating them as a monolith. Students of minority religions experience discrimination, but in different ways with different struggles; therefore, grouping students of minority religions in the same category is problematic (Bowman et al., 2014). Students of different faiths have different needs including dietary accommodations, prayer space and rituals, class exemption during holidays, and many others (Bryant, 2010; Johnson & Lawrence, 2012; Kocet & Stewart, 2011; Patel & Giess, 2016). In order for the university to properly engage with students of minority religions, college administrators should have a better understanding of different religious beliefs (Kocet & Stewart, 2011), and they should work to adhere to the needs of their students. Patten and Rice (2009) found that students who felt more spiritually integrated into a college campus were more likely to persist from the first to second year of college. There are several ways administrators can be more engaged with creating a campus climate where students of minority religions feel like they belong and have a support system, including increased dialogue about religion and creating space for students.

Increased dialogue. Often, campus climate is a measure to recognize if students are experiencing positive or negative influences related to their religious identities (Burchell, Lee, & Olson, 2010; Mayhew & Bryant, 2013; Riggers-Piehl & Lehman, 2016). Many scholars discuss the importance for increased dialogue regarding students of minority religions as a means of

having a better understanding of students' beliefs and experiences (Ahmadi & Cole, 2015). Intergroup dialogue and spirituality discussions are suggested methods to increase on-campus dialogue pertaining to students of minority religions. In the same vein, student affairs professionals should be able to cultivate an environment where students practicing a non-Christian religion feel welcomed and integrated.

Intergroup dialogue is discussed in multiple ways throughout the literature. Edwards (2017) and Fairchild and Blumenfeld (2007) encourage true theoretically based intergroup dialogue where students unpack their understanding of personal identity, privilege, and oppression. This is challenging for many students because understanding their privilege and oppression for one identity does not equate to understanding their privilege and oppression for all identities (Edwards, 2017). Because religion and worldview are discussed so infrequently, many students do not get to fully explore and reflect upon their personal beliefs and worldview commitment by the time they graduate from college (Mayhew & Bryant, 2013). Correctly performing intergroup dialogues and systems of oppression regarding Christian hegemony, religious minorities, and non-religious identities can lead to understanding and open-mindedness; however, when identities are unexplored, students of minority religions may still feel marginalized in the process (Edwards, 2017). Other scholars took a broader approach to the concept of dialogues and felt that campus roundtable would be suitable to address stereotypes and stigma related to religious minorities (Riggers-Piehl & Lehman, 2016). As a result, most researchers suggest that students should spend more time exploring their religious identity.

Student affairs professionals spend a large amount of time and have one-on-one encounters with students, which allows time for dialogue regarding religion. That said, because of the notion of separation of church and state (Ahmadi & Cole, 2015; Burchell et al., 2010; Patel & Giess, 2016; Riggers-Piehl & Lehman, 2016), many professionals take a hands-off approach to discussions of religiosity and spirituality for fear of pushback or crossing a legal line (Burchell et al., 2010; Riggers-Piehl & Lehman, 2016). Many professionals however felt comfortable talking to students about religion if the student brought it up or their shared similar beliefs, but often felt that their department chairs would not be accepting of the discussion (Burchell et al., 2010).

Creating space for religious minority students. Many institutions are working hard to create space, literally and figuratively, for students of minority religions. Johnson and Lawrence (2012) found that some institutions were developing and reutilizing physical space on campus to develop multi-faith religious spaces for students of all faiths to have a place of worship. They found that if spaces connote a feeling of spirituality without a specific religious practice, the space could be manipulated in a way that students of all religions could utilize the space for meditation and prayer (Johnson & Lawrence, 2012). Seeing the need for a better understanding of religious and spiritual development, Kocet and Stewart (2011) developed a competency for student affairs professionals, using the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion competency as a framework. They argued that many professionals were poorly equipped to help students in

understanding their religious and spiritual development and that spirituality can exist outside of organized religion. They hoped to bring more clarity to the importance of this identity through an additional competency (Kocet &Stewart, 2011).

Student Success and Well-being

Students engage with their religious identity in many ways throughout college. According to the Higher Education Research Institute (2005), many undergraduates (81%) report attending religious services once a month. One could speculate this has a large part to do with the influence of their family unit. Students' religious beliefs affect their success and well-being in different ways. Much research connecting religious worldview and academic success or well-being is inconclusive (Bowman & Small, 2012; Li & Murphy 2018). Some results indicate there is potential for a connection between identity and outcome, but so many other environmental factors play a role in the outcomes, pinpointing conclusive evidence that religious identity impacts well-being or academic success is challenging (Bowman & Small, 20012; Bryant & Astin, 2008; Li & Murphy, 2018).

Success on campus. Preliminary research indicates that a student's religious affiliation influences success and well-being outcomes. For example, students who practice Christianity are better supported by their peers, do well academically, and have better mental health than students who practice a minority religion or students who do not affiliate with any religion (Bowman & Small, 20012; Bryant & Astin, 2008; Li & Murphy, 2018). Negative speech pointed at students of minority religions has the greatest negative impact on sense of belonging (Riggers-Piehl & Lehman, 2016).

More specifically, Li and Murphy (2018) found that religious affiliation does not have any positive or negative effect on academic performance, but rather being religiously active has differing outcomes on academic performance depending on a student's faith. The students who experience the most positive impact on academic performance practice Christianity. Students who practice Judaism, Buddhism, or Hinduism experience no impact in their academic performance, while students who practice Islam experience a negative impact in their performance. Bowman and Small (2012) found that students who practice minority religions are more likely to struggle on their college campuses than students who practice Christianity and students who do not have a religious identity. The authors' understandings of this is that Christian students get to choose how actively religious they are without having their identity questioned, whereas students of minority religions are stereotyped and more likely to be openly questioned in their devotion by their religious peers. In addition to lower levels of academic success, students of minority religions are more likely to encounter poorer physical and mental health (Bryant & Astin, 2008).

Struggle and pluralism. One of the greatest benefits of college for students is being able to interact with people who have different worldviews. While Bryant and Astin (2008) found that students whose identities are on the margins are more likely to experience spiritual struggle,

another study found that students who interact with people who have differing worldviews are challenged to reconsider multiple perspectives and truths (Rockenbach, et al., 2014). Students experience spiritual struggle when they have difficult life circumstances that do not align with the teachings of their faith, including systemic oppression, social identities, and political issues. Women, students in the LGBTQ+ community, and students of minority religions are more likely to experience spiritual struggle than actively religious Christian students (Bryant & Astin, 2008), but Christian students are more likely to question their faith when they interact with students who practice a minority religion (Rockenbach et al., 2014). These articles demonstrate that students across the spectrum of religiosity experience struggle within their identity, but can all benefit from the power of dialogue.

When students experience spiritual struggle, it is often because they feel abandoned or unloved by God(s), or inflicted by the Devil or demons, and this has a negative effect on those students' self-esteem, confidence, and mental health (Bryant & Astin, 2008). If students have support systems such as interfaith dialogues or religious counseling available at their campus to talk about their feelings and concerns, they are more likely to develop a positive relationship with their well-being and religious engagement (Bowman & Small, 2012). Additionally, exposure to worldview diversity can lead to openness about other religious faiths and increase dialogue across students practicing them. Student affairs practitioners can create encounters to foster greater empathy building across religious worldviews (Rockenbach et al., 2014). Students can learn how to engage with difference and find similarities across religious experiences. Ultimately, students should feel challenged to accept others' religious beliefs, in addition to their own, as truths.

Conclusion

Students of minority religions combat systemic oppression through Christian hegemony every day. They must navigate their religious identities with their other social identities and constantly feel like an outsider. The greatest means of helping students in their faith development is by engaging in interfaith dialogue groups, providing events that celebrate minority religions' holidays, and educating others on the beliefs, values, and practices of students of minority religions. College administrators can support students of minority religions by learning more about their religious practices and engaging in discussions around faith during office hours.

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