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The Future of Campus Ministry Amid Church and College Disruption
By

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Doctor of Ministry

Candler School of Theology

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Through in-depth interviews with sixteen campus ministries, this study explores the significance of campus ministry, a resource that is caught in the middle of the disruption of the church and the changing nature of higher education. More so, this study attempts to understand how national initiatives are changing the face of collegiate ministry and argues that a unified approach to campus ministry leadership is an ecclesiological necessity. I am arguing that should mainline denominations fail or continue to be disrupted, campus ministry is too important to lose. I conclude with suggestions for a thinktank and support system that would help to sustain campus ministries across the nation.

# The Future of Campus Ministry Amid Church and College Disruption

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A Final Project submitted to the Faculty of the
Candler School of Theology
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# The Future of Campus Ministry Amid Church and College Disruption

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## Abstract

Through in-depth interviews with sixteen campus ministries, this study explores the significance of campus ministry, a resource that is caught in the middle of the disruption of the church and the changing nature of higher education. More so, this study attempts to understand how national initiatives are changing the face of collegiate ministry and argues that a unified approach to campus ministry leadership is an ecclesiological necessity. I am arguing that should mainline denominations fail or continue to be disrupted, campus ministry is too important to lose. I conclude with suggestions for a thinktank and support system that would help to sustain campus ministries across the nation.

## 1. Key Definitions

*Campus ministry* is the work of the church in higher education populations and settings. Most often, campus ministry is an outreach of a denominational judicatory, but also can be a ministry of a local church or a parachurch agency.

A *judicatory* is the governing body of a denomination, such as a diocese, presbytery, synod, conference, or district. As judicatories differ, so does their administrative oversight and capacity for campus ministry.

A *parachurch* agency is an organization that exists and acts independently of a denominational judicatory or local church. Often in campus ministry, parachurch agencies bend

toward the evangelical side and include, but these are not limited to Intervarsity Christian Fellowship, Campus Crusade for Christ, Young Life, and the Fellowship of Christian Athletes.

In contrast to parachurch and other evangelical campus ministries, this study will concentrate on mainline campus ministry. *Mainline* refers to the group of denominations among what Lantzer call's the "Seven Sisters" of American Protestantism: the Congregational Church (now a part of the United Church of Christ), the Episcopal Church, the Evangelical Lutheran Church, the Presbyterian Church (USA), the United Methodist Church, the American Baptist Convention, and the Disciples of Christ."[1]

Campus ministry is highly contextual[2] but can serve all aspects of higher education populations including, but not limited to, traditional and non-traditional undergraduate students, graduate students, faculty, higher education staff, alumni, and neighbors of the campus.

*Traditional undergraduate students* are those college and university students that are younger than twenty-four, enrolled immediately or within two years after high school, attend full time, have not gained independence, and have no dependents. Ninety-two percent of undergraduates are considered traditional students.[3]

On occasion, campus ministries may receive funding from a college or university's student activities fees, specific grants from their host college or university, inclusion on a

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[1] Jason S. Lantzer, *Mainline Christianity the past and Future of America's Majority Faith*. (New York: New York University Press, 2012).1.

[2] For an introduction to the contextual variances of campus ministry, see John Schmalzbauer. "Campus Religious Life in America: Revitalization and Renewal." *Society* 50, no. 2 (April 2013): 115–131.

[3] S. Hurtado, Kurotsuchi K., and S. Sharp, "Traditional, Delayed Entry, and Nontraditional Students" (paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association). 1996.

college's support services network, and other assistance from the campus administration. However, campus ministry is not a service of the university itself. This distinguishes campus ministry from *college chaplaincy.*

This study understands *college chaplaincy* as a division of a private, and most often, a religiously affiliated college designed to help students explore a multitude of faith options and questions. While both college chaplaincy and campus ministry may receive support from both the church and the college, college chaplaincy, unlike campus ministry, is a function of the university.[4]

## 2. Theoretical Foundations

This study will demonstrate that campus ministry, specifically as it has been supported by North America mainline denominations, is a highly specialized field and extraordinarily beneficial to the church. Campus ministries are situated at the forefront of culture and church and engage populations that the church often neglects or fails to reach. They are often entrepreneurial, innovative, and breaking ground in places and with populations where the church has not.

Campus ministry is critically important as it attends to the spiritual development of students, especially during college, one of the most defining moments in traditional students' lives. Best-selling authors Chip and Dan Heath write "our lives are measured in moments, and defining moments are the ones that endure in our memories."[5] The Heath brothers base much of

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[4] There is no universal definition of chaplaincy. Authors, judicatory leaders, and higher education administrations often use the words chaplaincy, chaplain, campus ministry, and campus minister interchangeably.

[5] Chip Heath and Dan Heath. *The Power of Moments: Why Certain Experiences Have Extraordinary Impact*. First Simon & Schuster hardcover edition. New York: Simon & Schuster,

their research on the numerous theories of Daniel Kahneman and Amos Tversky. Kahneman in his book *Thinking, Fast and Slow* establishes that the story of our lives is "about significant events and memorable moments."[6] If the church cares about people in the defining moments of their lives, then it ought to highly invest in campus ministry, especially considering that Froese and Bader argue that one's view of God "proves more important to their worldview" than any other demographic characteristic.[7] According to Fowler's theory of the stages of faith development, these moments experienced by traditional college students could range from the pre-stages (the Undifferenced Faith) to at least stage four (Individuative–Reflective Faith).[8] Galston calls these the "Odyssey Years," as young adulthood moments are defined by accomplishments like moving away from home, picking a career choice, and finding a life partner.[9]

This stage of development is quite turbulent, so it is not surprising that even the best campus ministries struggle to attract participants, develop meaningful programs, raise money, and win the support of the local community. Most notably, campus ministries struggle to win the

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2017. 5-6. Chip Heath is the Thrive Foundation for Youth Professor of Organizational Behavior at the Stanford University Graduate School of Business and Dan Heath is a Senior Fellow at the Center for the Advancement of Social Entrepreneurship at the Duke University Fuqua School of Business. They have co-authored four books.

[6] Daniel Kahneman, *Thinking, Fast and Slow*, 1st pbk. ed (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2013). 386.

[7] Paul Froese and Christopher Bader. *America's Four Gods: What We Say about God - And What That Says about Us*. Oxford. Oxford Univ. Press, 2015. 57.

[8] James W. Fowler, *Stages of Faith: The Psychology of Human Development and the Quest for Meaning*, HarperOne, 2010.

[9] William A. Galston. "The Changing 20s." *Brookings*. October 4, 2007. Accessed January 5, 2019. https://www.brookings.edu/on-the-record/the-changing-20s/.

support of their own denominations. Schmalzbauer and Mahoney point to consistent budget cuts and campus ministry closures that have evolved. They write, "once…dominant player in Christian campus ministry, mainline Protestant denominations have struggled to maintain their presence in student religious life."[10]

Campus ministry is unique in that it is firmly planted in both the church and the academy. The literature review will continue to make evident the decline, or changing nature, of the church as well as what some scholars think is a crisis in higher education. These two trends will undoubtedly be disruptive, especially to collegiate ministries. Without guidance, the process of developing a thriving and comprehensive campus ministry can take years, even for the most entrepreneurial, innovative, risk-embracing and flexible leaders. A national center for collegiate ministry would advance this process of transformation, growth, and leadership potential for positive and impactful change.

The highly contextual and unique deficiencies and challenges of campus ministry warrant not separate solutions for each problem but rather a system that can work toward alleviating a multitude of problems at once. These problems range from local to national in scope. The interviews conducted for this study illustrate the highly contextual nature of collegiate ministry and the need for a comprehensive response to the multiple problems campus ministries face that yet respects such contextuality.

At present, there is no resource, agency, institution, or center focused on addressing the needs of campus ministry. Even with significant funding and exploratory interest from various private endowments and foundations, campus ministries across the country lack a central

[10] John Arnold Schmalzbauer and Kathleen A. Mahoney, *The Resilience of Religion in American Higher Education* (Waco, Texas: Baylor University Press, 2018). 88.

thought, financial, and training center that crosses denominational, theological, and racial lines. A national center for collegiate ministry, perhaps analogous to the Indianapolis Center for Congregations or the Center for Creative Leadership, is needed for campus ministries to thrive through the impending disruption of the church and disruption of higher education. Here a team of professionals would collaborate to provide expertise, consulting, and professional development for campus ministries across the nation.

## 3. Literature Review

### *3.1. Spiritual Development While in College*

Including spirituality as a fundamental component of a students' development may be credited to Parker Palmer who almost single-handedly "introduced a contemporary concept of the idea of 'education as a spiritual journey' in his 1983 book…*To Know As We Are Known*."[11] Since then, many researchers have made a case for the inclusion of spiritual formation in college student life administration. Wondra suggests that campuses provide "remissive space" where students can take spiritual risks without harm or forgiveness.[12] Nash and Jang go so far as to argue that colleges and universities ought to transform into institutions of higher education that focus on vocation (a holistic view of the self, including one's spiritual development) rather than a

[11] Michael D. Waggoner. "Spirituality and Contemporary Higher Education." *Journal of College and Character* 17, no. 3 (July 2, 2016): 149.

[12] Ellen K. Wondra. "Mapping the 'Greatest Domestic Mission Field" in a New Educational Landscape." *Anglican Theological Review* 99, no. 1 (2017): 68.

focus on helping students with their career portfolios.[13] Small calls this focus on vocation answering the "big questions."[14] The Lilly Endowment traditionally has supported vocationally focused programs in private colleges, but since 2013 has expanded this work by supporting campus ministries at public universities, as well.[15]

Attending to one's spiritual development in any stage of life is vitally important. The challenges of contemporary college life make this even more intensively the case for students.[16] Rockenbach, Walker, and Luzader stress that "spiritual struggles are a known source of challenge for a considerable proportion of college students." These struggles include "questioning one's…beliefs, feeling unsettled…struggling to understand evil, suffering, and death; feeling angry at God; and feeling disillusioned with one's religious upbringing."[17] They

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[13] Robert J. Nash and J. J. Jang, *Preparing Students for Life beyond College: A Meaning-Centered Vision for Holistic Teaching and Learning* (New York: Routledge, 2015).

[14] Small, Jenny L., ed. *Making Meaning: Embracing Spirituality, Faith, Religion, and Life Purpose in Student Affairs*. First edition. Sterling, Virginia: Stylus Publishing, 2015. 61.

[15] An exceptional resource on vocation is Sharon Parks. *Big Questions, Worthy Dreams: Mentoring Young Adults in Their Search for Meaning, Purpose, and Faith*. 1st ed. San Francisco, Calif: Jossey-Bass, 2000. She writes the "central task of young adulthood is to discover and compose a faith that can orient the soul to truth and shape a fitting relationship between self and other, self and world, self and 'God'" (page 206). For an exhaustive study on the Lilly Endowment's Programs For The Theological Exploration Of Vocation (PTEV) initiative, see Timothy Clydesdale. *The Purposeful Graduate: Why Colleges Must Talk to Students about Vocation*. Chicago; London: The University of Chicago Press, 2015.

[16] A review of the literature on this statement alone would be exhaustive. Even the prominent atheist scholar and author Sam Harris argues for the acceptance of spiritual insight in his book *Waking up: A Guide to Spirituality without Religion*. First Simon & Schuster hardcover edition. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2014.

[17] Rockenbach, Alyssa Bryant, Walker, Coretta Roseboro, and Luzader, Jordan. "A Phenomenological Analysis of College Students' Spiritual Struggles." Journal of College Student Development 53, no. 1 (2012): 55.

add "in the college student population, the outcome of spiritual struggle appears quite grim."[18] Political bias,[19] racial tensions,[20] violence and rape,[21] the hookup culture,[22] exposure to social media and the internet,[23] hunger and homelessness,[24] and opposition to LGBTQ students, particularly from evangelical groups on campus,[25] are among the many issues that contribute to students' struggles. Considering mass shootings at Virginia Tech and other campus violence, some scholars conclude that "it is clear that crisis is always a possibility for college students."[26] More so, Lukianoff and Haidt suggest that "students at many colleges today are walking on eggshells, afraid of saying the wrong thing, liking the wrong post, or coming to the defense of

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[18] Ibid., 56.

[19] See Darren Linvill and Havice, Pamela A. "Political Bias on Campus: Understanding the Student Experience." *Journal of College Student Development* 52, no. 4 (2011): 487–496.

[20] See Rebecca Stotzer and Hossellman, Emily. "Hate Crimes on Campus: Racial/Ethnic Diversity and Campus Safety." *Journal of Interpersonal Violence* 27, no. 4 (March 2012): 644–661.

[21] See Jon Krakauer. *Missoula: Rape and the Justice System in a College Town*. Random House USA, 2016.

[22] See Lisa Wade. *American Hookup: The New Culture of Sex on Campus*. First edition. New York, N.Y: W.W. Norton & Company, Independent Publishers Since 1923, 2017.

[23] See Nicholas Carr. *The Shallows: What the Internet Is Doing to Our Brains*. Norton pbk. [ed.]. New York: W.W. Norton, 2011.

[24] See Brooke Evans. "Homeless and Hungry in College." *Change: The Magazine of Higher Learning* 48, no. 1 (January 2, 2016): 26–29.

[25] Nathan Todd, Mcconnell, Elizabeth, Odahl-Ruan, Charlynn, and Houston-Kolnik, Jaclyn. "Christian campus-ministry groups at public universities and opposition to same-sex marriage." *Psychology of Religion and Spirituality* 9, no. 4 (November 1, 2017): 412-422.

[26] Min Liu, Blankson, Isaac, and Brooks, Laurel Servies. "From Virginia Tech to Seattle Pacific U: An Exploratory Study of Perceptions Regarding Risk and Crisis Preparedness Among University Employees." *Atlantic Journal of Communication* 23, no. 4 (August 8, 2015): 211.

someone whom they know to be innocent, out of fear they will be called out by a mob on social media."[27]

Several prominent studies support the need and benefits for colleges and universities, even public and nonsectarian, to seriously consider serving the complete development of their students, including their spiritual needs. A landmark study by UCLA's Higher Education Research Institute explains that while young adults' religious engagement is in decline, college students are becoming substantially more caring, tolerant, and connected with others, and actively engaged in a spiritual quest. In fact, "spiritual growth enhances other college outcomes, such as academic performance, psychological well-being, leadership development, and satisfaction with college."[28] Similarly, the 2014 Gallup-Purdue Index Report, a study of 30,000 graduates of American colleges on job engagement and well-being, found that graduates double their chances of being engaged in their work and are three times as likely to be thriving in their entire development if they connected with someone on campus who encouraged them and cared for their whole selves.[29] Fiesta, Strange, and Woods found that spiritual well-being is positively

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[27] Greg Lukianoff and Jonathan Haidt, *The Coddling of the American Mind: How Good Intentions and Bad Ideas Are Setting up a Generation for Failure* (New York City: Penguin Press, 2018). 72.

[28] Alexander W. Astin, Helen S. Astin, and Jennifer A. Lindholm. *Cultivating the Spirit: How College Can Enhance Students' Inner Lives*. John Wiley & Sons, 2011. 11. This seven-year study funded by the Templeton Foundation surveyed 14,000 undergraduates at 136 colleges and universities. The researchers formulated their data into five characteristics: *Equanimity*, meaning a students' capability to find meaning in life and being at peace with their self-identity. *Spiritual Quest*, comprised of the journey or search for meaning. *Ethic of Caring,* meaning the students' capability of showing empathy and tolerance for others, especially concerning issues of social justice. *Charitable Involvement*, involves the practicality of caring through service, advocacy, philanthropy and assisting others. *Ecumenical Worldview*, meaning the students' tolerance and acceptance of beliefs, perspectives, and values beyond their own.

[29] Purdue Marketing & Media, Purdue University. Gallup-Purdue Index Releases Inaugural Findings of National Landmark Study. Accessed May 05, 2017.

linked to a students' social adjustment while in college.[30] Moreover, the promotion of spiritual awareness on campus is growing among faculty and staff, "particularly with regard to diversity and inclusion."[31] Candilas and Magadan found that both campus ministers and religious studies faculty are essential to a student's spiritual formation.[32]

### *3.2. The Significance of and Challenges for Campus Ministry*

Cragum, Henry, Mann, and Krebs argue that "colleges and universities that expand resources on the provision of religious services for students are, in essence, competing in a saturated religious marketplace."[33] In some instances, this can mean that the marketplace develops a competition between denominationally run campus ministries and college run chaplaincies. Typically, campus ministers and chaplains can work through these types of issues in positive ways. A more complicating factor is when public universities enter into the religious

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http://www.purdue.edu/newsroom/releases/2014/Q2/gallup-purdue-index-releases-inaugural-findings-of-national-landmark-study.html.

[30] Alyssa N. Bryant, "The Effects of Involvement in Campus Religious Communities on College Student Adjustment and Development." *Journal of College and Character* 8, no. 3 (04 2007). Bryant reviews their findings as presented in their American College Personnel Association address entitled *The Ins and Outs of Spirituality During the College Years*.

[31] Alyssa N. Bryant, Wickliffe, Keith, Mayhew, Matthew J, and Behringer, Laurie B. "Developing an Assessment of College Students' Spiritual Experiences: The Collegiate Religious and Spiritual Climate Survey." *Journal of College and Character* 10, no. 6 (September 1, 2009). 5.

[32] Kurt S. Candilas, and Marilou L. Magadan. "Interrelationship of the Freshman Students' Knowledge, Participation and Witnessing of the Eucharist as Presence, Sacrifice and Communion." *Asia Pacific Journal of Multidisciplinary Research* 4, no. 4.2 (November 1, 2016): 22–27.

[33] Ryan Cragun, Patrick Henry, Marcus Mann, and Stephanie Russell Krebs. "Chapel Use on College and University Campuses." *Journal of College and Character* 15, no. 2 (May 1, 2014): 115.

marketplace by establishing offices of religious programming. At the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, for example, an Office of Religious Affairs was established in the 1960s with the intent to help unite various campus ministry projects. By the late 1990s, the Office became managed by evangelicals who used the office to promote their own religious agenda, at the expense of non-evangelical Christians and non-Christians.

Schachter notes that students desire more emphasis on spiritual health while in college and argues for the importance of campus ministry.[34] Campus ministry, in particular, cultivates a student's assimilation into the community and heightens their complete development.[35] Bryant notes, "college personnel would do well to encourage students to establish close-knit communities…as the benefits for personal adjustment that emerge from such integrative experiences are evident."[36] Winnings argues that there is no doubt that campus religious directors "have tremendous influence on their students and the wider university community."[37] In fact, up until the 1960s, the sole work of a campus minister was spiritual in focus. The Danforth Study of campus ministry,[38] however, proposed that students have moved from asking "who am I?" to

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[34] Ron Schachter. "The changing chaplaincy: the role of religious leaders on campus as the spiritual needs of students evolve." *University Business* 11, no. 10 (October 1, 2008): 38.

[35] Chickering, A. W., & Reisser, L. (1993). *Education and Identity* (2nd ed.). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass

[36] Bryant, *Effects.*

[37] Winings, Kathy. "Campus Ministries and New Paradigms For Educating Religiously." *Religious Education* 94.3 (1999): 329-44.

[38] The Danforth Study of Campus Ministries was a five-year study of random sampling in the San Francisco Bay area, Chapel Hill, Pittsburg, Madison, Boston, Detroit, and New York. The study assumed that the university was the most influential institution in America, and therefore presumed that campus ministry could become a social theological influence within the university institution based on H. Richard Niebuhr's theology. By most accounts, the Danforth study was considered dated by the time of its publication., see Kenneth Wilson Underwood, *The*

"what shall I do?"[39] Today, the student "to-do" list is exhaustive and thus campus ministries are heavily involved in a host of "to-do" programmatic endeavors. From student-led worship services to small groups and bible studies, to experiential retreats, to providing service-learning hours, taking mission trips, hosting interfaith fellowships, and a thousand other exercises. Community, however, is what Carling and Ghinaglia say students "value the most."[40]

Considering the complexities and changes of the role of the campus minister, some argue that collegiate ministries require a specialized skill set. Carling and Ghinaglia explain:

> Campus ministries also require chaplains with a broader range of skills than those found in a traditional parish priest, including building bridges across religious difference; focusing continually on "what God is up to" in the broader community; understanding the complexities of academic settings and how to navigate them effectively; growing and sustaining a healthy organization through partnerships with other groups; board development, fundraising, and strategic planning; and above all, nurturing student "ownership" of the ministry.[41]

Theologian Ellen Wondra, who before joining the faculty at Bexley Seabury Seminary was herself a campus minister, disagrees in the specialist aspect of campus ministers. She writes "the ministers themselves know that they are required to be generalists with a very wide range of knowledge and skills" working with "broad theological concepts such as incarnation, hospitality,

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*Church, the University, and Social Policy.* (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1970).

[39] Winings, 330-331.

[40] Paul J. Carling and Armando Ghinaglia. "Back to the Future: Foundations and Change in Campus Ministry." *Anglican Theological Review* 99, no. 2 (2017): 318.

[41] Ibid., 326.

witness, love of neighbor, and formation."[42] In a 1971 journal article Sister Ann Kelly wrote "campus ministry has not yet developed into a profession with job requirements, clear goals, accepted directions, or evaluative criteria. Some chaplains argue that situations are too varied and complex for such definition."[43] There are similarly divergent views about the nature of campus ministry itself. Forty-six years later, Davis writes "there is still no broader consensus on what specifically is working and how to replicate it."[44] While there is not any consensus, Borgman, Van Drongelen and Meijknecht, suggest that campus ministry can ultimately be the search for a common language, provisional community, a holy place, and a fruitful exchange of experiences.[45] Simply put, there is not a replicable model for mainline or Catholic campus ministries.

More tangible models exist for parachurch campus ministries.[46] Parachurch groups are primarily Protestant, with Intervarsity, Campus Crusade for Christ, the Navigators, Young Life, Fellowship of Christian Athletes, and the Catholic-based FOCUS[47] being the most prevalent. The sustainability model for these parachurch organizations relies on employees to raise their salary

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[42] Wondra., 66, 68.

[43] Ann Kelley. "Religious Women in Campus Ministry." *Sisters Today* 43, no. 2 (October 1971): 76.

[44] Zac Davis. "Ministry and Millennials." *America* 217, no. 10 (October 30, 2017): 18–27.

[45] Erik Borgman, Hans van Drongelen, and Ton Meijknecht. "Pastoral Work: Search for a Common Language." *Implicit Religion* 9, no. 1 (April 2006): 90–104.

[46] Parachurches ministries do not consider themselves as a connection of the church, but rather a task-oriented endeavor.

[47] Focus has a $57 million annual budget and works on 137 campuses with 800 employees. See Heidi Schlumpf. "A 'Fight for This Generation': Numbers and Influence Grow for Campus Evangelization Group FOCUS." *National Catholic Reporter* 54, no. 13 (April 6, 2018): 10.

plus support for headquarters from their family, friends, and neighbors.[48] Perry, however, has done groundbreaking work exposing this "every man for himself" sustainability model is fraught with problems. In multiple studies, Perry has found that white employees have more access to fundraising dollars and they become predictably more successful, have longer tenures, and enjoy more benefits. In essence, the funding model of these parachurch groups is structurally racist.[49] Perry concludes the same less fortunate outcome for women in a parachurch ministry.[50] Ironically, the parachurch model is often replicated by mainline ministries, by developing liturgy beyond the approved prayer books, utilizing non-ordained leadership, and hiring interns that must raise their own support. Trueman finds this modeling of parachurch ministry ironic as these groups often "usurp the functions of the church" itself.[51] Trueman states parachurch campus ministries have problems of accountability, transparency, vulnerability to cult-like behavior, they minimize doctrinal commitments and are often led by unqualified people. Parachurch ministries, he states "are not the solution to the problem that is represented by denominations."[52]

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[48] B. Gardner. "Technological changes and monetary advantages: The growth of evangelical funding, 1945 to the present." In *More Money, More Ministry: Money and Evangelicals in Recent North American History*, ed. L. Eskridge and M.A. Noll. Eerdmans: Grand Rapids. 2000. 298-310.

[49] Samuel Perry. "Diversity, Donations, and Disadvantage: The Implications of Race, Class, and Gender for Personal Fundraising in Evangelical Missions." *Review of Religious Research*, Vol. 53, No. 4 (January 2012), 397-418.

[50] Samuel Perry. 2013. "She works hard(er) for the money: gender, fundraising, and employment in evangelical parachurch organizations." *Sociology of Religion* 74, no. 3: 392-415.

[51] Carl Trueman. "Parachurch groups and the issues of influence and accountability." *Foundations (Affinity)* 66, (Spr 2014): 25.

[52] Ibid., 31.

### *3.3. The Crisis in Mainline Christianity*

The mainline church is in disruption. A wide range of surveys and studies show that membership, attendance, and participation are declining in Catholic, mainline Protestant, and evangelical churches. If one's observation from attending church is not sufficient, Mark Chaves points to several indicators from the National Congregations Study that show the church is, in fact, losing membership.[53] Young people (Millennials and Generation Z[54]) are notably absent from church. The Barna Group explains the "Spiritual but Not Religious" crowd are "religiously disinclined."[55] The massive National Study of Youth and Religion would agree with this assessment as it paints an apathetic religiosity among young people.[56] Pew Research agrees, reporting that the number of young people in the church is declining significantly.[57] Similarly,

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[53] Mark Chaves, *American Religion: Contemporary Trends*, 2nd edition (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2017).

[54] Generation Z are those born after 1995, making up the majority of college students today. For peer-reviewed research, see Corey Seemiller and Meghan Grace. *Generation Z Goes to College*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2016; Jeffrey J. Selingo. *The new generation of students: how colleges can recruit, teach, and serve Gen Z*. Washington, D.C. : Chronicle of Higher Education, 2018, and Jean M. Twenge. *IGen: why today's super-connected kids are growing up less rebellious, more tolerant, less happy--and completely unprepared for adulthood (and what this means for the rest of us)*. New York, NY: Atria Paperback, 2018.

[55] Barna Group, *Barna Trends 2018: What's New and What's next at the Intersection of Faith and Culture.*, 2017. 170.

[56] See Kenda Creasy Dean. *Almost Christian: What the Faith of Our Teenagers Is Telling the American Church*. Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2010; Christian Smith and Patricia Snell. *Souls in Transition the Religious and Spiritual Lives of Emerging Adults*. New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009; and Christian Smith and Melinda Lundquist. Denton. *Soul Searching the Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005.

[57] "The Age Gap in Religion Around the World," Pew Research Center's Religion & Public Life Project, June 13, 2018, accessed August 01, 2018, http://www.pewforum.org/2018/06/13/the-age-gap-in-religion-around-the-world/.

the Lewis Center for Church Leadership, notes that "since at least the 1980s there has been a major decline in the number of active elders." [58] One report states that "547 churches in Quebec had been closed, sold or transformed."[59]

While most observers concede a decline in numbers of church membership and participation, especially among young people, some argue that interpreting this as a broad "decline" of the church overlooks important trends. Finke and Stark contend that there "is not a decline in religion, but only a decline in the fortunes of specific religious organizations as they give way to new ones."[60] Phyllis Tickle drawing on the work of Episcopal Bishop Mark Dryer, calls this the "Great Emergence," pointing to earlier transformations in the history of Christianity. "About every five hundred years the Church feels compelled to hold a giant rummage sale," she explains.[61] Looking back roughly five hundred years we do see the Protestant Reformation (1517ce), undeniably a momentous shift in Christianity. Five hundred years prior the Reformation, one finds the Great Schism between Eastern and Western Christianity (1054ce), and five hundred years before that the Fall of the Roman Empire (476ce), and roughly five hundred years before that the birth of Christ.

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[58] "A Lewis Center Report on Clergy Age Trends in the United Methodist Church 2017 Report," Lewis Center for Church Leadership at Wesley Theological Seminary, May 2017, accessed August 1, 2018, https://www.churchleadership.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Clergy-Age-Report-2017.pdf.

[59] Dan Bilefsky. "Where Churches Have Become Temples of Cheese, Fitness and Eroticism," New York Times, June 30, 2018, accessed August 1, 2018, https://www.nytimes.com/2018/07/30/world/canada/quebec-churches.html. The article credits the Québec Religious Heritage Council with this statistic.

[60] As cited in Schmalzbauer. "Campus Religious Life in America: Revitalization and Renewal." 116.

[61] Phyllis Tickle, *The Great Emergence: How Christianity Is Changing and Why* (Grand Rapids, Mich: Baker Books, 2008). 16.

Similarly, Harvey Cox suggests that the rise of the church in the global south and the decline of the Western church points to a new "age" in the history of Christianity. The "age of faith" was characterized by disciples' and adherents of the early church devotion and confidence in the hope of Jesus. However, when Christians executed bishop Priscillian of Avila in 385ce for wrong belief, the seeds of a new age were being planted. The "age of belief" in fact was in full swing with the advent of the printing press and the onset of the Protestant Reformation. Cox contends that we are now facing a pivotal time in the church as we move into a new age. The "age of the spirit" is characterized by a renewed interest in Pentecostalism, mysticism, mindfulness, and spirituality over religion.[62]

While there are a plethora of divergent interpretations that explain the many ecclesial shifts that are occurring, there is no doubt that the church is in transition. This disruption matters for many, including those involved in campus ministry, regardless of how these changes are interpreted. These shifts matter to campus ministry especially concerning financial stability from supporting denominations that may be in decline. These shifts also matter as they could potentially affect, negatively, the number of students involved in campus ministry, especially if campus ministry is seen as an extension of something that might be considered dying or irrelevant. Finally, the disruption of the church also could potentially provide sources of anxiety and worry to campus ministry leaders who are connected to the church through ordination, compensation and benefits, and who remain accountable to the larger ecclesial body.

[62] Harvey Cox. *The Future of Faith*. New York: HarperOne, 2010.

### *3.4. The Changing Landscape of Higher Education*

Campus ministry is uniquely positioned both in the church and in higher education, and as the church, the academy is also in transition. One study shows there are four basic types of schools of higher education: The large public university, the small private college, the large private nonsectarian university, and the historically-black college or university.[63] Of course, this list should also include the for-profit college, the small public university, the junior and community college, and technical institutes, to name a few, all of which include the presence of campus ministry. This study focuses on public universities, the preferred choice of most American students,[64] but higher education, across the board, like the church, is in disruption, including Land Grant institutions founded by the Morrill Acts of 1862 and 1890.

Dumestre articulates five fundamental problems[65] that help to explain the vulnerability of America's colleges and universities. First is waning public confidence. Arum and Roksa, for instance, found that "45% of students demonstrated no significant gains in critical thinking, complex reasoning, and writing in their first two years of college."[66] The second is increasing

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[63] This typology is based on Conrad Cherry, DeBerg, Betty A., Porterfield, Amanda, and Cherry, Conrad. *Religion on campus*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001.

[64] Almost ninety percent of Catholics, for example, attend non-Catholic Schools [Mary Deeley, "Continuing Ed: What the Church Can Learn from Campus Ministry." *U.S. Catholic* 71, no. 8 (August 2006): 33.]

[65] Dumestre, Marcel J. *Financial Sustainability in US Higher Education: Transformational Strategy in Troubled Times*. 1st edition. New York, NY: Springer Berlin Heidelberg, 2016. 29-35.

[66] Ibid., 30. Dumestre sites Richard Arum and Josipa Roksa, *Academically Adrift: Limited Learning on College Campuses* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011). Jon McGee, *Breakpoint: The Changing Marketplace for Higher Education* Baltimore, Maryland: Johns Hopkins University, 2015, makes the same point stating the majority of Americans are simply "skeptical and concerned about the economics of higher education" (page 43).

student debt. Dumestre notes a Forbes article that claims student debt has exceeded a trillion dollars.[67] The third problem is diminishing state support. He reviews data from the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities that shows state contributions to universities, since the 2008 recession, is down by 30% and that layoffs are increasing even as enrollment increases.[68] Sriram and Mclevain also have found that tenured professors are becoming rarer while colleges are now utilizing more part-time and adjunct faculty.[69] The fourth fundamental problem Dumestre cites is overregulation. While higher education is highly regulated, this is perhaps his weakest argument, as the government must have a role in such a huge endeavor.

The fifth, and most compelling of the problems that Dumestre states is what he calls "the traditional college DNA" or the quintessential Harvard model of higher education. Dumestre attributes this to Clayton Christensen and Henry Eyring's book *The Innovative University*.[70] The Harvard model, according to Christensen and Eyring in many cases pervades the other four through the invention of the ranking system and therefore is rooted in a traditional hierarchy that is no longer useful for educational endeavors. Howbeit, Christensen, and Eyring are not alone with this historical tracing. Derek Bok, for one, wrote of his tenure as Harvard's president and

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[67] Ibid., 31. Dumestre cites Chris Denhart, "How The $1.2 Trillion College Debt Crisis Is Crippling Students, Parents And The Economy." *Forbes.* August 7, 2013

[68] Ibid., 31. Dumestre cites Phillip Oliff, Vincent Palacios, Ingrid Johnson, and Michael Leachman, "Recent Deep State Higher Education Cuts May Harm Students and the Economy for Years to Come," *Center on Budget and Policy Priorities*, March 19, 2013.

[69] Rishi Sriram and Mclevain, Melissa. "The Future of Residence Life and Student Affairs in Christian Higher Education." Christian Higher Education 15, no. 1-2 (January 1, 2016): 73.

[70] See Clayton M. Christensen and Henry J. Eyring, *The Innovative University: Changing the DNA of Higher Education from the inside out*, 1st ed, The Jossey-Bass Higher and Adult Education Series (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2011).

noted the university's model of influence in his book *Universities in the Marketplace*.[71] Kevin Carey in his book *The End of College* also traces the DNA to Harvard's model. Carey presents the case that today's university is a reputation seeking machine with one goal in mind: to emulate Harvard and other Ivy League schools.[72] This model is what Ryan Craig, in his book *College Disrupted*, calls the "four R's:" Rankings, Rewards, Real Estate, and "Rah," all of which equate to not only an impossible goal for universities and colleges to attain but also an extraordinary cost.[73]

Both Craig (*College Disrupted)* and Carey (*The End of College*) claim the future of higher education will most likely have to result in a two-class system: The elite and non-elite. If Harvard was the gold-standard of the nineteenth and twentieth-century university, Arizona State might be for the twenty-first century if ASU's president Michael Crow has his way. Crow, a co-author of *Designing the New American University,* is perhaps the most notable university administrator forging this new path in higher education.[74] The new path includes massive open online courses (MOOC), accelerated courses (summer and short terms, high school early

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[71] Derek Curtis Bok. *Universities in the Marketplace: The Commercialization of Higher Education*, 5. printing, and 1. paperback printing (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 2005).

[72] Kevin Carey. *The End of College: Creating the Future of Learning and the University of Everywhere*. First Riverhead trade paperback edition. New York: Riverhead Books, 2016.

[73] Ryan Craig. *College Disrupted: The Great Unbundling of Higher Education*. First edition. New York: Palgrave Macmillan Trade, 2015. Jeffrey Selingo in *College (Un)bound: The Future of Higher Education and What It Means for Students*. Las Vegas: Amazon Publishing, 2013, makes practically the same argument.

[74] Michael Crow and William B. Dabars. *Designing the New American University*. Baltimore, Maryland: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2015. On ASU's heals is Purdue University's purchase of Kaplan, the large online university.

college[75]), satellite campuses, the increase of non-traditional (working adult and veteran students particularly), and job-readiness programs that immediately place students in working environments. Ahmad cites several studies that MOOCs alone, consistent with the ASU and Purdue models, will "severely 'unbundle'… 'undermine'… 'destroy'… 'fragment'… and replace traditional higher education models."[76] These all have the potential for disrupting traditional campus ministry as we know.

Similar to Craig (*College Disrupted*), Armstrong and Hamilton, in a longitudinal study of 200 undergraduates, found that the university for most is not a class equalizer as it moves students through one of three paths through the university experience: the "mobility pathway," the "professional pathway," or the "party pathway." Most colleges are designed for the affluential "party" student through robust Greek-life systems, major athletics, effortless classes and majors, and plush amenities along with a culture of academic indifference and detachment.[77] Key to the disruption, therefore, is that the "party pathway" has become such a huge focus in North American higher education, to the negligence of the other pathways, hence creating a crisis of mission and purpose within North American higher education.

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[75] Thomas Friedman even suggests that "every university" should "move to three-year undergraduate degrees from four." *Thank You for Being Late*, 359

[76] Ahmad Tashfeen. "Preparing for the future of higher education." *On the Horizon* 23, no. 4 (November 9, 2015): 323.

[77] Elizabeth Armstrong and Laura T Hamilton. *Paying for the Party: How College Maintains Inequality*, 2015.

## 4. Gaps in the Literature

A review of the literature shows the importance of spiritual development for college and university students, the support of higher education administrators for a renewed focus on spiritual development and support, and the significant role for campus ministry in filling such a role. Moreover, the literature exposes significant changes in the landscapes and institutions of both North American Christianity and U.S. higher education that many scholars call a crises. Taken together, these changes are creating a radically shifting context for campus ministry — one which may have adverse effects or compromise this critical work.

To address gaps in the literature, this study considered the following questions:

- Considering the importance of campus ministry as reflected in a review of the literature, what support does campus ministry receive from national institutions and initiatives (i.e., denominational support, grant support, ecumenical endeavors, and campus ministry associations)?
- Of the support received, to what extent does this support target specific theological, social, or ethnic communities?
- How confident are campus ministers about the sustainability of their ministries, based on the support they receive?
- Moreover, what steps do campus ministries take, and what forms of advocacy are campus ministries involved in, to secure their sustainability in the context of dual crises in church and campus? How do they identify new forms of independent support?

## 5. Epoche

I serve as the Executive Director and Campus Pastor of Cooperative Christian Ministry, the ecumenical [Episcopal, Lutheran (ELCA), Presbyterian (USA), and United Methodist] campus ministry that serves the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, a campus of nearly 30,000 students. I have held this position since 1999. I am also the Director of the Faith and Leadership Experience, a program located at UNC-Charlotte funded by the Lilly Endowment. Additionally, I served the National Ecumenical Campus Ministry Consultation Program Team, a collective of ecumenical leaders in collegiate ministry sponsored by the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Episcopal, Lutheran (ELCA), Presbyterian (USA), and United Methodist denominations. Since 2013, I have also participated in the Campus Ministry Theological Exploration of Vocation (CMTEV) initiative of the Lilly Endowment. CMTEV participation has allowed me many opportunities and experiences, one being the ability to work collegially with some of the nation's most prominent campus ministries, including utilizing some CMTEV participant campus ministries for this research.

## 6. Methods

Marking a departure on previous campus ministry studies,[78] the purpose of this study is to draw on the insights of campus ministry professionals to determine how campus ministry can be sustained, particularly in the face of challenges arising from the crisis of the church's disruption and future uncertainties of higher education. This study consulted sixteen campus ministers drawn from the participants in the Lilly Endowment's Campus Ministry Theological Exploration

[78] I have reviewed nearly 500 theological and social science studies on campus ministry since 1900, all of which utilized methods to observe and/or explain phenomenon in the field but not to project, forecast, or prescribe future possibilities.

of Vocation (CMTEV) initiative. Through this initiative, the Lilly Endowment supports 104 campus ministries at public universities in 35 states. The CMTEV is part of the Lilly Endowment's longstanding commitment to the exploration of vocation at both private and now public universities. In the words of Chris Coble, vice president for religion at Lilly, "campus ministries play a critical role in helping students explore their academic and career interests and their faith as they pursue their hopes and dreams."[79] Although each campus ministry in this study participates in the Lilly Endowment's CMTEV program, this study is not an evaluation of the CMTEV program. Rather, it draws on the exceptional cohort of campus ministry leaders convened by the program to tap their wisdom, insights, and questions about the challenges facing campus ministry at the dawn of the 21st century.

CMTEV participants represent a denominationally and geographically diverse group of campus ministries. Therefore, in order to limit the volume of collected data from the thousands of campus ministries in the United States, CMTEV was selected as a diverse composite of campus ministries across the nation. Sixteen of the 104 CMTEV campus ministries were selected to participate in this study. The focus group's composition, size, design, transcription, length, and setting were modeled from Bloor's *Focus Groups in Social Research*.[80] Since CMTEV is only available to state universities, no private colleges were selected. With respect to geographical diversity, the study included sampling from seven of the ten Standard Federal Regions of the United States.[81] Nine of the sixteen are campus ministries at Land Grant

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[79] "Lilly Endowment Makes Grants to Strengthen Campus Ministries Serving Public Universities," Religion News Service, 4 November 2015.

[80] Michael Bloor. *Focus Groups in Social Research.* (London: SAGE Publications, 2001.)

[81] I am not convinced that geographical diversity is needed for this study, however, I intentionally wanted to be as broad as possible considering that I only selected sixteen campus ministries to study. For information on the Standard Federal Regions see the Office of

Universities. Eleven of the sixteen serve research universities in the highest tier (R1) of the Carnegie Classification System rankings. One campus ministry serves a historically black university. Participants serve six denominations: four of the sixteen serve the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ); three serve the Episcopal Church; seven serve the Lutheran Church (ELCA); eight serve the Presbyterian Church (USA); four serve the United Methodist Church; and three serve the United Church of Christ. Hence, the sample is quite diverse. Collectively the sixteen participants have 251 years of campus ministry experience, averaging 15.69 years a person.

I conducted an initial focus group with nine participants on October 10, 2018, in Indianapolis, IN during the Lilly Endowment's Campus Ministry Theological Exploration of Vocation conference. The focus group lasted ninety minutes, and audio of the session was recorded and transcribed. A twenty-four-page transcription of the recording was used for subsequent evaluation. Following the focus group, online surveys were sent to seven additional campus ministers, and these were completed at a 100% response rate. Key features of the sixteen focus group and survey participants appear in the chart below.

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Intergovernmental and External Affairs at the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services: https://www.hhs.gov/about/agencies/iea/regional-offices/index.html

| Campus Ministry | University | Standard Federal Regions | Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) | Episcopal | Lutheran (ELCA) | Presbyterian (USA) | United Methodist | United Church of Christ | Land Grant University | HBCU | Carnegie R1 University |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Christus Rex | University of North Dakota | VIII | | | ☑ | | | | | | |
| Cooperative Christian Ministry | University of North Carolina at Charlotte | IV | | ☑ | ☑ | ☑ | ☑ | | | | |
| Ecumenical Campus Ministry | Kansas State University | VIII | ☑ | | | ☑ | | ☑ | ☑ | | ☑ |
| Ekklesia | Missouri State University | VIII | ☑ | | ☑ | ☑ | | ☑ | | | |
| Episcopal Campus Ministry | University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill | IV | | ☑ | | | | | | | ☑ |
| FLOW Wesley Foundation | Virginia State University | III | | | | | ☑ | | ☑ | ☑ | |
| Lutheran Campus Ministry | Clemson University | IV | | | ☑ | | | | ☑ | | ☑ |
| Lutheran Campus Ministry | University of Arizona | IX | | | ☑ | | | | ☑ | | ☑ |
| Presbyterian Campus Ministry | University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill | IV | | | | ☑ | | | | | ☑ |
| Presbyterian Student Center Foundation | University of Wisconsin - Madison | V | | | | ☑ | | | ☑ | | ☑ |
| Tyson House Students Foundation | University of Tennessee | IV | | ☑ | ☑ | | | | ☑ | | ☑ |
| United Campus Ministry | University of Arkansas | VI | ☑ | | | ☑ | | | ☑ | | ☑ |
| United Campus Ministry | University of Maryland – College Park | III | ☑ | | | ☑ | | ☑ | ☑ | | ☑ |
| Wesley Foundation | Texas Tech University | VI | | | | | ☑ | | | | ☑ |
| Wesley-Luther | University of North Carolina at Greensboro | IV | | | ☑ | | ☑ | | | | |
| Westminster Foundation | West Virginia University | III | | | | ☑ | | | ☑ | | ☑ |

## 7. Data Collection: Focus Group and Survey Protocol

The questions asked both to the focus group and by survey were identical. After general intake information was collected (name of campus minister, name of campus ministry, campus served, years of campus ministry experience, etc.), the sixteen campus ministers were asked:

1. In what ways is your campus ministry preparing for the future?
2. What do you see as the biggest current and future challenges for your campus ministry?
3. Looking back to when you started campus ministry, what types of onboarding or professional development was provided?

4. If onboarding or professional development was provided, how did you afford it, who provided it, and/or what benefit did it serve?
5. From the time you started in campus ministry to the present, what kind of professional assistance have you received?
6. In your opinion what kinds of skills, resources, continuing education, or support should new campus ministers receive?
7. How supported do you feel by your denominational structure?
8. How has your denominational support changed over time?
9. How do CMTEV events compare to other programs or events for campus ministry that you have attended? This is not an evaluation of the CMTEV program, but rather an evaluation of existing or past campus ministry events or programs not sponsored by the Lilly Endowment.
10. If money was not a concern for you, what would your campus ministry do right now on your campus to fulfill your purpose and mission?

After reviewing the focus group and survey data, several key informants were identified to fill various gaps in information and to provide historical and institutional context for conversations about higher education ministries. Focused interviews were conducted with these informants about their specific areas of experience and expertise. Like the campus ministers in the group of sixteen, they will not be named in this study. However, their experience includes campus ministry at the Middle Tennessee State Wesley Foundation, the Florida Gator Wesley Foundation, the Wesley Foundation at Winthrop University, the Baptist Campus Ministry at the

University of North Carolina at Charlotte, the Wesley Foundation at North Carolina A&T State University, and the Wesley Foundation at Florida A&M University.

## 8. Data Analysis

The methodology for this study included a review of the notes taken during the focus group, the focus group's twenty-four-page transcription, online survey submissions, and notes from the focused interviews. The transcript was made from an audio recording. The notes also included some of the non-verbal reactions of the participants. With the collected data, highlights were made of key phrases and sentences, and groupings of similar responses were established.

After a thorough review of the data collected, three core research questions emerged as a central focus of the most significant findings:

1. In what ways have you been supported in professional development for campus ministry?
2. What do you see as the biggest current and future challenges for your campus ministry?
3. In what ways is your campus ministry preparing for the future?

Below, I explore the responses to these key questions by looking at seven themes that emerged from the focus group, survey, and interview material.

## 9. Findings

### *9.1. Campus Ministers Lack Professional Development and Support*

*"I figured it out on my own."*[82]

Although the campus ministry participants come from across the country in unique settings, there is a great deal of commonality among their experiences and concerns. For instance, almost all respondents (fourteen of the sixteen) report little to no professional training or onboarding when they started campus ministry. The two who did receive training have been in campus ministry since the early 1990s and therefore benefited from resources no longer available. Moreover, the same numbers reported that ongoing professional support is sparse. One respondent stated "the field is pretty disconnected" in assisting campus ministries. Another stated, "I figured it out on my own." Another campus minister, in a contrarian manner, stated that "training is a pretentious word because nobody knows how to do campus ministry."

As indicated from this research, these campus ministers are not properly supported. The lack of professional development, for one, seems to consistently correlate to how campus ministers perceive their own denominational support. Although a few of the longest serving campus ministers are more generous toward their denominations than the younger campus ministers, they nonetheless admit that because of downsizing, judicatories overseeing campus ministry have cut staff and therefore have limited themselves in the ways denominations can help and support campus ministers. One campus minister described this as a sense of "disconnection." One campus minister reported "support…has diminished, even [as] the [campus] ministry has grown tremendously." Typically, we view growth in a church setting as positive, but when

[82] Focus group respondent.

campus ministries are resource-poor, attaining and developing "effective infrastructure to ensure all of the demands can be adequately met" is a source of worry. A fair sampling of the campus ministers interviewed also are frustrated with how ecclesial politics hamper denominational support. One campus minister said, "nobody in the church gives a shit about the people we serve because they're gay or poor or black."

Moreover, supervisors of campus ministry, especially those who operate in supervisory capacities regionally, are often untrained and inexperienced. Synods, dioceses, conferences, and presbyteries often make financial and governance decisions for campus ministries with untrained eyes.[83] These difficulties are on the heel of denominational and church decline. The disruption in the American church leads to a lack of professional development, support, and resourcing. As noted from the review of the literature, historically when the church has created vacuums in collegiate ministry, parachurch groups fill the void.

As Knotts demonstrates "campus ministers work in an unstable setting. With an almost constant threat of budget cuts hanging over their heads, four out of five campus ministers feel that their campus ministry position is somewhat tenuous and could even be cut."[84] One focus group respondent noted the frustration particularly involved when a denomination or judicatory enacts a vision for campus ministry. These visions "from on high" often come with no

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[83] Judicatories supervise campus ministry in different ways. Often these are denominational leaders who oversee campus ministry offices and budgets that may be part of a larger division, such as youth and young adult ministry, or mission engagement. In many cases these supervisors have no campus ministry experience.

[84] Alice G. Knotts, ed., *To Transform the World: Vital United Methodist Campus Ministries* (Nashville, Tenn: General Board of Higher Education and Ministry, the United Methodist Church, 2009). 172.

consideration of the multiple visions that may be necessary from within the individual contexts of the various campus ministries a said judicatory might supervise.

### *9.2. Campus Ministries Face Contextual Challenges*

*"In my context, we are in a new day."*[85]

Colleges are highly contextual. The way a campus ministry relates to a large public university differs from that of a small liberal arts college. Students who are studying the social sciences also vary from those who study engineering or architecture. Moreover, the generative themes of one campus may differ from another campus, resulting in a different approach to collegiate ministry between the two. Thus, effective campus ministries vary in ways that are attentive to the particularities of their contexts.

Likewise, campus ministries are also highly contextual. Campus ministries can be full or part-time, single or multi-staff, single or multi-campus, denominational or non-denominational, ecumenical, parachurch, standalone, or congregation based. Campus ministries have inconsistent access to university resources and staff. Campus ministers often serve triage roles in critical incidents involving students and campus communities, such as natural disasters, episodes of violence, and the like. The role of campus ministers in such situations varies from campus to campus. Campus ministries may also be a small group of students or an enormous network, as evidenced even through this sample of sixteen. Some campus ministries have traditional strongholds with local supporters that enable them to have a physical plant, a stream of revenue, or large endowment, while sister campus ministries may be fledgling.

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[85] Focus group respondent.

### *9.3. Campus Ministries Can't Always be Prophetic*

*"You can be prophetic, just don't piss anyone off."*[86]

Campus ministries also serve unique populations of students based on their ministry model. In a comprehensive study of Lutheran campus ministries sponsored by the ELCA, Sorenson and Martinson found that participants in Lutheran campus ministries "appeared more privileged than the typical American college student."[87] They also noted that "active ELCA students were more white (94%)…than other groups."[88] The data from the Sorenson and Martinson study suggests that this seems to mostly to represent the fact that many campus ministries reach their supporter's constituents (for instance, a Lutheran campus ministry will reach a mostly Lutheran audience) and these same supporting denominations historically planted ministries on mostly white campuses.

Participants in this study, however, report more diversity than the Lutheran study shows. Ecumenical ministries and those serving campuses with higher minority populations (including HBCUs) do a better job of reflecting their diverse contexts. Nonetheless, campus ministries, even those who are mostly white, are outliers in the national civil political landscape for several reasons, but in the mainline church mostly because of their radical sense of social justice. In this study, every campus ministry at least alluded to offering programs of social justice in these ministry contexts. However, being prophetic in campus ministry has been described as a "burden" by multiple campus ministers. One campus minister reported that "bishops kind of say

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[86] Focus group respondent.

[87] Sorenson, Jacob, and Rollie Martinson. "Lutheran Campus Ministry Study: Student Survey Report." LuMin. May 2018. Accessed October 9, 2018. https://lumin-network.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/LCM-Study-Student-Survey-Report-REVISED-May-2018-1-1.pdf. 5.

[88] Ibid. 13.

'you can be prophetic, just don't piss anyone off.'" In this sense, campus ministers run the risk of their prophetic nature being the cousin to ecclesial insubordination.

The risk of insubordination is not just limited to ecclesial powers. Campus ministers are also finding it more challenging to be prophetic on campus. Be it a racist incident in a Yale residence hall, a violent attack concerning free speech at Middlebury College, the fatal police shooting of an unarmed black man a block from UNC Charlotte, the dismantling of a Confederate statue at UNC Chapel Hill, or an all-out deadly white supremacist rally at the University of Virginia, the campus context is increasingly changing, and not necessarily in a way that welcomes the prophetic voice. Higher education administrators today are more likely to side on a student's emotional safety by censoring protests, demonstrations, and speech that could potentially be seen as psychologically harmful.[89] Therefore, while campus ministry certainly has a tradition of community organizing and supporting the campus protest culture, many are now landing on the side of caution, deciding to provide spaces that are emotionally nurturing rather than prophetically challenging. Campus ministry, one respondent noted, is a "liminal space" wearing many hats and playing many roles as it traverses the various and complex landscapes of having one foot in the church and the other in higher education.

[89] Tom Slater, ed., *Unsafe Space: The Crisis of Free Speech on Campus* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016).

### *9.4. Campus Ministries Face Various Forms of Competition*

*"I compete with boys in shorts, who play guitar and disc golf."*[90]

Campus ministry is also highly competitive. While churches facing decline often pour extraordinary resources into reaching young adults, for instance, these resources typically do not reach campus ministries, but rather their competitors. Examples of financial competitors include parachurch ministries, new church starts, and funding parish-based college programs. Similarly, campus ministries must compete with many other ecclesial priorities for funding and support. One respondent noted that although "mission giving was down" in her judicatory, the judicatory nonetheless found money to start a new campus ministry, at another university, funds that could have been used to sustain her ministry instead. Another respondent boldly stated that his biggest competitor is the judicatory itself. He noted "every time I deal with the conference it is the worst part of my job…some of them are great but…there's some people that seem to work maybe ten hours a week in their ministries to make sure my ministry doesn't exist. There are really people that despise what we do."

Be it denominational apathy, dismissiveness, or something more malignant as noted, one respondent sums it up well saying "it seems like there is this panic…[and] that's not healthy." The respondent's observation of panic may be an extreme characterization, however, observations from this study revealed a general sense of alarm among all participants, concerning the church's disruption and declines in funding. Such conditions are ripe for scarcity and competition. One campus minister described it as "every ministry for themselves justifying your existence." Another campus minister stated that "the presbytery cut the ministry by fifty percent

[90] Focus group respondent.

in funding without warning." Campus ministries with stronger boards of directors, situated in more wealthy regions, and those who have prepared for financial storms are better positioned than those who are in transition, serve less affluent communities, and haven't had the opportunity to build the financial base they have needed to sustain, much less endow, their ministries.

Campus ministries also have non-financial competitors on college campuses, as well. Most college campuses have an abundance of Christian campus ministries, many with leaders who have no theological training or experience. One respondent stated, "I compete with boys in shorts, who play guitar and disc golf." The more campus ministries on a given college campus creates resource scarcity, such as a competition for space, visibility, and access to students. Campus ministries also compete against "bullhorn" preachers[91] who travel from campus to campus, typically with a highly negative and fundamentalist message. Perhaps because of incidents like these, some mainline campus ministries are just not welcomed by university administration.

[91] A bullhorn preacher is an evangelist who uses free speech zones at campus to preach, usually in a highly charged and fundamentalist style. Often these "bullhorn" preachers tour from campus to campus. Examples include Tom Short (https://www.tomthepreacher.com) and Micah Armstrong (https://brothermicah.wordpress.com). Ironically, "the bullhorn was a legitimate symbol of ministry," when mainline campus ministers used bullhorns in the 1960s to rally students to protest the Vietnam War. Robert H. Hamill. "For Sale, One Bullhorn: See Campus Minister." *The Christian Century* 90, no. 6 (February 7, 1973): 166.

### *9.5. Campus Ministries Face Ecclesial Challenges*

*"They don't see us as church."*[92]

As noted in the review of the literature, the most prominent demographic campus ministry reaches is young adult, a population noticeably absent from the church. It is not unheard of for a large metropolitan mainline church with unparalleled resources to struggle with young adult ministry. Yet, campus ministry is tasked with young adult ministry almost exclusively. Demographically, most campus ministry participants come to campus ministry events alone, whereas most church parishioners come as a family unit. The Aspen Group suggests that churches have a 2:1 "parking ratio," meaning the church should have a parking space for every two people.[93] Campus ministry as a church of mostly single people means more work for each campus minister. For example, it is quite usual for a church's pastoral staff to be able to conduct a wellness check of an entire family unit in the same time it could take a campus minister to do a similar check for one student. Using this broad formula for pastoral workload, a campus ministry with one hundred active students is equivalent to a church with two hundred active worship attendees.

Regarding function, the church activity that most resembles campus ministry is a new church start, yet even new church starts are not faced with growth measures as extreme as campus ministry. Because student populations turn over at a steady rate, campus ministries must always grow exponentially. Even engaged, committed, and satisfied campus ministry

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[92] Focus group respondent.

[93] Joe LaPaglia. "Planning for Church Parking." Aspen Group. March 6, 2018. Accessed January 5, 2019. https://www.aspengroup.com/blog/planning-for-parking.

participants eventually graduate and leave. Based on the national college retention average, a campus ministry must have a yearly rate of growth of at least forty percent to maintain the status quo of a steady participant base.[94] One respondent admitted that when church leaders look at campus ministry, "they don't see us as church." Thus, campus ministers also experience levels of isolation and disdain from their clergy colleagues. Others noted that campus ministers are "misunderstood" and "unappreciated." Another stated frustration in that churches expect campus ministries to fill pews with students, yet do not support campus ministry.

### *9.6. The Future of Campus Ministry is Fundraising (and Innovation and Diversity)*

*"Our future right now, when we talk about future, is about fundraising."*[95]

The focus group and surveys allowed campus ministries also to discuss how they plan and prepare for the future. Colleen Carroll writes that "American universities have always been incubators for new ideas and for the resurgence of dormant ones."[96] It would make sense, then, that campus ministries are outliers in the body politic also for being the innovative arm of the church. One respondent said the "laboratory we are in is ripe with innovation and creativity that should impact and empower the church." Worship in campus ministry settings, for example, is often student led and designed and pushes the bounds of corporate worship and prayer books.

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[94] "Persistence & Retention - 2018," National Student Clearinghouse Research Center, August 04, 2018, accessed February 25, 2019, https://nscresearchcenter.org/snapshotreport33-first-year-persistence-and-retention/.

[95] Focus group respondent.

[96] Colleen Carroll, *The New Faithful: Why Young Adults Are Embracing Christian Orthodoxy* (Chicago, Ill: Loyola Press, 2002). 158.

Also, student ministries often devote a great deal of time, preparation, and organization to local and international missions. Many campus ministries are more diverse than local parishes, and students more readily connect with people who are different from them. Such distinctive features can make it difficult for young adults transitioning from their roles as college students to community members to connect to local congregations. This led at least one respondent to wonder if campus ministry ought to "be responsible towards impacting something that we know is dying (i.e., the church)."

Ironically, the most common work for the future in campus ministry is related to fundraising, an activity that demands significant time and energy from campus ministers. However, fundraising comes at a considerable cost. One respondent clearly stated, "I can't not pay attention to it." In fact, the fundraising demand aggravated most of the sixteen campus ministers. One explained that "it is interesting to me that the…denominational level is decreased its funding. [yet] still having an expectation of us to produce." One would think that the future planning of campus ministry would revolve around expanding on the innovative success it has in student development, but instead campus ministers are learning how to "make case statements and donor databases." One campus minister regretted that "my role is going to have to play a much more prominent role in fundraising. Programs are going to have to be carried out much more by students."

### *9.7. Unexpected Findings*

Two surprising and unexpected developments were demonstrated in this study. Most surprisingly is that both the review of the literature and the results of this ethnography bear little mention of the changing nature of higher education. Not one of the sixteen campus ministers

made any reference to the changing nature of universities, the institutional transformations in higher education, or the "crisis" in the higher education sector discussed so widely in industry publications and gatherings. I hypothesize three possible reasons:

1. Perhaps most likely, the decline of the church and incredible stress related around the lack of funding simply preoccupies campus ministers in ways that prevent them from adding the concern of the disruptive nature of higher education to their already overloaded basket of worries.
2. A second possibility is that campus ministers feel more connected to the church than they do to the university and such a connection causes them to worry less about the university context and its changing nature. Campus ministries, in particular that have their own buildings can exist near universities without relating the universities in meaningful ways.[97]
3. A third possibility might be that many of these campus ministers are merely unaware of the disruption in higher education. The lack of professional development, for instance, makes this possibility quite conceivable.

Secondly, campus ministers also often feel unheard, isolated, and typically on the edge of trying to sustain each day. This is clearly evident in this project's methodology as focus groups and interviews lasted upwards to ninety minutes each and campus ministers wrote in their

[97] The campus ministry I serve does not own a building and utilizes university space almost exclusively for all programs. As a result, I distinctly recall during a Lutheran Quadrennial Review that the review team was surprised to navigate the college campus. The team was used to instead reviewing campus ministries based adjacent to campuses.

surveys notes of appreciation like "this was one of the most helpful ministry reviews I have ever participated in."

### 10. Attempts at National Networking

In the United States, formal concepts of campus ministry began at the turn of the twentieth century when denominations realized they needed qualified clergy to lead collegiate ministry. Lutheran campus ministry started in 1907 at the University of Wisconsin when Howard Gold was called as a "student pastor."[98] About the same time, Matthew Allison was called to work with Presbyterian students at the University of Wisconsin.[99] In 1913 it was the work of Bishop James Baker to establish the first Wesley Foundation, the Methodist campus ministry at the University of Illinois.[100] Evangelical parachurch groups followed quickly. In 1933 the Navigators started at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. In 1938 Young Life was established. In 1941 Intervarsity launched their first campus ministry in the U.S. also at Illinois, and in 1951 Campus Crusade for Christ started at UCLA.[101] Ecumenical campus ministries did not appear until the 1960s.[102]

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[98] "Lutheran Campus Ministry Turns 90." August 8, 1997, accessed October 30, 2016, http://www.elca.org/News-and-Events/2902.

[99] "Journey of Faith: Ten Years of Pres House Ministry," Winter 2014, accessed October 30, 2016, http://preshouse.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/Pres-House-Voice-Winter-2014.pdf.

[100] Rex Dale. Matthews, *Timetables of History: For Students of Methodism* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2007), 159.

[101] John Edward Schwarz. *A Handbook of the Christian Faith* (Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House Publishers, 2004), 180.

[102] The Christian Association at the University of Pennsylvania (http://www.upennca.org), established in 1891, credits itself as the he nation's oldest active ecumenical campus ministry and thus predates all of the ministries in this discussion. However, there is little evidence that this ministry is accountable to multiple denominations. UPenn has its own Lutheran and Episcopal

Almost as long as campus ministry has existed as a distinctive endeavor, there have been efforts to organize and provide resources to campus ministry on a global perspective. Not all of these efforts have been equally successful. Those efforts that have been successful tend to complement campus ministry work, rather than sustain it amid the disruptions of both the church and academy. On the whole, five basic patterns can summarize the types of networking structures that have attempted to support campus ministry efforts: denominational networks, national campus ministry organizations, ecumenical and interfaith organizations, student conferences, and evangelical caucuses. I explore these in more detail below.

### *10.1. Denominational Structures*

Historically each major denomination has established a national campus ministry team, all of which have experienced reduction in staffing in recent decades. Currently, the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry for the United Methodist Church, responsible for over seven hundred campus ministries, has two staff members. Campus ministry within the Presbyterian Church (USA) falls under the four-staff Christian Formation division of the Presbyterian Mission Agency, responsible for church education, youth ministry, camp and conferencing, older adult ministry, and the "UKirk" network of collegiate ministries. The shrinking budgets that cause reduced staffing have also caused a great deal of turnover in denominational campus ministry offices. Schmalzbauer and Mahoney note that the "most serious erosion in denominational relations has occurred in the Southern Baptist Convention."[103] As

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campus ministries. Moreover, it appears that the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference of the United Methodist Church nor the Presbytery of Philadelphia fund this ministry.

[103] Schmalzbauer and Mahoney, *The Resilience of Religion in American Higher Education*. 88.

denominational structures continue to shrink, it should not be anticipated that these same structures can thoroughly support and sustain individual campus ministry programs.

### *10.2. National Organizations*

The most notable national organization to provide a network for campus ministry professionals is the National Campus Ministry Association (NCMA), started in 1964. Contributions gleaned from the Danforth Study include the importance of longevity in campus ministry, the emphasis of ecumenism, and the unintended creation of national associations for campus ministry. NCMA for example credits the Danforth Study with its founding in 1964. Their first convocation was held at Michigan State with four hundred and seventy-five participants. Today, the NCMA has a coordinating committee of eight members and has not missed an annual conference since its founding, but for the last ten to fifteen years has been knocking at death's door with about thirty active members.[104] Denominational campus ministers also network in their respective judicatories. Thus, NCMA became moribund when it became too cost prohibitive for campus ministers to attend both conferences.[105] The United Methodist Campus Ministers Association, for example, meets bi-annually. Likewise, every other year the Office of Young Adult and Campus Ministries of the Episcopal Church joins with the Lutheran Campus Ministry Network (LuMin) for a joint conference. These and other similar organizations almost exclusively offer two things: Annual ministry conferences and a web posting of available campus ministry jobs. Simply put, these national organizations have weakened, and at best have

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[104] See Charles Doak, "The National Campus Ministry Association, 1964-94: A Brief History." *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 32, no. 4 (1995): 500–505.

[105] The National Association of College and University Chaplains (NACUC) is much more prominent and successful.

found niche roles for their own continuity, but certainly cannot meet the overwhelming needs of campus ministries.

### *10.3. Ecumenical and Interfaith Organizations and Networks*

The national Ecumenical Campus Ministry Team (ECMT) is a collective of national staff members in collegiate ministry sponsored by the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Episcopal, Lutheran (ELCA), Presbyterian (USA), and United Methodist denominations. Considering these staffs have been strongly depleted, the ECMT is near extinction. STEP, the Student Ecumenical Partnership Network is now defunct; however, the World Student Christian Federation is a sizeable two-million-member network of socially conscious individuals who organize around peacebuilding, ecology, interfaith dialogue, and diversity.[106] Finally, the Interfaith Youth Core is an even more extensive and more prominent network that dedicates itself to mostly training interfaith leadership. When viable, ecumenical agencies do provide opportunities to network and collaborate. The problem is their viability. Those that remain viable, such as the World Student Christian Federation and Interfaith Youth Core, have distinct purposes that merely complement the work of some campus ministries. Like national agencies, ecumenical agencies cannot and do not desire to sustain individual campus ministries at the local level.

[106] "About Us". 2019. *WSCF*. http://www.wscf.ch/who-we-are/the-federation/about-us. Notably, the WSCF is a trans-national network.

### *10.4. Student Conferences*

A few student conferences should be noted. The Montreat College Conference is an example of one of the more successful gatherings of mainline college students, along with many campus ministers. Attendance at Montreat has consistently been at maximum capacity (1,000) for several years. However, this pales in comparison to Intervarsity's annual Urbana Student Missions Conference, which typically attracts sixteen thousand.[107] The largest attractor of college students, however, is Passion Conferences, an evangelical organization founded by Louie Giglio.[108] Student conferences, as well, do little to sustain campus ministry. There is a chance they may also compete with campus ministry. Many of these student conference participants do not participate in individual campus ministries and could be implicitly persuaded that attendance at a student conference is sufficient for their spiritual development and support.

### *10.5. Evangelical Caucuses*

The final attempt to organize resourcing for campus ministry comes from the evangelical perspective. Most notable is the plethora of bloggers who strive to give campus ministry advice. Most of the advice does not take into consideration the complexity of how contextual campus ministry is. Some examples are Exploring College Ministry, Convergence, and Campus Ministry

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[107] "About Urbana". 2019. *Urbana Student Missions Conference*. https://urbana.org/about-urbana.

[108] Passion 2019's attendance in Atlanta was projected at "nearly 40,000" and also had audiences in Dallas and Washington, D.C. Herb Longs, "Passion Drops Empowering "Step Into The Light" Ft. Sean Curran," *The Christian Beat,* February 16, 2019, accessed February 18, 2019, http://www.thechristianbeat.org/index.php/new-music/5715-passion-drops-empowering-step-into-the-light-ft-sean-curran.

Today sponsored by the Center for Mission Mobilization.[109] There are also a few examples of failed attempts of evangelicals connected with mainline denominations attempting to network campus ministries. Most notably is the Ascent Network sponsored by University Presbyterian in Seattle and College Union sponsored by the United Methodist-related Foundation for Evangelism. Both networks no longer exist.

These five patterns (denominational structures, national organizations, ecumenical and interfaith organizations and networks, student conferences, and evangelical caucuses) represent the various types of structures that over time have enhanced campus ministry. It is evident that some of these endeavors have been successful, while others have struggled. Even among these examples, not one structure has existed that provides a viable model that provides a robust and inclusive design that is aimed at sustaining campus ministry into the future.

### 11. The Need for a National Center

This study suggests that a national center for the advancement of collegiate ministry would prove essential in assisting campus ministries to flourish, despite the problems they face. Campus ministers who participated in the focus group expressed gratitude for the collective conversation about their work, and also a desire to continue this type of gathering and resourcing together. Additionally, the insight that these campus ministers had nothing to say about the changing nature of higher education are perhaps the strongest indication that a national center could respond to specific campus ministry needs, both known and unknown.

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[109] Exploring College Ministry: https://exploringcollegeministry.com; Convergence: https://convergenceus.org; Campus Ministry Today: https://campusministry.org

Dean and Foster write, "most of us do not know what the church across the street (much less around the world) is doing with youth, so we reinvent the wheel every day."[110] The same is applicable for campus ministry. A national center for campus ministry could finally prevent the church from unnecessary replication of resourcing.

Regardless of church decline, national denominations will want and need campus ministry offices, even in diminished capacities. It may be that denominational executives wear many hats, as in the case of the Presbyterian Church (USA) Mission Agency. A national campus ministry center, even so, will need denominational support and buy-in. Denominations have a role and place in campus ministry resourcing. Too often denominational offices try to offer more than they can handle typically leaving campus ministers feeling they were ill-equipped. A national campus ministry center can instead augment denominational work. Denominational offices can offer judicatory-specific polity training pertinent to campus ministry when necessary and help regional bodies evaluate the work of campus ministry. The denominational officers can be the conduit between students and the ordination process and continue to advocate for the inclusion and funding of campus ministries at national and regional decision-making conferences and gatherings. Conversely, there are several things that a national center for campus ministry can do differently from denominational officers.

[110] Kenda Creasy Dean and Ron Foster, *The Godbearing Life: The Art of Soul Tending for Youth Ministry* (Nashville: Upper Room Books, 1998). 45.

### 12. The Work of a National Center

*At what point do they say, "this is so important"?*[111]

The work of a national center for campus ministry has to emerge from a theological understanding of the nature of campus ministry as a vocation and a ministry of the church. Campus ministry is important, especially when its leaders thrive. Thus, a national center for campus ministry would cultivate thriving campus ministers. Understanding the nature and purpose of campus ministry is a complex enterprise. Notions of ordination, priesthood, clergy roles and offices, shepherding, counseling and care, sacramental theology, and ministry to the *laos* (the whole people of God) requires volumes of study, especially for those operating in an ecumenical context. Martin Luther reminds us that "we all have one baptism, one gospel, one faith, and are all alike Christians…we are all consecrated priests through baptism."[112] Campus pastors, however, are those ordained and set-apart for ecclesial leadership on campus for the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ, worship, administration of the sacraments, and

[111] Focus group respondent.

[112] Marin Luther, *Appeal to the German Nobility* (1520) in Alister E. McGrath, ed., *The Christian Theology Reader*, Fifth Edition (Malden, Massachusetts: Wiley Blackwell, 2017). 412.

prayerful care and equipping of the laity for ministry.[113] This is, in fact, a summary of Gordon Lathrop's fourfold ordo (word, bath, table, and prayer).[114]

Campus ministry also includes the administrative order of the church and its ministry that can be done by both clergy and laity. Campus pastors and campus ministers mentor students in their faith development, toward the ordained ministry and other vocations, the spiritual and catechetical formation of the laity, and the realization of discipleship as a way of life. Although campus ministry is a function of the church, it is not restricted to the church's people. Therefore, it also includes the embodiment of the teachings of Jesus in service and outreach to all, moral and ethical leadership, attention to the spiritual disciplines, peacemaking, ministry to the sick and dying, preferential treatment of the poor, marginalized, and oppressed, providing evidence of confession, forgiveness and reconciliation, and social and civic engagement that is prophetic in nature.[115]

A great deal of work has been done on increasing the effectiveness and competencies of religious leaders. It is essential within a campus ministry context that leaders value a posture of

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[113] Thus far, I have used the term "campus minister." For the sake of this study, the term "campus minister" can mean either a clergy or layperson who is responsible for campus ministry. When I use the term "campus pastor" I am referring to ordained clergy only. Campus ministry, in fact, is rich in lay ministry leadership. Bacik notes that, "more laypeople and increasing numbers of women are serving as campus ministers and exercising leadership in the faith community. In some situations, they perform, without benefit of ordained clergy, the pastoral functions of gathering, coordinating, educating, and comforting, as well as leading prayer and encouraging action on behalf of justice." He also writes that campus ministry is an incubator for peer, team, and bi-vocational ministry. James J. Bacik, *Pope Francis and Campus Ministry: A Dialogue* (New York: Paulist Press, 2018). 59.

[114] See Gordon W. Lathrop, *Holy People: A Liturgical Ecclesiology*, (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2006).

[115] See Deitrich Bonhoeffer. *Life Together* (Princeton, N.J.: Recording for the Blind & Dyslexic, 2005).

exploration over and against certitude.[116] Campus ministries do not always embrace and welcome persons of all ethnicities, gender identities, ages, sexual orientations, and physical capacities. However, to reflect mainline theology, campus ministry leaders, in order to thrive, ought to promote an inclusive community, strive for racial equity, social justice, prophetic service, and theological depth.

Ministry is crystallized in relationship-building, and what Bishop Rowan Williams calls a "'communicative theology,' in contrast to a 'celebratory theology,' and 'critical theology.'"[117] For Heifetz, "leadership is 'adaptive work' that 'consists of the learning required to address conflicts in the values people hold, or to diminish the gap between the values people stand for and the reality they face.'"[118] Campus ministry leadership is not only relational and adaptive work, but it is also answering a divine call, not unlike the call described by Martin Luther King, Jr. to "stand up for justice."[119] Parker Palmer writes that such an undertaking is a vocation that we simply "can't not do."[120]

Daniel Goleman, co-founder of the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (casel.org), formerly at the Yale Child Studies Center, claims that "emotional intelligence is the *sine qua non* of leadership." He identifies five core competencies of a thriving

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[116] See Patricia O'Connell Killen and John De Beer, *The Art of Theological Reflection* (New York: Crossroad, 1994).

[117] Michael Jenkins, "Religious Leadership" in Bonnie J. Miller-McLemore, ed., *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Practical Theology*, (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2014). 309.

[118] Ibid. 313.

[119] Raphael G. Warnock, *The Divided Mind of the Black Church: Theology, Piety, and Public Witness, Religion, Race, and Ethnicity* (New York: NYU Press, 2014). 39.

[120] Parker J. Palmer, *Let Your Life Speak: Listening for the Voice of Vocation* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2000). 25.

leader: Self-awareness, Self-regulation, Motivation, Empathy, and Social Skill.[121] Thriving campus ministries help to create thriving campus communities. The University of Virginia's Institute for Advanced Studies in Culture's Thriving Cities Project[122] has identified six endowments that make a thriving community: The Good (the realm of ethics); The True (the realm of learning); The Beautiful (the realm of design); The Just (the realm of social affairs); The Prosperous (the realm of economics); and The Sustainable (the realm of health). Campus ministers are leaders within and sometimes beyond their campus communities. Thus, thriving campus ministry, identified by the five core competencies, leads to a thriving communal practical theology, identified by the six endowments that will help campuses ultimately improve their community's livability and quality of life.

The work, then, of a national center of campus ministry that aims to help campus ministers thrive, can be divided into four key areas:

[121] Daniel Goleman, "What Makes a Leader" in *HBR's 10 Must Reads on Leadership*, HBR's 10 Must Reads (Boston, Mass: Harvard Business Review Press, 2011). 1.

[122] "Indicator Explorer • Thriving Cities". 2019. *Explore.Thrivingcities.Com*. http://explore.thrivingcities.com/.

### *12.1. Contribute to the Wellness of Campus Ministers*

*"I'm really weighed down by this right now." ... "It is incredibly isolating work."... "Maybe the way to plan for the future is to not plan for the future, but rather to think more deeply into your present context."*[123]

The current state of ministry leadership is first a ministry in isolation.[124] Lay and clergy ministers of all types, but especially those siloed on college campuses, face incredible challenges of detachment. Scott and Lovell found that some of the most significant stumbling blocks for rural pastors are loneliness, burnout, an imbalance between their personal lives and professional lives, and an absence of self-care, all contributed to by isolation.[125] This epidemic equally applies to campus ministers. Related is the overall loneliness of Americans in general, and particular the loneliest generation, Generation Z, as identified in recent studies. [126] Campus ministry needs, now more than ever, to connect people to their most profound needs to belong, which can often be an incredibly challenging task considering the campus minister is also in search of belonging.

Just as campus ministers play a critical role in the spiritual development of collegians, a national campus ministry center can spiritually help the campus ministers. For example, a national center can partner with spiritual direction experts at centers like the Living School at the

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[123] Focus group respondents.

[124] Chris Coble writes on this in the forward of George Mason, *Preparing the Pastors We Need: Reclaiming the Congregation's Role in Training Clergy* (Herndon, Va: Alban Institute, 2012).

[125] Greg Scott and Rachel Lovell. 2015. "The Rural Pastors Initiative: addressing isolation and burnout in rural ministry." *Pastoral Psychology* 64, no. 1: 71-97.

[126] "2018 Cigna Loneliness Index." www.multivu.com/players/English/8294451-cigna-us-loneliness-survey/docs/ IndexReport_1524069371598-173525450.pdf.

Center for Action and Contemplation or the Renovaré Institute for Christian Spiritual Formation. By offering spiritual getaways and pilgrimages, a national center will help campus ministers better handle the challenges that bombard them. These spiritual pilgrimages can include opportunities to learn new or strengthen known practices in contemplation, opportunities to detach from the daily grind, help to deepen relationships with colleagues, and cultivate experiences for campus ministers that generate sacred space.

Additionally, a national center can establish a mentoring network. In the focus group, the two campus ministers who had received professional training in their early years of ministry also received mentoring. After hearing this, one respondent stated, "it must be an amazing opportunity to be mentored by someone in campus ministry." The desire to be mentored is, in essence, a desire to be appreciated. Wicks states, "people offering mentorship are able to foster self-exploration and self-appreciation by the way they treat those who come to them for a listening ear and guidance."[127]

[127] Robert J. Wicks, *Sharing Wisdom: The Practical Art of Giving and Receiving Mentoring* (New York: Crossroad Pub, 2000). 21.

### *12.2. Funding, Consulting, and Advisement*

*"We can we can find some grants for innovative sexy things…but nobody wants to fund a daily grind. Denominations don't. People don't. We need someone who funds the day to day stuff."*[128]

There is an essential place for consulting and advising of campus ministers, boards, student leaders, university faculty and staff, and denominational leaders. A national center for campus ministry could, for example, follow the model of the Indiana Center for Congregations that provides no-cost consulting and low-cost educational events to parishes. Their work includes consulting and advising churches in appreciative inquiry, building maintenance, church planting, clergy health, finance and stewardship, music leadership, organizational behavior, social media, and strategic planning.

Another resource that would be valuable to campus ministry is philanthropic support. In fact, all the respondents surveyed and the focus group participants noted that assistance in fundraising is essential. The Lake Institute on Faith and Giving, for instance, at the Lilly Family School of Philanthropy at IUPUI helps individuals and organizations create and continue a culture of generosity and awaken charitable passions of potential donors. The Lake Institute offers seventeen courses just within their Fund Raising School. Nonprofit certification is another example of possible professional development. Emory University's Goizueta Business School, for example, offers a Nonprofit Management Concentration in their MBA program. Even a sampling of such expertise is out of reach to most campus ministers. A national campus ministry center and provide ongoing consultation and advisory services in each of these areas.

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[128] Focus group respondent.

Duin states that "most pastors are not leaders…not entrepreneurs…[and are] risk-adverse."[129] The Center for Creative Leadership found that leaders from across the world consistently faced challenges in managerial effectiveness, inspiring others, developing employees, leading teams, guiding change, and managing internal stakeholders.[130] The solutions recommended by CCL and other like-minded firms offer, however, are business oriented and extraordinarily costly. More so, the fees associated with the consulting itself is also prohibitive. A national center for campus ministry can provide such strategic assistance to campus ministries in leadership development at a cost that they would otherwise not be able to afford. Notably, a national center can provide onboarding and professional development to new campus ministry talent along with assistance in planting and restructuring existing campus ministries.

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[129] Julia Duin, *Quitting Church: Why the Faithful Are Fleeing and What to Do about It* (Grand Rapids, Mich: Baker Books, 2008). 128.

[130] "The Top 6 Leadership Challenges Around The World". 2019. *Center For Creative Leadership*. https://www.ccl.org/articles/leading-effectively-articles/top-6-leadership-challenges/.

### *12.3. Professional Resourcing*

*"Twelve percent of our students are going to consider committing suicide. Forty-four percent of my students, thirty-six percent of students nationwide, have a diagnosed mental health condition…one-in-five are going to be sexually assaulted…my gay students that are in the closet but in an abusive relationship can't report that because it would out them…They are drinking and drugging themselves to not have to feel and see what's going on."*[131]

Campus ministers do not have a collective resource for education and assistance. In essence, there is not one place (a single distinctive place that is widely known and accessible) that adequately provides professional resources to campus ministers. However, a national campus ministry center can offer proven theological resources, combined with the work of leading experts in higher education leadership. Higher Education is a distinct specialization in many colleges of education that prepare university administrators. While seminaries and church leaders are working through the struggles of the disruption of the church, higher education program faculty and leaders are likewise wading through the uncertainties of the future of the university. A national center for campus ministry would be a central place where the two thought processes could be engaged simultaneously.

One respondent noted "we have expanded the identity of college ministry to include late high school students who started college work while in high school and we've recognized those who have just graduated that are still trying to find their way…in part because what we're also seeing is that the ability 'to adult'…is being pushed out further." Thus, a national campus ministry center can develop leadership solutions that include a third academic dialogue partner,

[131] Focus group respondent.

that of generational studies experts (typically psychologists and sociologists) who study and track the latest trends in Millennials and Generation Z research and aid in non-traditional campus ministry approaches as noted by the respondent.

Campus ministry resources can be disseminated in three mediums: First, through in-person conferences. Second, a national center can provide online workshops, classes, or webinars. Third, a national center can provide curated online resources. The types of campus ministry resourcing are unlimited, albeit limited by availability and funding. However, the respondents in this study provided a few examples:

1. Exposure to student development theory.
2. Higher education theory.
3. Boundary training.
4. Fundraising and nonprofit training.
5. Primers on campus and church law.
6. Board management.
7. Crisis management, particularly on campus crisis.
8. Mental Health First Aid.
9. Active shooter training.
10. Trauma training.
11. Safe Zone training.

### *12.4. Sharing Best Practices*

*"What are we doing? Deepen students' connection to God and help foster a more mature faith. Help students equip students to connect with people different from them. Help students identify their gifts and share them…promote wellness in community."*[132]

Campus ministries equip young adults on college campuses to become leaders in and beyond the classroom. Some campus ministries do this by helping students discover God in worship, others through theological study, still others through serving others. Some campus ministry communities are "the church on campus," while others complement the work of another congregation. Campus ministry's incredible diversity defies a single standard or model, or a single set of best practices. Varied sets of best practices, instead, must be shared. Through cohorts, gatherings, conferences, and workshops, a national center can give campus ministers a space to share and learn one another's best practices for campus ministry. Currently, church leaders have little means to evaluate campus ministries effectively. Therefore, assessment criteria can also be shared.

In the late 1980s Allan Burry, the Assistant General Secretary of the Board of Higher Education and Ministry of the United Methodist Church, wanted to design a process of certification. He thought that by equipping seminaries, campus ministers could achieve at least some form of certification or accreditation. However, it is unclear how Burry wanted seminaries to do this. Early attempts tried to equalize all campus ministries. However, it has been proven that it would be exhausting and failure-prone to compare campus ministries as they have

[132] Focus group respondent.

different circumstances and contexts.[133] Best practices, however, can be compared. A national center can provide benchmarks on what makes for effective campus ministry practices and resource judicatories on how to best keep campus ministries accountable to the best practices.

In the voice of the respondents, a national center for campus ministry would continue the legacy the Lilly Endowment created in their CMTEV program which has become a legacy of generosity and abundance. In fact, the work of such a center, if done right, would mimic in eschatological hope what one respondent, with twenty-one years of campus ministry experience, explained: "I have never been a part of an organizational benefit like our relationship to the Lilly Endowment that is actively accomplishing a bringing together of diverse thought within Christian campus ministries that is empowering me to do my work better. I just can't even begin to think where else this is happening."

### 13. Limitations of this Study

This study focuses on participants in the Lilly Endowment's CMTEV program. By its very nature, this limits this study to the nation's most preeminent campus ministries. In essence, these ministries are flourishing. This study, therefore, does not speak to the features and characteristics of failed or struggling campus ministries.

### 14. Conclusion

In an exhaustive review of the literature, I have identified that campus ministry is key to a student's total development. I have also noted that because of the disruption of the church, and most interestingly the changing nature of higher education, campus ministries continue to

[133] Information about Burry was derived from a focused interview.

struggle. I am arguing that should mainline denominations fail or continue to be disrupted, campus ministry is too important to lose, and groups like the Lilly Endowment could potentially help sustain these ministries. I have discovered through a focus group, surveys, and focused interviews of some of the nation's most prominent campus ministers that even they are not prepared to face the challenges ahead, especially concerning the issues of how universities are rapidly changing.

This study has shown that campus ministers have few resources for professional development, find themselves isolated, face challenges of complexity, social justice, competition, and challenges related to their ecclesial nature. I have also noted that campus ministers have difficulty preparing for the future as they are burdened by the disruption of the church and demands of fundraising. I was also surprised to note that campus ministers did not address the complex and concerning issues of the changing nature of higher education. Moreover, I was also surprised at the level of isolation that campus ministers experience. As a result, I suggested that a national center for campus ministry be established and dedicated as a thinktank and resource to address these signifcant concerns.

Thus, it could be argued that my hope with this project is to convince the naysayers that campus ministry is an abundant community, worth the investment, and critical to the Kingdom of God. In essence, I am arguing for campus ministry's place in ecclesiological discourse. After all, where else in the world is the life of the academy and the life of the church aligned so well? Seminaries perhaps? However, seminaries come at a considerable cost and therefore are not easily accessible. Campus ministries, though, most often exhibit the three properties found in any competent community: They "focus on the gifts of its members, nurture associational life, and

offer hospitality to the stranger.[134] Perhaps only a national center for campus ministry would finally expose collegiate ministry as the abundant community and a project that matters. The "set of conditions," in the words of Kathleen Cahalan, is campus ministry's obscurity and total dependence on a failing ecclesial structure. The "resources" could be the Lilly Endowment or some other financial structure that see the vitality of campus ministry as critical to the nature of the church itself. The "activities" would be the life-transforming work done with college students across our nation, and the "impact" could be the revitalization of the campus, the church, and the world.[135]

A national center for campus ministry is not a conceptualization drawn out of crisis or panic of the church's struggle to survive. One respondent noted that "the future of the church and the future of campus ministry is not always the same question." In one scenario, the future of the church, there seems to be little imagination or ambition. During the focus group, a dynamic interchange between two campus ministers occurred. To the campus minister who earlier stated, "nobody in the church gives a shit about the people we serve because they're gay or poor or black," another campus minister said, "but I also heard in your voice that you believe in what you do." In this scenario, there seems to be a great deal of eschatological hope. The other responded back, "just having the ability to do something creates the moral necessity to do it and I have the information and the power and the privilege to be able to speak that truth in a group of people that I believe is making a difference in bringing us step by step closer to the kingdom of God." Jurgen Moltmann might know a thing or two about this moral necessity: "That is why

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[134] John McKnight and Peter Block, *The Abundant Community: Awakening the Power of Families and Neighborhoods.* (Oakland, CA: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2012). 67.

[135] See Kathleen Cahalan, *Projects that Matter: Successful Planning and Evaluation for Religious Organizations*. (Bethesda, MD: Alban, 2003). 1

faith, wherever it develops into hope, causes not rest but unrest, not patience but impatience…Peace with God means conflict with the world, for the goad of the promised future stabs inexorably into the flesh of every unfulfilled present."[136]

[136] Jurgen Moltmann, *Theology of Hope: On the Ground and the Implications of a Christian Eschatology*. (New York: Harper & Row, 1967). 21.

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