LEADERSHIP AND FAITH DEVELOPMENT IN CAMPUS MINISTRIES

by

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Abstract

Throughout my undergraduate and graduate work at Kansas State University, I have been fascinated with students' faith development. Sharon Parks' Theory of Faith Development for the College Years (Parks, 2000) outlines four stages of faith during the four to five years of college. As students enter into college, most start with a faith that is bound by authority and is dependent on others to function in a socially acceptable way. Healthy development continues until students enter a mature adult faith—one in which they have gained interdependence between their personal faith and the faith of others. They are open to those who are different and welcome diversity. With this in mind, how a campus ministry approaches a student may be vastly different depending on their stage of development.

My report focuses on comparing and contrasting Sharon Parks' Theory of Faith Development (Parks, 2000) and Susan Komives Stages of Leadership Identity Development (Komives, Owen, Longerbeam, Mainella & Osteen, 2005) in order to better understand the ability at which students can lead depending on their faith development. I concentrated on college age students who attend a non-denominational Christian campus ministry group. After completing my review of the similarities and differences of the two theories, I engaged in conversations with those involved in the ministries about each theory and how they are applicable to their faith leadership position within their organization.

Having been heavily involved in a campus ministry, both as a participant and an observer, I have gained great knowledge about the ministries and how students get involved. Adding my classroom experience learning about faith development and leadership development, I feel that researching and presenting information about leadership and faith development to

campus leaders would be beneficial. Educating campus leaders about student leadership development and faith development will better help equip them to reach students at the students' level.

Table of Contents

List of Figures

CHAPTER 1 - Introduction

Throughout my undergraduate and graduate work at Kansas State University, I have been fascinated with student development—especially a student's faith development. Sharon Parks' Theory of Faith Development for the College Years (Parks, 2000) outlines four stages of faith during the four to five years of college. As students enter into college, most start with a more conventional faith that is bound by authority and is dependent on others in order to function in a socially acceptable way. Throughout college, healthy development continues until students enter a mature adult faith—one in which they have gained interdependence between their personal faith and the faith of others. They are open to those different than themselves and welcome diversity. With this in mind, how a campus ministry approaches a student may be vastly different depending on their stage of development.

From researching student involvement, "the more energy that students direct into their academic lives, including becoming engaged with their studies and campus programs, the greater the likelihood of their having a positive college experience" (Davis & Murrell, 1993, p. 93). Clearly, encouraging students to lead in whatever they are involved in can be a positive experience, but how do you guide the students without overpowering their independence?

Having been heavily involved in a campus ministry and then seeing the other side of ministry by observing other students going through their campus ministry experience, I have gained great knowledge about the ministries and how students get involved. Adding my classroom experience learning about faith development and leadership development, I feel that researching and presenting information about leadership and faith development to campus leaders would benefit all involved. Educating these campus leaders about student leadership development and faith development will better help equip them to reach students at the students'

level. In order to understand both Parks' and Komives' theory, I will first define both faith and leadership as the theorists have defined those concepts.

Defining Faith and Leadership

Defining faith and leadership is important in order to understand the perspective taken in describing each and their influence on an individual's development. Parks defines faith as, "The activity of seeking and discovering meaning in the most comprehensive dimensions of our experience" (2000, p. 7). The process of meaning making and its relation to the individual allow for one's faith to develop. It's all about making "sense of the 'big picture,' trying to find an overall sense of meaning and purpose in one's life" (Love, 2002 p. 358). Faith is not spirituality. Parks (2000) describes spirituality as a personal search for meaning and purpose. Therefore, faith is different from spirituality in that spirituality is the actual search for meaning, while faith is the process of combining experiences in the world and one's own interpretation to define their faith. Faith is also different from beliefs. Faith is more dynamic and active because faith, "undergoes transformation across the whole life span," (Parks, p. 16) while a belief is more static because it is accepted as truth given that the person has no doubt about it.

Komives et al. define leadership as, "A relational process of people together attempting to accomplish change or make a difference to benefit the common good" (2005, p. 21). Therefore, leadership is developed in a group setting where all involved are working towards accomplishing the same goal. Unlike faith, leadership is easier to describe because there is more of a differentiation between words surrounding leadership than there are around those words surrounding faith.

CHAPTER 2 - Komives' Stages of Leadership Identity

Komives' Stages of Leadership Identity is based on five categories that continue to cycle through each stage of development each time gaining a higher level of complexity. Developing self, group influences, changing view of self with others, developmental influences, and a broadening view of leadership (Komives et al., 2005) are the categories that a student will go through during each stage. At the end of Chapter Two, there is a figure included that was created by Susan Komives to aid in the explanation of these stages of development. Before I explain each stage of development, I will give a brief explanation of each of these categories.
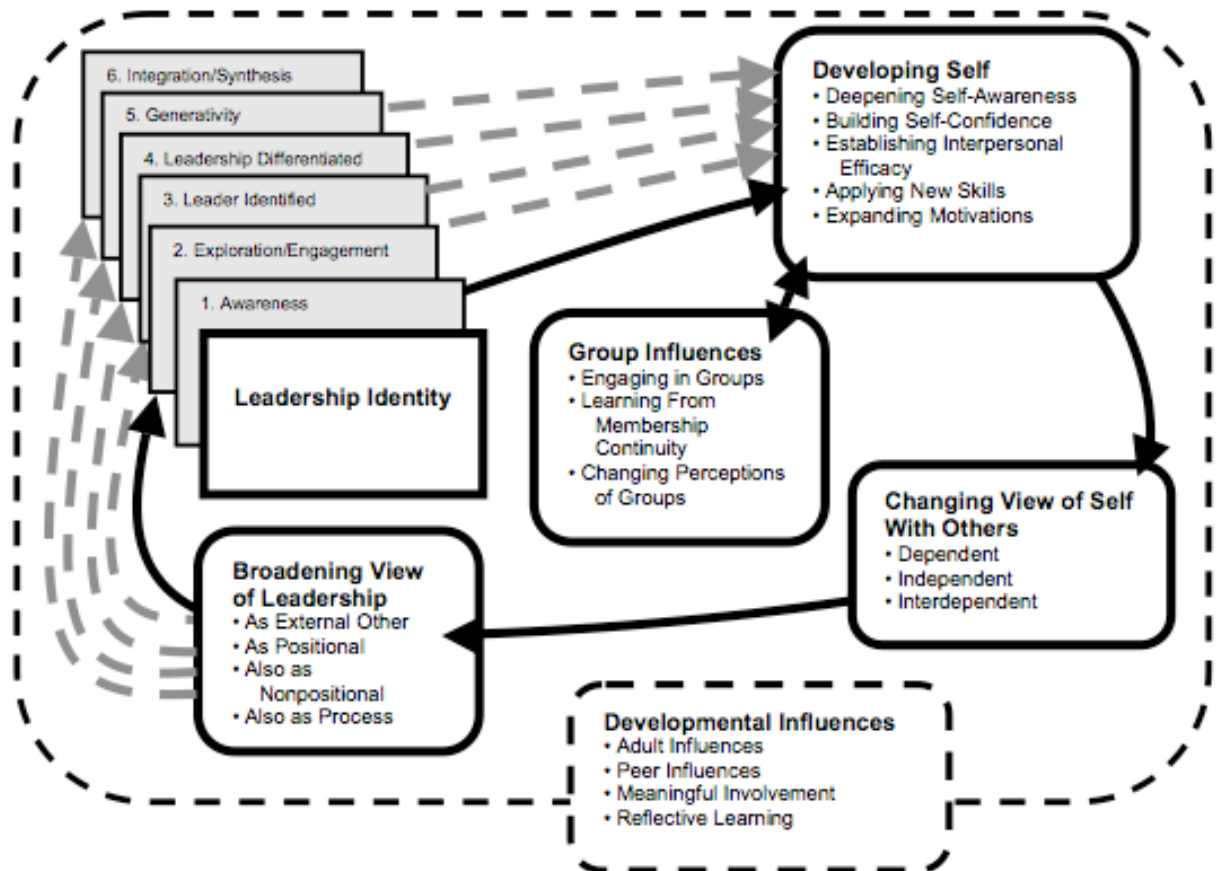
Figure 1 Developing a Leadership Identity: Illustrating the Cycle

Developmental Influences

Developmental influences that allow for the development of leadership include adult influences, peer influences, meaningful involvement and reflective learning (Komives et al., 2005). One should note that as an individual progresses through the different stages of development, how these items influence them changes depending on their sense of self and need for others' approval.

Adult Influences

Adults in the family unit are a crucial influence to a student's primary development as a leader. If a student's parent allows them to grow and learn, they are more likely to learn important lessons in how to communicate and relate to peers. (Komives et al., 2005) Early on in an individual's leadership development, adults are usually the first to see a student's potential and encourage him or her to pursue leadership opportunities. As a student moves into higher levels of development, his or her need for external affirmation lessens because he or she is able to be more self-directed. (Komives et al.) As this transition takes place, Komives states that, "Adults move from figures of authority to actively engaged mentors" (p. 597). With time and growth, adults soon move from mentors to friends. Students in higher levels of development gain the abilities to address concerns on their own and now value the adult as a meaning-maker and friend rather than a model or mentor.

Peer Influences

In the early stages of the model, individuals close in age to the student serve as friends or role models. Individuals say that the influence of an older peer was the reason they became interested and acquainted with a group in college (Komives et al., 2005). These peers served as support for students by taking them with them to meetings or activities and offering them

encouragement to get involved. As leadership identity develops, peer influences gain depth and meaning. "With more group experience, peers served as followers, teammates, and ultimately as collaborators and peer meaning-makers" (Komives et al., 2005, p. 597)

Meaningful Influences

As an individual starts to get involved, their primary reasoning is to make friends and to learn more about their values and interests. "Involvement experiences were the training ground where leadership identity evolved" (Komives et al., 2005, p. 598). As students progress through their development, their desire for involvement takes on new motivations—involvement is no longer about gaining friendships, but giving back and working towards a common goal.

Reflective Learning

Encouraging individuals to journal or to engage in meaningful conversations allows them to "uncover their passions, integrity, and commitment to continual self-assessment and learning" (Komives et al., 2005, p. 598). Students gradually move from conversations with family and close friends to processing experiences with adults and peers outside of their closest friendship circle. Students are able to take what they are learning and verbally discuss and use their newly learned skills. As students continue to learn and engage in leadership, they change the way they lead and think about how they can contribute to the betterment of the group.

Developing Self

As students continue through the stages of developing their leadership identity, their personal growth also continues to change. Self-awareness, building self-confidence, establishing interpersonal efficacy, applying new skills and expanding motivations are categories within the Developing Self section that make up this change (Komives et al., 2005).

Deepening Self-Awareness

In the early stages of one's leadership development, students usually experience a scattered and unorganized sense of self. They depend on adults and peers to make up whom they were, but with time, they are able to come up with their own personal identity (Komives et al., 2005). Sometimes this change comes about naturally, but other times students are placed in a role where they have to define themselves based on other's perception of them.

Building Self-Confidence

Early on, students rely on the support of adults and peers around them. Usually when they come to college, they go through periods of self-doubt and low esteem; however, knowing that they have the support of others helps them to flourish. If students feel supported, they are likely to gain self-confidence and a better idea of who they are and who they want to become. (Komives et al., 2005) Komives states that, "As their confidence built, they were willing to take risks to get more involved and were empowered to take on more active group roles" (p. 600). They were also more willing to stand up for their values without the affirmation of their peers (Komives et al., 2005). Their expanding sense of self-awareness allowed them to voice their opinions without the need of other's approval. With time, this identity as a leader slowly became part of their sense of self and they embraced this new identity.

Establishing Interpersonal Efficacy

As with any transition, the transition from high school to college allows for students to make new friends. This transition could prove difficult, but most students enjoy the ability to start fresh and get to know people different from themselves. With time, students realize the importance of understanding themselves before they get to know others. A student's ability to understand and discuss their values and beliefs allows them to learn from those of diverse

backgrounds. Another aspect of establishing interpersonal efficacy is the ability to delegate and trust. Early on in students' leadership development, they may feel uncomfortable with delegating tasks because they cannot trust other people, but they know that they can do it on their own. It takes time to build interdependence, but it soon becomes essential for a leader to delegate in order to be an effective leader (Komives et al., 2005).

Applying New Skills

As students enter into a group for the first time, they are careful to make sure that they had the skill set to excel in the group. As discussed in the last section, awareness of interdependence allowed them to understand the importance of developing team-building skills in order to accomplish a task. Skills that are learned over time include listening, teamwork, communication, and openness to diversity (Komives et al., 2005).

Expanding Motivations

Early on, students' motivation for involvement is self-centered—they get involved to make friends and be entertained. With time, students' motivations grow and deepen, as they understand how the group has allowed them to develop. As time passes, a student's commitment to the group and its members increases in strength. Soon, students gain a deep-rooted passion for the group and a strong desire to continue the legacy and to seek out appropriate changes (Komives et al., 2005).

Group Influences

By looking at the provided figure (page 6), one can see that the category of developing self directly interacts with group influences. The double arrow in the figure demonstrates that one is directly affected by the other. Within this category, I will discuss engaging in groups, learning from membership continuity, and changing perceptions of groups.

Engaging in Groups

Students begin their journey of college involvement with a simple desire to find a "sense of place." Within the first couple of days of college, students long to find a place that accepts them and their beliefs. The group where they find this sense of belonging is called an identity-based group. (Komives et al., 2005) Identity-based groups are places where students feel that others surround them with a shared common trait. Students often seek out an identity-based group in order to have a safe place where they know those within the group are like-minded and can identify with their struggles. With time and a continuing development of the individual as a leader, students continue to make their involvement conditional based on their developing convictions and narrowing interests. It is common for students to outgrow a group when their needs are not being met. Therefore, the experiences one has within the core group are critical to the student's continued involvement. If students experience a lack of trust or a bad experience, they are more likely to move out of the group.

Learning from Membership Continuity

With time, students slowly narrow down their group involvement in order to invest deeply into the handful of organizations they care about the most. Students quickly understand the responsibility they hold for the continued development of younger generations (Komives et al., 2005). With this understanding, their desire to serve as leaders or actively involved members increases. Though their leadership involvement may decrease, their support of the group continues as they see the importance for younger students to stay involved and invested.

Changing Perceptions of Groups

Students once viewed groups as "just collections of friends or people they knew" (Komives et al., 2005, p. 604). With time and a deeper understanding of the purpose for the

group, students were able to become aware of the core structure from which the group operated. What students once saw as an independent community begins to evolve into a link of communities that work towards one common goal, though the way in which they are involved is diverse and complex. The perception of the group no longer is limited to one small group of students but now stretches across campus to reach faculty, administrators and other student groups.

Changing View of Self with Others

Early on, as students learn and change their view of themselves based on the interaction they have with groups, they are dependent on the perceptions of others. In the primary stages, students depend on the affirmation and support of adults or more experienced peers for assurance. At this point, a crossroad is reached—students can continue to follow others and stay dependent, or they can seek out leadership opportunities and become more independent. Regardless of being an "independent leader or dependent follower" (Komives et al., 2005, p. 605), they share a leader-centric view of leadership—they view that only the person in the leadership position can lead. Finally, students reach an understanding of interdependence—both group members and leaders are valued in the group—anyone can lead.

Broadening View of Leadership

This final category is all about the construction one creates about leadership and the framework in which it functions. Early on, students viewed themselves separate from a leader—it was not yet their personal identity. A leader was viewed as someone older and wiser—someone who was in the position to lead. The mindset was very cut and dry—either you were the leader and led the group, or you were a follower. Followers did not lead, and leaders did not follow. With time, students begin to recognize that they are not only members but also valued

9

people in the group. As older peers and adults encourage them, students realize that they too have the ability to become a leader. A broader perspective of the group and its structure is gained as students recognize the importance of each individual and their diversity. This flows into seeing interdependence in a group—leadership is not only done by the leader, but also by group members. The leader becomes the facilitator as members begin to interact. This mindset allows for the student to "be a leader even when not being the leader" (Komives et al., 2005, p. 605). Once students understand the fluid motion of leadership, they no longer view leadership as a person, but as a process.

Leadership Identity

And finally, the core of the Leadership Identity model is the six stages of leadership identity (Komives et al., 2005). Through this six stage developmental cycle, students' view of self and others slowly changes as their perspective continues to change. At the stage of awareness, early recognition of a leader is formed, but the role of a leader is external to the individual. After time in that setting, the student reaches the second stage of exploration and engagement. Most first year students are involved in many organizations around campus and in their residence halls, so their ability to focus on a couple of groups is unlikely. Their intentions at this stage are to get involved, but where they want to lay down their roots has yet to be decided. Students are often very open to learning opportunities and looking to older peers for guidance and support.

The third stage is leader identified when the student is able to see the role of leaders and followers within the group. Students see a very clear divide between the two roles—this can be defined as leader-centric (Komives et al., 2005). As the role of leader is redefined based on students' broadening views of leadership, they enter the stage of leadership differentiated, stage

four of the model. Students see leadership all around them—not just from the leader. They begin to understand the role of leader as interdependent and believe that they too can lead even if they lead in a member role. Slowly, groups change from working under one leader to all contributing to the group, thus demonstrating the "we" mentality (Komives et al., 2005).

The fifth stage, generativity, is introduced when a student decides to seriously commit to a group and its larger purpose (Komives et al., 2005). Students will often enter into this stage in order to express a personal passion that is related to the beliefs and values they deem important. As they continue to lead in this capacity and work towards interdependence, they continue to take on leadership roles in order to influence others. As students in this stage look back at where they were as they entered college, they begin to see the need they had at that age to have a peer mentor, and now that they have matured as a leader, they recognize that they could serve in that role for younger generations just like someone did for them. It becomes a responsibility to the younger generations for older students to step into leadership roles so that they can have the same experiences.

Finally, the last stage in the leadership development model is integration and synthesis. Students in this stage are actively engaged with leadership—it has become part of their identity (Komives et al., 2005). They have gained the self-confidence and ability to work well with others, so leadership becomes something that is natural. They no longer feel the need to have the title in order to function as a leader in a group.

CHAPTER 3 - Sharon Parks' Theory of Faith Development for the College Years

Sharon Parks' Theory of Faith Development for the College Years allows us to break down the college years into four stages to better understand the different levels of faith using three categories from which to gauge the stage of development: knowing, dependence and community. First, I will define these three forms that we will use to discuss each stage of faith development.

The Forms of Knowing are as follows: Authority-bound, unqualified relativism, commitment in relativism and convictional commitment. (Parks, 2000) The way in which we relate to authority changes over time. During the college years, students move from an authority-bound cognition to a mature level of wisdom in the later college years or later on in young adulthood.

Secondly, the Forms of Dependence start with a student being dependent/counter-dependent, then moving towards a fragile inner-dependence, then a confident inner-dependence, and finally a stage of interdependence (Parks, 2000). Much like the forms of knowing, the interaction between self and world allows students to learn more about relationships and thus allows them to shift from complete dependence to interdependence with those around them (Parks, 2000). The feeling or affect that arises from students' encounters within the group shapes their dependence and transformation.

Finally, the Forms of Community can be defined as the form that nourishes the development of the forms of knowing and dependence. The forms of community allow for the other two forms to flourish and deepen as students continue to develop their community from a conventional community to one that is open to others (Parks, 2000). Now that I have defined

these different forms, I will explain how these three forms allow for development through the four stages of faith development.

Stage One: Adolescent or Conventional Faith

Form of Knowing: Authority-bound; Dualistic

In the early years of a student's faith development, knowledge comes from some authority "out there" that knows more than they. Parks explains that this authority can take the form of a person, group or a religious leader, but the student sees this authority as trustworthy and accurate because according to the student, everyone thinks alike (2000). Media, customs and symbols may also be seen as the authority to students at this stage because their view of knowledge is composed of influences around them. Although students may have deep-felt beliefs, when questioned about why they feel a certain way, they lean on sources external to them for their reasoning and not on their own thoughts.

This form of knowing is also dualistic because there is fluidity in their knowledge. However, what they view as true or untrue may differ from person to person, but an external authority binds the knowledge and thoughts they have on an issue. It is important to note that students may claim a statement as their own beliefs, but over time, one can see that others composed this statement and they have made it their own (Parks, 2000).

Students shift out of authority-bound knowing when they begin to discover inconsistencies in their thoughts and experiences. For example, a student may listen to two trusted spiritual leaders about a passage of scripture, but find that both leaders came to different conclusions on what the passage meant. When students discover this dissimilarity, they may choose to keep both separate to ensure that they do not conflict, or they may see both perspectives and begin to see them as opinions rather than as solid truth (Parks, 2000).

13

Form of Dependence: Dependent/Counter-Dependent

It is logical that as students are in the authority-bound stage of knowledge, they would also possess a dependence or counter-dependence on others. (Parks, 2000) At face value, students may be able to come across as having a more mature level of dependence, but usually when pressed, their lack of self-dependence will show that their thoughts on an issue are dependent on the opinions of others. The stage of conventional faith is fitting because a student's dependence is focused on conforming to socially accepted beliefs or styles of thinking. They would rather take on the faith of another than develop this faith for themselves. Because of this strong dependence on external authorities, students can easily be swept up into the customs and views of the group without ever reflecting on their own thoughts.

Until students have a deep-set desire to explore and test the truths that they hold, they will stay in the dependent stage of development. However, in the case that students explore the truths they hold, or are forced into exploration after a truth has unraveled, they will soon transition into a counter-dependent stage of dependence. Students enter this stage after a discovery of discord in a previously held belief. Students usually react to this dissonance by pushing away from the previously held beliefs, but they do not have clear direction other than getting away from that previously held truth. This transition prepares students to move into the next stage of dependence—fragile inner-dependence.

Form of Community: Conventional Community

Like I stated earlier, the conventional sense of faith requires a student to find their faith in others. Much like faith, a student's community is also grounded in the thoughts of the group and not their own. Conventional communities are comprised of like-minded students who share similar interests or beliefs. In short, they consist of, "those like us" (Parks, p. 92). Conformity to

the group is a necessity to function as part of the group at this stage. The cultural norms and interests of the group hold true in each individual within the group. (Parks, 2000) Much like the other two forms, the conventional community allows the authority to differentiate between *them* and *us* (Parks, 2000).

Stage Two: Young Adult Faith

Form of Knowing: Unqualified Relativism

As students begin to understand how their way of knowing has brought them to where they are today, they realize that knowledge is relative to the "contexts and relationships within which it is composed" (Parks, 2000, p. 57). Students are who they are today because of where they grew up, the parents they had, the lessons they learned, the experiences they encountered, etc. As students realize how relative their knowledge is, they learn to put their thoughts on the matter aside in an effort to find value in the situation from another's perspective.

Sometimes students face the unwanted reality of their assumptions when it fails them. For whatever reason, the relationship or career that they deemed trustworthy is lost and the students have to deal with the harsh reality of losing their assumed stability. Soon after students deal with a loss of trust in a situation or person, they learn to cope with this reality by holding tightly to their own truths and using their sincerity in that truth to get them through. This mindset is hard to maintain over time as students observe that even if a person is "sincere" about an issue, they still may be wrong. No matter how sincere you are about an issue, there is room for inaccuracy. So, as students realize the lack of sincerity depending on another student's sense of right and wrong, they move towards a commitment in relativism.

Form of Dependence: Fragile inner-dependence

As students move out of the stage of counter-dependence, they move towards inner-dependence which can be defined as a place in which, "other sources of authority may still hold credible power, but now one can also recognize and value the authority of one's own voice" (Parks, 2000, p. 77). As they begin to understand the harsh reality that a truth may fail them, they begin to learn how to find a healthy balance between listening to those around them while also listening within. For the first time, students begin to value their own inner-authority (Parks, 2000). They have had experiences and intuition that allows them to think independent of the outside world. Their "gut instinct" is worth listening to, as they are beginning to find that it is often right. Parks explains that this transition into the ability to differentiate between the inner and outer realities allows for a student to understand the "new bonds of relation between self and world, faith and life" (p. 78).

At first, this need to pay attention to one's inner-authority may seem greedy and self-centered, but students soon begin to understand that unless they honor their inner-self, they will not be able to effectively influence those around them. Finding the balance between the needs of this world and their own needs is hard to find, but once they find their equilibrium, they are ready to move towards a confident inner-dependence (Parks, 2000).

Form of Community: Mentoring Community

As students become more independent and self-aware, the need for community does not diminish. Parks states that, "for the young adult, community finds its most powerful form in a *mentoring community*" (Parks, 2000, p. 93). Despite increased independence, students still need a mentoring community in order to continue to be nurtured. Parks explains that,

> …It is the combination of the emerging developmental stance of the young adult with the
>
> challenge and encouragement of the mentor, grounded in the experience of a compatible
>
> social group, that ignites the transforming power of the young adult era. (p. 93)

This is critical for students to continue to understand their faith and the truths they hold. As a student moves through the developmental stages, this group will be continually important, as the student needs a network from which to flourish.

Near the end of this stage, young adults do not want to simply belong to a group, but instead young adults are attracted to groups that are compatible with the inner truths that they believe. The mentoring community

> …offers a network of belonging in which young adults feel recognized as who they really
>
> are, and as who they are becoming. It offers both challenge and support and thus offers
>
> good company for both the emerging strength and the distinctive vulnerability of the
>
> young adult. (Parks, p. 95)

Once students are able to find this support within a group, they are ready to transition into the next stage of community—one that is open to others.

Stage Three: Tested Adult Faith

Form of Knowing: Commitment in Relativism

As students move into this stage of faith, they understand that their choices do have consequences, but that those consequences are ones they have chosen and ones they will accept regardless. They understand that a different viewpoint may change their perspective, but from their current stance, this reality is what they will accept. However, if more viewpoints are attainable, their thoughts on the matter may change. For example, a student may function under a certain set of assumptions about their faith and deem those assumptions truth, but when given a

17

new perspective, their thoughts may change. Their morals and values are valid until proven wrong.

Form of Dependence: Confident Inner-Dependent

With the encouragement of others, students will slowly move from a fragile inner-dependence to a confident inner-dependence. When students are continually confirmed about their own abilities, they begin to find a greater sense of inner-dependence. During this transition, mentors move into more of a peer role as young adults gradually mature into fully adult (Parks, 2000). As students begin to see an accurate portrayal of the leader, the need for an authority figure in their life lessens and the students need more of a peer than a mentor.

Form of Community: Self-Selected Group

In this stage of community, young adults feel more confident to stand up for their own point of view because they feel confident in their inner-dependence and point of view. The students are less threatened by those who disagree with their viewpoint. They choose not to form a community with a mentor, but rather, with those who share the same values that they hold internally. Because the students have a close group of peers that are like-minded, they are more likely to respect diversity because it is no longer personally threatening. It may seem to an observer that a student's network is more diverse, but in all reality, those in their closest network, though they may be diverse, are likeminded about political, religious, and philosophical views (Parks, 2000).

Stage Four: Mature Adult Faith

Form of Knowing: Convictional Commitment

This final form of knowing may not surface until midlife. Midlife happens at different points in life depending on the individual, so an accurate definition of midlife would be when a person sees the future as no longer "infinitely revisable" (Parks, 2000, p. 86). Convictional commitment moves well beyond the authority-bound, dualistic knowing of the first stage and instead focuses on the fact that knowledge is relative depending on what is known. Therefore, this new level of mature wisdom is, as Parks describes it, "Not an escape from, but rather engagement with, complexity and mystery" (p. 60). Agreement is no longer necessary at this level. Instead, respect for differences of others is easy to obtain because the core of one's self is grounded.

Form of Dependence: Interdependence

Like the final form of knowing, the final form of interdependence is also unlikely to fully form until midlife. This final stage of dependence makes it "possible to depend upon others without fear of losing the power of the self" (Parks, 2000 p. 87). Parks continues to explain that at this new level, a person "now participates in a new freedom that can hold the paradoxes of weakness and strength, needing and giving, tenderness and assertiveness—without anxiety that in the recognition of the other the self will be diminished" (p. 87). At this stage, an individual understands the need for others and trusts this strong connection between self and others, self and the world and self and God. This tight bond between self and those exterior to the self allows for a person to feel a sense of delight and freedom at this newfound level, but it also brings to light deeper meaning that others may not be able to comprehend.

Form of Community: Open to Others

As individuals move out of a self-selected group because of an inability to keep from bumping into those different from them, they move on towards openness to others. Because they have a healthy balance of self and others, they are able to allow those "other" than them into their community. There is a desire to have others in their life that challenges their ideas because of a "longing in the soul for an embodied faithfulness to the interdependence that we are" (Parks, 2000, p. 102). Individuals are finally at a place in their lives where they are confident in their beliefs and willing to be challenged and surround themselves with those different than them.

CHAPTER 4 - Comparing and Contrasting Parks and Komives' Theories

After taking an in-depth look at each of the theories, I will now compare and contrast the theories from three specific aspects: starting points, ending points, and key concepts.

Starting Points

Because the stages cannot be compared one for one, I have decided to look at each theory's starting points. I will look at three starting points that both theories possess: leadership, dependence and community.

In both theories, the leader is external to self. This outside source of authority is the source of information and fact—he or she is trustworthy and completely accurate in what he or she says. This authority figure takes on many different shapes—parent, mentor, teacher, older peer, etc. Oftentimes, the individual sees the leader as the only one capable of leading the group and everyone else involved as only capable of following. In Komives' et al. Stages of Leadership Identity (2005), this authority sees the individuals' potential and encourages them to pursue leadership opportunities. However, in Parks' Theory of Faith Development for the College Years (2000), the individual is described as a vessel open to believing anything and everything the authority tells them. The information the authority tells the individual is taken as fact and not questioned as inaccurate. Parks clearly states that early on, students may give the impression that the faith they have is their own, but taking a closer looks shows that they do not have their own thoughts to back up their "personal belief."

Early on, dependence on others is prevalent in both theories. Students seek groups as their support system and depend on them for their identity. In Komives' et al. stages (2005), it is

imperative that an individual has a group of people who will support them, as they likely will face self-doubt and low self-esteem issues. Parks (2000) explains that a student would rather conform to the socially acceptable ways of the group than trust their own thoughts on their beliefs as their desire to belong trumps their own thoughts on issues. Therefore, it is easy for individuals to be swept up with the group's customs and views without realizing that they have never reflected on their own thoughts.

With this being said, it is clear in both Komives' et al. (2005) and Parks' (2000) theories that the individual is very dependent on others in order to formalize their identity. Parks takes it a step further by also incorporating a stage of dissonance in which individuals begin to question their opinions against the pre-conceived facts of others. As this dissonance becomes more prevalent, a student may react by pushing away from the previously held beliefs because of the discord. This could lead to students removing themselves from the group altogether. According to Komives et al., similar dismissal from a group could occur if individuals no longer felt they needed the group in order to grow. This decision may be based on differences in beliefs about the group's morals and values or simply because they found their community elsewhere.

And finally, both Parks (2000) and Komives' et al. (2005) theories discuss the importance of community within an individual's faith and leadership development. Early on, individuals believe that the community is controlled by a figure of authority—they can participate in the community, but it cannot be changed or controlled by them. Primarily, a community is a place where a person can find acceptance with others just like them. This community is safe and free of discord or inconsistencies. Komives et al. discuss the community as one that is based on identity. All members within the group share a common trait that brings them together. Parks shares that only the leader or authority within the group is allowed to

differentiate between "*them* and *us*" (Parks, p. 92). In both theories, the primary stage of community is based on how an individual's needs are taken care of by the group that holds very similar needs.

Ending Points

As individuals arrive at the final portion of their development within Parks (2000) and Komives' et al. (2005) theories, they have gained a more confident core that has allowed them to appreciate and desire diversity. If we revisit the points we discussed in the "Starting Points" section, we will see that individuals have made great progress in their definition of a leader, need for dependence, and understanding of a community.

Leadership was once defined as "external to self," but now, an individual understands that anyone can lead—it is all around him or her. In Komives' et al. theory (2005), a student's new level of self-confidence helps them to be assured that they have the ability to lead others— leadership has now become natural and is done regardless of a title. Much like Komives, Parks (2000) also defines leadership as not being limited to one person. Instead, anyone can lead or be led. At this level of development, diversity in thoughts and beliefs is welcome because individuals have the ability to challenge their own beliefs given their strong understanding of themselves. With this being said, a person can genuinely respect another's differing beliefs without feeling that they need to surround themselves with only those who are like-minded.

With time and growth, students reach a healthy level of interdependence where they have gained a strong sense of self and in turn can depend on others in their weaknesses. Before, all of their dependence was other-centered, but now they have found their sense of self and have gained confidence. Komives et al. (2005) explain that an individual will reach this level of interdependence when they first gain an understanding of self before they get to know others.

23

With this base, an individual is able to appropriately interact with those of diverse beliefs or thoughts. Before, the authority was external to self, but now they understand that although there may be differences between them and others, but it does not mean they cannot hold onto their own truths. Along with this new mindset, a student also gains a trust for others in the group and works to delegate tasks when needed. People no longer feel that only they are capable of completing a task, but they trust the other members of a group to share in this responsibility.

In the final stage of dependence in Parks' theory, an individual has gained the ability "to depend upon others without fear of losing the power of self" (Parks, 2000, p. 87). Much like Komives' et al. (2005) theory, they have a healthy balance of interdependence with those around them. They understand the need for others and that they alone cannot obtain perfection but that they need to lean on others for support in their weaknesses. Parks believes that at this final stage, there is a tight bond between self and others, self and the world, and self and God (Parks, 2000).

Parks (2000) and Komives et al. (2005) both hold the belief that the community is no longer a social network, but a way to learn and develop. As people move through the stages, they have come to value the thoughts of others without forgetting their own beliefs and values. Diversity in the community becomes a necessity though it used to be discouraged due to a lacking sense of self. Komives writes that students begin to understand the greater meaning of the group and understand its importance for generations to come. What was once a social network has now evolved into a community whose core structure is grounded in sharing with others. The need for a group that is completely the same has passed as an individual at this level is comfortable with diversity because they have self-confidence in their own beliefs.

The word "confidence" is salient in Parks' theory too. (2000) In lower stages, it was important to the individual to have a community of like-minded individuals, but now the desire

has shifted towards individuals who have diversity in beliefs and values. Parks explains that the "others" that once made a student uncomfortable are now welcomed into their community because they enjoy the challenges they bring of holding different beliefs. This level of confidence amongst diversity is reached because students have a strong sense of self and a core understanding of their personal beliefs.

Key Concepts

The important message from Komives' et al. theory is that everyone has the ability to become a leader, but not everyone is successful as a leader (2005). Because the figure is cyclical in nature, the five categories that influence the student throughout their six stages of leadership identity change in how they impact the students, but the categories stay the same.

In Parks' faith development theory (2000), however, the importance is in the community in which the students are learning and growing in their faith. The community allows for the development of the forms of Knowing and Dependence. Within the community, their needs change from having a figure of authority, to the need for a mentor, towards a peer group and finally towards finding a community that is diverse in beliefs in order to challenge their strong faith.

In both theories, it is important to note that how one progresses through each theory differs depending on the individual. For one person, they progress through their development quickly, while another person may spend a lot of time in one stage before they reach a transition into the second stage. Understanding that students are different in their development will help a leader to guide them more effectively.

CHAPTER 5 - Conversations

In order to gain insight from the perspective of students and leaders who are actively involved in a campus ministry, I contacted five individuals from the Kansas State University chapters of Christian Challenge and The Navigators to discuss both theories with them. Of the five people with whom I spoke, two were on staff as campus ministry leaders, two were current student ministry leaders, and one was a student ministry leader alumnus. In my conversations, I explained each theory to them with a handout. I answered any questions they had about the theories and clarified any points that were confusing to them. In order to gain similar results, I posed five questions that will serve as different sub-sections in order to combine the answers from all five individuals.

Can you give me an example of the Faith Development Theory in your work?

All of those interviewed were able to correctly take the Parks' Theory of Faith Development (2000) and apply it to their individual experiences. Those involved in The Navigators talked in depth about how a particular event within the ministry really shaped their faith development. I believe it is important to note this event in order to understand these student's perspectives, so I will give a brief overview.

The Navigators functioned under the name The Navigators, but was run quite differently than other Navigator chapters at other major universities. In the Fall 2008 semester, the old Navigators chapter announced that they were changing their name to Student Mobilization. At this point, The Navigators was no longer a student group at Kansas State University, but a small group of students wanted it to continue under its original mission. With the help of The Navigators' leadership at other universities, they restarted The Navigators at Kansas State

University. The students and staff I interviewed are now a part of the "New Navs" and speak openly about how their experience in "The Split" has influenced their faith development.

I noticed some differences in how this question was answered depending on the person's affiliation with Challenge or The Navigators. For those who were involved with The Navigators, they spoke at length about how they had excelled to stage three or four of the stages of development before the split, but as they encountered pain and suffering from having their connections between the truths they held and the person or organization who gave them those truths stripped away, they reversed their progress back to stage one. All interviewed from The Navigators spoke at length about how they had learned that they had placed their faith in the leaders and the organization and not in God. Therefore, when the ministry failed them, those truths became irrelevant and they had to start back in stage one to relearn their faith. In Christian Challenge, however, this crisis was not prevalent, nor did either person interviewed talk about backtracking in their faith development. Both expressed that throughout their time in Christian Challenge they felt supported and felt comfortable working through, questioning, and doubting their faith. As Bible study leaders, they observed many times that they had helped individuals with similar questions or concerns and felt that they had created an atmosphere that allowed for a student's faith development to flourish.

Can you give me an example of the Leadership Development Theory in your work?

A common theme throughout all of the conversations was a desire to move into a leadership position in the future. All of those with whom I spoke either continued within their campus ministry as a strong leader or became a passive follower who felt unimportant to the group. This desire to become a leader came from having an influential peer or mentor in their life

as a freshmen or sophomore. By their junior year, all had taken on a leadership role or had become frustrated with not being a part of the elitist clan. Christian Challenge and The Navigators had different ways of equipping students for leadership roles.

In Christian Challenge, students apply to be Life Group leaders. A Life Group leader is a Bible study leader who is paired with another leader that teaches a small group of students over the course of a year. They are required to meet with each of their members throughout the year and to also meet with their mentor, usually a Christian Challenge staff member, at least two times per month. During my interview with one campus staff member, she explained to me that hardly any students get turned away from being a Life Group leader unless they have serious issues that would harm them and the group more than help. Also, being paired with another Bible study leader allowed for accountability within the group.

On the other hand, Navigators requires a student to be a part of a leadership team called Timothy Team before they allow students to sign up for leadership roles. Once students have indicated how they would like to lead, the leaders place students in leadership roles depending on the needs of the group. In both Christian Challenge and The Navigators, all students continue to be actively involved in a leadership team that meets on a consistent basis throughout the school year.

During each conversation, I noticed that the Komives' et al. Leadership Development Theory (2005) held true—all interviewed got involved in a campus ministry because they were looking for a place to belong, but with time, their motives and desires changed towards a desire to lead and mentor others as they had once been led and mentored. Some expressed a crucial experience when they recognized that all could lead; others felt there was no moment when this was discovered, but rather, it happened naturally and without notice. Those within The

Navigators expressed a strong desire to be the leader that they saw in their Bible study leader when they were freshmen. With time, they began to realize that their view of their leader was skewed because the view of perfection they had experienced was not actually reality. Thus, the desire for their members to see them as a sinful human and not as the perfect Christian became necessary in order for them to not idolize their leader, but instead, to look to God for the image of perfection.

Have you observed interplay between the two theories?

As the conversations moved towards looking at both theories in relation to a campus ministry, an interesting comparison was made. All interviewed began to realize that oftentimes if a student was given a prominent leadership position within a group during their primary stage of Parks' Theory of Faith Development for the College Years, Adolescent or Conventional Faith, they were more likely to skip over the next stage, Young Adult Faith (Parks, 2000). Their view of their leadership position subconsciously kept them from questioning and developing a personal faith independent of the group. Instead, because students felt the need to be all-knowing and confident in their Christian beliefs, they saw the role as having priority over questioning their faith. Therefore, it was easy to move towards the Tested Adult Faith stage (Parks, 2000). As a leader, they felt that it was their duty to help others grow in their faith, but they lost sight of how they too needed to continue to grow in their faith. However, allowing a leader to have a safe place to work through these doubts, whether with a mentor or within their own Bible study, allowed them to progress through stage two. This progression is often slightly secretive because they do not want it to cloud the younger student's leadership perspective of them.

Another interplay that was noted was the gained confidence in the later stages of each theory that encouraged students to serve as leaders for the younger generation. By stage three of

Parks' theory, Tested Adult Faith (2000) and by stage five of Komives' et al. theory (2005), Generativity, students began to see the campus ministry from a different perspective—they are no longer looking towards the group because they feel accepted, but now they are looking at the group and how *they* can continue its legacy.

After gaining a deeper understanding of these two theories, do you have other questions?

What would greatly benefit campus ministry leaders would be to learn where to focus their attention in order to help students develop to their greatest potential. Do they focus on helping freshmen solidify their faith, or do they mentor older students who will in turn pour into freshmen students through Bible studies and small group interactions? Is it important for the campus ministry staff to increase or decrease their mentoring relationship as students grow and develop? It would be interesting to look at the influences mentoring relationships have at different stages of faith and leadership development.

Commitment to the ministry was also brought up—do I, as a campus minister, ask students in the early stages of development to commit to our ministry, or do I allow them to make the decision? Are they capable of knowing what is best for them in these primary stages of development, or do I need to decide for them? When is a student capable of making a decision independent of others? A lot of these questions stemmed from a concern about asking students to commit prematurely to an organization for the good of the group and not the good of the student. More research about decision-making development throughout college would be beneficial in learning how to encourage and to challenge students throughout their faith and leadership development.

Trends within a campus ministry would also be interesting to research further—do students or staff set the bar of what is acceptable or unacceptable within a campus ministry? How can these fads be changed—does it mean changing the student staff's perspective or the ministry staff's perspective?

Has your perspective on how you guide campus ministry student leaders changed with this added insight?

At the conclusion of my conversations, all of the participants expressed a feeling of confirmation of thoughts they already had about a student's faith and leadership development. Be mindful that the following comments are the opinions of the participants and are not my own opinions. Those interviewed said that having the theories in a visual form helped them to make their thoughts tangible and helped them to put together the ideas they had in their mind about a student's development.

As faith leaders in a ministry, it is important to remember to always redirect the attention and praise back to God. C.M. Call (2010) stated that it becomes easy for younger students to see leaders as celebrities, but it is a leader's duty to help students understand that they too sin and have shortcomings. Students in the primary developmental stages will often put a leader on a pedestal and will be disappointed because that leader failed them. If a leader can remember this mentality of younger students, they will be able to help students find convictions in scripture and in God.

From a student leader perspective, it is important to never just submit to the rules because if it is not a personal conviction, it is null. Being caught up in acceptance can result in disaster. Oftentimes, student leaders feel such a great need to be accepted that they are willing to avoid their own doubts and questions in order to be accepted. It can become extremely disconcerting

when a student goes as far as to create a pseudo confident inner-dependence because they would rather be accepted in their "strong beliefs" than stick out because of their questions and doubts about the group. This is a crucial piece in development within a campus ministry—the ability to feel comfortable with questioning and doubting one's faith. If a student has not been able to solidify their foundation in Christ, becoming a leader can make it even harder to develop these roots in Christ.

After talking with alumni of Christian Challenge and The Navigators, both agreed that if a student developed strong roots in their relationship with a mentor or their campus ministry and not in Christ, their transition from college to the working world was difficult because they had to reground themselves with those old connections now void. With this in mind, it is important for a leader to not let students rely on them for their faith, but to continue to point them back towards God or scripture for guidance. By allowing students the freedom to fall in love with Christ first, they are not only setting them up for success in college, but also for the rest of their lives.

With the knowledge that student leadership positions can quickly become performance driven, being mindful of this and preparing to combat it can be beneficial. Knowing that when students get caught up in performing in order to be accepted, they can easily develop a fake confident inner-dependence as a result. Encouraging students to face their doubts and not suppress them will help them to grow even as a leader. One of the participants said it best when he said that, "It would look selfless to die for myself and to not be who I am for the sake of the group, but in the end, it is selfishness to not be you" (Personal Interview, 2010).

Continuing to be aware of the leadership style of a campus ministry and its impact on students is crucial for their development. Most students do not come to college with a mature faith that allows them to understand the need to love Christ first. It is the duty of campus

ministry leaders to instill this knowledge and desire within these students. Because students are developmentally immature in the categories of faith and leadership, it is easy to take advantage of their lack of knowledge, but in the end, what good does it do them? It is smart from the business perspective, but campus ministries should always operate from the perspective of what is best for the students and rely on God to take care of the rest.

CHAPTER 6 - Synthesis

Parks (2000) and Komives (2005) both state that in the early stages of development, the authority in their life is external to them. As students make the transition away from their parents and embark on their first year of college, they face a new sense of freedom and independence. Some freshmen have never experienced this level of freedom before, and the magnitude of it can be intimidating to them—to the point that they seek out others who will serve in the parent role so they will not have to be their own authority. As this transition takes place, students begin to separate their parent's beliefs and faith from their own. A student may have gone to church throughout their childhood because their parents went. Now, their parents are not there to tell them to go. Therefore, sometimes for the first time in their lives, students are faced with making this decision on their own. This amount of freedom can be overwhelming, and usually students seek out a group that will act as their parent in the realm of faith and encourage them to go.

During my conversations, I was reaffirmed of my understanding from the theories that students seek out an older mentor or leader to tell them right from wrong in their ministry group. For example, freshmen that attend a campus ministry group often view whatever their Bible study leader tells them as truth. They do not compare it to their previously held beliefs, but instead, accept everything they say as fact and not opinion. Students often engage in a campus ministry group because they want to feel a part of something. This is a time when they are taking it all in and are not completely devoted to just one group—instead, they are involved in multiple groups in order to find one group that fits their needs.

When students enter college for the first time, they are often extremely dependent on the thoughts and opinions of those external to themselves and choose to find their place in a group that holds similar beliefs. Campus ministry leaders are often put on a pedestal, and students will

do anything and everything in order to please these leaders because who they are as an individual is wrapped up in how these leaders see them. Therefore, students work hard to please these leaders by accepting the ministry's beliefs as complete truth. Early on, students do not value their own beliefs or thoughts on faith because it is easier to trust a figure of authority—students may claim these truths as their own, but when pressed to explain, they often cannot support their "beliefs."

As students spend more time within a campus ministry, they become more active in their group role. However, they still hold a leader-centric view and continue to look up to the group's leader as a figure of authority and the only one able to lead the group. With time, they begin to reveal inconsistencies between what different spiritual leaders tell them. At first, this failure in the stability and consistency of their beliefs is unnerving, but they find that being sincere in their "beliefs" is all they need in order to get through. At the end of this phase, which usually ends near the end of their freshman year or beginning of their sophomore year, they begin to discover their own voice and find a balance of self and others. At this point, they may separate from the campus ministry that causes discord or find a group of likeminded people within the ministry. Finding this group provides the needed stability for them to continue in their world of previously conceived stable realities.

As a student progresses into a more mature stage of development, usually during their sophomore and junior year, a leader is no longer characterized just by one person, but they begin to see leadership happening all around them in different forms. One leader no longer leads the group, but it becomes a "we" mentality where everyone in the group is equally influential on the group as a whole. As this mentality takes shape, a student begins to see that the choices they make in their beliefs about God affect them both positively and negatively. They may choose to

come to different conclusions on issues of faith than other members of their Bible study or small group, but they have to be okay with those differing viewpoints because they are becoming confident in their own inner-dependence. In this stage, diversity in beliefs about God are not seen as threatening because students have felt confirmed in their own thoughts about God. They welcome differing opinions on faith but still seek to have a group of like-minded students in their closest network.

Finally, the student begins to gain a strong sense of their identity both as an individual and in a group. Their faith and leadership development has grown immensely since they started college. No longer do they have to rely on the opinions of others to construct or maintain their faith, but they have found a healthy balance of interdependence. Leadership is no longer constrained to one person, but everyone in the Bible study or small group has a leadership role—there may still be a "leader," but this person is more of a facilitator than a catalyst. Now, their focus is on the continuation of the ministry's mission. They no longer need a peer mentor, but now they are serving as a mentor to younger students. They find value in the developmental journey they have taken throughout college and now they hope to facilitate that pipeline for generations to come. Students work in this role differently—some are still actively leading as Bible study leaders and others take a back seat leadership role as participating in the ministry, but not in a formal leadership role.

Because they have gained a strong core identity, they also choose to seek out situations and activities that embrace diversity and attract those vastly different in beliefs and values because they are confident in their own sense of identity. A student is no longer absorbed with figuring out what is right or wrong but has become comfortable with the unknown of their faith in God and the understanding that their sense of truth may vary from others' sense of truth.

Those that are "other" are now openly welcomed in their life because they have a deep acceptance of their unique set of beliefs and welcome others who challenge this set of values. At this stage, students are comfortable with disagreeing with a group or individual because they no longer need the complete acceptance of others in order to define their faith.

If everything happened exactly how it should, development would progress smoothly as I synthesized above. However, after talking with campus ministry leaders and members and also reflecting on my own journey, I do know that this process of developing one's faith and leadership is not always a smooth journey. During my conversations, we spent a lot of time talking about the Tested Adult Faith Stage of Parks' theory (2000) and the possibility that if a student was given a leadership position when they were in Stage One of their faith development, they seemed to have a harder time progressing through each stage of Parks' theory. Students involved in The Navigators and in Christian Challenge expressed this as a concern when they had been shown both models. A staff member for Christian Challenge described it as the "Stage Two disappearing act" (Personal Interview, 2010). In Challenge, they work hard to combat skipping over this time of questioning and doubting by spending one-on-one time with each student leader at least twice a month. As I conversed with students who were a part of The Navigators before the split, they saw this as what you did in order to continue to be accepted—they did not doubt or question anything about your faith because they were never given the chance. They feared questioning because they had a high and lofty leadership position and did not want to doubt faith because the leadership position could be at stake.

In campus ministry, it is important to be cognizant of a student's development in both areas in order to help development to continue. From a business perspective, it makes sense to attract people when they possess a very authority-bound view of the group because they will

willingly commit. However, from the "people first" perspective, it is important to allow them to progress through questioning and doubting before asking them to step into a leadership position—even if it means they will not be ready to lead until later than desired.

Leaders need to be aware of students' development and continually work to make sure the students are in a place where they feel comfortable progressing through the stages of faith and leadership development. Because the progression through these stages is crucial for one to continue to lead in a faith-based setting, providing a strong and confident core in college is pertinent in order to succeed after graduation. Students may not openly admit to doubting their faith, but a wise and educated staff member will be able to comfortably address these concerns with the students and remind them that this stage of the unknown is perfectly acceptable and the ministry supports them and encourages their questions. Having a ministry that is open and does not put on an attractive face allows students to really open up and feel comfortable sharing about their struggles. It is concerning when a student does not feel this level of comfort in a group that claims to accept them no matter what. When a student is in this situation, I worry that they will take on a faux Tested Adult Faith (2000) because of their leadership position and never really question or doubt their faith until after college when that solid support system is harder to obtain.

CHAPTER 7 - Conclusion

In conclusion, the interaction of both Sharon Parks' Theory of Faith Development (2000) for the College Years and Susan Komives' et al. Stages of Leadership Identity (2005) paired well when looked at from the perspective of a campus ministry organization. Although one cannot compare each theory directly to its counterpart, the ways in which each developmental theory progresses is similar. After conversing with students and staff within Christian Challenge and The Navigators, it was clear that when one looks at both leadership and faith development, it is easy to understand that it is necessary to have a strong core faith before asking a student to step into a highly sought after leadership position. By obtaining a position in which one leads others before going through Stage Two of Parks' theory, Young Adult Faith, (Parks, 2000) the student may have a harder time effectively leading when they still are in their primary stages of development themselves.

After having completed this in-depth look at both theories, I would be interested in doing more research about how a campus ministry leader can observe a student and know their potential as a faith leader. Now that they have the basic ideas of the stages of development, what can they do to make sure a student is ready to lead others? How can they help to encourage students to progress through Stage Two of Parks' theory? What leadership roles are appropriate for students before the questioning stage and what are appropriate once they have reached a level of tested commitment? Giving the campus ministry staff some tangible cornerstones in a student's development may help them to not just see a potential leader as a great person, but rather be able to confidently identify the qualities within the student that shows they have the leadership and faith skill set that makes them ready to lead.

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