Chapter 31

“The Enemy in the Midst”: Gay-Identified Men in Christian College Spaces

Kamden K. Strunk, Lucy E. Bailey, and William C. Takewell

NOTICE: This is the authors’ version of a work that was accepted for publication in *Critical studies of Southern place: A reader*. Changes resulting from the publication process, such as peer review, editing, corrections, structural formatting, and other quality control mechanisms may not be reflected in this document. Changes may not have been made to this work since it was submitted for publication. This article may not exactly replicate the final published version. A definitive version was subsequently published in W. M. Reynolds (Ed.), *Critical studies of Southern place: A reader* (ISBN 978-1-4539-1340-6).

Christian colleges are institutions of higher education that are unique in their symbolic power and educational mission. Supporters of Christian colleges describe the important role such spaces play in advancing and protecting the faith and creating a new generation of proselytizing believers (Adrian, 2003), while church officials tout the protective value of Christian colleges against the secularizing influence of higher education and for retaining young people in their denominations (Kingsriter, 2007). Central to maintaining an evangelical mission is the need to carefully prescribe and enforce standards of behavior for both students and staff. For students, such standards can include signing a “lifestyle covenant,” attending religious services, following guidelines regarding interactions with the opposite sex (e.g., “visitation hours”), alcohol restrictions, learning the theology of the host denomination, and various other standards

particular to a given campus or denomination. Among these are norms and standards concerning sexual morality.

Many conservative Christian colleges have policies openly barring LGBT students from enrolling or graduating (Wolff & Himes, 2010), though efforts have been underway in recent years to appear more accommodating. For example, the Council for Christian Colleges and Universities (Jones, 2001), a group including approximately 174 Christian colleges, 62 of which are located in the Southern U.S. (48% of all U.S. Christian colleges), released recommendations for their member institutions on how to handle the “highly divisive issue of homosexuality” (p. 1). Rather than excluding gays entirely, the recommendations suggest that colleges condemn “a type of sexual behavior” but not “a sexual orientation per se,” calling this stance “commendable indeed” (p. 3). Although this policy shift differentiating sexual orientation as an internal state from sexual sin as an action has shaped practices within many Christian college spaces, as well as the understanding of human sexuality among students at those colleges, recent research (Barton, 2010) suggests that LGBT students attending Christian schools experience anxiety, fear, depression, and suicidal thoughts. At the same time, some survey research suggests that heterosexism and homophobic attitudes persist at Christian colleges, though attitudes about discrimination have become less negative than in the past (Wolff, Himes, Kwon, & Bollinger, 2012).

The conservative Christian community is itself seemingly split on the issue of LGBT inclusion in the church, with some calls for the church to “come out of the closet” in opposition to LGBT identities (Ribas, 2004) matched with other calls to strategize how to affirm individuals (loving the sinner) and their identity development while still working within church teachings (hating the sin) (Estanek, 1998; Yoakam, 2006). These unresolved debates shape church

teachings as well as the practices, policies, and climates of Christian colleges. To differing degrees, Christian colleges are campus places that take on the roles of champions of the faith, defenders of orthodoxy, creators of proselytizers, nurturers of development, and protectors of young minds. These protective and prescriptive roles have historically accrued special significance in the South, where concerned members of the public have called on religious groups and colleges to uphold existing traditions and social structures in other social shifts such as integration and civil rights (Crespino, 2007). Thus, in the South in particular, the Christian college is a place for generating particular kinds of identities, as well as a physical and symbolic site for preserving enduring traditions and values amid change. These messages seep into the daily experiences of the gay students in these spaces.

Whitlock (2007) suggests that a queer sexual identity is directly at odds with “fundamentalist religious discourse” that can pervade schooling spaces and Southern cultures (p. 87), yet can also create a “complexity of being-in-place from which to question dominant, constricting conventions” (p. 85). Those raised in diverse evangelical or conservative churches who develop or expand their sense of identity as gay at Christian colleges can offer key insights into the meaning of such educational places for negotiating identities discursively constructed as disparate while becoming “educated subjects” (Levinson, Foley, & Holland, 1996).

In this essay, we draw from interviews with men who identify as gay and who attended Christian colleges located in the Southern U.S., to discuss their experiences in heteronormative educational places close to home that have been meaningful in their experiences as college students but that required some level of negotiation as gay “beings-in-place” while complying with standards established by the Christian colleges and their host denominations. In particular, we focus on their experiences seeking and generating places of refuge and navigating and

cultivating a sense of sexual subjectivity within these institutional cultures. We also explore the “meanings and relations of voice and visibility, silence and invisibility” in the “specific context” of the Christian college (Talburt, 2000, p. 13). Participants were recruited through snowball sampling. Initially, the first author sent emails to established contacts, and asked them to identify others interested in participating. Six individuals who attended four colleges were interviewed (see Table 1 for demographics): David, Nathan, Joshua, Jacob, Simon, and Jason (all pseudonyms). All interviews were conducted via Skype due to the geographic dispersion of participants, and each lasted approximately 1 hour. The interviews were recorded, transcribed, and analyzed collaboratively using inductive analysis (Patton, 2002).

[ED: Table 1 about here.]

The colleges participants attended are associated with evangelical denominations (denominations that are members of the National Association of Evangelicals) and are members of the Council of Christian Colleges and Universities. All participants earned their undergraduate degrees between the years 2005 and 2010. At the time of the interviews, four participants were between the ages of 25 and 30 and two were between 30 and 35. All participants were white. David and Joshua moved out of the region following graduation; all other participants remain near their alma maters. Although each participant was active in his respective religious faith before entering college, each underwent some transformation in relation to his faith during and following his college years. David and Jacob now identify as atheist or agnostic, Joshua and Jason remain Christian-identified but have changed denominations, and Nathan and Simon retain affiliations similar to those they held when entering college. The majority of participants reported coming out as gay, either to themselves or others, while attending college.

“It’s a Lot Like Feeling at Home”: Meaning of the Christian College Space

The website for one Christian college beckons students to their campus with language connoting familiarity and comfort; its experience is “a lot like feeling at home.” Participants were drawn to their Christian colleges for an array of reasons that spoke to the similar symbolic meanings the places held for them even before they stepped foot on the physical space of campus as students. Unlike those lured to schools by sports teams, particular degree programs, or scholarship opportunities, the men in the study narrated their college choices in primarily familiar, familial, and geographic terms. Each participant had relatives or friends who attended the schools, and several found the proximity of the campuses to their family homes or communities appealing. For example, Simon, whose father wanted him to attend a nearby school rather than a state school, eventually chose the Christian college “everyone else in [his] family” had attended. Conveniently, the familiar campus was located nearby; he explained, “I’m not really going anywhere.... I grew up in [Southern city], I went to K–12 and then graduated... so I really haven’t left [Southern city].” For Jason, who attended a state school for a short time, the Christian college appealed because of “smaller” class sizes, a “more intimate” climate, and a feeling of safety from having “a lot of friends” on campus. Small private Christian colleges foster attachments that subtly create a sense of place, and even an oasis in a secular world, imbued with familiar associations and religious legacies.

Several participants initially associated the schools with a sense of familiarity, safety, and comfort, a feeling that emerged in part from the schools’ curricular continuity with their religious upbringing. Joshua “liked the idea of going to a university...whose employees and administration shared similar values to mine.” For David, the choice seemed even preordained: “If you asked me then, I would have said God told me to go.” However, his sense of divine

calling to the space was intermingled with the appeal of knowing others who were attending: “[I] had friends who were going there. I knew [the state school] was an option, but I didn’t really know anyone who was there.... I didn’t look at any other universities at all.” For Nathan, who “always expected” to attend the school, he mentioned, “it definitely felt safe. I’d been raised in the church... and...my freshman year a bunch of my friends from high school all went there. So it felt...almost like an extension of high school at first.... I was sort of comfortable already.” The meaning of the Christian campus can be compelling for parents as well. When Simon was considering a state school, he reported, “My dad sat me down and was like, I know you’re gonna have too much fun so you have to [attend] somewhere [nearby].” Perhaps the strongest articulation of the interweaving of the forces of family, familiarity, tradition, and religious socialization comes from Jacob, who recalled,

I grew up in a [evangelical denomination] family, my dad was a... minister and my maternal grandfather was a... minister as well.... So my family was pretty steeped in it... and I thought growing up that I was going to go into the ministry as a pastor and to teach theology. And so I always wanted to go to [the Christian college I attended] and that’s where my parents went, too. So, it just kind of seemed logical that I would go there as well.

His layering of religious and familial influences on the logic of college choice initially cultivates a sense of safety and familiarity in place.

Yet, as some participants began to realize that their lives did not match the traditional heteronormative “script of what life is supposed to look like,” the very elements of place that made the campus initially inviting and comforting became unsettling, even threatening. The men variously described the experience of processing their identities in these Southern educational

spaces as “confusing,” “terrifying,” “uncomfortable,” and “weird.” The presence of friends and family made gay visibility impossible, and the silence on campus regarding gays made public processing impossible, leaving four of the men to deal privately with their developing sense of identity. Nathan, who was active in college life and had a lot of friends, began to “build up walls” and feel “isolated,” and began to take classes “at public schools just to escape a little bit.” Although the men had been drawn to these spaces because of friends and familiarity, hanging out in dorm rooms took on different connotations. David described his fear of “losing friendships with the guys that I was friends with. I thought they would be afraid that I was interested in them.” In contrast, Joshua described a sense of place as protected when aligned with God’s will. For Joshua, whether studying abroad or attending a Christian college, it is God’s affirmation of the choice that renders a physical location protected and safe: “If I’m where God wants me, what on earth could happen to me?”

“Gay Rights, the Gay Agenda, and All that Stuff”: Shifting Historical and Political Meanings

The participants in this study attended college during a decade in which gay rights became a more visible political movement and discursive force than at any previous point in history. Diverse gay rights initiatives, including challenges to military exclusions of LGB personnel, advocacy for gay marriage, and congregational debates about the place of LGBT people in their churches spurred religious leaders and politicians to reconsider and deliberate long-held positions. The Council of Christian Colleges and Universities’s (Jones, 2001) recommendations to distinguish between sexual orientation and behavior emerged within this political milieu. Participants thus describe incidents at school that speak to a certain level of confusion and negotiation among college administrators as they tread into new historical and

political territory in which they lacked the experience, language, or clear mandates on how to contend with the increasing visibility of gay issues on campus. Such sexual subjectivities seemed antithetical to church doctrine and disruptive to binary understandings of gender and sexuality.

Some participants (Nathan and Joshua) described administrators who were just “too uncomfortable” with the topic of gay issues to discuss it directly. Nathan reported, “Both from the church and from the chapel and the school, it was very much, just, sort of. we don’t talk about this. I feel like it’s a question that everybody sort of danced around.... They were too uncomfortable.” This silence can become a weapon of power with both personal and institutional meanings. For gay students in these spaces, who in some cases are still developing an understanding of themselves as gay, it can produce an unspoken mandate for repression. Nathan recalled, “I didn’t even have the words to use.... It was something no one talked about, something you’re not allowed to discuss.” He stated, “When you’re not given any tools for dialogue about that given thing, it led to some really awful dark places for me.” Maintaining silence helped protect educational investment as well. Joshua, even after reconciling his faith and gay identity by his senior year, “didn’t really want to come out, because, well... I didn’t want to get kicked out of school. I put too much money into it at that point.”

The silence also served an institutional purpose. Although Nathan and Joshua report visits to campus from outside groups to preach against “homosexuality” and tout ex-gay programs, only Simon recalls campus officials publicly discussing the issue. In these colleges, where financial viability relies on both retaining students and preserving their Christian identities, silence becomes either an overt strategy or a collateral effect of negotiating the incendiary power of LGBTQ issues, both on campus and in the broader political climate, given that LGBTQ issues can attract unwanted outside attention. This silence may be related to the

complex in-group/out-group political messaging that emanates from conservative Christian circles, with out-group messaging often crafted to “sell” the theological message (Burack, 2008).

While some participants recalled administrators drawing a firm line about sexual conduct and “homosexuality,” others discussed and mobilized as salient to surviving in their Christian college the conceptual distinctions among same-sex attraction, identity, and behavior. The message some students received was that claiming a gay identity threatened the institutionally authorized silence regarding gays, but was insufficient grounds for expulsion unless the student acted on his or her same-sex attraction. For example, Nathan described a dean who became “really torn up” over the idea of expelling students “dealing with” same-sex attraction. However, the dean’s attitude changed strikingly when a gay student publicly proclaimed his identity. In this instance, the dean “wished he could send [him] home because of the views he was spouting off, but he wasn’t having sex with anyone at the time.”

Other participants describe receiving conflicting messages, where college officials’ personal beliefs clashed with their institutional roles; this both fostered confusion and helped the students to develop strategies to remain on campus. For example, Jacob describes a discrepancy he observed between college officials’ personal and institutional positions on this “question,” with some officials seeming to hold “personal beliefs like the gays aren’t going to hell” alongside their public support for policy that amounted to “want[ing] to keep my job and perpetuate a system that pays my paycheck.” The various conflicting personal/institutional messages and silences created for some participants a feeling of being supported while also being pressured to keep silent.

Being-in-Place: Navigating and Negotiating Identities in an Evangelical Place

The issue kept on popping up but the administration wouldn't talk about it, the... chaplain wouldn't talk about it, the teachers wouldn't talk about it, all the students wanted to talk about it though. (Joshua)

As other scholars have reported, in sexual minorities' navigation and critique of heteronormative and homophobic educational spaces (Mayo, 2007; Meiners & Quinn, 2010; Rodriguez & Pinar, 2007; Talburt, 2000; Whitlock, 2007) and Southern spaces (Howard, 1999; Sears, 1991; Whitlock, 2007), participants' narratives spoke of reflexive and strategic work in which they engaged to negotiate their identities and, in some cases, their developing sense of a gay identity, within school spaces that either explicitly condemned "homosexuality" or refused to acknowledge the presence of gay people on their campuses. "There were not outwardly really anti-gay... angry protestor types" on campus, Nathan recalled, but "just this quiet understanding that this is wrong." Although this culture of silence proved to have some liberatory ruptures, it also meant carrying a palpable weight that demanded repression.

"Very Unexpected Support": Spaces of Support and Refuge

The broader culture of silence left little room for voicing or processing sexual subjectivity outside of prescribed community norms (Mayo, 2007), and few models for men seeking clear language to define themselves. Preserving one's place as a college student on a familiar campus and minimizing interruption to education may have maintained a sense of continuity and security for those not yet ready to speak openly or widely about their unfolding identities, which were, as Nathan phrased it, "this whole internal part of myself that was just too dangerous to share." In two cases, participants described this survival-induced silence as interfering with friendships, because they felt unable to reveal their full identities and secrets

central to intimacy. In places that several participants experienced as risky and potentially hostile without sanctioned language to process their unfolding sexual awareness, some found vital spaces of refuge, safety, and pleasure. Some came out to friends one by one; one processed through drawing; one turned to scrapbooking; others processed with support campus staff. Supportive staff who appeared from under the constant shadow of religiously ordained heteronormativity that saturated campus culture were particularly important for students processing and claiming a sense of self. Nathan turned to friends as well as a campus counselor who was “extremely open” in order to process his experiences. Some kept watch for signs of safety. Nathan, for example, sensed that his professors may have been “a lot more open and a lot more liberal” than the schools’ official positions on LGBT people/“homosexuality.” Joshua received support from faculty and staff after coming out publically, though those messages were given in confidence, perhaps because of conflicts between personal beliefs and institutional policy.

Stages of Acknowledging and Speaking

Participants described layers in the coming-out process through and beyond college. For one participant, Simon, who had a “ton of fun in college,” “by the time I had gotten to [college] I had already come out to all of my friends.” Although he originally anticipated that the Christian college space might be stifling for a gay man, he found supportive friends on campus. “That was...a big concern of mine,” he said. “I didn’t want to tell anybody because I thought they might judge me or they might not be my friend, but it was quite the opposite.” In college, his process focused more on making decisions about when and with whom to share in school and at

work, and on building relationships with accepting friends. Only recently, after college, did he come out to his mom.

For Nathan, it was a “slow process” of incremental stages, from an internal, slow acknowledgement to himself to “declaring my orientation.” Finding, facing, and naming the words for his feelings eventually gave way to voicing his identity to friends and family. David perceived sharing with friends on campus in stages as part of the “general arc of the friendship.” David eventually came out publically only after leaving the South. Jacob described first “struggling with being gay” and then realizing that, with spiritual help, he was “gonna kick it... Jesus is gonna take care of it.” He described coming out to selected family members, before briefly living in a city in the Northeast where he “just came out to the world.” For these men, speaking about their identities, naming themselves as gay, using the words (both privately and publically) was a carefully considered act influenced by geographic proximity to family as well as peer and faith concerns.

Performing and Hiding

To varying degrees, each participant had to hide his developing identity, share strategically and selectively, contain his behavior, or face sacrifices and losses of other aspects of being a college student. Nathan was uncertain what repercussions he would have faced had he chosen to come out more widely and publicly at college rather than telling “one friend at a time kind of quietly,” but in retrospect he suspects the college would have prevented him from taking a leadership role in the dorms, “which ended up being a big part of [his] college life.” To experience one aspect of his college life fully meant choosing to repress another part. For Jason, hiding his sexual identity meant shielding a variety of gender nonconforming behaviors that

might signal “gay” to others, such as “trying to walk like a straight guy” and hiding his “scrapbook material underneath [his] bed.” He felt pressured to conceal his hobbies, to carefully control commonplace behaviors, and to perform carefully in each interaction in order to hide potentially gender nonconforming markers that might reveal his identity.

David understood hiding and sharing identity very differently, describing his sexual identity as “a deep and dark and terrible secret” and stating that “revealing it to somebody at some point during a friendship” was a form of intimacy. For David, then, the hidden identity was something to be revealed as part of the “general arc” of a developing friendship. Jacob saw his sexuality as something to hide, because if he “threw that one little thing into the mix” then others’ positive regard of his skills “would just be invalidated”; revealing this aspect of identity would destroy positive perceptions of all other aspects of identity and the “positive feedback” that came with them.

Negotiating Gay and Religious Identities

Participants’ developing sense of awareness of themselves as gay while attending a Christian college during potentially key developmental years was processed and negotiated through the lens of their religious beliefs and upbringing. Despite his having no interest in girls and masturbating to images of men, Joshua did not recognize that he was gay until his college years, and he initially viewed the two categories of identity, Christian and gay, as epistemologically incommensurate:

[It was when I was away from college] that I had a kind of [hitting noise] “well I’m clearly gay” moment, and that was really hard for me. Because, well, I’m a Christian. You can’t be a Christian and be gay...and... it wasn’t until my senior

year... that I started being really okay with it... for a while I was... just really, really just confused.

Nathan described his experiences in more emotional terms, of the “terror” of being gay and the layered implications of that identity for his friends, faith, family, and future: “I was really, really scared about what being gay would mean for me as a Christian. I was terrified of Hell. I was terrified of how people would react if they found out. I was really, really afraid of disappointing my family.”

A key strategy in processing being gay at a Christian college that seemed to emerge from the participants’ religious upbringings was that several of them turned to scripture or scholarship to search for understanding and to process their growing awareness of their gay identities, while others turned to more emotional or experiential faith knowledge. Significantly, these knowledge quests could be undertaken in private. Joshua sought (in vain) “rock solid evidence” from the Bible that “God was against the whole concept.” By appealing to the written scriptures, these men turned to perhaps the only authority above their upbringings, their denominations, and their schools, because the text represents the pure Word of God. This appeal to scripture, then, can be conceptualized as turning to absolute authority. Nathan also described his work to “kind of go back and research what I thought I understood about the Bible.... I started doing more research on...what the scientific studies show about what we know about orientation.... I started reading a lot of writers as far as what the scripture actually says about the issue.” In contrast, Jason described a process of reflection and realization that “if God is love, then God loves everyone... so why would He send me to Hell just because I’m gay? The answer to that was, well—He’s not.” Simon explains, “the Bible can say whatever it says, but I believe that God is a loving God and accepts everybody for who they are. So that’s how I deal with it now.” Others turned to the

authority of science and logic and chose to leave their respective denominations. David described questioning denominational rules and doctrine, which led him to begin studying the Bible on his own. Eventually, he began reading about psychology and science, coming to the conclusion that he “just didn’t see God filling a need. I didn’t see Him as an explanation to anything.” Jacob describes the transition in more emotional/experiential terms:

It probably fell apart for me. I felt betrayed. I felt very hurt. Then I just felt like, what the crap is going on with reality? And now I just really don’t care.... When lightning didn’t strike and I didn’t feel any worse inside, I just kept going with it.

Both those negotiating staying within their faith groups and those navigating out of their familial faith groups did so by appealing to logic and research or to emotion and experience.

Christian Colleges as Places of Education

The data demonstrate a range of active metaphors about movement, processing, walking, and hiding that speak to both the psychological and physical elements of coming to understand oneself as gay through and beyond the place of the Christian college. For the men in this study, this is ongoing conceptual, embodied, and sometimes spiritual travel to arrive at new places of understanding the self. As Nathan describes it,

it was like a 15-year journey to get to the place where I am where I accept myself...having reconciled it with my faith.... So, I try to grant that sort of, a long leash to people who don’t understand yet, they’re not there yet. It’s about education, informing people and having those sorts of difficult discussions.

The institutionalized silence, overt condemnation, or mixed messages that can govern Christian college places means that those who identify as gay, whether they come to that sense of

self before or during college, must find or create their places of refuge and learning to have these “difficult discussions” because they are at odds with the mission of the college. The Christian college is a (hetero)sexualized institution steeped in traditions and legacies that gain power from its religious origins, a place that defines itself against an increasingly secular, even sinful world. These messages have implications for those who represent the sin, who are “enemies in the midst,” in the words of one participant. Christian colleges are particular generative places of education that imagine and make possible certain types of educated subjects. Gay students must work within and against the conventions of place in their becoming. It is interesting that although few participants wove comments about courses or academics into their narratives, most accounts reflected profound personal learning. In some cases, the colleges accomplished their mission in providing students a place to “grow spiritually as well as academically” and preserving relationships with the Christian faith, but perhaps in a much different way than the founders might have imagined.

In particular, we read participant narratives as casting a critical gaze on traditions and negotiating new meanings as part of the work of becoming educated subjects. Coming to a gay identity within a religious institution made particular learning possible. As Nathan reflected, “I think it took me awhile to actually get to that place where I... would not change being gay, but I’m actually glad that I am because it’s made me a much more empathetic and compassionate person than I would have been otherwise.” As participants reflected on their experiences, some chose to distance themselves from the version of Christianity in which they were socialized, and some continued to wrestle with what feels like two different aspects of being. Another prioritized his identity as Christian before gay, saying he lets his “theology show before [his] rainbow.” Another said, “I would still call myself a Christian... it looks different now than it did.”

Understanding his coming to his gay identity as affirmed by God, Nathan said, “I just had that religious experience of feeling in tune with God, I felt God with me and that He loved me no matter what.... That came really in...my darkest moment and that was a kind of defining moment for my life.” Some didn’t narrate affirmation and acceptance in religious terms.

The Christian colleges these men attended, by virtue of practices of silence and invisibility coupled with monolithic religiously ordained heteronormativity, seemed to close off possibilities for those who do not “fit the mold,” in the words of one participant. Yet, the participants in this study found and generated spaces in which to understand their unfolding sexual identities. Within these educational spaces, supportive staff, places of refuges, and navigation strategies emerged that allowed these men to explore their identities and come to new learning. In this way, despite religious discourses often mobilized against them, these participants were able to negotiate as beings-in-place questioning the conventions of the college and religious groups (Whitlock, 2007) while coming to understand their own sexual identities.

References

- Adrian, W. (2003). Christian universities in historical perspective. *Christian Higher Education*, 2(1), 15–33.
- Barton, B. (2010). “Abomination”—Life as a Bible Belt gay. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 57(4), 465–484.
- Burack, C. (2008). *Sin, sex, and democracy: Antigay rhetoric and the Christian right*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Crespiro, J. (2007). *In search of another country: Mississippi and the conservative counterrevolution*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Estanek, S. M. (1998). Working with gay and lesbian students at Catholic colleges and universities: A student affairs perspective. *Catholic Education: A Journal of Inquiry and Practice*, 2(2), 151–158.

Howard, J. (1999). *Men like that: A Southern queer history*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Jones, S. (2001, August 17). *Report: The Ad Hoc Task Force on Human Sexuality*. Council of Christian Colleges and Universities. Retrieved from http://www.cccu.org/professional_development/resource_library/2002/report_the_ad_hoc_task_force_on_human_sexuality

Kingsriter, D. A. (Ed.). (2007). *Is the lower cost worth the high price?* Retrieved from http://agchurches.org/Sitefiles/Default/RSS/AG%20Colleges/FAQ/Is%20the%20Lower%20Cost%20Worth%20the%20High%20Price_.pdf

Levinson, B. A., Foley, D. E., & Holland, D. C. (Eds.). (1996). *The cultural production of the educated person: Critical ethnographies of schooling and local practice*. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Mayo, C. (2007). *Disputing the subject of sex: Sexuality and public school controversies*. New York: Rowman & Littlefield.

Meiners, E. R., & Quinn, T. M. (2010). Doing and feeling research in public: Queer organizing for public education and justice. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 23(2), 147–164.

Meiners, E. R., & Quinn, T. (Eds.). (2012). *Sexualities in education: A reader*. New York: Peter Lang.

- Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Ribas, M. (2004). The church in the closet. *Theology and Sexuality*, 10(2), 83–89.
- Rodriguez, N., & Pinar, W. (Eds.). (2007). *Queering straight teachers: Discourse and identity in education*. New York: Peter Lang.
- Sears, J. T. (1991). *Growing up gay in the South: Race, gender, and journeys of the spirit*. New York: Routledge.
- Talburt, S. (2000). *Subject to identity: Knowledge, sexuality, and academic practices in higher education*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Whitlock, U. R. (2007). *This corner of Canaan: Curriculum studies of place & the reconstruction of the South*. New York: Peter Lang.
- Wolff, J. R., & Himes, H. L. (2010). Purposeful exclusion of sexual minority youth in Christian higher education: The implications of discrimination. *Christian Higher Education*, 9(1), 439–460.
- Wolff, J. R., Himes, H. L., Kwon, E. M., & Bollinger, R. A. (2012). Evangelical Christian college students and attitudes toward gay rights: A California university sample. *Journal of LGBT Youth*, 9(3), 200–224.
- Yoakam, J. R. (2006). Resources for gay and bisexual students in a Catholic college. *The Journal of Men's Studies*, 14(3), 311–321.

Table 1

Participant Information

Name	Graduated	Major	Current Career	Current Region	Current Faith	Age Range
David	2005– 2010	Performance Arts	Information Tech	Northeast	Atheist	25–30
Nathan	2005– 2010	Humanities	Visual Arts	South/Midwest	Same	30–35
Joshua	2005– 2010	Communications	Visual Arts	South/East	Evangelical	30–35
Jacob	2005– 2010	Language	Health Care	South/Midwest	Agnostic	25–30
Simon	2005– 2010	Visual Arts	Information Tech	South	Catholic	25–30
Jason	2005– 2010	Health	Health Care	South	Christian	25–30

Note. All participants had changed denominational affiliation since beginning their undergraduate work, except for Nathan and Simon.