

Research Notes Concerning Loss of Faith Due to College Attendance:

By Max B. Frederick, AnOldScientist, 12/19/2008

People have challenged the basis for my assumption that many Christians students lose their Christian faith while attending and because of attending a secular college.

There is widespread perception, even among Christian organizations, that there are scientific studies indicating secular college attendance does not have an adverse effect on Christian faith. An overwhelming number of people are acquainted with someone they know who has had their Christian faith at least weakened, if not lost altogether while attending college. Even so, many have become convinced that scientific evidence proves secular college has no effect against Christian faith.

A casual search of the internet reveals a popularly quoted without reference scientific study done by researchers at the University of Texas, that concludes that more young people who do not go to college lose their religion than those who do go to college. Many websites¹ pick up on that conclusion and interpret it to say it is a myth that college students lose their Christian faith as a result of college attendance. Even Islamic web sites take heart that college does not destroy the religion of followers of Islam².

A Google search on the phrase, “those who never attended college had the highest rates of decline in church attendance” reveals at least 39 web sites with that exact quote. Most of them reference some “surprising research” that was done at the University of Texas at Austin. But those web sites give no clue as to where that research paper can be found.

They all quote the same exact words, but do not reveal the original source of that work. It is even quoted by a college research paper that is thoroughly referenced, but this reference is only a reference to another link in the gossip chain.

Who are these “Researchers at The University of Texas at Austin?”

Eventually I found that oft quoted, yet rarely referenced work by researchers at the university of Texas. The first publication of that research paper, February 5, 2007, sported the logo of SSRC.

SSRC³ stands for Social Science Research Council, a not-for profit organization promoting “Social Science for the Public Good.” They seem to have a leaning towards humanism, and are bent on the proposition that all religions are equal. They appear to have an agenda⁴ to convert those who worship the creator to the worship of the creation. (The unstated corollary is, since among religions not every one of them can be supernatural, to all be equal, none of them are supernatural. Therefore, all religion is the product of the imagination of humans, none are supernatural.)

That research paper was first published⁵ early in 2007 under the title, *How Corrosive Is College to Religious Faith and Practice?* Mark D. Regnerus and Jeremy E. Uecker, two

¹ <http://crockerchronicle.blogspot.com/2007/08/does-college-cause-young-people-to-lose.html>

² www.islamicboard.com/general/44067-college-students-lean-toward-religion.html

³ <http://www.ssrc.org/>

⁴ <http://religion.ssrc.org/reforum/> and <http://religion.ssrc.org/reguide/>

⁵ http://religion.ssrc.org/reforum/Regnerus_Uecker.pdf

researchers from the University of Texas in Austin, present data in a way that shows the “loss of faith” phenomena does not exist.

A longer and more technical version of that research was published⁶ on April 25, 2007 adding the author Margaret Vaaler under the title, “*Losing My Religion: The Social Sources of Religious Decline in Early Adulthood.*”

The conclusion of this “scientific research” that religion is not lost in secular college was picked up by many Christian organizations as a mantra that Christian faith is not diminished by secular college attendance. It appears that they feel relief that their faith is not challenged as they previously believed.

However, there is the false underlying assumption is that all religions are equal. There is the false assumption that the Christian religion and a religious liberal viewpoint are equivalent. This is accomplished by making the study about religiosity rather than about Christian belief.

Notice the subtle change of the subject of the research from Christian faith to generic “religion.”

According to their analysis, one going into college as a conservative Christian and emerging as a religious progressive has suffered no loss of “religion” even though this is the very definition of loss of Christian faith.

Buried deep in the report they admit:

“We are not claiming that higher education does not *liberalize* students—that very well may be true. Graduating seniors may well be more politically moderate or liberal than incoming freshmen, and may tolerate a wider range of lifestyle choices than when they began. And students who do engage intellectually are more likely to accommodate “progressive” ideas into their belief systems rather than to deconstruct their entire worldview.”

It appears that the only thing their study proves is that a good percentage of humans are inherently religious⁷ (religious as opposed to Christian.) Religiosity is a human trait that is not easily destroyed. Easier than destroying this tendency toward religious expression, is the effort to re-directed the religious tendency toward non-Christian beliefs and therefore destroy the faith in Christianity by substituting another religious zeal.

Therefore, what their statistics really show is that there is less loss of “religion” among college students than among those young people that do not attend college. In college, “religion” is preserved by redirecting it away from Christianity to Non-Christian “religious” pursuits. In the world outside college, the tendency toward religion is not preserved by the substitution of religious zeal toward intellectualism, therefore the statistics show a greater loss of “religion” outside college than inside college.

Christian faith and religious zeal are far from equivalent.

There are two basic religions in this world. Those who worship the creator, and those who worship the creation.

⁶ www.geocities.com/deeann_regnerus/LosingmyReligion.pdf

⁷ http://www.abpnews.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=1496&Itemid=119

The articles that promote the idea that Christians do not lose their faith during college promote the assumption that when they say “religion” we are to assume “Christian faith.” They prove their point that college does not cause a loss of faith in “religion” as they convert from worshipping the creator to worshipping the creation.

Observe the following question and answer⁸ posted on a secular web site:

Q: What to do when you lose faith?

I can no longer find faith in God, or even faith in myself, I am lost, what to do?

A: Discover Nature's healing influences and realize your oneness with Life

But the reality is there is great loss of Christian faith in conversion from worshipping the creator to worshipping the creation.

As a result, later in life, when the creation worshipers realize the futility of it all, they lose faith altogether⁹. Note, the article does not say they lose faith in Christianity, just in “religion.” That loss is attributed mainly to intellectual arguments.

When actual students are surveyed about the relevant question, the results are different¹⁰.

When asked the more relevant question, “Why do Christians lose their faith in their first year of college?” Yahoo responses¹¹ clustered into three broad groups, Those who seemed to sense some accusatory connotation in the question and gave a rebellious answer defending the teaching of science or “truth” as they called it, those who admitted they succumbed to the teaching of science or “truth,” and those who just wanted to party.

Conclusion:

There are two basic religions: Those who worship the creator, and those who worship the creation. They are all just as religious, but converting from Christian to Naturalist is a loss of Christian faith. And that is what the studies try to hide in their statistics. Colleges are biased away from Christianity toward naturalism or humanism, which is, in fact, a bent toward the destruction of Christian faith.

Religious people who attend college become less religious at a lower rate than those who do not attend college.

That does not mean that Christians do not lose their faith by attending college.

It means that college influences substitute non-Christian religion for Christian faith.

In other words, College students really are influenced to lose their Christian faith by college attendance. The reason given by those who have experienced it overwhelmingly attribute the loss to being forced to chose between what their religion teaches and “reality,” as they learn it in college. They have to chose between science and what they have been falsely taught that the bible teaches. Where the professors cannot drive a wedge between students and religious behavior, they can between science and the bible.

⁸<http://askville.amazon.com/SimilarQuestions.do?req=Americans+begin+distrust+lose+faith+government+restored+Obamas+calling>

⁹<http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2000/sep/03/religion.world1>

¹⁰<http://www.annistonstar.com/religion/2008/as-churchnews-0614-0-8f13s3222.htm>

¹¹<http://answers.yahoo.com/question/index?qid=20080227134737AA7hNSw>

Check out the sociology term paper that was obviously submitted to a secular institution of higher learning where the instructor, obviously biased toward the secular conclusion of the paper, let the student slide for not revealing the actual source of the basis for the conclusions, and thereby concealing the bias present in that source.

That term paper is:

Testing the Tradition:
How does higher education affect student religiosity?

SOC 452 – Sociology of Religious Behavior
Term Paper

Jamelle Bouie
December 5th, 2007

For complete text go to:

<http://usjamerica.files.wordpress.com/2008/02/soc-452-term-paper.doc>