

LABYRINTHS IN THE LANDSCAPE:

WHO IS RECOMMENDING,

WHO IS USING, AND ARE

THERE BENEFITS?

by

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## ABSTRACT

### LABYRINTHS IN THE LANDSCAPE:

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The labyrinth is a symbol known to exist for at least for four thousand years. It has been used in many cultures and religions throughout its existence as a symbol for the journey of life, a sacred space to pray, and a place of meditation and contemplation. After several hundred years of absence, the labyrinth is regaining popularity in modern cultures and religions, and is thought to be beneficial to the mind, body, and spirit. Many of the contemporary labyrinths are in the outdoor-built environment. This research assists landscape architects in understanding who is recommending labyrinths, using labyrinths, and the benefits of labyrinths.

Literature on the subject of the labyrinth is investigated to understand current research about the labyrinth and its history, forms, materials, uses, benefits, and users. The literature explores and suggests ideas for future research related to labyrinths and the practice of landscape architecture.

A qualitative approach is applied to this research. In-depth interviews were conducted with twelve key informants at five study sites in the Dallas/Fort Worth metropolitan area. Labyrinths at two hospital settings, two church settings, and one college campus were chosen for study.

The data, analyzed qualitatively, revealed that the people who commission labyrinth projects have a very specific knowledge of the subject and are seeking to enhance their organization by providing an interfaith space for walking meditation, contemplation, and relaxation. The users can be

individuals or groups; one of the uses most often cited is walking meditation. The benefits of using labyrinths are somewhat unique to the individual user and are therefore hard to measure.

This research concludes with ideas for future research to clarify unknowns established while conducting this research. The intent is to inspire further research related to labyrinths and their use as design elements by landscape architects.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	iii
ABSTRACT.....	v
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.....	xii
Chapter	Page
1. INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1 Labyrinth Introduction.....	1
1.2 Research Objectives.....	2
1.3 Research Questions.....	2
1.3.1 Who is Recommending or Promoting the Use of Labyrinths?.....	3
1.3.2 Who Are the User Groups for These Labyrinths?.....	3
1.3.3 What Are the Perceived Benefits of Using the Labyrinth?...	3
1.4 Significance and Limitations.....	3
1.5 Definition of Terms.....	4
1.6 Summary.....	5
2. LITERATURE REVIEW .....	7
2.1 Labyrinth Introduction.....	7
2.2 Defining a Labyrinth.....	8
2.3 History.....	9
2.3.1 Symbolism and Origin of the Labyrinth.....	10
2.3.2 The Cretan Labyrinth.....	12
2.3.3 The Chartres Labyrinth.....	13
2.4 Sacred Geometry.....	14

2.5 Characteristics.....	15
2.5.1 Forms.....	15
2.6 Revival of the Labyrinth.....	16
2.7 Uses of the Labyrinth.....	17
2.7.1 Contemporary Uses.....	17
2.7.2 Meditation.....	19
2.7.3 Creative Uses.....	20
2.7.4 Healthcare Uses.....	22
2.8 Materials.....	22
2.9 Form.....	24
2.10 Placement.....	25
2.11 Walking a Labyrinth.....	26
2.12 Summary.....	27
3. RESEARCH METHODS .....	28
3.1 Research Approach.....	28
3.2 Project Site Selection.....	29
3.3 In-Depth Interviews.....	32
3.3.1 Selecting the Respondents.....	32
3.3.2 Purpose of Interviews.....	34
3.3.3 The Interview Questions.....	34
3.3.4 Analysis of Interviews.....	35
3.4 Summary.....	36
4. DATA ANALYSIS.....	37
4.1 Introduction.....	37
4.2 Who Promoted or Recommended for the Labyrinth at this Project Site?.....	37
4.2.1 Respondent Data.....	37



4.3 Is the Labyrinth Being Utilized at the Project Site? Why or Why Not?..	38
4.3.1 Respondent Data.....	39
4.4 Who Are the User Groups of this Labyrinth at the Project Site?.....	40
4.4.1 Respondent Data.....	40
4.5 What is the Main Purpose for Use of the Labyrinth at the Project Site?.....	41
4.5.1 Respondent Data.....	42
4.6 Are There Any Coached or Guided Programs for the Labyrinth at the Project Site?.....	43
4.6.1 Respondent Data.....	43
4.7 Do the Users of the Labyrinth Perceive Any Benefits at the Project Site?.....	44
4.7.1 Respondent Data.....	44
4.8 Are There Any Benefits to the Institution for Having a Labyrinth on Site?.....	45
4.8.1 Respondent Data.....	45
4.9 Has There Been Any Formal Research Done at the Project Site to Determine How the Labyrinth Has Been Utilized?.....	47
4.9.1 Respondent Data.....	47
4.10 Are There Any Design Issues With the Labyrinth That Have an Influence on the Utilization of the Labyrinth?.....	47
4.10.1 Respondent Data.....	48
4.11 Respondent Summary.....	49
4.12 Project Site Case Studies.....	50
4.12.1 Richland Community College.....	50
4.12.1.1 Designer's Perspective.....	53
4.12.1.2 Conclusions.....	54
4.12.2 Baylor Medical Center Dallas.....	54
4.12.2.1 Designer's Perspective.....	58

4.12.2.2 Conclusions.....	59
4.12.3 Cook Children's Health Care System.....	60
4.12.3.1 Designer's Perspective.....	62
4.12.3.2 Conclusions.....	63
4.12.4 Kessler Park United Methodist Church.....	63
4.12.4.1 Designer's Perspective.....	65
4.12.4.2 Conclusions.....	66
4.12.5 St. Stephen's Presbyterian Church.....	66
4.12.5.1 Conclusions.....	68
4.13 Summary of Findings.....	68
4.13.1 Is the Labyrinth Being Utilized at the Project Site? Why or Why Not?.....	69
4.13.2 Who are the User Groups of this Labyrinth at the Project Site?.....	69
4.13.3 What is the Main Purpose for the Use of the Labyrinth at the Project Site?.....	70
4.13.4 Are There Any Coached or Guided Programs for the Labyrinth at the Project Site?.....	70
4.13.5 Do the Users of the Labyrinth Perceive Any Benefits at the Project Site?.....	70
4.13.6 Are There Any Benefits to the Institution for Having a Labyrinth on Site?.....	70
4.13.7 Has There Been Any Formal Research Done at the Project Site to Determine How the Labyrinth Has Been Utilized?..	71
4.13.8 Are There Any Design Issues That Have an Influence on the Utilization of the Labyrinth?.....	71
4.14 Summary.....	71
5. FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS.....	73
5.1 Introduction.....	73
5.2 Research Findings.....	73

5.2.1 Research Questions.....	74
5.2.1.1 Who is Promoting or Recommending Labyrinths?.....	74
5.2.1.2 Who Are the User Groups of Labyrinths?.....	74
5.2.1.3 What Are the Perceived Benefits to the User and the Facility?.....	74
5.3 Findings and Literature.....	75
5.4 Importance to the Profession.....	76
5.5 Future Research Opportunities.....	76
5.5.1 What Percentage of Labyrinths Are Designed by Landscape Architects?.....	76
5.5.2 How Much Does Privacy Matter in the Use of a Labyrinth.....	76
5.5.3 Does the Form of the Labyrinth Influence its Functionality?	77
5.5.4 Can a Path be a Labyrinth?.....	77
5.5.5 Performing a Market Study or Market Analysis.....	77
5.5.6 How Many Landscape Architects Know the Difference Between a Labyrinth and a Maze?.....	77
5.5.7 Participant Observation of Labyrinth Users.....	77
5.5.8 Surveying or Interviewing Labyrinth Users.....	78
5.5.9 Interviewing People Un-Educated on the Labyrinth or People Opposed to Labyrinths.....	78
5.6 Summary.....	78
APPENDIX	
A. RESPONDENT TRANSCRIPTIONS.....	79
REFERENCES.....	146
BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION .....	154

## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Figure		Page
1.1	Classical Seven-Circuit Cretan Labyrinth.....	9
1.2	A Typical Maze.....	9
1.3	Labyrinth Symbol on Coin.....	12
1.4	Labyrinth on Petroglyph.....	12
1.5	Cretan Seven-Circuit Labyrinth.....	13
1.6	Chartres Labyrinth.....	14
1.7	Stone Labyrinth.....	24
1.8	Cretan Labyrinth with Gravel Path.....	24
1.9	Gravel Labyrinth with Natural Borders.....	24
2.1	Cretan, Chartres, and Square Labyrinths.....	25
2.2	Richland Community College Labyrinth.....	50
2.3	Baylor Medical Center Labyrinth .....	54
2.4	Cook Children's Health Care Center Labyrinth.....	60
2.5	Kessler Park United Methodist Church Labyrinth.....	63
2.6	St. Stephen's Presbyterian Church Labyrinth.....	66

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Labyrinth Introduction

The labyrinth is a symbol that has existed for at least four thousand years (Artress 2006; Buchanan 2007; Kern 2000; Lonegren 2001; Pink 2005; Seward 2003). It was found across multiple continents and countless cultures long before intercontinental travel was likely (Buchanan 2007). The origin of the labyrinth is still a mystery although a number of individuals consider it as part of a collective unconscious—a symbol for the meaning of life innate in all humans (Artress 2006). Other researchers pose the theory that the labyrinth spread from culture to culture through nomadic migration (Kern 2000). Although drawings of labyrinths have been found on ancient walls, coins, pottery, and other items and relics, the labyrinth has been used primarily as a walkable course. Many cultures have held sacred ceremonies involving the labyrinth, and it was often viewed as a symbol of the journey of life (Artress 2006).

Numerous accounts have recorded people walking the labyrinth to promote balance in their lives. It was often used as a tool for healing and meditation. Once popular in indoor applications such as the Chartres Cathedral in France during the Middle Ages, the labyrinth is experiencing a revival after hundreds of years of silence (Artress 2006). This revival is occurring in the Western world, primarily in outdoor-built environments. Labyrinths are being moved outdoors and constructed with materials such as brick, granite, and terrazzo (Kern 2000). Outdoor labyrinths are increasingly being used in therapeutic garden settings at hospitals for healing, at spas for stress therapy, and at churches, cathedrals, and retirement centers (Atalli 1999). Many still view the labyrinth as a form of holistic therapy and a tool for walking meditation.

Professionals, such as landscape architects, are typically the designers of outdoor labyrinths during the current revival period. This poses the question whether these design professionals possess sufficient knowledge on labyrinths and its history to make sound design

judgments and decisions regarding the use of such devices. This research first explores the current literature on the labyrinth to understand its history, uses, and benefits, and to study its basic forms and characteristics.

The second facet of this research qualitatively studies selected labyrinth sites in both the Dallas and Fort Worth areas. Five public study sites are chosen including a labyrinth at a religious institution, a healing institution, and at an academic institution. Stakeholders at the selected institutions are then interviewed about their observations and knowledge of the use, benefits, and design considerations of the labyrinth. In most cases, three people affiliated with each study site are selected to be interviewed, one of those being the designer. At two study sites the designers are unavailable to be interviewed. Therefore, additional measures are taken to address any design issues that affect the labyrinth's use, whether positive or negative.

### 1.2 Research Objectives

With the revival of the labyrinth (Buchanan 2007) and its increasing popularity in outdoor-built environments, it is important for the designers of these environments (e.g., landscape architects) to be knowledgeable of its utilization, user groups, and potential benefits. The objective of this research is to identify who promotes the usage of labyrinths, the user groups, and the benefits to using a labyrinth. Understanding the nature of the labyrinth will help landscape architects and other designers understand the labyrinth as a tool for meditation and not just as an ornamental object, symbol, or form.

### 1.3 Research Questions

For designers to increase their understanding of the contemporary uses and applications for outdoor permanent labyrinths, the landscape architect must know who is requesting the labyrinth, why, and the perceived benefits. This research focuses on three primary questions to help determine these answers.

- Who is recommending or promoting the use of labyrinths?
- Who are the user groups for these labyrinths?
- What are the perceived benefits of using a labyrinth?

#### *1.3.1 Who Is Recommending or Promoting the Use of Labyrinths?*

Knowing who is recommending or promoting the labyrinth allows the designer to understand the people funding these projects, as well as what types of places benefit from it the most. It also assists the designer in better understanding the client's needs and requirements.

#### *1.3.2 Who Are the User Groups for These Labyrinths?*

Familiarity with knowing the user groups will assist the designer in applying materials and style deemed most appropriate to the basic labyrinth form. If the user group consists of children, for example, the materials might be different than for an adult user group. The labyrinth design at a hospital would also vary from that of a church or cathedral.

#### *1.3.3 What Are the Perceived Benefits of Using the Labyrinths?*

Knowing the benefits of labyrinths can provide landscape architects with a better understanding of why the labyrinth is being used. It can also facilitate the designer to endorse labyrinth implementation on future projects, where appropriate.

### 1.4 Significance and Limitations

The significance of this study is to research the labyrinth, its promoters, users, and benefits, and apply this knowledge to the profession of landscape architecture. Only one study was found in current literature that explores the labyrinth as a designed element as it relates to landscape architecture. The intent of this research is to encourage future study exploring the labyrinth as it applies to the outdoor landscape.

The limitations of this study are the lack of research available that applies the functions of the labyrinth to the profession of landscape architecture. Another limitation is the small number of labyrinths in the Dallas/Fort Worth area available for study. For example, a labyrinth in a park

setting was desired. However, one could not be found within 100 miles of the Dallas/Fort Worth area.

### 1.5 Definition of Terms

- Archetype – “Irrepresentable, unconscious, pre-existent form that seems to be part of the inherited structure of the psyche and can therefore manifest itself spontaneously anywhere at anytime” (Storr 1983, 415).
- Chartres or medieval Labyrinth – Reached fruition during the thirteenth century and developed over several hundred years from the classical labyrinth. Its name was derived from the Chartres Cathedral in France, where it was introduced (Buchanan 2007).
- Circuit – Concentric unicursal path of the labyrinth (Artress 2006).
- Collective Unconscious – Carl Jung’s theory that there are preexisting forms, called archetypes, which are inherent to all humankind. These archetypes may express themselves unconsciously through the psyche (Storr 1983).
- Cretan or Classical Labyrinth – Original form of the labyrinth. Has a round organic shape. Usually has seven circuits, and is the oldest form. Found on ancient coins of Knossos (Buchanan 2007).
- Creativity – The ability to find new solutions to a problem or new modes of expression; bringing into existence something new to the individual and to the culture (Edwards 1999, 276).
- Labyrinth - Usually round but sometimes rectangular. Has a unicursal path that begins at the perimeter and leads to the center winding around the entire labyrinth. The path is not intersected by other paths as is the case in a maze. There are no choices to make; the path ultimately leads to the center and back out again (Kern 2000).
- Left Brain – “The left half (oriented according to your left) of the cerebrum. For most right-handed individuals and a large proportion of left-handed individuals, verbal functions are in the left hemisphere” (Edwards 1999, 276).



- Maze - Multicursal, with many intersecting paths, dead ends, and cul-de-sacs. The goal is to get to the end without getting lost (Pennick 1990).
- Meditation – “The practice of training your attention by focusing it on something. Focus of your attention can be something of the present moment such as a flower or candle. Through the practice the mind settles down” (Monaghan 1999, xvii).
- Multicursal – Having many pathways, with dead ends (Pennick 1990, 190).
- Right Brain – “The right half (oriented according to your right) of the cerebrum. For most right-handed individuals and a large proportion of left-handed individuals, spatial, relational functions are in the right hemisphere” (Edwards 1999, 277).
- Sacred Geometry – “From Neolithic times up to just prior to the Protestant Reformation, a very special kind of geometry, called sacred geometry, was used in the construction of all sacred spaces. This geometry consists of a handful of ratios. These ratios are found in sacred spaces all over the world” (Lonegren 2001, 14).
- Troy Towns – A sea-faring community of Scandinavia, which Kern believes brought the labyrinth idea to the Americas (Kern 2000).
- Unicursal – A single pathway with no dead ends (Pennick 1990, 191).

### 1.6 Summary

As labyrinths become more commonplace in the outdoor-built environment, design professionals should understand their symbolic meaning. Who is promoting labyrinths, who is utilizing them, and their perceived benefits must also be understood. The research objective is to answer these primary questions and provide a framework for understanding the use of the labyrinth in contemporary landscape architectural applications. The research questions are straightforward and help to understand the spaces and users of labyrinths.

The literature review evaluates current literature pertaining to labyrinths and how they are used, how they originated, and their history. It delves into their contemporary uses and their therapeutic benefits. The literature review basically summarizes many of the thoughts and ideas

of today's labyrinth experts.

Chapter three discusses the methods involved in conducting the research. It describes the study sites, the interviewees, and explains how they are selected. A qualitative approach is used for this research; chapter three explains how the in-depth interview questions are designed.

In chapter four, the data collected from the in-depth interviews are classified and analyzed. First the data are organized by interview question, summarizing the main ideas stemming from the questions asked. The data are then analyzed by each study site with more detail and site specifics. The data are then used to answer the fundamental research questions.

Chapter five summarizes the findings from the study sites and relates the data back to the literature review. This chapter describes how this research is important to the profession of landscape architecture and presents ideas for future research.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1 Labyrinth Introduction

The labyrinth, a mysterious symbol approximately four thousand years old, has been part of many cultures found on numerous continents during its existence (Buchanan 2007). A symbol for “self discovery” and “the search for the center of life” (Hohmuth 2003, 9), the labyrinth was connected to many cultures and religions for thousands of years before its near banishment around the fourteenth century (Artress 2006). A renaissance of the labyrinth began in the late twentieth century and its use continues to increase exponentially (Artress 2006; Attali 1995; Lonegren 2001; Pink 2005; Saward 2002).

The popularity of the labyrinth has increased over many settings around the world in the past quarter century; since 1992 the revival of the labyrinth has accelerated (Saward 2002). In 1991, few people knew about labyrinths; however, by 2006 thousands of labyrinths were located in “churches, cathedrals, hospitals, community and memorial parks, cancer centers, spas, schools, hospices, prisons, and retirement homes” (Artress 2006, x). A sudden increase of interest has been seen on “both sides of the Atlantic” since the mid-1990s (Lonegren 2001, 9). The United States alone contains over four thousand labyrinths, both public and private (Pink 2006).

The modern labyrinth has many applications and its extensive archetypal nature transcends a variety of faiths or traditions (Artress 2006). Thus it is being used as a stress reduction tool in hospitals, a tool for team building in the corporate environment, and as prayer paths in churches. The New York Times reported, “In an age when many Americans are looking beyond the church pulpit for spiritual experience and solace, a growing number have rediscovered the labyrinth as a path to prayer, introspection, and emotional healing” (Goodstein

1998). Depending on the imagination of the institution or the purpose of the group using it, the possibilities are endless (Artress 2006).

According to Buchanan (2007), “contemporary activity in creating labyrinths is driven by three threads of interest: The historical, the artistic, and the spiritual” (p. 12). This literature review addresses the labyrinth from these points of view in an effort to understand how the labyrinth can be used in contemporary landscapes.

## 2.2 Defining a Labyrinth

The term “labyrinth” is often confused with the term “maze” (Artress 2006; Attila 1995; Buchanan 2007; Lonegren 2001; Pink 2005; Saward 2002). Modern literature often confuses the two and even a dictionary would most likely be inaccurate by mingling the definitions and yielding a conclusion that they are the same (Saward 2002). However, stakeholders of labyrinths are often fervent about the differences, noting that to be a labyrinth, the design must have only one path. To meet the requirements of a maze, on the other hand, the design must have many paths and choices in those paths.

Within the literature, the sources are concurrent that mazes and labyrinths are quite different. Labyrinths are unicursal and have only one path whereas mazes are multicursal and have more than one path (Artress 2006; Attila 1995; Buchanan 2007; Kern 2002; Lonegren 2001; Pink 2005; Saward 2002).

The labyrinth can take on many forms including circular, rectangular, or pentagonal (Kern 2000); however, most are circular in form with a single, unicursal, meandering path that goes to the center, and then following the original path, goes back out to the edge (Artress 2006). There are no options to choose in terms of paths, intersections, or directions. The goal is to simply walk into the spiral path, follow it to the center, and then walk back out (Pink 2006). The path is not hidden or denoted by walls; only the strength of the mind is required to stay on the path (Buchanan 2007). According to Attali (1999), one cannot lose one’s way because the spiral path

has no dead ends. The only choice the user makes is the basic choice of entering the labyrinth (Artress 2006).

Mazes are multicursal and have many paths, dead ends, entrances, and exits. Many choices must be made and challenges must be solved. Mazes often have vertical elements such as hedges and walls to block the sight of the user, making it even more challenging. The maze is a puzzle to be solved and is a test of logic (Artress 2006). A maze is a sequence of puzzling paths meant to disorient; the goal is for the user to find his or her way out (Pink 2006). The maze's paths are hidden by secret turns and dead ends, requiring one's logic to escape it (Buchanan 2007). The maze contains no clues guiding the user; thus one is rarely certain which path to take (Lonegren 2001).

The unicursal labyrinth and the multicursal maze have differences beyond their number of paths (Artress 2006; Attila 1995; Buchanan 2007; Lonegren 2001; Pink 2005; Saward 2002). Whereas mazes are analytical puzzles that challenge the left brain (Artress 2006), labyrinths are a centering “form of moving meditation,” that engages the right brain (Pink 2006, 228).



Figure 1.1 Classical Seven-Circuit Labyrinth (Lonegren 2001, 18)

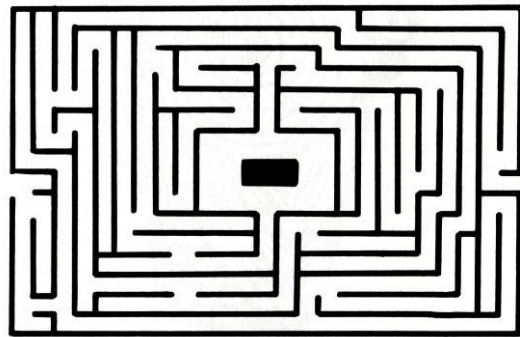


Figure 1.2 Typical Maze (Pennick 1990, 157)

### 2.3 History

The history of the labyrinth is extensive and somewhat mysterious. The origin of its form and dissemination throughout so much of the world is puzzling. Many forms of the labyrinth

appear throughout history; however, the two most influential are the Cretan (or classical seven-circuit labyrinth) and the Chartres (or eleven-circuit labyrinth) (Buchanan 2007).

Many labyrinth researchers have found the labyrinth symbol to be at least four thousand years old (Artress 2006; Attali 1995; Buchanan 2007; Lonegren 2001; Saward 2002). Labyrinths have appeared in the European Atlantic coastline settlements of the Bronze Age, on Mediterranean shores, throughout various locations in the Roman Empire, in medieval Christian churches, and now in contemporary spaces (Saward 2002). The symbol of the labyrinth, which many view as an archetype has appeared in “Iceland, Russia, Scandinavia, throughout Europe, in North Africa, the Middle East, Indonesia, and the American Southwest, Mexico, and Brazil” (Saward 2006, 8). The earliest known labyrinth examples were found in Sweden and on the Island of Crete (Buchanan 2007).

### *2.3.1 Symbolism and Origin of the Labyrinth*

The symbol of the labyrinth has been found on many artifacts such as ancient coins, pottery, rock art, and cave walls (Artress 2006). Attali (1999) found that remarkably comparable patterns have occurred on such artifacts located thousands of miles apart throughout Scandinavia, Russia, India, Tibet, Greece, Brittany, Africa, and America (p. xxii).

The origin of the design of the labyrinth is a mystery, as is the explanation of how the labyrinth works in terms of its meditational benefits (Buchanan 2007). An even larger mystery however, is how the labyrinth was found across the span of the globe, with minimal variation and long before intercontinental travel was likely. Buchanan believes that “we must accept that an inherent human need to express an idea visually gave rise to the labyrinth” (2007, p. 8). The labyrinth must never be viewed as a “local epiphenomenon.” Instead, the labyrinth has been found across the world over thousands of years (Attali 1999, xxii)

Labyrinths are most likely a universal symbol created through the “collective unconscious” and passed down through many generations (Artress 2006, 40). The collective unconscious, according to Carl Jung, is a theory that suggests the existence of archetypal forms

that are universally known and inherent to the psyche of all humankind. The theory of collective unconscious is thought to encompass animals as well (Campbell 1976, 60). In other words the labyrinth, its form, and its symbolism for the meaning of life, could be patterns of instinctual knowledge. This theory could explain the discovery of labyrinths in unrelated cultures throughout different areas of the world. The labyrinth is a unique archetype because it can be walked and experienced, whereas most archetypes are psychological processes that cannot be experienced directly (Artress 2006).

Kern (2000) suggests there are two ways to think about the origin and dissemination of the labyrinth to determine why they are found in so many places around the world. The first idea is that the design of the labyrinth was invented by different cultures in different places independently. This theory supports the collective unconscious theory suggested by Artress and developed by Jung.

The second view suggested by Kern is that a single design and invention of the labyrinth spread around the world through migratory influences. This assumes that the labyrinth idea is so unique and sophisticated that it could only have been spread throughout the migration of ancient civilizations throughout history.

Kern believes that the second theory is the most reasonable. He writes that ancient examples of labyrinths have only been found in Europe, India, Java, Sumatra, and the American Southwest. He claims reports of the existence of the labyrinth in other ancient civilizations are false. He notes that other regions of the world viewed the labyrinth as European in origin. Since the labyrinth is not found in all cultures and exists only in certain traditions, it is most probable that the conception of the labyrinth happened in one culture and was spread to others by migration (Kern 2000).

If the labyrinth was conceived in one culture and then disseminated through migration and travel, it is important to determine which culture first conceived the labyrinth. Many facts point to the Mediterranean Basin because most ancient labyrinths have been discovered there.

Kern (2000) states that the labyrinth most likely originated in Minoan Crete. Crete was the first advanced European civilization and the most dominant culture of the time. Kern states that the labyrinth was known to the Minoan Crete civilization in the second or third millennium before Christ, and any prior examples have not been documented.

Kern postulates that the labyrinth then reached Spain, England, and Ireland via Mycenaean prospectors. It is uncertain how the labyrinth made its way to India; however, it also spread to Java and Sumatra. Kern proposes that the existence of labyrinths in North America can be explained by trans-Atlantic contact, noting that a majority of the Troy towns on the coasts were sea-faring people. The Troy towns Kern refers to are turf-style labyrinths in the British Isles located on Scandinavia (Kern 2000).



Figure 1.3 Labyrinth Symbol on Coin  
(Hohmuth 2003, 6)



Figure 1.4 Labyrinth on Petroglyph  
(Buchanan 2007, 8)

### 2.3.2 The Cretan Labyrinth

The Cretan labyrinth is the oldest European labyrinth form on record. Parts of it can still be found on Mount Knossos on the Isle of Crete in Greece. This Cretan form is also referred to as the classical seven-circuit labyrinth. The Cretan form existed as the fundamental labyrinth shape in America and India (Kern 2000). The oldest surviving labyrinth was found on a rock carving in Sardinia; it dates from 2500 to 2000 BC. "It is believed that these designs evolved out of the spiral figure found in nature" (Artress 2006, 46). Buchanan (2007) also determined the



Cretan, classical seven-circuit form to be the original and oldest form of the labyrinth. This literature review has found that the Cretan form is one of two most influential labyrinth designs to date.



Figure 1.5 Cretan Seven-Circuit Labyrinth  
(Buchanan 2007, 23)

### 2.3.3 The Chartres Labyrinth

The Chartres labyrinth is the second-most influential labyrinth form. Around the thirteenth century, labyrinths began to appear in medieval churches and cathedrals (Buchanan 2007). The labyrinths, mostly paths defined by paving patterns, were fundamentally different from the Cretan version. Although both are based on a circular form with a unicursal path, the Cretan form is more asymmetrical and organic in shape. The newer medieval version was more formal and symmetrical. The medieval version also had eleven circuits instead of the seven found in the Cretan. The medieval version is referred to as the Chartres labyrinth (Artress 2006), and was installed in the cathedral floor in France from 1194 and 1220 AD. The original Chartres labyrinth is very rare because it is undamaged and one of the few that remain intact from that era.



Figure 1.6 Chartres Labyrinth  
(Hohmuth 2003, 130)

#### 2.4 Sacred Geometry

Some researchers and historians of ancient labyrinths believe the labyrinths were based on sacred geometry (Artress 2006; Buchanan 2007; Kern 2000; Lonegren 2001; Pennick 1990). Most ancient labyrinths were regarded as sacred spaces and were used as spiritual and religious tools (Lonegren 2001). Most sacred spaces built before the Renaissance were created using sacred geometry and were thought to give the space a special energy that allowed its users to connect to another realm of existence. Several formulas are used in sacred geometry; the ones most often applied to the labyrinth are pi (3.1416) and phi (1.618) (Lonegren 2001).

“Sacred geometry is a balance of proportion, placement, and position of elements such as stone, wood, and mortar that use a complementary system of numbers, angles, and design” (Artress 2006, 48). According to Artress (2006), “by using this balanced system, the mind can

find rest, comfort, and harmony, thus leaving the mind open to other levels of awareness” (p. 48). She likens this approach to the Chinese model of Feng Shui. Sacred geometry was applied to the Gothic cathedrals of Europe and once held in high regard with master builders and masons. Artress (2006) notes that according to Robert Lawlor, author of *Sacred Geometry, Philosophy and Practice*, the theory of sacred geometry stems from the philosopher Plato and the actual measurements and equations were developed by Pythagoras (p. 49).

An understanding of sacred geometry needs more than a rational approach (Lonegren 2001). Lonegren (2001) has found that ancient sacred spaces used sacred geometry to tune the space much like a musical instrument “to resonate at a frequency that aided the supplicant in connecting with the spiritual” (p. 13-14). Non-physical activities such as connecting spiritually, healing, and even prophesizing, can be enhanced with the distinctive vibrational levels created by these sacred ratios and orientations to the earth’s energy fields. Ancient populations somehow intrinsically knew about these energy fields and placed their temples and other sacred spaces where these energies were active (Lonegren 2001).

According to Buchanan, sacred geometry is based on shapes found in nature. For example, the circle is found in nature; however, the square is not because it is a man-made shape. The patterns and proportions found in nature, such as the nautilus shell, help to organize space that is in harmony with nature (Buchanan 2007). Experts have found that this may be one reason the labyrinth exists and that the original forms are circular.

## 2.5 Characteristics

### *2.5.1 Forms*

The Cretan classical seven-circuit labyrinth is the most common form used (Buchanan 2007). It is normally found with seven circuits, or concentric rings; however, according to Robert Ferre (2003), labyrinth expert and original founder of the Labyrinth Society, it can have more circuits, typically in steps of four. Thus the next size is 11. See Figure 1.5 for a visual of the

Cretan Labyrinth. The form of the Cretan labyrinth is somewhat organic and more mushroom-shaped rather than a perfect circle (Ferre 2003).

The Chartres Cathedral pattern is more formal and the form is more circular. (See Figure 1.6.) This form typically contains eleven circuits. The original, located at the Chartres Cathedral in France, is approximately forty-two feet in diameter (Artress 2006). The path is sixteen inches wide and the total walking distance is 861.5 feet, inclusive of the walk to the center and back. The sacred geometry entrenched in the design of the Chartres Labyrinth is important and the path placement, width, and turns all contribute to the balance of the labyrinth (Artress 2006). According to Ferre (2003), the Chartres Labyrinth can be made into a variety of diameters, from smaller versions of twenty feet, to larger versions of up to one hundred feet. There can also be a variance in form such as making it octagonal or even square (Ferre 2003). (See Figure 2.1.) Other forms of labyrinths are usually based on the Cretan or the Chartres designs.

## 2.6 Revival of the Labyrinth

In many cultures the labyrinth was a symbol for the journey of life. It was, according to Atalli (1999), “an implicit indicator of profundity, complexity, and the riddle of human destiny” (p. xxiii). It was a popular symbol with many religions and cultures for many years. “And then came the Age of Reason, with its exaltation of transparency and the straight line. From here on, the labyrinth became an enemy, an example of obscurity to be clarified and banished” (Atalli 1999, xxiii). When the Renaissance began, the labyrinth was losing its status as a symbol for life and wisdom. The straight line became the symbol for truth as science, math, reason, and transparency became more valued (Atalli 1999).

After years of obscurity, the labyrinth is gaining popularity once more. “The labyrinth is now returning full force into all dimensions of human society replacing and displacing the straight line” (Atalli 1999, 41). “We are just beginning to restore the honor of the imagination,” and “our souls hunger for the lost connection to our intuitive nature expressed through myths, dreams, stories, and images” (Artress 2006, 117). In the past, America housed only a very few labyrinths;

however, now there are hundreds (Saward 2002). Many labyrinths have been built since the 1980s. The rediscovery of the labyrinth has led to a resurrection of labyrinths in churches, gardens, and as environmental art in public places. Hundreds of labyrinths are appearing in America and Europe. "Throughout the long history of mazes and labyrinths, whenever and wherever society is undergoing rapid change and development, the labyrinth, in one form or another, has blossomed" (Saward 2002, 12).

The labyrinth has, over thousands of years, had its times of rise and fall. The labyrinth, once a symbol of the meandering path of life, faded with the Renaissance. Walking a straight path overshadowed the meandering path of the nomadic lifestyle. As the world continues to change, the meandering path and imagination are making their way back into culture. "In these uncertain and confusing times, humanity is once again seeking the pure path of the labyrinth, reflecting as it does the journey of life in which one step is taken at a time" (Saward 2002, 40).

## 2.7 Uses of the Labyrinth

### *2.7.1 Contemporary Uses*

Contemporary uses of the labyrinth vary in applications from schools to hospitals and are becoming popular in many public and private applications. Churches and cathedrals are reviving the use of the labyrinth, parks are starting to use the labyrinth, and even individuals are taking advantage of them in their own private gardens. Artress sums up the many modern uses of the labyrinth, in a forward to Atalli (1999, xiii), stating:

Labyrinths are being created all over the western world. Hospitals are using them in their complementary healing programs, spas are using them for stress reduction, retirement centers are using them for exercise and community building, memorial parks invite their grieving clients to walk to release fears and find solace, churches and cathedrals are using them to quicken the spirit and enliven the religious imaginations as parishioners walk the path of life.

Buchanan (2007, 50) refers to the labyrinth "as a tool for self-growth and personal discovery." He states that the labyrinth is being used in many different settings including: hospitals, schools, prisons, workshops, conferences, retreats, churches, hospices, spiritual groups, and other special needs groups.

The Chartres or medieval design is once again appearing in churches and cathedrals. Recently there has been a remarkable revival of the labyrinth as a spiritual tool. New audiences are being exposed to the labyrinth. Knowledge of the labyrinth's heritage and usefulness allows it to transcend the traditional Christian perspectives, and it is emerging in more public secular environments.

In the 1990s, several replicas of the Chartres labyrinth were installed in public parks and other public environments, especially in America (Saward 2002). There are even labyrinths installed with surrounding amphitheatre seating with special care given to surrounding vegetation and the overall setting. This allows the labyrinth to become a multi-use space used for several functions, almost becoming a stage.

Marcus and Barnes (1999), experts on healing gardens, note that the labyrinth has been used throughout history as a tool for contemplation and symbolic cleansing. They state that the labyrinth has made its way back into ecclesiastical and medical settings and is being used for walking meditation and in some religious capacities. Marcus and Barnes (1999) speculate that the benefits of the labyrinth in these uses are related to the "slowing down of the pace of the day" or the possibility that the "symbolism of turning, turning, and turning again, to see from all angles is helpful. Whatever the mechanism, the labyrinth still beckons people to leave their troubles at its heart" (p. 94).

In addition to church or religious settings and health care settings, the labyrinth is making its way into school systems. Labyrinths are being used to inspire creativity in children and as a tool for learning the arts and sciences (Saward 2002). Inspired creative teachers are introducing the labyrinth to school curricula to motivate the students and capture their interests. Labyrinths are being used for lessons on subjects such as art, drama, psychology, history, math, and geography (Saward 2002).

In addition to curriculum, the labyrinth is being used as a de-stressor from the rigors of academia. Teachers and administrators are finding that the labyrinth is a valuable asset to the



playground as a retreat for exhausted students needing time out to regroup their thoughts before returning to the pressures of the school day. Saward (2002) has found that when children walk the labyrinth, it gives them the necessary break needed to sort through problems and to recover their self-control, thereby allowing them to make conscious decisions.

Labyrinths are also being used in private residences (Saward 2002). Labyrinths can be very affordable and enjoyable to the homeowner. Many homeowners are taking advantage of the wide variety of materials available. For example, some have their own labyrinth form in their lawns and gardens.

This literature review has found that many places benefit from the inclusion of a labyrinth. It appears that they are becoming more known and understood as they gain popularity across the United States and internationally.

#### *2.7.2 Meditation*

Studies have shown that some sense of internal spirituality, not necessarily related to religion, can increase the level of happiness one may experience in life (Shimoff 2008). Shimoff suggests that meditation is one way to increase this level of inner spirituality. It has been shown to produce positive health benefits such as a stronger immune system, reduced blood pressure, and reduction in the rates of heart disease, strokes, and cancer. This is becoming acknowledged in the medical world where twenty-five percent of American medical schools incorporate spirituality and health into their curricula. Meditation is one way to increase one's inner self or spirituality thus increasing the likelihood of health benefits (Shimoff 2008).

The most prevalent use of the present-day labyrinth is a walking or moving meditation (Buchanan 2007). Buchanan suggests that our current way of life, although very leisure-oriented, has become chaotic and burdened with an abundance of choice, inhibiting the ability to live a balanced lifestyle. Buchanan believes walking the labyrinth can unite the rational, intuitive, and spiritual elements of the walker allowing him or her to take a break from the chaos and let intuitive inner knowledge suggest how to manage the tasks of life. The labyrinth, as a tool for walking

meditation, has many applications in contemporary landscapes. According to Shimoff (2008), people have an aversion to boredom. Besides work, our time is consumed with watching television, listening to our iPods, reading magazines, and playing video games. She suggests that with all of this stimulation, some might have difficulty with traditional meditation. Although she does not mention the labyrinth, she does recommend walking in nature as an alternative means of meditation.

Dr. Lauren Artress, a licensed psychotherapist, states that meditation is important due to the amount of stress individuals are experiencing today. This quieting of the mind will rejuvenate the mind, body, and spirit. However, it takes discipline to master, especially with all the distractions of everyday life. She states, "The labyrinth can be a tremendous help in quieting the mind, because the body is moving. Movement takes away the excess charge of psychic energy that disturbs our efforts to quiet our thought processes" (Artress 2006, 25).

"Mastering the flow of our unruly hands, arms, shoulders, and eyes, working them in a congruent way, can bring us closer to our self" (Artress 2006, 70). The intention of all spiritual disciplines is to replenish ourselves through meditation and prayer. For many people, attempting a sitting meditation, quieting the mind, is just not possible. However, by walking a labyrinth, the release of energy helps one to center the mind. People are realizing that without much effort, they can benefit from the experience of a moving meditation while walking a labyrinth (Artress 2006).

The labyrinth has been associated with the journey of life for many centuries (Hohmuth 2003). Hohmuth states that the labyrinth is a path of experience, a space used for learning, discovery, and opportunity. Hohmuth poses the question, "Where do our thoughts lead if you don't need to think about the path you are following? Inwards," he replies (2003, 121).

### *2.7.3 Creative Uses*

Some believe that the labyrinth is a tool to enhance creativity. Creativity will be a highly sought-after ability in the coming years (Pink 2006). Pink's theory states that this era is changing



from an information age to a conceptual age, where creativity will be a requirement of survival for companies as well as individuals. Pink suggests that as many repetitive careers are outsourced overseas, the creative careers will thrive in the United States. One way to enhance creativity is to exercise the right brain, which is known in the study of psychology to be the half of the brain where creative thought is found (Pink 2006).

The field of psychology has established that there are two hemispheres of the brain, each responsible for its own set of functions (Blakeslee 1983). The left brain excels at analysis, verbal abilities, and organization, as well as linear, logical, and deductive thinking. The left brain is sensitive to time and helps keep the brain in the present. The left brain processes language; since society today is verbal and functions in a very linear way, the left brain's lateral thinking style gets utilized more and therefore dominates over the right brain in Western culture (Pink 2006).

The right brain, on the other hand, excels at nonverbal expressions, interpreting emotion and patterns, and problem solves in a holistic manner. The right brain is the big picture side of the brain where intuition, creativity, and perception of aesthetics are found (Pink 2006). The right brain is sensitive to space and therefore helps people adjust to their surroundings.

These two hemispheres of the brain help one maneuver through life. The left keeps individuals grounded and practical, and the right helps make creative inductive decisions. Walking a labyrinth, for instance, allows the right brain to excel because the left brain does not have to pay attention to where it is going. Therefore, it takes a break and allows the right brain to dominate. Edwards (1999) states, "In order for one to gain access to the sub-dominate right brain, one must present the brain with a task that the left brain will turn down" (p. xx).

A labyrinth is an escape for the right brain. As the left brain engages in the logical progression of walking the path, the right brain is free to think creatively (Tolzman quoted in Pink 2006, 229). The Labyrinth Society reinforces this theory within their definition of a labyrinth: "Labyrinths are thought to enhance right brain activity (<http://www.labyrinthsociety.org/about->

labyrinths 2008).” Pink (2006) compares walking a labyrinth to driving on a long empty road; the mind does not have to pay attention and allowing itself to slip into another place.

#### *2.7.4 Healthcare Uses*

For many years the labyrinth has been found at churches for walking meditations and prayer paths. Recently they are appearing in healthcare settings as well (Wood 2006). According to healthcare professionals, the use of walking the labyrinth as an addition to traditional forms of treatment is essential (Griffith 2006; Baran 2003). Griffin (2002) states that “Oncology nurses are in a unique position to become knowledgeable about the labyrinths, and how they may help their patients” (p. 296). She states that the labyrinth is a form of psychoneuroimmunology and can be integrated with other forms of treatment. The labyrinth is a tool to help patients heal by “achieving a contemplative and transformational state of mind” (Griffith 2006, 296). The meandering path of the labyrinth that signifies the journey of life can help to comfort the patient, caregiver, and loved ones (Wood 2006). Practitioners are finding that using holistic treatments, such as the labyrinth, along with traditional methods of treatment, is becoming important (Baran 2003). The integration of mind, body, and spirit in healing programs summons an individual’s innate self-healing abilities (Sandor 2006). Densford (2007) has found that over the past fifteen years, the use of labyrinths in therapeutic settings has increased; with this increased use and interest, many more studies are being performed to research their effectiveness.

#### 2.8 Materials

It is common knowledge among researchers that labyrinths have been made from many materials throughout the thousands of years they have been on this earth. The earliest known labyrinth found on the Greek isle of Crete was first carved into rock (Buchanan 2007). The labyrinths of Scandinavia, Sweden, and the Mediterranean were mostly made with rock borders that defined a unicursal path. As the labyrinth progressed, the materials have become more sophisticated. By the thirteenth century, the medieval Chartres style labyrinths, which were being installed in many churches and cathedrals, were made with brick and other paving materials. In

sixteenth century Britain, many labyrinths were constructed using berm-like turf mounds, which are often referred to as Troy Towns (Kern 2000).

Today many materials can be used to create the form of a labyrinth (Artress 2006; Buchannan 2007; Lonegren 2001; Pennick 1990; Saward 2003). Depending on the placement of the labyrinth and the permanence of labyrinth, the materials used can vary. Labyrinths can be made using berms and/or plantings defining the paths or even a lawn mowed path to create the form, if something temporary is needed. This research is primarily focused on permanent labyrinths in outdoor environments accessible to the public; therefore, materials such as stone, brick, pavers, aggregate materials, and even concrete are the most suitable. Many stone paths are used in natural settings, whereas materials such as concrete or brick can be appropriate for urban settings where much of the landscape is hardscape materials (Saward 2003).

Many interesting materials can be used for constructing labyrinths and, with modern technology and the creative drive of the culture, the possibilities are limitless and more affordable than ever (Saward 2003). Labyrinths are suitable to public spaces and private spaces such as residential gardens (Saward 2003). The individual can have a labyrinth because designs and materials are developed for smaller areas. Moreover, the ability to personalize and consider the genius loci of the site is more possible than ever (Saward 2002). Buchanan (2007) states that the more people using the labyrinth, the more solid the materials should be so that it can withstand more wear and tear.



Figure 1.7 Stone Labyrinth  
(Buchanan 2003, 85)

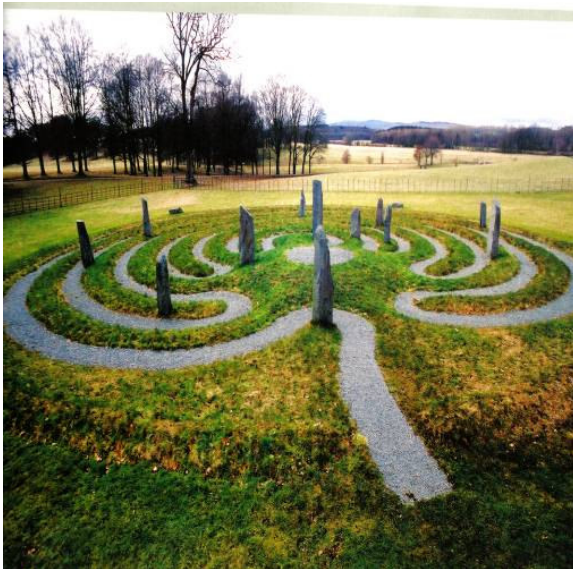


Figure 1.8 Cretan Labyrinth with Gravel Path  
(Buchanan 2003, 123)



Figure 1.9 Gravel Labyrinth with Natural Borders  
(Buchanan 2003, 137)

## 2.9 Form

The majority of labyrinths are circular in form (Artress 2006), but there are other forms of labyrinths that have been used over the years. Labyrinths can be circular, pentagonal, rectangular, and organic in form (Kern 2000). The Cretan or original seven-circuit labyrinth is circular in form but organic because it almost flattens out at the entrance according to pictures from Buchanan (2007). The Chartres or Medieval Labyrinth is a perfect circular form, and the

four quadrants of paths created by the pattern create a cross-like form that was once a symbol for Christianity (Artress 2006). Other forms such as the rectangular or the pentagonal are based on the same principles of the Cretan and Chartres. The singular path always leads to the center and then back out (Buchanan 2007). There are more organic shapes where the path is in more of a linear form; however, the path must be unicursal and lead to a center and then back out. When one is able to draw and design the basic Cretan pattern, with practice, other forms can be created using the guiding principles of the labyrinth (Buchanan 2007).

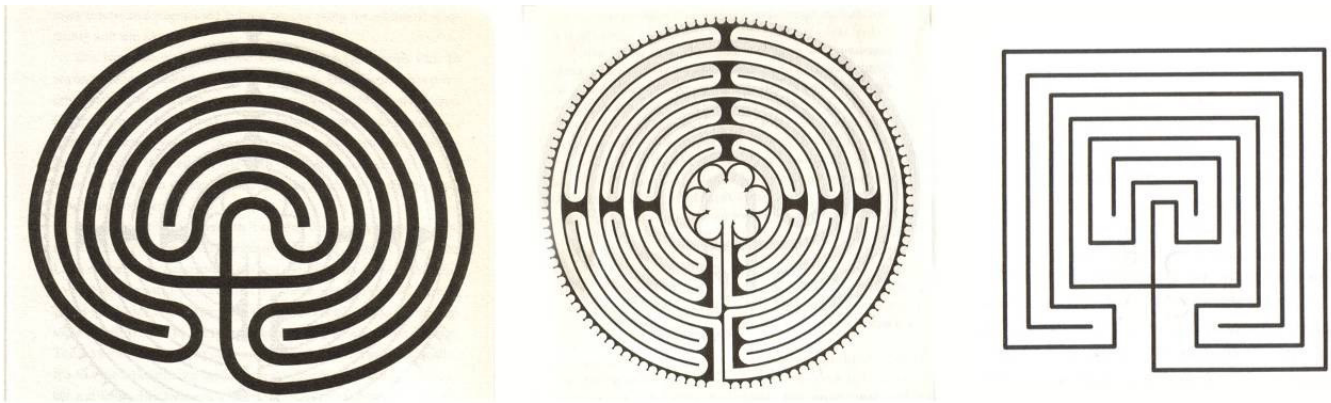


Figure 2.1 Cretan, Chartres, and Square Labyrinths  
(West 2000, 7-8)

#### 2.10 Placement

As with any design in the outdoor built environment, analysis should be conducted to determine the appropriate design solution (Simonds 1983). When analyzing a site for design, several important factors should influence it. The existing characteristics of the site, or “genius loci” should help determine the form of the labyrinth and the materials used. For example, a more natural site may call for a labyrinth with a more organic form and materials that contribute to the aesthetics such as field stone path borders and decomposed granite paths. In a formal or urban environment, the Chartres or medieval design may be more appropriate because it is very symmetrical. These examples are basic design considerations and can be researched in basic landscape architecture books authored by experts such as Simonds (1983).

Other basic elements used in the analysis process for any landscape design are climate elements such as sun and prevailing winds, soil conditions, circulation, existing vegetation, and topography (Simonds 1983). These basic elements should be considered to help determine the location of the labyrinth in terms of feasibility and fit into existing conditions. The landscape architect must ensure that the labyrinth will be comfortable to use in relation to climate conditions.

Placement decisions such as direction and orientation of the labyrinth must be considered (Buchanan 2007). Views within the site of the labyrinth are important; measures should be taken to ensure the view will be relaxing and not distracting (Buchanan 2007). There are also directional ways to lay out a labyrinth. All labyrinth designs should have cardinal points; south should be the appropriate position for the entrance in the northern hemisphere (Buchanan 2007).

### 2.11 Walking a Labyrinth

Artress (2006) emphasizes that the benefits of walking a labyrinth do not require a great deal of concentration. The energy discharged by walking an intricate path focuses the mind. This simple act can invite one back into the center of his or her being. Anxiety or fear may be experienced upon the first walk of the labyrinth, but this oftentimes dissipates quickly and users experience a calm that guides them. Eventually, the winding paths represent the turns in one's life. Walking the labyrinth is particularly helpful to those who have had a shift in their lives, and it comforts those who are experiencing an unpleasant life. New opportunities, insights, and peace may develop as a result of walking a labyrinth.

There are many ways to walk a labyrinth; however, an important step in preparing to walk the labyrinth is to reflect on one's life and what one wants to accomplish with the walk (Artress 2006). It could be to pray, meditate, or find a solution to a baffling question. To help describe the internal process one may feel while walking the labyrinth, Artress (2006) has conceived of three terms, which she calls the "three R's": releasing, receiving, and returning (p. xii.) Releasing describes one's walk towards the center of the labyrinth; receiving is meant to represent the

center of the labyrinth, and the return is the walk back to the edge of the labyrinth. This is the process (noted by Artress) that can be metaphorical to releasing one's problems, receiving an inspiration, and making the return with an inspired solution or revelation.

#### 2.12 Summary

This literature review identifies the history and background of the labyrinth, as well as discusses the current trends, through the inspecting recent literature on labyrinths. The literature reviewed includes books on labyrinths, journals, theses, and dissertations. Literature is studied in the fields of psychology, personality, and meditation as well to complement the meditative, creative, and therapeutic benefits the labyrinth is said to instill.

This chapter defines the labyrinth, gives a brief history of the labyrinth, discusses sacred geometry, describes the characteristics of the most popular labyrinths, and explores the uses of labyrinths. Materials, form, and a discussion of how to walk a labyrinth are discussed in this chapter as well.

## CHAPTER 3

### RESEARCH METHODS

#### 3.1 Research Approach

This research is guided by an interpretive view applying a qualitative approach. It implements an in-depth interview data source using phenomenology as the fundamental analytical tool. The interpretive view is a paradigm that allows one to understand phenomena from an actor's own point of view. Perceptions of what is, by a person, are important to the interpretive view (Taylor and Bogdan 1998). The researcher is the instrument for data collection, and his or her values are an extremely important part of the analysis (Henderson 1991). The potential for discovering meaningful results in the interpretive view exists because there are few overriding rules to limit the data-finding process. Many times, research questions come from the data analysis. The interpretive model is holistic, inductive, and attaches meaning and perspective to the findings (Taylor and Bogdan 1998). Positivism, which is at the other end of the spectrum, emphasizes quantitative methods that pertain more to testing and numbers. It is more objective and reductive. With positivism, the opportunity to understand the perspective of the actor is lost (Henderson 1991).

A qualitative approach is frequently an ongoing process. Research questions emerge as the research begins, often generating more questions as the research progresses. The qualitative approach usually requires interaction with people because understanding their reality is the purpose. Qualitative studies are rich and contextual applying research methods such as in-depth interviews and participant observation (Henderson 1991).

In-depth interviews are used for this type of research; according to Henderson (1991), interviews are the paramount method for understanding a subject in depth. Interviews can be structured in several ways, ranging from highly structured to open-ended questions; however, the



primary intention is to unearth what is on people's minds and to understand their perspective (Henderson 1991). Interviews can produce very rich data, although they can be unpredictable and are hard to pre-test (Henderson 1991). This research uses a guided interview approach; specific topics and questions are discussed, with room allowed for more questions and issues to emerge as the interview progresses.

Phenomenology is a movement to understand the phenomenon as it is consciously experienced by the participants (Henderson 1991). It is a facet of the interpretive view as well as a philosophical movement. The principal focus is the research and explanation of phenomena as consciously experienced, exclusive of theories regarding causal explanation and free of unexamined preconceptions and presuppositions (Henderson 1991). This research takes this approach in the interview process to gain understanding of what the participants are thinking and experiencing. Open-ended questions are used to allow many other questions and conversations to occur, allowing the participants to guide the interviews.

### 3.2 Project Site Selection

Local study sites were selected in the Dallas/Fort Worth metropolitan area, in north Texas, due to the restraints on the researcher's ability to travel and an interest in this particular location. Project sites had to be public institutions or allow public access to their labyrinth. This study is geared toward landscape architects and the outdoor-built environment; therefore, the labyrinths had to be permanent and located outdoors. These requirements lead to projects at hospitals, churches, and institutions of learning such as schools, colleges, or universities. Coincidentally, the literature review revealed these settings to be some of the most popular.

Using the World Wide Labyrinth Locator, which is a web-based application co-managed by Veriditas (headed by Dr. Lauren Artress) and the Labyrinth Society <http://wwwl.veriditas.labyrinthociety.org/> (2008), five locations were selected in the Dallas/Fort Worth area. Artress has done a great deal to promote, educate, and maintain the integrity of the labyrinth and has become one of the United States' top advisors and facilitators on the use of the

labyrinth for meditational purposes (Atalli 1999; Buchanan 2007; Kyle 2002; Pink 2006; Saward 2003; Sholem 1999).

Artress's non-profit organization, Veriditas, is dedicated to education about labyrinths. It has installed and promoted labyrinths all over the world (Sholem 1999). As stated previously, her organization runs the World Wide Labyrinth Locator that was used to find locations for the study sites of labyrinths presented in this research. Her ideas and insights about labyrinths are evaluated from the standpoint of a psychotherapist and a reverend. Veriditas has trained facilitators of labyrinths all over the nation. This locator lists labyrinths world-wide and is searchable by using state, city, or zip code to narrow the results to a particular area or region. The study first began by using the World Wide Labyrinth Locator on the website listed above to conduct a search to locate labyrinths within a fifty-mile radius of the zip code 75204, a zip code central to the uptown and downtown area of Dallas, Texas. The search identified twenty-two labyrinths within the fifty-mile radius of the selected zip code. Advanced searches found that eleven of the labyrinths were in churches, one was in a hospital, and one was located at a local college. The remaining nine labyrinths were at private residences or other locations not selected for this research because they were not public institutions or because the labyrinth was not publicly available.

A limit to this study is that there were no completed labyrinths in the Dallas/Fort Worth metropolitan area that were located in a public park setting. Literature revealed that labyrinths are becoming quite popular in public park settings, and a study of a site such as this would have been a valuable source of additional information. An extended search was conducted on the Labyrinth Locator, which searched for labyrinths within 100 miles of the same 75204 zip code to specifically establish if any labyrinths were available in public park settings in the extended radius. This search identified twenty-nine labyrinths, but no labyrinths in public park setting were located.

The Labyrinth Locator contains contact information for most of the labyrinths, which provided a starting point for interview selection. The selection of the specific study sites was exceedingly narrow since fifty percent of the labyrinths located through the defined search on the Labyrinth Locator were located at churches or some form of religious institution. Calls were first made to the hospital and the college campus because there was only one in each setting available. Through these calls it was discovered that an additional hospital in Dallas had a labyrinth, yet it was not included on the World Wide Labyrinth Locator.

Additional research was conducted on the Internet and through conversations with landscape professionals who are familiar with various design projects throughout the Dallas/Fort Worth area. This research lead to the identification of the second labyrinth located at a large hospital near downtown Dallas. The labyrinth at this site was not listed on the World Wide Labyrinth Locator, possibly because the hospital refers to it as the Interfaith Prayer Garden.

At this point three locations were chosen including two hospitals and one college campus. Calls were made to contacts at the eleven churches to determine their level of interest in participating in this research, and if there was anyone on site with the information needed for this research. Three of the listed contacts could not be reached, two of the locations were not interested in the research, and two did not return messages in time to be considered. This left four labyrinths to be considered for this study. Two were eventually chosen based on the level of knowledge of the stakeholders on the site's labyrinth and the specific form of the labyrinths. One church had the medieval Chartres form and the other had a contemporary organic form.

Overall, the forms selected included three Chartres forms (the most popular in the Dallas/Fort Worth area), one classical Cretan form, and one organic contemporary design (probably based on the classical version, but with more variance). Choosing institutions with different forms of labyrinths was most useful in comparing ideas about form.

Relevant literature indicates that contemporary labyrinths are primarily found in churches, hospitals, and educational institutions. Therefore, this research was conducted with two churches, two hospitals, and one local college.

### 3.3 In-Depth Interviews

Opinions of the users of labyrinths regarding their benefits are highly subjective; therefore, in-depth interviews are used in this research. Qualitative interviewing is flexible and open-ended, allowing the researcher to develop questions as the interview process progresses (Taylor and Bogdan 1998). It allows for conversational engagements, which lead to a better understanding of the interviewees and how they view a topic. In this study, the research was intended to study labyrinth settings and use in the Dallas/Fort Worth area, resulting in a broad range of settings and interviewees within a narrow geographical area.

According to Taylor, general theories about social phenomena are constructed by interviewing multiple informants. In qualitative studies, according to Taylor, the type of informants or the number of interviews is not important at the beginning of the project, but it is important at the end. There are many ways of to build a pool of informants. One way is called “snowballing” (Taylor and Bogdan 1998). Snowballing is the idea that once the researcher is acquainted with an informant, the informant will then introduce the researcher to other informants. Snowballing was used in this research project to find informants of the labyrinths from projects selected.

#### *3.3.1 Selecting the Respondents*

As previously noted, the World Wide Labyrinth Locator was used to locate the project sites in the Dallas/Fort Worth area. It was also noted that the Labyrinth Locator had a contact person listed on nearly all of the labyrinths listed. Contact persons garnered from the Labyrinth Locator were called and informed about the research. They were questioned about their knowledge of labyrinths and specifically about the history and use at their particular location. These individuals confirmed knowledge about the labyrinth and agreed to participate in the in-depth interview or refer the researcher to someone who could.

At each labyrinth location, a stakeholder or key informant was interviewed as was the designer, when possible. In all, twelve interviews were conducted at the five locations described in section 3.2. At some locations two informants were identified and interviewed along with the designer.

Designers of two project sites were unable to be contacted for interviews in this study. The designer of one of the church study sites was a landscape architect who is deceased. A second church study site purchased the labyrinth as a pre-designed kit and it was installed as a turn-key project. A church member with a construction background oversaw the project as it was installed and performed the grading and preparation for the labyrinth kit. This individual was interviewed by the researcher in place of the designer.

It would have been preferred to have conducted additional interviews with stakeholders at the five selected project sites, as well as extend the research to additional labyrinths in the Dallas/Fort Worth area. The researcher was unable to identify any additional stakeholders at the five selected project sites. Additional participants either lacked sound knowledge on the labyrinths at the site or were unwilling/unable to participate in the research in the established time frame. Additional project sites were also considered in the research, but the researcher faced similar constraints. Three of the listed contacts could not be reached, two of the locations were not interested in the research, and two did not return messages in time to be considered. Twelve study sites were eventually selected from the twenty-two available in the fifty-mile radius around downtown Dallas.

The list of selected projects and associated interviewees included:

- 1) Baylor Medical Center – Dallas, Texas:
  - a) Chaplain A
  - b) Chaplain B
  - c) Designer of the labyrinth

- 2) Cook Children's Health Care System – Fort Worth, Texas
  - a) Chaplain
  - b) Designer of the labyrinth
- 3) Richland College, Richardson, Texas
  - a) Employee and promoter of the labyrinth
  - b) Employee, user, and facilitator of the labyrinth
  - c) Designer of the labyrinth
- 4) United Methodist Church at Kessler Park – Dallas, Texas
  - a) Affiliate and promoter for the labyrinth
  - b) Church member and promoter for the labyrinth
  - c) Project manager and construction supervisor for the labyrinth
- 5) St. Stephen's Presbyterian Church – Fort Worth, Texas
  - a) Pastor and promoter for the labyrinth

### *3.3.2 Purpose of Interviews*

. The interviews addressed the primary research questions of this study:

- Who is promoting or recommending labyrinths?
- Who are the user groups of labyrinths?
- What are the benefits to the user and the facility?

### *3.3.3 The Interview Questions*

The interview questions below were developed to answer the three research questions. According to Taylor and Bogdan (1998), asking open-ended descriptive questions provides the informant the opportunity to discuss things that are important to him or her. The interview questions below were structured in an open-ended way that could then be elaborated on by carefully designing questions that would inspire discussion. The interview was meant to be conversational with the selected questions used as a template for the interview. In most cases, the interview questions, once answered by the interviewee, offered opportunity for even more

questions, creating the intended conversation. At other times, the questions were answered before they were even asked, allowing the interview to proceed in various ways and lengths.

The interview questions are as follows:

- Who recommended or promoted for the labyrinth at this location?
- Is the labyrinth being utilized?
- Who are the user groups at this labyrinth?
- What are the main purposes for their use of the labyrinth?
- Are there any “coached” or guided programs or uses for the labyrinth?
- Do the users of the labyrinth perceive any benefits?
- Does the institution derive any benefits from the labyrinth?
- Has any formal research been done to determine how the labyrinth has been used?
- Have any design issues with the labyrinth influenced its use, privacy issues, materials used, or overall design?

#### *3.3.4 Analysis of Interviews*

The data collected from the in-depth interviews are recorded and then transcribed. The data are categorized by each question, giving a general idea of how the study sites selected in the Dallas/Fort Worth area came to be, are being used, and if they have any benefits. This method gives a snapshot of the data discovered.

The data are then analyzed from a case study approach for each location, allowing for more specific answers about each location to unfold. This method of analysis gives the researcher a chance to compare the respondents' comments with actual observations of the site, which has been documented with pictures and field notes.

The data discovered at this point are then cross-referenced with the literature review to see if the respondents' comments coincide with what the literature says about the contemporary use of labyrinths in the landscape.

The analysis then searches for themes or domains crucial to understanding contemporary labyrinth use in the Dallas/Fort Worth area. These methods of analyzing the data provide a triangulation between the data gathered in the in-depth interviews, the data recorded in the literature review, and the data observed from the researcher's field notes and pictures by using a case study approach. This approach allows more specific information about the respondents' thoughts and understanding of labyrinths to emerge. Finally, searching for domains or themes helps the researcher discover areas for future research or study in the fields of labyrinths and landscape architecture.

### 3.4 Summary

The literature review helps to identify that contemporary uses of labyrinths requires further study by landscape architects. Understanding labyrinth user groups and possible benefits can contribute to the design and placement of labyrinths in the outdoor-built environment. A qualitative method is chosen due to the subjective nature of the labyrinth. A basic understanding and perspective is needed regarding the user groups and stakeholders of labyrinths. A total of twelve interviews are performed at five study sites in the Dallas/Fort Worth area, including two hospitals, two churches, and one college campus. Interviewees include designers, chaplains, reverends, and one labyrinth construction manager. The analyses of the data are triangulated between the in-depth interviews, site observations, and literature review.



## CHAPTER 4

### DATA ANALYSIS

#### 4.1 Introduction

The data gathered through the in-depth interviews are analyzed in chapter 4. The data are first classified as a snapshot identifying each interview question then describing the responses given during the interviews. This compares the answers as a whole, identifying overall themes.

The data are then analyzed by each study site describing in more depth the respondents' answers for each interview questions. Field observations are included in the site-specific analysis as well as the designer's perspective of the study site.

#### 4.2 Who Promoted or Recommended the Labyrinth at this Project Site?

Most of the respondents who promoted the labyrinth are individuals or groups who had a close affiliation or association with the site. Many of the respondents were the ones who originally recommended having the labyrinth developed at the site. Other promoters for the study sites were employees or volunteers at the sites aspiring to enhance the organization in some way.

##### *4.2.1 Respondent Data*

- At Richland Community College a handful of people on a committee to establish the Mind, Body, and Health program at the college recommended the labyrinth. The promoters believed strongly in the initiative to provide an outdoor element to the college that would complement the Heritage Garden, a historical allusion, in conjunction with the school's Mind, Body, and Health program (Res 1; Res 10).

- At Baylor Medical Center's Dallas campus the promoters were a committee called the Interfaith Task Force; their objective was to provide an interfaith place for any religion or culture to meditate or pray. Hospital officials "wanted a place where people of all faiths could come with equal confidence" (Res 11).
- At Cook Children's Health Care System in Fort Worth, the dominant promoter was the head of ministries at the hospital. The objective was to create a worship space for patients and their families to use.
- At Kessler Park United Methodist Church, the idea to integrate a labyrinth on the church grounds was initiated by two individuals—one who worked at the church, and the other a long-time member of the church. Their objective was to create a space where members of the congregation could come together while providing an outreach to the neighboring community by providing a place for prayer and meditation.

Many of the promoters of labyrinths were members of committees formed at the established study sites. These committees were charged with implementing the labyrinths. The promoters were all well informed about labyrinths and had personally researched their uses prior to deciding on proposing them for implementation at the study sites. The majority of the promoters knew precisely what they were looking for when recommending the labyrinth at the study sites. "[The labyrinth] has been in my mind for a long time ... when our landscape architect first brought the drawings [of mazes], I said have a nice life ... we want a labyrinth" (Res 3).

#### 4.3 Is the Labyrinth Being Utilized at the Project Site? Why or Why Not?

Out of the five labyrinth study sites selected, one of the study sites at Children's Health Care System is heavily utilized. Three of the study sites are being utilized, but not as much as they could be: Richland College, Kessler Park United Methodist Church, and Baylor Hospital. St. Stephen's Presbyterian Church is being utilized, but no indication was given as to how much.

#### 4.3.1 Respondent Data

- At Richland Community College, the labyrinth is not being used as much as hoped. “[The labyrinth] is being used to some extent, but not as much as I want it to be ... I don’t see many individuals out there, students or staff ... but there are instructors who take their classes out there to have the experience” (Res 1).
- At Baylor Medical Center, both respondents agreed that the labyrinth is being utilized, but just not as much as it could. Both respondents stated that they would like to see the labyrinth utilized more frequently. “We’d love for it to be utilized more. A lot of people don’t know what to do with it” (Res 7).
- At Cook Children’s Health Care System, the respondents considered the labyrinth as being utilized. “[The labyrinth] is being highly utilized, and it’s one of the better projects they have out there” (Res 2). “It’s well used ... we never have huge crowds out there, with the exception of people coming as a group, but it’s more likely you will have one to two people out there at a time” (Res 3).
- At Kessler Park United Methodist Church the utilization is gradually increasing, “little by little, more and more people as they get to know about it, and are using it” (Res 8). Respondent 9 stated he frequently sees individuals walking the labyrinth, kids gathering at it, and people often walking their dogs through it.
- At St. Stephen’s Presbyterian Church, the labyrinth is being utilized. The church possesses a portable indoor labyrinth as well as the outdoor labyrinth at the study site. “They have Sunday school classes using it and a guild that performs guided programs” (Res 4).

The respondents also described possible reasons for the under-utilization of the labyrinth at their site. A lack of information leads to the labyrinth’s under-utilization: “There is no question that there are a lot of students on campus who don’t have a clue ... people will just cut across it without even thinking about it” (Res 1).

At Baylor Medical Center, “A lot of people don’t know what to do with it,” and “A lot of people are suspicious of it because it has pagan origins” (Res 7). Respondent 7 also pointed out that the geographic weather restraints of Texas play a large role in the under-utilization of the labyrinth stating, “Of course in Texas, you can’t use it between, I don’t know, May and sometime even close to October because it is just so fricking hot” (Res 7).

#### 4.4 Who Are the User Groups of this Labyrinth at the Project Site?

The user groups are diverse taking into consideration the divergent populace of the various study sites selected for this research. Three of the labyrinths at the study sites are being utilized by the surrounding communities more than the organizational users at the study site. The most recurrent user populations uncovered by the respondents included:

1. Individuals users,
2. Community groups and church members,
3. Hospital patients,
4. Hospital patients’ family members,
5. Hospital staff,
6. Relaxation class participants,
7. Students in guided prayer walk and walking meditation classes,
8. Student Classes (Mind Body Health, Peace Studies, Psychology, and Writing classes),
9. Professors and other university staff,
10. Sunday school classes,
11. Yoga students,
12. Memorial service attendants, and
13. Dedication Ceremonies attendants.

##### *4.4.1 Respondent Data*

- At Richland Community College the main user groups are student classes and groups from surrounding communities (Res 1; 10). “I don’t see many individuals out there,

- students or staff ... but there are instructors who take their classes out there to have the experience” (Res 1). Many of the classes using the labyrinth are from the Mind, Body, and Health Program, Peace Study classes, Psychology classes, and writing classes.
- At Baylor Health Care System, the respondents concur that users of the labyrinth are individuals such as patients, family members, and staff. “We have an amazing group of occupational therapists that are into alternative ways of healing. We have walking relaxation classes whose goal is to teach walking meditation” (Res 7). Respondent 11 states that they have “relaxation-made-easy” classes that utilize the labyrinth.
  - At Cook Children’s Health Care System the labyrinth users consist of mostly patients’ family members and hospital staff (Res 2). “Many of the users are worried kids, parents who are terribly anxious, and staff who need to walk off tension” (Res 3).
  - At Kessler Park United Methodist Church, the majority of the users of the labyrinth are from the surrounding community and not from the church congregation (Res 8; 9). “For me the labyrinth was something that was able to bring a community event” (Res 9). “It is being utilized by the neighborhood really more than just this congregation of the United Methodist Church because it is for the community and not just the church” (Res 8).
  - At St. Stephen’s Presbyterian Church, “There are some obvious ways that it is used. There are occasionally Sunday school classes set up who use it ... we also have students from the elementary school who will come do it either individually or as a class. There are a couple of professors who come out here pretty regularly and do a class with it. Those are some of the main things” (Res 4).

#### 4.5 What is the Main Purpose for Use of the Labyrinth at the Project Site?

Data collected from respondents on questions exploring the main purpose of the use of the labyrinth received a variety of responses from the respondents due to the variance of study sites selected. An overview of the labyrinths’ uses is as follows:

1. Walking meditation,
2. Interfaith prayer space,

3. Play area for children,
4. Outlet for relaxation and stress relief,
5. Alternative healing and pain management,
6. Outdoor gathering places for public functions, and
7. Outdoor classrooms.

#### *4.5.1 Respondent Data*

- At Richland Community College, the labyrinth's main purpose is outdoor classroom exercises; specifically through the University's Mind, Body, and Health program, writing exercises through the English department, and psychology class exercises (Res 1; 10). The University has utilized the labyrinth in the initial dedication ceremony of the project site, as well as with several memorial ceremonies. The labyrinth is occasionally used by individuals. "For example, one day I met a friend out here for lunch. We just sat out here, you know, it was a nice day. There were two students who were just out here just using the labyrinth, I guess for meditation. And again, that is the type of thing that we would like to hope to happen more often. But it does happen; there are people who do that" (Res 10).
- At Baylor Medical Center, the major purpose of labyrinth usage at the hospital is for healing, meditation, relaxation, and prayer (Res 7). As an interfaith space welcomes anyone and any religion, "It [the labyrinth] is not a strengthening of my faith, it is a strengthening of my being, so anybody can go and use that no matter what their faith is" (Res 7). The labyrinth is used to help with alternative pain remediation through the Pain Management Center at the site, and it is used by hospital patients' family members (Res 11).
- At Cook Children's Health Care System, "It's up to the user to determine. It's a place to pray without words, a space to help relax children who are worried about what is happening to them, anxious parents, and staff who need to walk off tension" (Res 3).

- At Kessler Park United Methodist Church, the user's main purpose at the labyrinth is to slow down from the hectic, fast-paced world. It is a spiritual journey and a "retreat from the hustle and bustle of life" (Res 8). The labyrinth is more than just a space but "an energy field. There is much conversation needed on the understanding of a labyrinth" (Res 9). People use the labyrinth for the energy created through sacred geometry and the intent of the space (Res 9).
- At St. Stephen's Presbyterian Church the labyrinth has individual purposes such as prayer and meditation, as well as group purposes, such as the meeting of a Sunday school class (Res 4).

#### 4.6. Are There Any Coached or Guided Programs for the Labyrinth at the Project Site?

Two project sites, Baylor Medical Center and St. Stephen's Presbyterian Church, have coached or guided programs in place at the labyrinths. One project site provides guided programs upon request. Two project sites, Richland Community College and Cook Children's Hospital, do not offer any formal guided programs. They do, however, supply brochures and pamphlets explaining the labyrinth and its use and purpose.

##### *4.6.1 Respondent Data*

- At Richland Community College there are no formal coached or guided programs available at the site's labyrinth (Res 1; 10). The site initially provided brochures on the labyrinth as well as a webpage and an explanation of the labyrinth's use on a plaque located beside the labyrinth. "We did have some materials available initially. We made them available in the library, but we haven't really replenished those because there wasn't a large demand" (Res 10).
- At Baylor Medical Center, coached programs are used for meditation and alternative healing practices (Res 7). There is a monthly "Relaxation Made Easy" workshop that frequently uses the labyrinth for different activities, and the pain center regularly uses the labyrinth. "One of the things they do is walking meditation for pain management ... and the Chaplains do sessions on spirituality and deep breathing" (Res 11).

- At Cook Children's Health Care System, a pamphlet is available to the public that depicts the labyrinth's use. The respondents both concurred that no formal coached or guided programs are available.
- Kessler Park United Methodist Church provides detailed instructions on walking the labyrinth, as well as offering guided tours and walks if requested by individuals or groups. "There is supposed to be a sign and unfortunately we do not have it up yet, which would direct people who wanted a guided tour to the appropriate facilitators" (Res 9).
- At St. Stephen's Presbyterian Church the site has trained labyrinth guides who are available to teach and coach individual and groups on how to use the labyrinth. "We now have two people trained as labyrinth guides. They do coaching when they are asked" (Res 4).

#### 4.7 Do the Users of the Labyrinths Perceive Any Benefits at the Project Site?

Ten of the twelve respondents agreed that the perceived benefits are nearly impossible to measure, although the positive benefits are definitely present in the labyrinths' users. It was determined that none of the five project sites or the twelve respondents were aware of any data formally collected on the benefits or perceived benefits of the labyrinths' users. All of the respondents agreed that as observers and users of the labyrinth themselves, the positive benefits are clearly evident for the individual users of the labyrinth, no matter the shape or form of its use.

##### *4.7.1 Respondent Data*

- Positive benefits are perceived by users of the labyrinth at Richland Community College. One respondent said, "a few individuals that I talked to have received benefits but we have not done a formal study on it" (Res 1). Another respondent does not mention observing any specific benefits, but does mention seeing individuals walking the labyrinth, "I guess for meditation" (Res 10).
- At Baylor Medical Center, "it is not magic, but an ancient belief and it is the pattern that is good for the meditation. You can not go around the block and get the same effect" (Res 7). It is tough to measure, "since most everything in life has a purpose, it can be



centering sometimes do activities with no purpose” (Res 7). “It’s the mystery and silence that we really discover ourselves and God, and I think that is also what the labyrinth can provide ... I find I am more creative when I leave there the labyrinth, than when I went in” (Res 11).

- At Cook Children’s Health Care System, there has been no formal research. “People tend to stop me and tell me they have been out there, but we don’t keep any data on it” (Res 3).
- At Kessler Park United Methodist Church, “simply the physical-ness of walking it, causes such relaxation and the twists and turns from left brain to right brain, and the slowing down of your pace is beneficial to your body” (Res 8). Respondent 9 believes that just the energy of being around the labyrinth is beneficial, “Even if you are just left to ponder what this labyrinth does, know absolutely nothing at all, I think the energy out of a labyrinth will come to you” (Res 9).
- At St. Stephen’s Presbyterian Church, Respondent 4 believes it is hard to quantify, but as a user, “there’s a real benefit in just having something that focuses you ... sitting still to pray, is not a big thrill to me, I enjoy the movement” (Res 4).

#### 4.8 Are There Any Benefits to the Institution for Having a Labyrinth on Site?

Respondents at all five of the selected project sites concurred that the labyrinth is perceived as a benefit to each of the sites. A majority of the respondents stated that although the labyrinth is not the main purpose or function, it does attract individuals and user groups from both inside and outside of the community to use the space. Six of the twelve respondents believed the main benefit was that the labyrinth provided a positive reflective space for individuals and user groups to enjoy and use for whatever reason they felt necessary.

##### *4.8.1 Respondent Data*

- At Richland Community College, the labyrinth brings an attractive landscaped area to the campus and it does get the college some publicity by being listed on the World Wide Labyrinth Locator (the same locator the researcher used to identify this site) The

labyrinth is “consistent with the values that we express as a college ... mindfulness, contemplation and reflection that ought to be part of the higher education experience” (Res 10).

- At Baylor Medical Center there are benefits to having the labyrinth as well as some negative issues. Respondent 7 explained that at first the labyrinth got much attention and press, but it has decreased since the initial construction and dedication ceremony. “Some would call it a deficit because we are a Baptist hospital, and some think we are mixing pagan stuff and Christian stuff. I could not disagree more” (Res 7). Another respondent definitely believed it is a benefit stating, “it advances our mission to minister to people of all faiths and to be an interfaith space” (Res 10).
- At Cook Children’s Health Care System the labyrinth brings forth praises from its users – both staff and hospital patients. “We do get a lot of comments from staff as well as the clients at the hospital that it was a great thing to do for them and for the facility. They really appreciate what was done for the clients and the staff as well” (Res 3). Respondent 3 also mentioned she gets comments that people found them by going to the World Wide Labyrinth Locator.
- The Kessler Park United Methodist Church has not only attracted people from the surrounding community to use the labyrinth; it has provided some monetary benefit. Respondent 9 stated that selling bricks for name-sakes creates revenue for the Church. Respondent 8 also stated that people are curious and this brings them by the church to see what the labyrinth is all about.
- At St. Stephen’s Presbyterian Church the labyrinth has brought some press to the Church. “We had a dedication service that about 150 people came to, and there were news reporters there. I know for a fact the guy who runs the religion page has come out and walked it ... I can’t say we have gotten any more members by having it, but it is consistent with a total package of how we understand our church” (Res 4).

#### 4.9 Has Any Formal Research Been Done at the Project Site to Determine How the Labyrinth Has Been Utilized?

All respondents were unaware of any formal research undertaken to determine how the labyrinths at the project sites are being utilized or how the users have benefited from the labyrinth. Many of the respondents interviewed, however, believed such research would be a good idea.

##### *4.9.1 Respondent Data*

- At Richland Community College, Respondent 1 believed that it was possibly a good idea to have some formal research conducted.
- At Baylor Medical Center, Respondent 7 stated, “That would be a great idea.” Respondent 11 thought that doing that kind of research would be hard, but stated, “Maybe you could just do a stress level test or something, measured before walking the labyrinth and after the walk.”
- At Cook Children’s Health Care System both respondents agreed that no formal research had been done.
- At Kessler Park United Methodist Church, “No formal research had been done ... just in the feedback from the instructions in lessons that they have conducted at the labyrinth, and then we have gotten together afterwards and discussed it orally, but I have not documented it” (Res 8).

#### 4.10 Have Any Design Issues with the Labyrinth Influenced the Utilization of the Labyrinth?

All of the respondents had ideas that could improve the utilization of their labyrinth. The design issues discussed are as follows:

1. Materials used, for paving and planting,
2. Microclimate issues (sun and shade),
3. Privacy issues,
4. Drainage problems,
5. Safety concerns,

6. Formal versus organic forms of the labyrinth,
7. Planning ahead for future needs (such as sleeves for irrigation and lighting),
8. Surrounding distractions (streets, noises, buildings),
9. Benches and other distractions inside the labyrinth,
10. Having plants with less maintenance requirements, and
11. Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessibility.

#### *4.10.1 Respondent Data*

- At Richland Community College there were some concerns with the materials used, which are stone and Mexican Feathergrass borders. “For me it needs to be very uniform. I find it is distracting, the way ours is designed with partial rock and partial plant, I find that distracting. I think uniformity is important. I think that there are wonderful labyrinths where the plant material is totally uniform” (Res 1). There was also a problem with the crushed gravel path that is used in Richland Community College’s labyrinth. It was said to be distracting and that a finer pea gravel was needed. Respondent 10 at Richland Community College stated, “It’s not the materials, so much as the experience.”
- At Baylor Medical Center, hollies are planted around the perimeter of the labyrinth and can be uncomfortable when they are brushed up against. Also, the benches are a problem because they get in the way of the outside path (Res 7). “What I love about it is the water features. They drown out a lot of the noise so it actually is a peaceful place in the center of a chaotic setting” (Res 7). The benches in the center for contemplation are also acknowledged as beneficial. Another respondent explained, “I would suggest just putting more shrubs and greenery and blooming things all around so the concrete is not as intrusive, but more natural” (Res 11).
- At Cook Children’s Medical Center, Respondent 2 discussed the importance of choosing the correct materials used in the path of the labyrinth, stating “the gravel tends to detract from the meditative aspects of it [the labyrinth], because you have that scuffing, it is not as smooth a surface, you want the surface ...to facilitate the meditative qualities.”

Respondent 3 from this project site stated that safety was a main concern for them in the design because they are a children's hospital. She explained, "Another thing with the architectural design [of the labyrinth], it's not like you can lose a small child in it. Just for safety reasons, and we didn't want anyone lurking either. This is a children's facility".

- At Kessler Park United Methodist Church, they considered making it more private by having walls and more plantings, but decided not to so that it would be more inviting to the surrounding community (which was the design intent) (Res 8). Respondent 9 was more concerned with the planting materials used at the site; something less formal, more natural, and less maintenance-driven could have been used.
- At St. Stephen's Presbyterian Church, the labyrinth is more of an organic, contemporary design. Respondent 4 suggested that maybe this form does not work as well as the more classical versions of the labyrinth.

#### 4.11 Respondent Summary

The respondents, through the interviews, revealed that labyrinths are being used in the Dallas/Fort Worth Metropolitan area as a place of meditation and prayer. The labyrinth also accepts all religions and traditions as an interfaith worship space. The labyrinth is being used for individual use as well as group use such as Sunday school classes, walking relaxation classes, and college classes. The labyrinth is being utilized by the surrounding communities, as well as people associated with the study site. Some study sites have guided programs that teach how to use the labyrinth, whereas others have brochures. A lack of knowledge of the labyrinth is mentioned as a reason for its under-utilization.

## 4.12 Project Site Case Studies

### *4.12.1 Richland Community College*



Figure 2.2 Richland Community College Labyrinth

The labyrinth at Richland Community College was built according to the medieval Chartres form. It is constructed of large diameter decomposed granite as the path, with alternating borders of stone and Mexican Feathergrass to delineate the edge of the paths. The labyrinth is located just northeast of a lake and is in a park-like setting. It is set in vast areas of lawn and old growth trees with a memorial parkway alongside the labyrinth honoring deceased staff with engraved bricks. The Heritage Garden is just east of the labyrinth providing immense native plantings of grasses and perennials and an arbor. There is also an aged hand-use water pump that is actually in working order and expresses the homestead of the original farm that is now the Richland campus. Since this labyrinth is not ADA accessible, a finger labyrinth is available for those in wheelchairs who cannot access the walkable labyrinth ([www.rlc.dccd.edu/labyrinth.htm](http://www.rlc.dccd.edu/labyrinth.htm) 2008).

Two of the respondents interviewed at the study site are employees of the college and are very interested in the utilization of this labyrinth. Both Respondents 1 and 10 were part of the committee established to promote the labyrinth into existence on the campus, and Respondent 12 was the designer.

The promotion for the labyrinth at the study site originated when the college decided to implement a Mind Body and Health program. A few key members of the committee responsible for creating this new program went to a National Wellness conference, and the idea to implement a labyrinth was brought up in a meeting. "I just jumped in [the conversation] because I had become very interested in labyrinths personally. When we brought the Mind Body Health program here, the labyrinth is something we were interested in and more and more people began to see a need for one (Res 1)." The president of the campus was also very supportive in implementing the labyrinth (Res 1; 10). Once the labyrinth was decided upon, Respondent 12, who was at that time part of the horticulture program, was designated to oversee the design of the labyrinth.

Both Respondents 1 and 10 stated that the labyrinth at Richland Community College is utilized but not as much as they wish it would be. "I don't see many individuals out there; either students, or staff. But there are instructors who take their classes out there to have the experience -- mind body health classes, psychology classes, peace study classes, and writing classes" (Res 1). Occasionally individuals visit the labyrinth, "I suppose for meditation" and some community groups, classes, and student groups use the labyrinth as well. "We view ourselves as part of the community, responsive to the community, and we wanted it open to the community" (Res 10). The labyrinth has also been used for some memorials and dedication ceremonies.

The Richland Community College website details information on the labyrinth and how it is utilized. However, a lack of knowledge of the labyrinth may be the reason of its under-utilization. "There is no question that there are lots of students on campus who don't have a clue. People who just kind of cut across it without even thinking about it" (Res 1).

The main intentions for the labyrinth's utilization at Richland Community College are to provide a gathering place for classes and ceremonies, class exercises in the Mind Body Health program, and for meditational uses (Res 1).

This study site has had no formal research conducted to determine how the site is being utilized or to survey how the labyrinth users benefit. Respondent 1 thought it would be a good idea to conduct some kind of research or survey on this subject.

On the other hand, the respondents believed that the labyrinth had significant benefits for the college. Respondent 1 mentioned the attractive landscaped area and the publicity received from being on the World Wide Labyrinth Locator. The benefits are that the labyrinth "is consistent with values that we express as a college." "Contemplation and reflection ought to be part of the higher education experience" (Res10).

In terms of design issues with the labyrinth, the crushed gravel path makes for a rough surface, and is currently under discussion with the facilities director about using really fine pea gravel (Res 1). The Mexican Feathergrass was a bad choice for some of the borders. "It's a beautiful plant, but there is a variance here in terms of sun and shade and they are not in form in the way it was conceived they would flow over" (Res 1). The feathergrass can also cause tripping if not cut back. However, "If you are standing back from the labyrinth the feathergrass is pretty (Res 1).

Respondent 10 discussed more about the placement of the labyrinth than the materials. The respondent stated that the location of the labyrinth was vital to its use. "I'm sure on some college campuses it would be more secluded, so it may be easier to get into more of a meditative state; however, with it being more secluded it would give it less visibility and possibly even less use" (Res 10). The respondent appreciates how the Heritage Garden is a buffer from the parking lot and likes the view of the water from the lake. For the respondent, location is just as important as materials, "and materials would matter depending upon who your primary audience would be" (Res 10).



Respondent 1 suggested that the labyrinth must be uniform. “I find it distracting, the way ours is designed with partial rock and partial plants” (Res 1). Respondent 10, when asked about form such as more organic forms with elaborate plantings, thought if the budget is there, it is excellent.

#### 4.12.1.1 Designer’s Perspective

Respondent 12, the designer of the labyrinth at Richland Community College, uncovered much about the design and solutions. This respondent was not currently involved with the college or how the labyrinth is utilized so discussions were mainly about design. The Richland College labyrinth is the first labyrinth designed by this respondent.

When questioned about forms of labyrinths and using planting and water around labyrinths, the response was that using the traditional forms of labyrinths does indeed limit the plant material that can be incorporated into the labyrinth. That is why the Mexican feathergrass was used as alternating border at this study site.

Respondent 12 emphasized the location of the labyrinth at Richland was important. “I think the site being central to the campus, that it is visible from the buildings and that it was not off away from the buildings and the campus, made the site very visible to the population” (Res 12). This location entices people to come from surrounding neighborhoods and it is more like a park setting. In terms of solitude, the respondent feels it is important for a labyrinth. “That was the purpose of the shrubbery on the sides, to give it some buffer from the busier areas” (Res 12).

Regarding buffers, the respondent explained that “in a campus setting we also have to be aware and keep in mind safety issues. We couldn’t put anything too tall or too confining as this could become a hazard or problem area, where someone could hide” (Res 12).

When questioned about any ideas or suggestions for labyrinth designers, Respondent 12 stated, “That is so unique to the site.” Respondents suggested keeping in mind maintenance issues, making sure plant materials do not require a lot of maintenance, and ensuring that the labyrinth does not interfere with people walking.

#### 4.12.1.2 Conclusions

The labyrinth at Richland Community College is a Chartres form and built with crushed granite paths with an alternating rock and Mexican Feathergrass border. The labyrinth sits in a park-like setting and provides a space for individuals as well as classes to meet for many purposes including meditation and reflection. The main users of the labyrinth are the Mind, Body, and Health program, class exercises, and the surrounding community. As with many of the labyrinths studied it is being utilized but not as much as hoped for.

Some of the users are individuals but mainly classes such as psychology, and the Mind, Body and Health program utilize the labyrinth. The under-utilization possibly stems from a lack of knowledge as to what the labyrinth is.

#### 4.12.2 Baylor Medical Center Dallas



Figure 2.3 Baylor Medical Center Labyrinth

The labyrinth at Baylor Medical Center in Dallas is positioned central to the hospital's campus, and is actually called The Interfaith Garden. The labyrinth in the Interfaith Garden is a Chartres replica and is sunken four feet below grade to help with noise pollution from the

surrounding buildings, streets, and helicopters landing at the hospital. The material used for this labyrinth is terrazzo.

Three interviews were completed at this project site including two of the respondents, Respondent 7 and 11, who are employed at the hospital. Respondent 6 was the designer of the Interfaith Garden.

The Interfaith Garden at Baylor was promoted with an Interfaith Task Force that Respondent 11 chaired, along with other Baylor Medical doctors, nurses, and chaplains. Baylor is a Baptist-based hospital, and they wanted a place where people from all religions or faiths could pray (Res 11). The idea for an interfaith area was needed after someone discovered a Muslim praying in the stairs one day. "He had no place to pray. Our chapel has a big picture of Jesus and he probably didn't feel comfortable there" (Res 7).

The labyrinth, or Interfaith Prayer Garden, is being utilized according to respondents, but all agree they wish it would be used more. "A lot of people just don't know what to do with it, but we've held classes for it. A lot of people are suspicious of it because it has pagan origins" (Res 7). Sometimes the Texas heat is responsible for it not being used as much. People will bring their children out there to run, play, and release energy. "Some just sit and enjoy the area that we have. There are patients and family members of patients that use it, more than I would expect. Even in the heat of summer, I see people out there. It amazes me" (Res 7). "I look and I see people with their IV poles walking it and I see people in wheelchairs being pushed around it, children skipping, running and playing on it, and that is great, too. Again, not as much as I would like to see it used though" (Res 11).

The primary user groups are hospital patients, family members of patients, and hospital staff (Res 7; Res 11). The purposes, for its utilization, according to the respondents, is primarily for walking meditation, relaxation, stress relief, praying, or just sitting and enjoying the outdoor space.

The hospital does have coached and guided programs for the labyrinth. "We have an amazing group of occupational therapists that are into alternative ways of healing that they often

use the labyrinth with their patients, as well as having occasional walking relaxation classes, which this respondent teaches” (Res 7). The primary uses for the labyrinth are walking meditation and to relieve stress, stating that “being a chaplain is a stressful job. I am not a good mediator. I usually have to be moving, so that is what I like about it. You can meditate and be doing something at the same time” (Res 7). The hospital has a Relaxation Made Easy workshop once a month inviting people from all over the campus to participate, and the Pain Center regularly uses the labyrinth with outpatients. The chaplains do sessions on spirituality, deep breathing, and water therapy, but one of the main things they do is walking meditation for pain management (Res 11).

It is difficult to survey or measure the perceived benefits that users acquire from walking the labyrinth, agrees both Respondents 7 and 11. Both utilize the labyrinth and concur they experience benefits from walking the labyrinth. “The focus is on the meditation and not the exercise. It has been believed for a long time that it is the pattern that is good for meditation; it is the rhythm.” “Everything we do in life has a purpose to it. I like the fact that sometimes there is no purpose to it [the labyrinth]; you just do it. I think that is kind of relaxing itself, and is centering. That is what I really like about the labyrinth” (Res 7). “As a user and observer, I can see the benefits. It [the labyrinth] is very relaxing and centering. I have walked it with patients and they have talked to me as they are walking, talked to me about their fears and their stresses. It’s usually more of an internal thing but when I’ve done that, people have said that it has been very helpful” (Res 11).

When asked how the labyrinth benefits the institution, Respondent 11 stated, “I think it advances our mission to minister to people of all faiths, to be an interfaith place.” After the Interfaith Task Force was put into place, the committee had many ideas before deciding on the labyrinth. It also had ideas about displaying different symbols from different religions around the labyrinth. However, it decided not to because they did not want to exclude any religions. The task force decided on the labyrinth because it has been used in so many religions; from the respondent’s comments, would be the symbol itself. “When it first opened, we got a lot of press.

We've had weddings out there" (Res 7). Some would call it a deficit because they are a Baptist hospital, "and some people think we are mixing pagan stuff and Christian stuff. I could not disagree more" (Res 7).

The respondents revealed no attempts toward any formal research conducted to determine how the labyrinth has been utilized or how the users are receiving benefits, but the respondents did agree that would be an interesting study, although hard to quantify.

When questioned about design issues, both Respondents 7 and 11 had some concerns about the design of the Interfaith Garden. Some trees were removed to install the labyrinth, and this angered some of the hospital staff (Res 7). As far as the labyrinth design, "First of all, we have holly bushes growing out onto our path. That is not very comfortable when you brush up against holly bushes." "They have benches around where you sit and contemplate, but if you sit, your knees go out into someone's path" (Res 7). Respondent 7 likes the water feature used around the labyrinth. He stated, "We have helicopters landing, which can become really noisy. The water features drown out a lot of the noise, so actually it is a peaceful place in the center of a chaotic setting" (Res 7).

"There needs to be more green, more flowers and trees out there. We thought there would be more [trees and flowers] in the designer's initial design, and part of it is, it is still pretty young" (Res 11). The water, the respondent mentioned, helps to dull the sounds of traffic on the nearby streets. Respondent 11 believes the main issue with this labyrinth design, being in the middle of a major hospital with a lot of concrete, is to have more plantings to soften the design.

The labyrinth form at Baylor Medical Center is a medieval Chartres form, and when asked if form matters, Respondent 11 stated, "I am not dogmatic on the form. I like this design [the Chartres]. It takes a little longer to walk than the classical Cretan. I have walked those and they were fine with more grass around it." Respondent 7 is partial to the Chartres form because it is more formal and patterned and allows the respondent to establish a rhythm stating, "Just because I can feel my arms when I am walking, and they kind of metronome, like I am kind of getting into this metronome type of thing."

#### 4.12.2.1 Designer's Perspective

Respondent 6 in this research was the designer for the labyrinth or Interfaith Garden, as it is called at Baylor Medical Center in Dallas. Respondent 6 stated, "We have had inquiries about designing labyrinths on a lot of projects. This is one that we have gotten built and implemented."

Some of the projects the respondent mentioned were labyrinth designs for other hospitals and churches. "Some religions don't want to call it a labyrinth. They want us to change the name and call it a Prayer Garden. On the Baylor campus that came up, and it wasn't a big deal, but they just said, "No, we won't call it a labyrinth. We will call it an Interfaith Garden" (Res 6).

"This project started, wow, I don't know the exact date, I want to think it was at least seven or eight years back. I really didn't hear much of a labyrinth or even the term. Our committee was formed [to implement the labyrinth]. We are familiar with all of the campus so one of my jobs was to find the site" (Res 6). The committee had selected three possible sites around the Baylor campus for the Interfaith Garden. "I analyzed those sites. Actually we did a design for all of those, as to how they got integrated into the campus" (Res 6). All of the sites designed were to use the Chartres form as that is the form the hospital wanted.

Of the three sites analyzed, the one selected was the most difficult site. "The others were easier. The others [possible labyrinth sites] were more passive and soft. They [possible labyrinth sites] were in a grove of trees, it tended to be a lot quieter and easier to provide a space that you could go into and pray, to be alone, and have a little solitude" (Res 6). The site chosen "was the toughest," but it is what [the committee] viewed as being the center of the Baylor campus. They wanted it to be highly visible and that was foremost." The site was selected by creating a matrix of all the possible spaces; this one received the most points. "Even though it was more urban and noisier, it was the heart. You look down on it and you realize that was an important symbol within the core of the campus, in terms of healing. So that is why they picked it." After the committee selected this site, the respondent said, "Oh my God, they picked the wrong one" (Res 6).

When the respondent was asked if this more urban site—right in the middle of the campus surrounded by buildings—affects the usage of the site, the respondent stated, “Sure I do. But one of the things you try to do is to eliminate distractions. One of the first things we did is shrink its size in terms of the space and we dropped it about four or five feet from the street” (Res 6).

As for the design of the labyrinth, the designer added a bench seat in the center and used water features around the perimeter of the labyrinth to mask the noise of the traffic from the surrounding streets. “We did as much planting as we could to help soften it, but they wanted hard surface within the center. I originally had grass and stone with grass joints, but it’s a high-maintenance thing. So we switched materials to rustic terrazzo, which is a granite chip material” (Res 6). The respondent also used a vine-like trellis that surrounded the whole labyrinth to give it more vegetation. “As far as other materials we used all the materials around Baylor, masonry, brick walls, cast stone, and I think that is the basic approach and theme” (Res 6).

When the respondent was asked about his recommendations for designers, he said, “I think it is easier to select sites that are more park-like, where it is quieter, where you are more communing with nature, and therefore a much higher being, so to speak, a more beautiful place” (Res 6). “Good design is pretty direct and the message is clear, that is what I call good design when the message is clear, the goal hit” (Res 6).

The respondent also had recommendations about pulling elements from the labyrinth, but not being so literal with the form, stating “nothing says it needs to have a center. Why couldn’t a labyrinth be in just a beautiful place that people walk through? The path creates the connection to the views and the place” (Res 6).

#### 4.12.2.2 Conclusions

The labyrinth at Baylor Medical Center in Dallas is the Chartres form and is very formal in style. It is actually referred to as the Interfaith Garden, and is intended to be an interfaith place of prayer for the hospital campus. The labyrinth is very visible and is central to the campus. The labyrinth is used by individuals such as patients and their friends and families. It is also utilized



as a tool for therapy, and the hospital has coached programs in relaxation and pain management therapy. The respondents agreed that the labyrinth could be used more.

#### *4.12.3 Cook Children's Health Care System*



Figure 2.4 Cook Children's Health Care System

The labyrinth at Cook Children's Hospital was built in 2006; it is the classical Cretan form. However, from site observation the form seems to be a little more contemporary, making use of a variety of planting materials and a water feature. Two respondents were selected to be interviewed for the project site. Respondent 3 works at the hospital and Respondent 2 is the designer of the labyrinth. The labyrinth at Cook Children's Hospital was promoted by Respondent 3, and was an idea for an outdoor worship space for families. "It [the labyrinth] has been in my mind for something like that, a long time, but I was actually approached by a member, a woman who has used labyrinths before, and it was very interesting to me" (Res 3).



Respondent 3 stated that the labyrinth is being well utilized. "It's well used...we planned so it is accessible for tricycles, wheelchairs, wagons, and IV poles, so it's on an all-weather surface right out front of our hospital" (Res 3). When asked if the hospital has any coached or guided programs, the respondent stated, "We have had a little bit. It was mostly during the training sort of things when first getting the labyrinth. I conducted a program for child life to show them various uses of it" (Res 3). Community church groups come and use the labyrinth; some of those visits are facilitated tours. "We did briefly consider having documents here to do that, but that is not the primary purpose of the children's hospital...so we provide an informational brochure that serves as a guide and tours on request" (Res 3).

The purpose of using a labyrinth "is for the user to determine ... it is for many people a way to pray without words" (Res 3). "At a children's hospital, as you might well imagine, there a lot of kids who are worried about what is happening to them, parents who are terribly anxious, and staff who need to walk off tension" (Res 3). Play space is another use the respondent mentioned; kids play and skip through the labyrinth. "There are people that just walk through it and have no idea it is a labyrinth, they think it is just a winding path, well hey good for them" (Res 3).

There are no forms of research that have been done in regards to the use or benefits of the labyrinth, but the respondent said, "I would say that lots of people use it...people tend to stop me and tell me they were out there" (Res 3). The hospital is not keeping any records on its use, and the respondent stated, "From our perspective we just want to provide an opportunity" (Res 3).

Respondents also stated the labyrinth brings the hospital press by being on the World Wide Labyrinth Locator, and the hospital fields calls from community groups asking if they can come and walk the labyrinth.

When discussing the design of this labyrinth, Respondent 3 stated that when initially working with the landscape architect regarding the design of the labyrinth, the designer first brought in concepts for mazes. The designer thought mazes would be better for the flow of the site, "once I could explain my reason to him...he saw that I had a very distinct request for a

labyrinth...he went back and re-drew and did a fantastic job of making a labyrinth” (Res 3). Another issue addressed in design discussion was on safety. For safety purposes, the children’s hospital did not want any huge vegetation forms that could allow someone to hide behind them.

#### 4.12.3.1 Designer’s Perspective

Respondent 2 in the research was the designer for the labyrinth at Cook Children’s Health Care System. This labyrinth was the first designed by this landscape architect, and according to the respondent quite a bit of research was done on labyrinths while designing this project.

Respondent 2 has received some feedback regarding this design, and said the labyrinth is being heavily utilized. “A lot of parents and siblings, and everyone who is associated with the child that’s in the hospital uses the labyrinth to, you know for meditation....they [the hospital] have had lots of and lots of comments and praise back saying how nice it is to be able to go out there and walk that and just meditate...it is quite heavily used” (Res 2).

“Labyrinths are becoming more utilized throughout the United States as they have been in Europe for a number of years...there is a great need for these types of spaces” (Res 2). For the labyrinth design at the hospital, “we wanted an area where people could go and have the ability to walk in a secure path, and just be able to meditate. That is what it was really designed for” (Res 2).

“The difference between this one [labyrinth] and some others was that there was a combination of plant materials and hard surface, a lot of labyrinths are just a pattern on the ground that you follow. We wanted to introduce the use of plant materials, to one, act as barrier and also to really green up the space” (Res 2). While designing the labyrinth turning radiuses for wheelchairs, wagons, and other accessibility issues were considered.

On discussing the design of labyrinths in general and the possibilities of using different forms of labyrinths, the respondent stated, “[Y]ou have to be very careful in the design of a labyrinth in that it is really designed to allow you to walk a known path or secluded path so that it allows you to meditate more on whatever you are meditating on. If you have too many other

elements it becomes a distraction and the meditative qualities of the labyrinth start to disintegrate” (Res 2). On labyrinths in general the respondent stated, “It frees the mind up...I think, the ability to move through a space in a concise way and in a patterned way frees the mind to think even greater thoughts” (Res 2).

#### 4.12.3.2 Conclusions

The labyrinth at Cook Children’s Hospital is based on the Cretan form and is integrated with water features and various plantings. According to the respondents, the labyrinth is being utilized by children in the hospital as well as their families and friends. It is a place to relax and de-stress. People from surrounding communities and churches come and use the labyrinth at the hospital.

#### 4.12.4 Kessler Park United Methodist Church



Figure 2.5 Kessler Park United Methodist Church Labyrinth

The labyrinth located at Kessler Park United Methodist Church is the medieval Chartres form. It is positioned away from the church where it is visible to the surrounding community. The labyrinth was installed in 2004 and is made from bricks and pavers. It is forty feet in diameter and was designed as a kit by The Labyrinth Company, owned and operated by David Tolzeman in

New York. This company designs and sells paving kits as labyrinths; the designer picks a pattern and orders a pre-made labyrinth.

The key informants for this location were Respondent 8, an employee for the church, and Respondent 9, a life-long member of the church and promoter of the labyrinth. Respondent 9 played a significant role in getting the labyrinth installed and is listed as the contact person for the labyrinth on the World Wide Labyrinth Locator. A third respondent interviewed, Respondent 5, actually completed much of the construction and grading surrounding the site. The respondent was chosen because there was no designer, per se, or landscape architect involved in fitting this labyrinth into the site.

Both Respondents 8 and 9 were primary in promoting the labyrinth built at the project site. They have had a long interest in labyrinths, and when collaborating on promoting the labyrinth, decided the church would benefit from having one. “We spoke about labyrinths and what they meant to us—the healing properties and the meditation, relaxation properties” (Res 8). The respondents thought the church might resist a labyrinth. Therefore, they formed a small group to educate the church members on what the labyrinth was all about and how it differs from a maze. After obtaining some funding Respondent 8 contacted David Tolzeman with the Labyrinth Company to begin the process.

The respondents concurred that the labyrinth is being utilized, more by the surrounding community than by the church itself. “Little by little, more and more people, as they get to know what it is about” seem to be utilizing the labyrinth. (Res 8). “Just last week, I came here for a memorial service for a friend...in the two days that I was here...I saw someone engaged in a meditative aspect on this labyrinth...I saw kids gathering to meet at the labyrinth...I saw parents coming through talking” (Res 9). “Yeah, I think the labyrinth is used. I used to give yoga lessons out here...it was a fabulous place to lay and watch the sky” (Res 9).

“We live in such a hectic, fast-paced world that those who come and walk the labyrinth, it is all about slowing down and being focused on your own thoughts.” “It’s all about educating people...It wasn’t [the labyrinth], a pagan ‘new age’ thing; it was a very ‘old age’ thing and in all

cultures, in especially the Christian tradition or in any tradition...you know I walk it with Buddhist friends, and Hindu friends, and Christians...it's a meditative tool, it's whatever you need it to be for you" (Res 8).

The labyrinth at Kessler Park United Methodist Church benefits the church as well. It is mainly for the community and used by people from surrounding neighborhoods. It's also a profit center for the church. The church sells the bricks surrounding the labyrinth to be engraved for dedications or as memorials. Respondent 9 (although he is a spiritual person) claimed he really wanted to do something for the church to help it raise money, which the labyrinth has been successful in doing.

The respondents have formed several coached or guided walks groups to teach individuals how to walk the labyrinth, and educate them on its benefits. The study site also provides a set of instructions that provides additional information on the labyrinth. No formal research has been conducted at this project site to determine how the labyrinth is being used or how it benefits the users. Based on some of the comments that the users describe to them the respondents believe people users definitely benefit. "Even if you say you have no faith and don't want to use it as a spiritual tool...simply the physicalness of walking it, causes such relaxation and the twists and turns from left brain to right brain, and the slowing down of your pass is beneficial to your body" (Res 8).

In regards to the design of the labyrinth at the project site, Respondents 8 and 9 agreed privacy was considered in the initial design. However, they chose to leave the labyrinth open because it was more inviting to the surrounding community, which was the ultimate purpose for the labyrinth. "For this specific one, we decided it was more important that everyone feel welcome" (Res 8). "I am not hip with the landscape treatment of the labyrinth...I would rather have natural plantings all the way around" (Res 9).

#### 4.12.4.1 Designer's Perspective

As previously stated, this labyrinth was actually a kit designed by The Labyrinth Company. No formal landscape architect was used on this project. Respondent 5 is a contractor

and volunteered much of his time to help with the construction process and do the grading for the site. Respondent 5 did have some suggestions for designers on building labyrinths. He suggested main considerations should be “privacy and planning ahead...having sleeves through to have accessibility to it so you don’t have to go back in and tear it up for future plans...just really planning in it for having electrical, piping, and sprinklers underneath it.”

#### 4.12.4.2 Conclusions

The labyrinth at Kessler Park United Methodist Church is a Chartres form and was ordered as a kit. The labyrinth is used by the surrounding community as much or more than the church members. The labyrinth is inviting to the community and was one of the goals for installing the labyrinth. The respondents felt the labyrinth could be utilized more, but more people are using it as they become more knowledgeable of the labyrinth and its benefits.

#### 4.12.5 St. Stephen's Presbyterian Church



Figure 2.6 St. Stephen's Presbyterian Church Labyrinth

St. Stephen's Presbyterian Church, located in Fort Worth, installed its labyrinth in 2006. The form of the labyrinth is very contemporary; it is made to fit in a space positioned directly east of the sanctuary that is sixty by ninety feet. It was designed to be consistent with the existing architecture. Only one key informant was interviewed for this labyrinth. Respondent 4 is the minister of the church and is very familiar with the labyrinth and how it is utilized. The designer of this labyrinth is unfortunately deceased and other informants could not be contacted in time to stay within the time constraints of completing this research. Although only one informant was interviewed, the researcher determined that enough information was gathered to be considered in this research project.

The promotion of the labyrinth began with some interested church members. After one particularly interested member attended labyrinth training at Veriditas in San Francisco, the idea really started to gain acceptance. The church started with a portable indoor canvas labyrinth. After that labyrinth's success became apparent, the church decided to build a permanent outdoor labyrinth. The church received a donation and plans were set in motion.

Both labyrinths at the church are currently being utilized—the indoor portable one, as well as the permanent outdoor labyrinth. “There are occasionally Sunday school classes set up to use it. Then they contact the labyrinth guild, and the labyrinth leader will come and do this sort of guided program” (Res 4). Several students from surrounding schools use the labyrinth as well as a couple of professors. “People are often out, walking their dog, or just enjoying the grounds and they decide to walk the labyrinth. That is exactly what it is for” (Res 4). There is a labyrinth guild and they do conduct guided tours, but mainly when asked.

Respondent 9 stated, as a user of the labyrinth, that he perceives a benefit. However, observing the benefits that others experience is harder to measure. “You know, there's a real benefit in just having something that just focuses you. You may be praying, but I think it probably pushes a little bit closer into mysticism. There is more of a sensory involvement” (Res 9).

The labyrinth has benefited the church. “We really played it up big when we built it. We had a dedication service and there were newspaper reporters. I know for a fact that the guy who



runs the religion page has come out and walked it. You know, I can't say that we have gotten more members. It [the labyrinth] is consistent with a total package of how we understand our church" (Res 4). There has been no formal research done at this location; however, the respondent felt the data derived would be interesting.

Regarding the design of this labyrinth, the respondent stated that with traditional forms of labyrinths such as the Chartres or the Cretan, "I kind of get more of a sense of passing from one hemisphere to another in my brain I really get a sense of there being a transition (Res 4)." The form of this labyrinth is very contemporary. The respondent said, "I am not sure if I pick that up so much on this one, but maybe I am just not used to it yet." The labyrinth was designed to fit an existing space. The designer accounted for ADA accessibility by having wider paths so someone in a wheelchair can get around it.

#### 4.12.5.1 Conclusions

The labyrinth at St. Stephen's Presbyterian Church is unique because it was custom designed to fit within a sixty by ninety feet space. As a result the form of the labyrinth is contemporary and not as formal as the Chartres or Cretan. The respondent believes the labyrinth is being used by individuals as well as in Sunday school classes. It is also used by some surrounding schools and neighbors.

### 4.13 Summary of Findings

Although three different facility types were selected—two churches, two hospitals, and a college campus—and five overall project sites selected, the answers provided during the interviews can be generalized. Moreover, some definite patterns or themes have emerged from the data.

Essentially the promoters for labyrinths are employees or stakeholders at the project sites with a passion for the organization. They truly want to make a welcoming space at their facility. The respondents were typically devoted to a spiritual quest or are sensitive to the overall health of the mind, body, and spirit, viewing the labyrinth as a tool to unite the three. The respondents were also well informed on the subject of labyrinths and had a specific idea of what they wanted



in terms of style, form, and usage. In other words, it is important for the designers themselves to know about the specifics of a labyrinth and its uses. Designers should educate themselves regarding labyrinths before contacting a potential client. For example, the respondents revealed that some designers presented concepts for mazes, instead of a labyrinth. Such a mistake clearly identifies the designer's lack of knowledge on the difference between the two.

The individuals promoting labyrinths want spaces that provide a place for interfaith worship and an escape from the hectic fast-paced world. Some want a space that provides for anxious patients and their families to reflect and relax, whereas others want a space that gives something back to the community by offering a space to gather for meditation and relaxation.

#### *4.13.1 Is the Labyrinth Being Utilized at the Project Site? Why or Why Not?*

At each study site selected, the labyrinth is being utilized to some extent. However, nearly all respondents showed hope that the labyrinth's utilization would increase. The respondents agreed that on an individual level, many people may not know or understand what a labyrinth is used for or how it is to be used. At one study site in particular, a hospital, the respondent believed that the labyrinth was being highly utilized; this labyrinth was in a garden setting directly in front of the hospital in a very visible location.

#### *4.13.2 Who Are the User Groups of This Labyrinth at the Project Site?*

This question produced a variety of users because the question was asked in relation to three different types of institutions: churches, hospitals, and a college campus. All locations have some measure of individual use whereas others have individual as well as group utilization. The two hospitals selected consisted of user groups such as hospital patients along with their visitors, hospital staff, relaxation class participants, and the occasional ceremony attendants. The user groups of the two churches were church members, neighboring community residents, guided prayer and walking meditation class participants, yoga students, and Sunday school students. The college campus has a very specific group of users consisting of mainly individuals who are students or employees of the facility; however, the majority of the users from the facility utilized the labyrinth during college classes such as mind, body, and health classes, peace study classes,

psychology classes, and writing classes. Another segment of the labyrinth's user groups are those who come from the surrounding community.

#### *4.13.3 What is the Main Purpose for the Use of the Labyrinth at the Project Site?*

The major purpose for utilization of the labyrinth slightly varied, depending on the study site, but several distinct themes were unveiled. The prevalent intention of use identified by the respondents interviewed was for walking meditation. The second theme identified was for interfaith prayer and meditation. Other purposes included a play area for children, alternative healing and pain management, outdoor gathering spaces for special functions such as memorials and dedication ceremonies, and outdoor classrooms.

#### *4.13.4 Does the Project Site Offer Any Coached or Guided Programs for the Labyrinth?*

Some of the sites have formal coached or guided programs for using the labyrinth, and some do not. Several sites offered some form of guided tour or coaching, but only upon request. One of the hospitals had coached programs for relaxation techniques and for pain management. Both of the churches had guided programs upon request.

#### *4.13.5 Do the Users of the Labyrinth Perceive any Benefits at the Project Site?*

Nearly all of the respondents agreed that the perceived benefits of labyrinth users were hard to identify and measure. Nine of the respondents are also labyrinth users; they perceive benefits from their own use. The respondents commented that they have had users come and share their experiences with them. Most of the respondents agreed that there are benefits but, again, measuring them can be quite difficult.

#### *4.13.6 Does the Institution Benefit From Having a Labyrinth on Site?*

There are benefits to having a labyrinth. To some respondents it increases the recognition of the facility by being on the World Wide Labyrinth Locator, which brings in people from outside of their community looking for a labyrinth. It should be noted that the Labyrinth Locator was used to locate the projects for this research. Having a labyrinth is also consistent with the values of the organization. In summary, the labyrinths have generated press, are

consistent with the overall values of the organization, and they provide a valuable space for the community to use.

*4.13.7 Has Any Formal Research Been Done at the Project Site to Determine How the Labyrinth Has Been Utilized?*

None of the locations selected have performed any formal research on how the labyrinth is being utilized. Many agree that it would be an interesting study.

*4.13.8 Did Any Design Issues Influence the Utilization of the Labyrinth?*

Many of the design issues of the labyrinths can be related to many projects and designs by landscape architects. The issues mentioned deal with materials involving both hardscape and planting, microclimates around the labyrinth, privacy issues, drainage problems, safety concerns, the form of labyrinth (formal or organic), surrounding distractions, ADA accessibility, and pre-planning for the future of the site.

Suggestions designers should consider are keeping the surrounding infrastructure in mind and designing accordingly. Many thought that microclimate influences the use of the labyrinth, but in Texas the heat is a problem with many designed applications. One theme that emerged is putting the labyrinth in a visible location, but still providing the solitude needed for people to relax and meditate.

4.14 Summary

In this chapter the data gathered through the in-depth interviews are analyzed. A holistic view is first examined by combining all the respondents' answers for each question. This approach describes an overall picture of how the specific question is being answered for the Dallas/Fort Worth area. The analysis is then broken down to analyze each specific study site. The site studies go into more detail describing the respondents' thoughts and feelings recorded in the in-depth interviews. Site observations and the designers' perspectives are also included in this section.

As chapters three and four discussed, in-depth interviews were conducted in the Dallas/Fort Worth area at three specific facility types—two hospitals, two churches, and a college

campus. In this section each interview question is explored and conclusions are drawn as to the data received from the interviews.

## CHAPTER 5

### FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

#### 5.1 Introduction

The researcher's principal purpose is to facilitate an enhanced understanding of outdoor permanent labyrinths by landscape architects. This chapter discusses the findings from the in-depth interviews conducted on labyrinths at selected study sites in the Dallas/Fort Worth metroplex and how these findings address the primary research questions:

- Who is recommending or advocating the use of labyrinths?
- Who are the user groups for these labyrinths?
- What are the perceived benefits of using a labyrinth?

This chapter also cross-references the findings of the interviews with those of the literature review. Correlations are established between what was found from labyrinths at the study sites in the Dallas/Fort Worth area, with what the literature states is occurring nationwide and even internationally. This chapter also illustrates the importance of the data to the landscape architecture profession. Future research opportunities are discussed because the research prompted many additional questions about the utilization of labyrinths and issues with their overall design.

#### 5.2 Research Findings

The research findings are described in terms of the in-depth interview questions (see chapter 3), the three fundamental research questions (listed section 5.1), and what was discovered from the literature examined during this research. Chapter four describes the data discovered in detail, whereas this chapter locates the

overriding themes that answer the research questions and offers suggestions for areas of future study.

### *5.2.1 Research Questions*

The in-depth interview questions described previously created themes helping to answer the research questions. The data were analyzed based on individual interview questions and then summarized to answer the three fundamental research questions of the research.

#### *5.2.1.1 Who is Promoting or Recommending Labyrinths?*

In the Dallas/Fort Worth area, people who recommended or promoted for labyrinths are knowledgeable on what a labyrinth is, its utilization, and the specific labyrinth form to be implemented. They are often members of a committee to establish the labyrinth for a specific reason. To be sure, in many cases, the individual or group who recommends the labyrinth knows more than the designer, which makes it imperative for designers to research the subject as much as possible. It is also concluded that the designer should address the labyrinth as more than an ornamental object. The labyrinth has many meanings and values for the promoters.

#### *5.2.1.2 Who are the User Groups of Labyrinths?*

This research indicates that those who utilize labyrinths are individuals seeking an outlet for meditation or prayer. It is also a way for anxious patients or their family members to de-stress. The labyrinth is described as an instrument to unite a community by providing a place for contemplation during a morning jog, or even while walking the dog. The labyrinth also provides a place for coached pain management therapy and/or guided relaxation exercises. They provide a chance to get patients of hospitals outside and moving around, thereby speeding the healing process. It provides a space for interfaith worship because the labyrinth is known to many cultures and traditions from many time periods throughout the world.

#### *5.2.1.3 What are the Perceived Benefits to the User and the Facility?*

According to the respondents, the benefits to the user are the most difficult to measure. Many of the respondents are also users of labyrinths; they state that the labyrinth provides them

an opportunity to escape their hectic fast-paced life. The labyrinth is a walking meditation, prayer without words, and an outlet for creativity.

The institutional benefits, according to the research, are much simpler to measure. Having a labyrinth suggests that the institution is open to individuals, to a variety of religions and spiritual journeys, and to individual enlightenment through meditation, thoughtfulness, or mindfulness. The labyrinth is inviting to the community; many respondents stated their labyrinth is used by people from surrounding neighborhoods.

### 5.3 Findings and Literature

There were many similarities between the information in the in-depth interviews as compared with the literature. This may be due to the fact that most of the informants selected were very knowledgeable about labyrinths. With respect to defining a labyrinth, all respondents agreed there were significant differences between a labyrinth and a maze, as does the literature. According to the literature review the Chartres and the Cretan labyrinths are the most popular forms. Of the projects selected for detailed study, three were the Chartres versions, one Cretan, and the other a contemporary or site-adapted form. Many of the respondents were very knowledgeable about the history of the labyrinth. This varied history and its usage throughout many cultures and religions is one of the reasons for the labyrinth's growing popularity. The labyrinth is inviting to many people from an array of cultures.

Both the literature and designers interviewed detail information about the increase in popularity of the labyrinth. Two of the three designers commented that they are getting more requests for labyrinths; ten years ago, they had no idea what labyrinths were.

The strongest correlation found between the literature and interview data is the contemporary uses of the labyrinth. Both the literature and the respondents have confirmed that some people need an outlet from the hectic fast-paced life of today. Many individuals have trouble undertaking traditional forms of meditation. The labyrinth's ability to provide a space for walking meditation facilitates this activity.

Creativity is discussed in the literature as well as in the interviews. The labyrinth is a tool for releasing the right brain to be intuitive and creative. One respondent mentioned a job drained his creativity and that walking the labyrinth helped replenish his creative thoughts.

#### 5.4 Importance to the Profession

The literature review and the in-depth interviews indicate labyrinths are becoming more popular and are being used frequently in organizations and institutions such as hospitals, churches, universities and college campuses, parks, community centers, retirement centers, and private gardens. It is therefore fundamental that landscape architects and the profession of landscape architecture be somewhat more familiar with who is commissioning labyrinths, who is using them, and their benefits. An objective for this research is to identify these questions as well as to be a baseline for future research that may benefit the profession of landscape architecture and the design of labyrinths in the outdoor-built environment. Identifying the promoters, users, and benefits will help designers make sound design decisions about form, layout, and materials, and be aware of the knowledge that the promoter may have regarding the labyrinth desired.

#### 5.5 Future Research Opportunities

##### *5.5.1 What Percentage of Labyrinths Are Designed by Landscape Architects?*

Although four of the study sites selected for this research were designed by landscape architects, many listed on the World Wide Labyrinth Locator are not. It would be helpful to the profession to know how many labyrinths are carefully designed into a particular site and how many are just “plunked” onto the site, without the expertise of the landscape architect.

##### *5.5.2 How Much Does Privacy Matter in the Use of a Labyrinth?*

Many respondents interviewed indicated that they wanted the labyrinth in a central location that is highly visible; these respondents believed that this will contribute to the successful use of the labyrinth. However, some users deem solitude as a requirement for successful meditation and the relaxation the labyrinth is supposed to help induce. How can designers locate labyrinths so they are both very visible and offer solitude and privacy to experience the escape from a fast-paced life?



#### *5.5.3 Does the Form of the Labyrinth Influence its Functionality?*

Three of the five labyrinths selected for this research were the formal Chartres version of the labyrinth. One labyrinth was the classical Cretan with a contemporary “twist” that allowed for extensive planting and a water feature. The final labyrinth selected was very contemporary and designed to fit into a sixty by ninety foot space, thus stretching the labyrinth out of its usual circular form. How much freedom do designers have to play with form before the properties that define a labyrinth and make it work become distorted to a point that it is no longer a labyrinth?

#### *5.5.4 Can a Path be a Labyrinth?*

One designer interviewed suggested that the labyrinth could be just a path to walk, getting from “Point A” to “Point B,” and still have qualities that would allow it to be reflective and meditative. What are the qualities of a path that would make it perform like a labyrinth?

#### *5.5.5 Performing a Market Study or Market Analysis.*

The literature and the interview responses revealed the increasing popularity of the labyrinth. A market analysis could be performed to determine current trends and demands, both from a design standpoint and from a business standpoint.

#### *5.5.6 How Many Landscape Architects Know the Difference between a Labyrinth and a Maze?*

The research revealed that one landscape architect, after being asked to design a labyrinth, presented concepts with mazes. The client then made it very clear that there is a difference between the two and that a maze was definitely out of the question. It would be interesting to see how many designers already are educated in labyrinth properties.

#### *5.5.7 Participant Observation of Labyrinth Users.*

As benefits of labyrinth users are difficult to measure, participant observation studies might assist designers to understand how labyrinths are being used. This understanding could be applied to the study of the space or the benefits of the user

#### *5.5.8 Surveying or Interviewing Labyrinth Users.*

Interviewing or surveying labyrinth users before and after their walk could measure the benefits of labyrinth users. This approach could also be used to measure the user's perception of the overall design helping designers to refine the design of labyrinths and the surrounding space.

#### *5.5.9 Interviewing People Un-educated on the Labyrinth or People Opposed to Labyrinths.*

Interviewing people not knowledgeable about labyrinths or people opposed to labyrinths might provide some balance in the study of labyrinths. In this research, only people knowledgeable about labyrinths were interviewed, which could have created a bias.

### 5.6 Summary

Chapter five summarizes the data analyzed in chapter four and places the information in more of a thematic approach to detail important findings and trends in the research questions addressed in this research study. The findings are correlated with the interview questions, the research questions, and the literature review. The findings are then examined to determine their importance to the profession of landscape architecture. Ideas for future research studies are then presented regarding the use of labyrinths and landscape architecture.

The research also revealed that labyrinths in the Dallas/Fort Worth Metropolitan area are promoted by individuals knowledgeable about labyrinths; thus it is important for the designer to be well informed when designing a labyrinth. The users of the labyrinths vary depending on the type of study sites, and can be individuals, groups, and organized classes with exercises. The benefits are both the therapeutic benefits experienced by the user and the community outreach benefits to the facility for having a labyrinth.

## APPENDIX A

### RESPONDENT TRANSCRIPTIONS

Respondent 1 Richland Community College

Norton: Well, my first question for you is who recommended or advocated for the labyrinth at this location?

Respondent 1: That is an interesting question. The people, when we were first developing the Mind, Body, Health Program on campus, some of the key people in that went to a National Wellness Conference where they at least saw and went to a session to walk a labyrinth. When they came back from that conference, she and I were both in a meeting with the President, with some other people discussing the Mind Body Health collection for the library. I don't know, I cannot remember the specifics but somehow labyrinths came up. I jumped in because I had become very interested in labyrinths personally. I visited the Chartres Cathedral in France, and then speaking with her about the great experience that she had at this conference. And the president said, "Well do we need one of those here"? And I said, "Yes" (laughs). And the others person said yes, and so he was very interested and he started to looking into it, at that time we were teaching landscape design and (name withheld) was the teacher.

Norton: So I guess the Labyrinth is meant to be utilized in the Mind, Body and Spirit program, but also as a garden feature at this location.

Respondent 1: Exactly, exactly it's a very nice landscape worked into this, (shuffling paper) it is called the Spiritual Garden. You'll see when we go out there, the campus is built on the site of an old fall back toward the middle of site, and there is still a well pump here from the farm. For that with the garden, and then the labyrinth. And like I said we had a horticulture program that program is that is good opportunity for horticulture students, but it was primarily about the Mind Body Health aspects.

Norton: Excellent, excellent. Do you feel that the labyrinth is being utilized for the Mind, Body Health?

Respondent 1: It is to some extent. It's not used as much as I want it to be. It never has been. There are some design issues, which... I don't see many individuals out there either students,

staff, or others from campus. You are welcome to come and occasionally we have groups from the community who come and use it. But there are instructors who take their classes out there to have the experience. Either Mind, Body, & Health Classes, Peace Study Classes, Psychology classes where they are talking about stress; writing instructors where they just want their students to come. I can't give any numbers, because we haven't measured that but they are out there from time to time.

Norton: Okay, alright. Do you feel like, that we will get down to more of this in the design? But, do you think that a lack of interpretation, a lack of people knowing what a labyrinth actually is or what it does?

Respondent 1: That is an issue. I'm assuming you looked at our website, there are pages on there.

Norton: I have.

Respondent 1: Oh, Okay. On the Richland website there is some information that I wrote. On what we have on trying to disseminate the information; but there is a lack of little bit of information about... There is no question that there are lots of students on campus who don't have a clue (laughs). People who just kind of cut across it without even thinking about it. And I don't think we have done a good coordinated effort. We dedicated it, and had staff that were there and heard that, but of course. But if we had more time, if I had more time that is something that we needs to be done. Labyrinths are getting much more prevalent, you know, much more and a lot of people do know about it, just not as many people as we want.

Norton: From a lot of my research, I found that a lot of people that have may have difficulties with traditional meditative techniques find that by walking helps relax the mind.

Respondent 1: Yes, exactly exactly. Great techniques.

Norton: So, and I guess we have already talked about this but, Who are the user groups at the Labyrinths. You were talking about that...

Respondent 1: Yes, classes.

Norton: Okay, and the purposes of that use you said before. Like you said the Classes are writing, exercising.

Respondent 1: Yes, and meditation.

Norton: Are there any, well this we already talked about this as well. Are there any coached are guided programs for the use of the labyrinths?

Respondent 1: Well not formally. I am available if somebody wanted that, but I have never had that. The few communities, outside communities ????? And I'm not... you may know that there is a National Training Program for Labyrinth facilitators, and I have not been through that program, but it is something that I always wanted to do.

Norton: Is that Dr. Artress?

Respondent 1: Yes it is Dr. Artress program, right. Its not like I am trained, but I could do that.

Norton: Are there any, do you perceive any of the users of the labyrinths getting any benefits, the one that actually uses it?

Respondent 1: (Laughs) Well a few individuals that I talked to, yes. But we haven't done a study on it.

Norton: What benefits to the institution, to Richland, for having the labyrinth. If any.

Respondent 1: That is a good question. The attractive landscape area, and/or who find us through the National Labyrinth locator, getting a little PR through that way.

Norton: That is how I found you by the way.

Respondent 1: Yes, I though so. And I think we had a couple (laughs).

Norton: Okay, and my next question I believe you have already answered and it is that if you done any formal research to determined how it is being utilized?

Respondent 1: We haven't done that, although it we would be nice if we did. By the way I know someone who is writing a dissertation, I understood it is supposed to be completed, a formal study on the using labyrinths for stress relief if you are interested.

Norton: Oh Okay. That is one of the big things, as landscape designer and architects we try to create spaces that are relaxing. You said that there are some design issues. You know some of the things that I researched, that I have here as notes to talk about, are the privacy issues, materials, and the overall design. What design issues were referring to?

Respondent 1: Talking about materials, and this will make more sense when you see it, it is a crushed gravel path, and having walked a lot of indoor and outdoor labyrinths, where I find the surface too rough, and I talked to the facilities director about this last week, about the possibility of a really fine pee gravel. Which I think would be smoother, I don't know if the change will happen, but I would like it to. The major problem is that, and this is not on this design (she pulls out chart??), the exterior border and three of these borders are not stone. Most of the borders are flat. But they used Mexican feather grass for those borders, and that has not been a good choice. It is a beautiful plant, but the variation here in terms of the shade and sun, and so they are not inform in the way it was conceived and they flow over. If you do not keep it cut back a lot then they flow over the path so much it can trip you up. We are looking at either replacing it with all stone, or with a compact low growing plant. Yeah If you are standing back from the labyrinth the feather grass is pretty.

Norton: Okay so definitely materials, planting materials, how that functions.

Respondent 1: Yes that is very important.

Norton: What about privacy issues, Do you think people, if that determines if someone will use this or not

Respondent 1: I haven't really thought of that.

Norton: I know that, for an example, I visited a labyrinth that was able to be seen from many buildings, and I know that it was hard for me to focus and concentrate, because I was the only one out there.

Respondent 1: (Laughs) You felt like you were in the spotlight.

Norton: I was walking in the circle, and that got me wondering if privacy, if people were reluctant to use them if they were in the center of attention.

Respondent 1: Hmm, interesting. Well I guess that is possible, well this one is not in the middle of campus. It is a quite area of campus for sure by the lake, as you will see. There are people passing by for sure. Now, I had never thought about that. I have been to labyrinth events where you have time, and then it becomes kind of a cool experience. The outdoor labyrinth at Baylor Labyrinth downtown. And it is a totally different experience. That is something to think about. What else, the materials privacy and was there something else.

Norton: I guess the overall design in terms of the layout, the wind or sun?

Respondent 1: Part of it is very shaded, and in the summer I wish it was all shaded, but that is just the nature of being outside in Texas (laughs). It is a very lovely view towards the lake.

Norton: That concludes my formal questions, but if anything that you would like to elaborate on it. If you want to add anything that I am not thinking about.

Respondent 1: Yeah, right.... Let me think. Like I said we invested a significant amount in building the labyrinth, and unfortunately it is nobody's job. So (name withheld) and I are just kind of representatives of the labyrinth, she is head of my ??? , and me just because I am interested. I would just really like for someone to have time to maybe take classes and have a five miniature spiel and just so we could get the word out to more students. From time to time we have articles in the, we haven't done that lately. And with a community college, the generations of students change so regularly.

Norton: What do you think that landscape architects or any designers of outdoor environments. What do you think we could I guess do to make the use of labyrinths more know about.

Respondent 1: At most indoor labyrinths, they have something to read, it is very helpful for those who are not familiar with them. I thought about having a container, but. So we have the lack of signage which is a little longer than what we have got for someone who just stumbles on it. I have adult children and I brought them to view and see the labyrinth for the first time. We were all



walking it, and they got to the middle and just walked back out directly, and I was like no, no, no. You have to go both ways for it to really work. But that is the kind of thing that people do that haven't heard about it, and that is a bad thing, The complete experience is to going in and coming back out. Information like that is important.

Norton: Do you think, as a walker of labyrinths, the incorporation of plant materials in the labyrinth design? Would that be distracting to a walker or more relaxing?

Respondent 1: I think, its, for me it needs to be very uniform. I find it is distracting, the way ours in designed with partial rock and partial plant, I find that distracting. I think uniformity is important. I think that there are wonderful labyrinths that the plant material is totally uniform. As a note I was at the Getty Museum in Los Angeles last week, which is a fabulous garden. It's a circular garden and in the center they have what looks like a labyrinth. And it's made with these, shrubs that are pruned in a rounded shape, like a maze. It is in the center, and it is really a fountain, because all of these shrubs are in water so you can't walk it. But I was thinking that a labyrinth like that with these mounted shrubs that were all uniform would probably be a lovely experience. It would be hard to maintain, I'm sure but. I think uniformity is the key and with plants you always do not get perfectly uniformity (laughs).

Norton: Do you find a lot of people, a lot of readings and research a lot of people confuse a labyrinth with a maze.

Respondent 1: Yes yes. That is totally typical. Yes, people ask about that all the time. Its an important point that a labyrinth is a... but there obviously there are easy.

#### Respondent 2 Cook's Children's Medical

Norton: A lot of these questions pertain to the natural labyrinth at Cooks Children's Medical, so if you don't know them that is fine, and if you want to elaborate on something that I am not asking, just to be more of a conversation type interview. I will start off with my first question. Do you know who recommended or advocated for the labyrinth there at the medical center?

Respondent 2: It was a woman with the name of (name withheld), she heads up one of the ministries department there, so it was her idea to do the labyrinth. That was the impetus to the design.

Norton: From your knowledge, do you know if the labyrinth is being utilized or people using the labyrinth?

Respondent 2: Yes, it is being heavily utilized. It's one of better projects that they have out there. A lot of the, if you know anything about Cook's Children's Hospital its for children who have a number of different abnormalities and so forth and so. A lot of parents, and siblings, and everyone who is associated with the child that's in the hospital uses the labyrinth to, you know for meditation. They have had lots and lots of comments and praise back saying how nice it is to be able go out there and walk that and just mediate. It is quite heavily used. As a matter of fact and was actually the setting for the wedding of a young lady who had cancer and was going, was getting married, and then they found out that she had a relapse. She wanted to get married in that particular part of the garden, and then six months later she dies. It is very heavily utilized.

Norton: Excellent, excellent. Do you know anything about the, you just explained a little bit about the users groups of the labyrinth.

Respondent 2: It's all family members and staff uses it. I mean, everyone associated with the hospital uses the labyrinth. Some use it, you know, for meditation and a lot of people just go and have a nice place to walk. It is a very calming environment, so when people are keyed up with what goes on inside the hospital, weather your staff, your patient, family or whatever, it's just a nice to go and relax and kind of gather your thoughts.

Norton: That kind of answers my next questions, which was, what is the main purpose of the labyrinth. I guess that is just meditation, to have a place to...

Respondent 2: Yeah, the emphasis was really... Labyrinths are becoming more utilized throughout the Unites States as they have been in Europe as they have there for a number of years. She had visited a number of them with Disney and a lot of other place a lot of hospitals

and so forth. There is a great need for these types of space. We had a limited amount of space to work with, so we couldn't do full grown gardens and mazes and everything else. We wanted an area where people could go and have the ability to walk in a secure path, and just be able to mediate. That what it was really designed for.

Norton: Do you know if there is any coached or guided programs that they have?

Respondent 2: They don't have any coached programs, but they do have a pamphlet out that explains, and I am sure you can by and get one, that explains the labyrinth and everything else. As far as docent lead programs, no, not that I am aware of.

Norton: What are the perceived benefits of the people walking the labyrinths?

Respondent 2: Well, I have not had direct contact with the users. But with talking to (name withheld) and one of the pastors there and some other people involved with it. The direct benefit its just a great space to walk, mediate, gather your thoughts and just kind of put things in perspective. That is probably the greatest benefit. Its part of an overall design that we had that space, and the labyrinth is kind of the key element of it. We have other spaces for sitting, relaxing, meditating, and then we have a memorial space as well. It is all close together, so that the meditative experience is all part of the design.

Norton: Are there any benefits that you can see of them having a labyrinth, institution wide for them having the labyrinth. As far as them being acknowledged or press?

Respondent 2: I think that is secondary to what the main emphasis was on the design or on implementing the labyrinth. But they do get a lot of comments back from staff as well as again the clients at the hospital that it was a great thing to do for them, and they really appreciate what was done for the clients and the staff as well.

Norton: Do you know if there has been any formal research, done out there to determine how the space is being utilized.

Respondent 2: To my knowledge there has been no formal research.

Norton: And this where you can just run with it and elaborate on anything you want to talk about. Were there any design issues with the labyrinths? Did you have any solutions and problems to overcome? Are there anything to take into account when you designed it such as privacy issues, materials, the overall design. What makes...

Respondent 2: The difference between this one and some others was that there was a combination of plant materials and hard surface, where a lot of labyrinths are just a pattern on the ground that you follow. We wanted to introduce the use of plant materials, to one act as a barrier and also to really green up the space. We have a lot of different planting in the area, so it was a culmination of using plant materials in the overall space. The design of the labyrinth was such that plants were used in the labyrinth, and secondly we had the a.. a lot of kids are pulled with wagons out there, and you have a lot of wheelchairs and so forth. In that aspect in the design of the labyrinth had to be taken into account of in terms of turning radiuses for wheelchairs and for wagons and everything else, so it would accommodate those uses. Over the course of time we had to make some minor modifications to accommodate some of the tighter radiuses and so forth. One of the other design elements that we had to deal with is the users that it wasn't strictly just a walking or pedestrian use it was, had to deal with people who are incapacitated in some for of fashion who had to use wagons or wheelchairs in the labyrinth as well.

Norton: Do you feel as a designer there's ways to extract what makes a labyrinth work, in kind of pull that out into maybe multiple use spaces that is not specifically a labyrinth but might maybe in my mind a walking or strolling garden. Do you think that can have the same effects as a labyrinth?

Respondent 2: In some respects, yes. But you have to be very careful in the design of a labyrinth in that in it is really designed to allow you to walk a known path or secluded path so that it allows you to meditate more on whatever you are mediating on. If you have too many other eliminates it becomes a distraction, and the meditative qualities of the labyrinth start to disintegrate. That

would be my only concern about introducing a whole lot of different elements into a labyrinth design, because then it starts getting away from what a labyrinth is designed to do.

Norton: Sure. Then from my research and my reading it's the brain not having to think about where it is going or how it going to move. It allows the mind...

Respondent 2: It frees the mind up, and the walking aspect or the moving aspect in my research, I did some study increases the ability of the mind to contemplate and meditate on a particular problem. Instead of just sitting there in a fixed position, thinking about and meditating. I think, the ability to move through a space in a concise way and in a patterned way frees the mind to think even greater thoughts.

Norton: I am actually going out to the site today. What did you use for paving materials?

Respondent 2: Oh, we used a textured and colored concrete. We originally thought about some paving patterns and some modular pavers and so forth, but because of the wagons and some of the other issues, like having a lot kids having to take an IV cart, and carry that, we wanted some texture to the pavement, we wanted it to be as smooth as we could get it so that the end users could actually use the space.

Norton: I was actually doing an interview yesterday at a location, and the designer used a real course decomposed granite and there was some actual some pretty big chunks of gravel in there. That was one of there concerns that if it was a lot smoother material that it would be a better effect.

Respondent 2: Yeah, The gravel also, and this is just a comment, the gravel tends to detract from the meditative aspects of it, because you have that scuffing, it is not as smooth a surface, you want the surface and the it just needs to facilitate the meditative qualities. And this labyrinth is not what I would call a true labyrinth in the strict definition of the word. It allows people to meditate, but it also allows them to get out of the hospital environment and get into a less stressful environment than what they kind of retreat from what they are going through.

Norton: Have you designed any labyrinths for other facilities?

Respondent 2: No, that is the only one we have designed. We done several gardens at Cook's, so they approached us to do that.

Norton: Was the labyrinth something you had studied before or when you were asked to design?

Respondent 2: Just when, we were in France we went to the labyrinth at Sharps, but no. This was the first time that I really got into it, when we were asked to design it we did a lot of research on it.

Norton: It's actually very intriguing?

Respondent 2: Yes very intriguing

Norton: Well are there any other design issues that might help educated landscape architects?

Respondent 2: Well like everything else, when your doing site design you need to take everything into consideration. We have had continual draining problems over there because there was a fountain there at one time, and we have had for some reason some water intrusion coming onto the site that they cannot identify. That effects plant materials, so from a site design problem, its all landscape architecture, you have to take into consideration every effecting impacting. And just do your research and you should be good to go.

Norton: Do you think a privacy issue has an effect on how it is being used? For example, I was visiting a labyrinth and I was walking it to get the experience, and it was able to be seen by different buildings. It was a little hard for me to kind of let go, because I was the only person walking, and I felt like I could be viewed from all these different people. That was just something in my mind, because if a labyrinth was in more a private setting people may use it more.

Respondent 2: I have never really thought of that, but it makes sense because I know a lot of the earlier labyrinths were in churches, which were very private, very calming and quite. As opposed to being in a more public place where there are too many distractions. The more distractions you can eliminate from a labyrinth environment the more successful the labyrinth will be.

Respondent 3 Cook Children's Medical Central, Fort Worth

Norton: My first question is, who recommended or advocated for the labyrinth at this location?

Respondent 3: Well, we have long wanted an outdoor worship space for families. It has been in my mind for something like that a long time. But I was actually approached by a member of a woman who has used labyrinths before, and it was very interesting to me.

Norton: Is the labyrinth here being utilized?

Respondent 3: Yes. Yes it is. It's well used. We planned so it is accessible for tricycles, wheelchairs, wagon, and IV polls. So it's on an all weather surface right out front of our hospital.

Norton: So there is a lot of individual users. Are there any coached or guided programs?

Respondent 3: We have had a little bit. It was mostly during the trainer sort of things of it, I conducted a program for child life to show them various uses of it. We have people from the community church groups who will come and ask if it's okay, if it's open to the community, and some of those are facilitated tours and some are not. We did briefly consider having docents here to do that, but that is not the primary purpose of the children's hospital ????. Within that hospital, so we provide an informational brochure that serves as a guide and tours on request.

Norton: What would you sum of the main purposes for the use of the labyrinth?

Respondent 3: Well, I think that is for the user to determine. It is for many people a way to pray without words to walk. At a children's hospital, as you might well imagine, there are lot of kids who are worried about what is happening to them, parents who are terribly anxious, and staff who need to walk off the tension. Play space, we have little kids to skip through it, we have...I brought my mom who has Alzheimer's, I just wanted to bring her because it was donated in my name, and I had hoped she would recognize my name. What she loved most was that she could walk alone. Alzheimer's has taken her sense of where she is away, and she gets lost. You can't get lost in a labyrinth, you can walk through that without someone holding your hand, or walking with you. It's been used in many different ways. Because it is in a limited space, we can take children... we don't have to say, Hey, No, Stop!. There is a natural ??? There are people just

walk through it and have no idea it is a labyrinth, they think it is just a winding path, well hey good for them.

Norton: Absolutely. I guess in my study, I am not testing participants on whether they are getting any benefit. But as an observer, do you perceive people getting the benefits from it?

Respondent 3: People tend to stop me and tell me they were out there. We are also not collecting any data on it, we don't keep data on it, it seems to sort of invade on people's spiritual and emotional health. From our perspective we just want to provide an opportunity. I would say that lots of people use it.

Norton: And that is one of the reasons that I wanted to take a qualitative approach to this research, rather than surveying people using it. It's very hard to quantify any benefits, especially from a landscape architect's perspective where we are concerned with outdoor space. I realize as a student there is a great need for outdoor meditational type spaces.

Respondent 3: When our landscape architect first brought the drawings I thought, oh and I adore him now, we work well together, but he first brought mazes. He said this will be better for flow because people can come into and come out of, many entrances and many exits. And I said, have a nice life, we are not going to be able to work together, I want a labyrinth. Once I could explain my reason to him, I found him to be much wanting to meet our needs. His assumption was because the media frequently exchanges those words, that I probably didn't have a clue to the difference. But once he saw that I not only know the difference, but I had a very distinct request for a labyrinth, and that it wasn't going to work with someone wanting to build me a maze. But he went back and re-drew and did a fantastic job of making a labyrinth.

Norton: In a lot of my research, you know one of the reasons that I am interested in the labyrinth I am interested in creatively and intuition. Through my literature, so I uncovered that a maze is to stimulate the left brain, and a labyrinth stimulates the right brain. Has the institution seen any benefits from having the labyrinth? Any press, or just any received a good image for having it.



Respondent 3: Well, our landscape architect has won a Nation award, and that is definitely a benefit. Mostly this is an instruction that stating in construction where children can play safely, and the kinds of materials????

Norton: Well, I guess my purpose in that question would be, that you know when you get an labyrinth, and people are knowing about it, and press, and it really gets people to know what a labyrinth is.... Maybe a promotion tool?

Respondent 3: Yes, Well we get people who call and say that we saw you on the National Registry, is it okay if we come and we walk. We also there are people who know about a children's hospital, who are touched by kid's with illness, and the only response that they know to make is to come, and that is just a recipe for terror for these children. That is a huge safety risk and a violation of privacy, of people with ill intentions that come by. So, we are able to say to them, to honor their good intent and protect patients' families. Make a hospital prayer list, and so folks people will know that they are not alone.

Norton: I guess my next question if there is any there is an utilization?

Respondent 3: Well, not research as such. We had a professor from Dallas Baptists University ???

Norton: I guess my last question is are there any design issues on the labyrinth that effected the utilization.

Respondent 3: Yes, drainage issues out there, long term. All the way back.

Norton: Yes, anything issues design related.

Respondent 3: We also were concerned that would it fit within the space.

Norton: Something in my mind, in terms of privacy. Do you think that determines how it is used? Do you think people want more of an intimate space, where they can be alone or do you think it matters if there are a lot of people around walking the labyrinth?

Respondent 3: We never have had huge crowds out there with the exception of people coming as a group, and sort of wanting to be together. It is a lot more likely that you have one or two

people. I guess people here want a little space. Another thing with the architectural design, it's not like you can loose a small child in it. Just for safety reasons, and we didn't want anyone lurking either. This is a children's facility so we have to take enormous, not trying to paint this as a dangerous area... anytime you have groups of vulnerable people, you have to watch who your advertise to. All children's facilities, all nurseries, all playgrounds have to take precautions.

Norton: As designers, that is one of the things that we run into quite frequently. You know a big mass of vegetation might look good in this area, but you also have to take that into consideration. As far as the overall design, as an advocate and a user of labyrinths, do you have any suggestions for landscape architects and designers to keep in mind when designing and using these projects?

Respondent 3: Be as open as you can you can.

Respondent 4 at St. Peter's Presbyterian Church, Fort Worth

Norton: Well, my first question for you is who recommended or advocated for the labyrinth for this location?

Respondent 4: We had a church member of the name of (name withheld), who as I understand it, this actually happen before I came here. She was really interested in learning about labyrinths and got the church through our music director (name withheld) to send her to labyrinth training in San Francisco. They started by getting a full size chart of a labyrinth, that you could just fold out and put in the crossing of our church, which is huge. We could fit it perfectly, so you basically got a full size chart labyrinth right there that often were walking indoors. That is well the initial thing got started. She came back, we have a tradition here at St. Stephen of having a guild for organizations like that that represent certain aspects, and worship has always been very important, and so there was labyrinth guild formed, and that is where is got started.

Norton: Great, absolutely, Is the labyrinth at this location being utilized, do many people use the labyrinth here?

Respondent 4: And actually I didn't speak on building the labyrinth that we have. Over time there was increased interest, and one of the, and I believe if I can recall correctly, you should check this with (name withheld), but I think we actually got a donation, in fact I am sure we did get a donation, yes we did get a donation, in the name of a church member's mother from her father to build this labyrinth. So, because there was interest in having an outdoor labyrinth, and so we proceeded on that. So on to your next question how often is it used?

Norton: Yes, Is it is ....

Respondent 4: Yeah, sure. There are two... because we still have the indoor labyrinth and the outdoor. The outdoor is used often in ways that surprise me. There are some obvious ways that it is used. There are occasionally Sunday school classes set up and use it. Then they contact the labyrinth guild, and the labyrinth leader (name withheld) or someone from the Guild will come and does this sort of guided program through it. We also have a lot of students from the ??? school who will come do it either individually or as a class. There are a couple of professors who come out here pretty regularly and do a class with it. Those are some main things. One of things that has been really neat, is the other day I ran across the minister of another Presbyterian Church walking down my hall, and I asked her if she was coming after my job. She said no, that she and some of her church people had been walking the labyrinth, and that they do it a lot. I didn't know that. You know I see people out, and I don't always know it is, and I feel like I don't want to violate there personal space when they are on the labyrinth, but there are people out there. And that's exactly what it is for. We have people who just come to, we a huge grounds. People are often out say walking their dog or just enjoying the grounds and they decide to walk the labyrinth... and that is exactly what it is for.

Norton: Absolutely. That is great. So there are both individuals and user groups using the labyrinths?

Respondent 4: Yeah, that is right.

Norton: Well that kind of goes into my next question. Are there any kinds of coached or guided programs? I know you said that there are.

Respondent 4: Yes, we do. We now have two people trained as labyrinth guides, (name withheld) and (name withheld). They do coaching when they are asked. I think we not have the best system yet, for making sure that that happens as often as it could. But, yeah, yeah we do.

Norton: Awesome, and my next question is.... Since I am not actually going out to survey users to see if they are getting any benefits, I kind of felt like that is more on the psychology roll, instead of the design roll. So this question is do you perceive or do you observe people getting a benefit from walking the labyrinth?

Respondent 4: Yes, yes I do. You know, yes exactly, that is harder to quantify. I know I get a benefit, but I don't do it as much as I probably could. But, you know, there's a real benefit in just having something that just focuses you. I have gotten a sense that there the whole, that there are right-brained approaches... things that are happening that I don't know the difference, but I am basically a right-brained person. What is nice to me is first of all, I am kind of more naturally in movement anyway, just sitting still to pray, is not a big thrill to me. I enjoy the movement. And you know I think it is not exactly prayer. You may be praying, but I think it probably pushing a little bit closer into mysticism, because you are, there is more of a sensory involvement. We built it in part of a larger garden process that we are working on. There are people who come again and again that are clearly getting a benefit from it.

Norton: One thing that I found through my research, through the literature that I have been pouring through, by walking the path, by your brain knowing where you are walking, its kind of like driving a car on an open interstate. It allows your left brain to kind; well I am getting bored and allows your right brain to open up which is where a lot of your creativity and intuition comes from.

Respondent 4: It is funny, that is so true. I had an experience a couple of years ago when we were walking the indoor chart labyrinth. I was walking the labyrinth, and it is full size, but the lanes are kind of narrow. You know, if you have other people on it, it can get kind of tight. I was

walking the labyrinth and mid-way coming back I realized that I had gotten off of the path, and I was not paying attention, and I could not tell you I knew I was off the path. It just suddenly hit me, and that was the first time that it really struck me that the sharp labyrinth was blazed in my head a way . I always think, I don't know if you have read Roger Zelazny's umm? Oh what is that series of novels he wrote the science fiction novels? That are about these people from alternative dimension, who actually our world is a reflection of there world. And they walk a maze a labyrinth, to create the pattern for the universe, and that it is blazed in there consciousness. I realized that this is blazed in my consciousness, because I know I am off the path. Till then I was just in prayer, and then I suddenly realized that I was in the wrong spot, I was lost. So then I just got where I thought I should be, and I was fine.

Norton: Cool, that is very neat. Does the church see any benefits from the labyrinth? Is it brining people in, does it give you any advantage, press?

Respondent 4: Yes, press is good, were okay with press. We really played it up big when we built it. We had a dedication service that about 150 people came to, which was awfully good. There were newspaper reporters. I know for a fact that the guy who runs the religion page has come out and walked it. You know, I can't say that we have gotten more members. We view it, I won't say everyone views it this way, this is certainly the way I and the people who are advocates for it view it. It is consistent with a total package of how we understand our church. We have this huge beautiful sanctuary and a real strong emphasize on worship. We are, by building the labyrinth part of what we wanted to do was to put our inside outside. We feel like one of our strengths is a more focused approach to spirituality. We wanted to both present that but also strengthen it so we expanding spirituality beyond just simply thinking about you do through different ways... like movement. I think that is where the benefit has been.

Norton: Has there been any formal research done to determine how it is utilized?

Respondent 4: No. And I don't know if you're going to ask this, but I can tell you little bit about the research building it, you may want to come to that later. But, no we haven't really beyond...

well let me put it this way I don't know. It may be that the labyrinth people have done something into it, but no we have never really that I know done any.

Norton: Well, and I guess my last question is dealing with the design issues in the building. One of things that I am interested in is that I like the organic form of this labyrinth. What is your opinion of this form versus the sharp form which is more a formal pattern?

Respondent 4: I would say, and probably something that I should when I have some time is walk them both back to back when we have the sharp labyrinth down. The one thing that I wonder about is... I know what they say about the sharp labyrinth is and also what do they call the other one, the 7 Ring Labyrinth?

Norton: The Cretan

Respondent 4: Yeah, maybe. Of them they say and I do kind of get more a sense of passing from one hemisphere to another in my brain, I really get a sense of there being a transition. And I am not sure if I pick that so much on this one, but maybe I am just not used to it yet. Here is the other side of it. There was a lot of research going into to the building, and the guy that built it, Mr. (name withheld), who died a couple of years ago. He had never done anything like this before either, and he did a lot of research. One of the things that was a real emphasis, that (name withheld) and others wanted was that it was accessible walk. That is why we have very wide paths, so that someone in a wheelchair can get around it. We wanted it to be.. it had to fit in a certain space, we wanted that wheelchair access. Consequently what needed to happen to make our own labyrinth. This is the St. Stephen's labyrinth. As far as I know no one else has done this design, Mr. Spence designed it. As far as I know we are the only ones who have it, and that is kind of neat too.

Norton: Yeah, absolutely. Something that triggered something when you said you contacted the landscape architect, and it was the first time he had done one, and he had to do research. When I was doing an interview a person the other day, and the institution when to the landscape architect and requested a labyrinth, and he came back with all these proposals for mazes. They

had to say, "No, no, no, this is what a labyrinth is. He had to go back and research and then he ended up building a wonderful labyrinth. So one of the goals of this research is to help landscape architects...

Respondent 4: To Understand that difference?

Norton: Yes, because there is a major difference.

Respondent 4: Yes, there is. Honestly, I hate mazes; you know I don't want to get lost (laughs). That is part of the symbolism of the labyrinth, is that you can get in there but you can come out again. That's very cool; the whole thing is just very cool.

Norton: Well, one thing that I am trying to understand as a designer I am drawn to the organic approach because it gives more opportunity for vegetation, water features, and other elements. As a designer does that, is that very distracting, does it pull away from the experience of the labyrinth or does it add something, does it help people relax? That is another type of thing I am trying to figure out through this research.

Respondent 4: That is hard to say. At one level we are probably not, because what we have got over there is really more a smaller plants and there were a couple of trees that were planted. Overall I do not view the natural aspects as distracting or necessarily.... I tend to think the fact that it is outdoors, and you know even though we know kind of overlooking the road and the park that is one is more attuned to cut through nature.

Norton: Well that is all the questions that I have for you. You are more than welcome to elaborate on anything. Do you have any suggestions that you have for my research or for designers is general with solutions or different kinds of projects to use labyrinths with. Do you have any other comments?

Respondent 4: Just a few things that come to mind. It's been nice that we have both the indoor and outdoor options. The indoor, what has been nice with the indoor, it is that we can align it with important Liturgical events or special events. For a while, a couple of times a year we did a complete service, while the choir would sing. During the service, while they are doing the

complete, people were walking the labyrinth, which was really cool. Outdoor is harder to do that sort of thing with, and that is one of the challenges with it. But, doing it sort of in line with special liturgical events and advertising it is open with our marketing people.

Respondent 5 Kessler Park United Methodist Church, Dallas

Norton: Some of my questions you may or may not know about, so just let me know. Do you who recommended or advocated for the labyrinth here at this location?

Respondent 5: I believe it was (name withheld). She was the prime person as for as putting it together and getting putting put in.

Norton: Yes, I believe I am meeting with her.

Respondent 5: See what they had is that they had this thing going off on an angle. They didn't have any the wall in, or any of the landscape in. We had to cut out about 2 foot of solid flat rock in there to get to get enough soil in to do these carvings. Then we had to get our water in, to get our electrical in, then all that stuff to get in. It was all open though there to get it in, and then we ran extra piping to allow for future growth. See I know basically just from a construction standpoint.

Norton: Sure. If you would talk again about the privacy because that is one of the major things that I am looking at from a design standpoint.

Respondent 5: Well, it was in the design to have more privacy landscaping around here than what they have,????? this is a quite area but budgets didn't allow for it. So in the future they will finish it, and they will have this thing that will make it more private. It will allow people, once they have that privacy it will allow people to feel like they are not being observed, and they will more indulgent. Anyone under stress or duress in their life, like the guy that was just here, and he comes and he sits and this is his church. He said he has had some wonderful revelations sitting here. It is really a powerful place, that would happen more if people had there privacy. The best way is through natural bushes and shrubs.



Norton: That is a question that I had after walking a labyrinth at a different location in Dallas, where I felt like I was being observed. I felt like it would be easier to let myself go if I didn't have to worry...

Respondent 5: Exactly, if you weren't on guard or worrying about what other people think about this. It really is to be, it really is your walk of life. You go in and it takes you all the way through the center, and takes you way back out and all the way through and you are turning you right and left, it getting your mind as you think about your problems. It gives you balance so you are thinking more on the center. Men tend to be right minded and woman tend left minded. It gets both sides of your consciousness concentrating and usually when you do it from not the strict male or female perspective you do better.

Norton: Yes sir. It is all about balance. The Ying and Yang.

Respondent 5: The Ying and Yang out of the Middle East. I just went to India last year, I'd definitely go back. When your kids are about 9 or 10 years old you need to take them to India, to show them how people make it on nothing. It totally changed me.

Norton: So is there a concrete base underneath it?

Respondent 5: Yes, well that and mostly rock. They put in a really hard compactable sub-soil and got it good and level and compacted it. They didn't a really good job with the prep. He came out and he had forms that he set, and laid all the parts between the in breakers.

Norton: So did you kind of manage the process?

Respondent 5: No, I didn't manage it at all. All I did was give him the project, and we got it ready. We were working, and we had to come in even after they put it in and dig up. Then that stuff was added, and a bunch of those benches and stuff were added.

Norton: Was this a kit?

Respondent 5: Yes it came in a kit.

Norton: Was it from the Labyrinth Company?

Respondent 5: Something like that. They just had this wonderful kit. He just laid the center and worked off of that. They laid the lines out and set the forms and laid the radius forms. It was, it just did great.

Norton: How long did it take them to complete it.

Respondent 5: About a week. About two days to prep it, and about three days to lay it.

Norton: Have you observed many people using it?

Respondent 5: Yes, quite a few, quite a few. They have a lot of services out here. I think it gets used quite a bit. I just believe it would be more used if they had the money for landscape. If you know of anyone with about ten or fifteen thousand wanting to donate to a good cause this would be it. People have started adding special things to it, they are starting to add bricks and stuff around. In this respect it is a good money making project for the church, because any of these bricks can be replaced. It's nice to have your name on something.

Norton: Do you have any recommendations for any landscape designers/ architects that are designing projects such as this.

Respondent 5: Privacy and planning ahead. Having sleeves through to have accessibility to it so you don't have to go back in and tear it up for future plans. Just really planning in it for having electrical, piping, sprinklers underneath it.

#### Respondent 6 Baylor Medical Center

Respondent 6: We've done, we have had inquiries about designing labyrinths on a lot of projects. This is one that we have gotten built and implemented. Presbyterian Hospital out in Plano, on which we did work and did a bid tower, I think. A Chaplain there had asked and had interest doing one out there. I really don't know the source or the reason, or why the interest sparked him or whether he went to Baylor or some others. But, we really haven't been back to him, to see if he wants to take it to the next level.

We have designed one for Wilshire Baptist Church, which is adjacent to a Column Barium, which was designed a year ago. It's a very small area. Many approved it, they were seeking funds to

build it, and they are still seeking funds, and called us a couple of weeks ago and wanted to do final contract documents, so they are getting serious about it. A lot of it had to do with the Column barium, families buying niches, if you will, basically in a wall kind of system. And there off to the side, there is sort of this prayer place or space, which is basically a labyrinth. Some religions don't want to call it a labyrinth, they want us to change the name and call it a Prayer Garden. It's a finite difference in religious, and the way their interpretation of it. And I don't know if you have heard of that, but it happens. So on the Baylor Campus that came up, and it wasn't a big deal, but they just said, "No we won't call it a labyrinth, we'll call it a... and that is there preference of terms, and where it comes from I guess. Its important to certain religions, and I'm Methodist, and to me it doesn't matter what you call it, its what you do (laughs). Anyway, take the religion out of this in a sense...

Norton: Yes sir, and since it transcends religions, I think that some may want to... to make it seems to fit there religion by calling it that.

Respondent 6: So anyway, there is a number of other projects that we have perused and tried to do some. Some where on the drawing boards, and it never... I think at Lovers we looked at one over there, and it was a different one, a softer, but it never moved to the next step to fund it.

This project started, wow, I don't know the exact date, I want to think it was at least seven or eight ????. when I really didn't hear much of a labyrinth or even the term. Our committee was formed at Baylor, and it had members that were part of this committee that formed Thanksgiving Square, downtown Dallas, which is existing now. I don't know if you are familiar with that space, but it is a triangular park right next to umm, umm of those building that they changed the names. Umm it's. Are you familiar with it?

Norton: Yes, I'm somewhat familiar with it.

Respondent 6: Then you know about where it is. The point is that, there is a chapel that Philip Johnson designed, within it, and he designed the whole park, it wasn't a landscape architect involved, it was an architect. It was strictly for Thanksgiving, and prayer, and for meditation, and

that kind of thing. The committee that had started that, there were a lot of members that were a part of this Baylor committee. Their task was to decide where the site would be, on the downtown campus. They knew they wanted to do it on the Gaston downtown campus.

We've been doing Baylor's work for probably... to keep it consistent throughout the system. We do a lot of healthcare. They, we are familiar with all of the campus, so one of my jobs was to find the site. They had some ideas for about three ??? , and I analyzed those and developed schemes, and this one was site and there were two or three others. Actually we did a design for all of those, as to how they integrated into the campus. All of them were, used the, I call it a classical geometry. Some of the original labyrinths, if you read about them, that form keeps coming up, and I think it was in Chartres, that major cathedral there, that it was used. They wanted that symbol, that form.

It is interesting when you study it, I don't want to get off on a tangent here, but when you analyze it, it's all about finding the center of it, the center of life, finding the there are a lot of metaphors for it. You enter it, and if you have ever gone on this particular arrangement of a labyrinth, you start to approach the center, but you never get there yet. It takes you on a journey, and it's like a maze, that's another term for it that I guess that have read. It will bring you to another quadrant, and then it will bring you in a little closer, and then it will trick you and bring you back down around counter-clockwise into an opposite one, and eventually you will find your way into the center part of it.

A lot of people have had a lot of thoughts about in what that means, and why. But there is something about prayer, and the relationship of a superior being, a God, in that idealism is to approach that, but it's a difficult task, I guess a philosophical thought about it. That's something that I observed.

I really liked the pattern, so what I did was adopted it on all these different other sites. This one was selected, and this was the most difficult site. The others were easier. The others were more

passive and soft, they were in a grove a tress, it tended to be a lot quieter and easier to provide a space that you could go into and pray, to be alone, and have a little solitude. All of the...

This one was the toughest, but it is what they viewed as being the center of the Baylor campus. They wanted it to be highly visible, and that was the foremost. They analyzed all the spaces and did a matrix, because it was the only way to draw out of the committee where they wanted to go to. This one received the most points in terms of how they set it up in a weighted kind of matrix system. Even though it was more urban and nosier and, it was in the heart. You look down on it, and you realize that that was an important syllable within the core of the campus, in terms of healing. So that is why they picked it. And we went, "Oh my God, they picked the wrong one. (Laughs).

Norton: Well do you think, that visibility, I guess the lack of privacy, do you think it affects the usage of it any at all?

Respondent 6: Sure, I do, sure I do. I think, and everybody is different in that regard, in what they, it is kind of like religion but, on how they pray and how they do? So you will get different answers for that. But, one of things is that you try to do, is to eliminate distractions. This was the most difficult one. So we said, we will see what we can do, and it had utilities underground, and this stuff. The first thing that we did, is shrink its size in terms of the space, and we dropped it about four or five feet from the street. (Pulls out plans) This is the junior street that comes around this thing and around this side of the plane. It's a public street, and it comes around... Have you ever been here?

Norton: Yes sir, I have.

Respondent 6: Okay. Well you come around and it will go under the hospital, and it T's in over here. Here is another diagram. It wraps around here and goes through the Collins, Samons and Robert's hospitals ends out on Worth Street. Very busy, and the drop off from Roberts hospital. That is why they called it the center of the campus. There is a series of hospitals, different names,

and different functions. But Robert's is one of the larger ones, that was built probably about fifteen years ago, and so that drop off area there was key.

So in order to get it away from the traffic we dropped it, and put it at the same level as Collins Hospital, right after Samon's and Collins. Then, what it really meant was that parameter wall that is around the edge could be as low as we could get it, in order to. It became a protective rail from high to low, so that when you are in the space, you really couldn't see the automobile, so that worked fine. When you are a pedestrian you could walk along the space and look down but not feel like you are interrupting anything within the labyrinth. Of course the view down would always work, because it's in really an urban setting. So all of the views around it... and that was really important to the committee, that it's highly visible. So that is why we dropped it in the design.

I always thought the entrance to it, and the finality of finding the core and the center was the most important thing in the labyrinth design, so I changed those. The center was not changed much, only that the form I took it away and provided a seat, a low bunch that you sit, and it's open ended. So you could do it with one person sitting on the outside, or it could be a group that were praying together, and that's why they are facing each other on the inside. The entrance sits off, and it's sort of is an invitation. That particular form also has a seat around it, it has a core, and sort of a plaque or dedication in the center. It's open to invite you into it, and then you follow the path from the outside world into that center space. So all of those forms, we are trying to pull people into it. In a sense, its, well I grew up Baptists, and I am Methodist now. But it is more of trying to pull people in, and they are more aggressive in terms of what they do, both in terms of Evangelical movements to attract people to their religions, than perhaps the Methodist are and some of the other religions. So this one is sort of going outside of that, and saying to the people, "Come In", that this is a good space. We are not tucking this off into the corner of campus, we are putting it in the center of life, the center of So that was the attitude towards how it could be used. It also, as that photograph shows (points to a photo), at the opening. it could be used for

meeting place and other events, which is an interesting, it's not one function. It could be used as a meeting place, and that is where the opening ceremonies were held at it, which was kind of neat.

Then, the other thing that we did within the design is use water to mask the noise of the traffic around. We created two water walls on opposite sides; they are over on this side and that side (referencing the plan). It gave it white noise, which you can see here where water spill at the top, and then we kicked it out towards the end, so before it goes into the pools. We also used, we split the walls, so as the walls swings around the water comes out the end of it into the pools. We did as much planting as we could to help soften it, but they wanted hard surface within the center. I originally had grass, and stone with grass joints, which I thought would be kind of fun and softer, but it's a high maintenance thing. So, we switched the materials to a rustic terrazzo, which is a granite chip material. Then I also in trying to green this thing up, did a vine kind of a trellis which reamed this whole thing up. You can see in the rendering (referring to the plan) up across the top, where the vines on the outside and the trellis kind of leans in toward the center. During the spring you will get the tropic vine and you will get the red flowers that ream the whole thing.

We had two entrances, the labyrinth entrance over on this side, where you come down steps and come in or you can come in off the Junius (street) come down the steps into it. There are gates, and it's gated at certain times or if they wanted to close it off. We wanted to open this side with an open screen for the views coming from the hospital into it. It is solid along here and it is also solid along the street side. Shade trees that existed there, and its funny how we design. I worked on this thing with Mr. Powell (the tress) in the early 70's (laughs), and this was a grid of tress, so we saved a lot of the trees we put in that period. In a practice you ended going back and re-did what we did in the 70's, which is interesting. I think that is probably it. We used all the materials around the Baylor masonry, brick walls and Cass stone, and I think that is the basic approach and scheme. Places to sit along the perimeter, benches, or you could go ahead and walk the prayer path.

Norton: Excellent, Excellent.

Respondent 6: I did others, another scheme that was not too far from here. It was in a linear park that existed, with heavy live oaks over everything. It offered a very linear water element that would lead into the labyrinth. That was the proposal back then. It got into inscriptions of biblical messages and the phrases from the bible that were placed at the bottom of a pool. We would boil the water down and these cells over these words and then suck the water back up, where you could read these messages. It was sort of an interactive in a sense, but that was getting a little too commercial for them, and they like this space better. I think that is it.

Norton: Well, you said earlier, that you are getting these request for labyrinths more often?

Respondent 6: Well yeah, but not real often, maybe three or maybe four request. I have always wanted to, or I was definitely in the program that we had to use this pattern to do it in a much different way, and that is the fun thing.

Norton: Do you have any recommendations for designers on the design or implementation of labyrinths or the approaches, or just overall suggestions. .

Respondent 6: I think it is easier, obviously as I said, to select sites that are more park like, where it is quieter, where you are more communing with nature, and therefore a much higher being, so to speak, a more beautiful place. The interesting thing about that is that it sometimes could be very different in its character than the natural space. If the fact that you are putting it in has lots of natural assets, then that also can be very religious. That is sort of a little design issue, that it would not hurt try to elaborate on that. The setting is the real key, because that would have a lot to do with that geometry. In another words, if it was in an open natural setting that would be totally inappropriate. Both materials and setting it's all about focus in those natural settings. Focusing to a center, focusing to something that is not man made...so the setting of it of course.

Norton: One visit that I made over at Cooks Children's Medical Center in Fort Worth and they have a labyrinth and it's very organic. It's more of a meandering path, but it still goes to the center and back out. They have a lot of vegetation mixed in with the path. From my readings



and understanding, that one of the things that makes a labyrinth work is that when you are walking the pattern allows your left brain, to kind of it almost gets bored and subside to the right and that where it is theorized that creativity and intuition and more of a spiritual thinking happens. I am just wondering if that distracts when you have a path that has lots of thing integrated with it?

Respondent 6: That is a good comment. And yeah, I think that is the designer tries to hard in conveying choices and other distractions. Just because it is soft and it is plantings, doesn't mean that it is quite and solemn and peaceful and focused. They could not your head off with geraniums. It's contrast and design. I don't know. The word labyrinth, I think, comes from the term pathway or a maze, so it says it's a pattern of some sort. Or weather or intricate or very simple is open, and you can define that. This is very regimented, this is,, it has a beginning and an end, there are no choices. I think we you give choice it is a maze. Now, that what makes design fun, there is no right solution. I think it would be important to you to walk any labyrinth without knowing why it was developed like it was, to come up with your own opinion, to see if it conveyed what you thought it conveyed. That what design is about. Good design is pretty direct and the message is clear, that is what I call good design when the message is clear the goal is hit. If you are too complex or too contrived or give too many choice, too many views, or too many messages you may be on the wrong path, design path. I don't know. I have not been on, I have read and did research on the labyrinths, but I have not really been to those sites. Some of them are temporary; a lot of them are probably temporary, which is interesting, because the flexibility of it could very well be a real good thing, if you could change it. If a person comes back to that same space, and it is different this time, something different, just pattern wise.

Norton: Yeah, that is a good thought.

Respondent 6: They wanted people come back. We are doing a renovation to this building (refers to plan) and we are doing the Cancer Center, which is right across the street. Which is a big giant job, it won't be built for another five or six years, but it is. So part of my task was how do I develop this (the labyrinth) without. The labyrinth sits right over there, in this plan view, so we

are doing a court yard, with another water wall and make it a people place outside the Cancer Center. So for the third or fourth time I am working on this.

Norton: I think you have given me some good insight. I really appreciate this; you have given me some good insight.

Respondent 6: Other than to enlighten and trying to provide a better understanding, what are you trying to write here. Are you trying to prove something? Do you create a hypothesis and go after the conclusion?

Norton: I am using a qualitative approach to my research to come up with my questions. A few in my mind are the forms –organic versus the more formal, the materials, among other things?

Respondent 6: Nothing says it needs to have a center. Just as soon as I say it is black, I want to know why it is not white, and that is what life is about. It could be.. it doesn't have to return upon itself. (Respondent now drawing on a piece of paper) If you have a site and you created this path, and ended up with a beginning and an end. But because of the site, you had space here that was quite different along that pathway, than this one that focused you to do something else (drawing different rough paths and labyrinths on paper). It is not necessarily about creating mazes and patterns. Why couldn't a labyrinth be in a just in a beautiful place that you walk through? The path creates the connection to the views and the place. To be that is a labyrinth (pointing to a drawing). We have done some that are squares, but it is more of a maze.

Norton: David Hopman, who he is my chair, that is one of the questions he was asking me. Can you take the labyrinth, can you pull it out, and not be so literal with it, and still have the same benefit?

Respondent 6: Right, and the beauty of that is this was done, as one of the first classical ones, that is why it got that tan. They wanted it with it, this was the first one for Baylor. This one was proven and they thought it was great. They weren't going to experiment because it might now communicate; it would just be a beautiful place. But what has that got to do with internalizing your own issues. It would just be a beautiful place, which we design all the time. So that is the

difference, the difference in the word I guess. Labyrinths as you think of them are really more patterning.

Norton: In my research I have found that there is a lot of research from behavioral scientists that are done on labyrinths. I haven't found much research at all from a design standpoint. So I hope that this thesis will open up more opportunity for design in the field.

Respondent 6: I think it could. I definitely think it could. The other thing is that you probably want to address scale, and what I mean by that is path doesn't have to be an enormous path, it can be just in one place. The path is getting to it, but it doesn't have to be... It's majestic. The scale is the difference, and the experience in those two kinds of things. I think it is more than just a path. When does it become a labyrinth and when does it become good design?

Norton: That is a really good point. Thank you so much.

Respondent 7 Baylor Medical Center, Dallas

Norton: Well, my first question for you is who recommended or advocated for the labyrinth here at this location?

Respondent 7: Well it was a joint effort. The Chapel's department had a lot to do with it. A couple of chaplains in particular, you talked to (name withheld), she was one of them, and the other was a lady by the name of (name withheld), who has moved onto another place. The story goes, I believe. Someone discovered a Muslim praying in the stairs one day, because he had no place to pray. Our chapel has a big picture of Jesus, and he probably didn't feel comfortable there and it is really not convenient for praying on your knees anyway. So everyone was like, oh yeah we probably need an interfaith, and I think they just started thinking about a place to sit. Jennifer and Jan were enough knowledgeable about labyrinths, to say where they say hey why don't we make it both here, and give people an outdoor place to pray at least. Hopefully we will have more places to pray later on. So that was kind of the impetus of getting that done. Some people were for it, and some people weren't. A lot of conversations happen between the idea and actually getting it in place.

Norton: My next question is do you think the labyrinth is utilized here.

Respondent 7: Yes it is. We'd love for it to be utilized more. A lot of people don't know what to do with it. But we have had held classes for it. A lot of people are suspicious of it because it has pagan origins, but some does the Christmas tree and the Easter Bunny, and everything, everything we do has pagan origins. So there has been a lot of re-education. Of course in Texas, you can't use it between, I don't know, May and sometime even close to October because it is just so fuckin hot (laughs). We have even thought of building some kind of a tent over it, but we thought it would make it really ugly, but there is not a lot of natural shade around it. But of course in Texas even with shade it is too hot to do those kinds of events. But I am also on the other hand, I am really surprised at people who get out there that know nothing about it, and they know enough to say, hey I am supposed to walk this. It is utilized for all kind of things. Unfortunately sometimes people take their kids out there to run all over it, give them a place in this hospital setting to exercise, get rid of some of their energy. Some just sit and enjoy the area that we have. But there are patients and family member of patients that use it, more than I would expect. Even in the heat of the summer, I see people out there, it amazes me.

Norton: That gets into my next questions, who are the user groups?

Respondent 7: Well we have a really cool, maybe that isn't the right word, an amazing group occupational therapists that are into alternative ways of healing, and I use that word loosely -- healing. One of them, as a matter of fact, I saw the other day with a patient of there who is terminal. I mean, he is going to die and he knows it, and he is having to deal with that. He has had a really long term disease and has been at our hospital for at least two months. And she said, how long has it been since you have been outside. He said he hadn't been outside. So she gets the nurses permission and takes him outside. He couldn't walk the entire labyrinth, but because it was such a peaceful setting, even in the midst of all this concrete, he walked a little what he could, him and his IV pole. Then they sat in the center of it, and had an hour long discussion. I have used it in a walking relaxation class, that I teach to mainly outpatients. I will be

lying to you if I tell you that twenty people were showing up for these things. But we do have a few that come, and they are surprised at how much they enjoy it. I really have two goals there. One is to teach a walking meditation, it is kind of a relaxation of the body, thinking about taking your steps. Thinking about feet are doing, what your knees are doing, what your ankles are doing, what your hips are doing... thinking about those things that we take for granted which tends to relax the body. And then, what the monks have been doing for hundreds and hundreds of years, and that is repeating a prayer over and over while you walk the labyrinth, it is a form a relaxation and centering.

I use that way, I use it myself, being a Chaplin is a stressful job, and it is really the only thing... and I am not a good mediator. I usually have to be moving, so that is what I like about it, is that you can meditate and be doing something at the same time. You have your eyes open, or you will stumble. So that is what I like about it, it gives you both.

Norton: Absolutely. That is one of reasons that I was interested in the labyrinth, because I have tried various forms of meditation and I can't keep still.

Respondent 7: That is a problem in our culture isn't it? (laughs)

Norton: Yes, it is. So you would say, the main purpose for the labyrinth here is for healing, all around healing and meditation.

Respondent 7: Exactly. Yeah, I would say so. If you study back on the labyrinth it's has so many different reason for labyrinth being built. Some are just absolutely crazy in my opinion, but it is what it is to people. If they are more relaxed when they get through, then we have accomplished enough in this setting, in my opinion. You know there can be a centering effect, I think. I personally like the fact, and I am a religious person, but in our particular labyrinth there are no religious symbols at all and I like that. It is not a strengthening of my faith, it is a strengthening of my being, so anybody can go and use that no matter what there faith is.

Norton: Yes, I agree. Do you have any coached or guided programs; I know you mentioned you taught some classes.

Respondent 7: Yes, there have been a couple of coached programs. We would like to do more. Actually, you know that the heat is a problem and the rain is a problem (laughs). It is one of my favorite things to do, so we would like to offer more of those. We have a lot of ... we have a healing environment program coming up in early November one Saturday in November where someone is coming in and teaching Tai Chi and meditation classes. Last year a group came, actually I think they were from UTA. They were studying to become physical therapist or occupational therapists, and after that program they heard about it and they all went down and were walking the labyrinth all at one time. We have a few a year, we would like to have more.

Norton: So, do you have. I am not really trying to quantify and I am not surveying any users if they are getting any benefits. But as an observer do you perceive that people are receiving these benefits?

Respondent 7: Yeah, and I want to be clear about that. To me it is not magic, but I do think and this is an ancient belief, you cannot go for a walk around the block and get the same out, and equal what you get from walking the labyrinth. The focus is on the meditation, not getting exercise. It's been believed for long time that it is the pattern that is good for the meditation, it's a rhythm.

I wrote a short story about our labyrinth once, and I talked about how I always do it and once I get to the center, and go back out faster than I came in for some reason. I kind of have this pattern, this pace that happens when I walk it. I think, I wrote this in my short story, that everything that we do in life has this purpose to it, you know. We work to get paid. I go home and I feed my child, so she will go to sleep at night, and so she'll have good health. I try to get a good night's sleep and everything even when we walk around the block to loose weight or get exercise. There is, I like the fact that sometimes there is no purpose to it, you just do it. There is not much in life where you can say, I am just going to do this without purpose. I think that is kind of relaxing in itself, and is centering. That is what I really like about the labyrinth. I don't know if you found this in your studies, but the Greeks had something similar, but theirs were just meandering paths that you

would find in a park or something, and they got it wrong (laughs). A meandering path is great through the woods, I love being in the woods, but there is a purpose in the labyrinth.

Norton: I want to get to some design issues, I have a couple of questions to ask you about that. But first, what about benefits to the institution? Any press or, the reason I am asking, is that does the institution get any press and does that therefore educate others on the labyrinth?

Respondent 7: Well, when it first opened we got a lot of press. I'm sure Jan told you, but we had Maya Angelo came and spoke. We've had weddings out there. It got a lot of attention out front. It doesn't get a lot anymore, but again because people get it, or understand it, they are surprised that it is here. The title of my short story was *Out of Place* I think, because it is in the middle of a hospital in downtown Dallas, you know. You are surprised to find it there, I have always pictured these out in the woods, in a more retreat type setting. So, I have to be honest with you, I can't say it has a benefit to the hospital. I will just be flat out honest with you, some would call it a deficit because we are a Baptist hospital, and some people think we are mixing pagan stuff and Christian stuff. I could not disagree more, but some of those people have a lot of power, and so in their opinion it has decreased our worth or whatever... (laughs) but I think it is hogwash. We did have a big problem with that; I will be straight with you. But you know I see people down there, there was one a guy walking down there, with his truck stop looking hat, you know a large machine name on the hat. He was walking the labyrinth, and I thought that was so cool, that guy has found a reason to walk it, and doesn't care people or care if people are looking at him or wondering what he is doing.

Norton: That brings to mind in my research about how it in the pre-history it was a symbol for the walk of life, the meander of life. Then you get into the Fifteenth and Sixteenth centuries, where everything was the straight and narrow, and a lot of church's that had a labyrinth started to get rid of them, because the meander was not long, it was the straight and narrow, not the meander...

Respondent 7: That is unfortunate, because it is in the mystery and the silence that we really discover ourselves and God and I think that is also what the labyrinth can provide. I use it, we get

really busy around here, and I use it as an opportunity to stop myself. I like being a creative person, and sometimes this job can kill that, so I use it as a way to break up a pattern or that rut that we can get to. I find I am more creative when I leave there than when I went in. That is interesting that you brought back up, I never thought about that. There is one church here in town, Royal Lane Baptists, they have one in their back yard, and it is Christianized, it is a church,, so I guess they have that right. People want to change it up a lot, but I just like it the way it is, I like it more traditionalized.

Norton: I noticed that this particular labyrinth, when I was researching online, and I found that Baylor had one, when I was searching labyrinth I couldn't find anything, because it was the Inter-Faith Garden. Is that the reason they don't call it a labyrinth?

Respondent 7: Yes. There was one powerful man, well he perceives himself that way, who associated that word with something evil. That one man almost shut the whole, he came in days within of shutting it all down, I mean we had bull-dozers here. He made a big deal, and that was the way...I called a labyrinth or a ??? to just to buck that idea. That is exactly what happen.

Norton: Has there been any formal research to...on any of the users to determine?

Respondent 7: No. That is a great idea though.

Norton: There are a lot of groups, I don't know if you have been to the Labyrinth Society?

Respondent 7: Yes, that is where I submitted my short story to. I got some money for my short story. I won the award that year, in 2005 if you want to look it up (laughs). It has a picture of our labyrinth on it, or it used to anyway.

Norton: Yes, I am actually going to do that. Congratulations. I noticed on the site that they had a questionnaire for walkers. Since I am coming from a design stand point instead of the behavior science, I decided not to quantify anything. Now I am coming more to the design issues. Are there any design issues off the bat that you can think of that influences utilization?

Respondent 7: Yes. I think you need to remember this; first of all we have holly bushes grow out onto our path... and that is not very comfortable when you are brushing up against holly bushes,



that were bad idea. Then why they torn down, we had these beautiful beneficial trees, I'm not sure what they were, flowering trees. They mowed those down, and put up crape myrtles, that sap all over the damn place... Ugh it just makes me ill. The doctors also, the doctor that looks out at these, he was also so angry, that was another thing that ticked me off. One thing that they didn't think about and this shocked me. Have you been there?

Norton: Yes.

Respondent 7: They have benches around where you can sit and contemplate, well if you sit your knees goes out into someone's path. That drives me insane.

Norton: Do you think that was the designer or was this people here stating what they wanted and the trees being removed and stuff?

Respondent 7: I think, it would have to be the designer, especially the benches because all we said is that we wanted benches. They built them into the path, which wasn't smart. What I love about it, because you know we have helicopters landing on top of the hospital, so it can be really noisy. Is the water features, they drown out a lot of the noise, so it actually is a peaceful place in the center of a chaotic setting, that is what I love the most. I love the fact that there is the benches in the middle, to where you get to the center, the centering self you can actually just sit there and contemplate for a while.

Norton: Yeah, when I was out there I noticed that, and that is a good idea.

Respondent 7: Although there is a wall around it, some of it, you can see through it, and I like that as well. I have always really loved the really natural stones that outline a path that you get at a retreat center, those are my favorites. But considering where this one was put. I like to be able to feel the path under my feet; you can kind of do that out here. It's not so smooth that you feel like you are walking on tile, it has a little bit of a rock feel to it, but I am sure we had to do that for safety purposed too.

Norton: Now, I visited a labyrinth the other day where they used a real course decomposed granite, and they kind of thought that that distracted from the walk because you are walking and you might hit a big piece of gravel.

Respondent 7: Well, that is true. I do like to hear the walk beneath my feet.

Norton: Yeah, I guess it has that more natural feel. You mentioned earlier about the meandering path. I have visited labyrinths that some the classical Cretan seven circuit, and then the eleven circuit labyrinth that is here, and then others that are more organic form. They still eventually wind around to the center and wind back out, but they are not really circular but more linear. Do you feel that has a...

Respondent 7: Yeah, I mean I am partial to the distinct patterns of the first two that you mentioned. Just because I can feel my arms when I am walking, and they kind of metronome, like I am kind of getting into this metronome type of thing. You know in ours you will be in one quadrant, then next quadrant and do some over there, and then back to another one. So you're having to kind of watch where you are going, but there are enough lengthy paths in there to let you walk it out or focus a little bit more on your walking instead of making the turn. I am big about the pattern, especially to someone who does it every other day.

Norton: In some of my research, it says to read Sacred Geometry. Do you think that geometry has something to do with it?

Respondent 7: Yeah, I am open to that, you know I have read about that too, but just don't know much about it. I am one of those people who are really skeptical open at the same time, which really puts me in a weird place most of the time. I am open to that, but I just take it as it is.

Norton: Well, that is all the questions that I have. Is there anything that you want to elaborate on?

Respondent 7: Let me think about that. There is another labyrinth in the parking lot off of Forest Avenue at the Unitarian Universalist Church. I have walked that one too, It is right beside Forest Avenue in Dallas, and it doesn't really work for me. They actually have a couple of different ones

out there, they have two I think. It is on a paved parking lot that needs repair, and it is too many distractions for me. I think there is so much to be distracted by here, and they have built it to the best of their ability to take away from the distractions.

Norton: Do you think privacy matter, as far as it is being used? I came here one Sunday to walk it, and there was a couple people walking though. I felt like I could be viewed from so many different buildings that it was hard to really let go.

Respondent 7: Yeah, I mentioned that in my short stories, all these people looking down at you. I was walking it a couple weeks ago, and the weather was beautiful, I was where I needed to be at that time. This kid, who was probably in fourth grade, was just running around, and almost knocking me down. I had to stop. We have a couple of signs out there that say no smoking and no food. But we should have put one that says no cell phones, because our staff thinks it is a great place to go be quiet and talk. So we need to add a no cell phones sign.

I think some bit of privacy is good, or at least it be there with people that you know because there is that level of comfort there. At the same time, there is something, and this is just a personal belief, when I notice when all those people are looking at me, and I do it anyway, it makes me feel good. Then they see how it is used, and they may start to come out and use it. If we are not doing it, the staff, then the patients and there families are not going to use it either. At least that is how I look at it. That was a good question though.

Norton: That is all I have, it has been great speaking with you.

#### Respondent 8 Kessler Park United Methodist Church

Norton: Well, how did this labyrinth come about? Who recommended it and who got it here?

Respondent 8: Well (name withheld) when we moved here almost nine years ago, I guess eight and half years ago. The first year that we were here, he and I spoke about labyrinths and what they meant to us -- the healing properties and the meditation, relaxation properties. He is a massage therapists and yoga teacher, and we were talking about that, and he said he had always wanted one to be here. I said I love them too and I have to go away and find one. So, I was in a

meditation class over at Dallas Theological Seminary that meets on Saturday mornings. In my meditation, I kept seeing this labyrinth. I came home and told my husband, you know, I think I am supposed to do a labyrinth at Kessler, but I am just not ready to do that. He said, well you know, they are really not going to welcome it if you wanted to because that would be really different, and they would probably think it is paganistic and that type of thing. So, I went well, I am not ready to fight with anyone. So I went back the next Saturday morning and did the meditation, and got the same vision. I was like, okay well that is two. Then I went back the next week, I went home and told my husband, alright it is time to build the labyrinth here, I am very sure of that. He said okay, I don't know how open they will be. I said, I know they will be open, because it is time.

We proceeded to getting a small group together and one of those was Jeff Chandler. We met and talked about it, and started giving out information to people and trying to educating them on what a labyrinth is, because it is not a maze at all. There is only one way in, and one way out, there is nothing to trick you like a maze. It is a meditative spiritual tool, from thousands of years ago, you can find them all over the world. So, we started getting money together, and I found an architect and started speaking to him about it. It's one up North, his name escapes me right now, I have all the paperwork at home... but I can't remember now, because this was in, it was in 2004 that we actually started it. It took a couple of years to get it done.

Norton: David Tolzman?

Respondent 8: Yeah, that's him! That's him! He is really good. So it was a matter of which one will we use, and what be the coloration, and what will be the materials. So there was a whole lot of things that needed to be decided until we finally decided on this.

Norton: Awesome. Do you feel like the labyrinth is being utilized here?

Respondent 8: Little by little, more and more people, as they get to know what it is about. It is being utilized by the neighborhood really more than that just this congregation of the United Methodist Church, because it is for the community, and not just the church. That was its whole function, that anyone can come and use it. That is why it is outside, and we welcome anyone to

come. And if they don't understand or use it as a spiritual tool or a meditative tool, then the benches are here for them to come and use as a prayer garden. Every time I pass by here, there like there is someone at least sitting here on the benches.

Norton: After educating, did you have any resistance in putting the labyrinth in?

Respondent 8: No, but then there was some resistance on what it would look like. The first thing we heard is, oh it is going to look like a teleport. And we were like, no, we reassured them it was no going to look like a teleport at all (laughs). I am an artist, and I did a drawing, a digital sketch of it, and sent it out to a lot of people and spread it with info on what is a labyrinth in the community. Then I held several classes on information about the labyrinth for education, then had them come out after it was done. I still do education and have them come out and walk it, I do that most regularly actually, because there are a lot of people who don't realize the value of it, and the health.

Norton: Now this is the Eleven Circuit Charters form?

Respondent 8: Yes, it is.

Norton: I have visited some other sites, I have visited the Seven Circuit Creation Form, and some are more organic approaches. Do you feel like the form has anything to do ?

Respondent 8: Any significance? No, I really don't. As long as you are weaving in and out, and going to the left brain and to the right brain, because there is something that happens going back and forth from each side of the brain, that really opens you up to a whole different level. As long as you have that, and all of them have that it doesn't matter. Just a shorted circuit you will reach the center and complete it sooner than a longer circuit. That's all.

Norton: What do you think the main purposes are for the users of this labyrinth?

Respondent 8: We live in such a hectic, fast paced world that those who come and walk the labyrinth it is all about slowing down and being focused on your own thoughts. Isolating yourself for just a short span of time from all the craziness of the world. Even though it is open, you go into the sacred space and even though there may be other people walking it, you are there on

your own spiritual journey by yourself. It is like a pilgrimage, it is sort of like, it's a retreat from all the hustle and bustle and franticness of the world. Those who enter, even those who don't know what it is about and they just walk it and they come out and say, "What did I just do? I have this wonderful relaxation and awesome feeling. Please explain to be what just happen to me. I had that happen to me just two weeks ago from a person, and I didn't know it was his first time walking it or I would have explained it a little bit more (laughs).

Norton: Do you have a lot of people who don't know what to do when they get to the labyrinth? Do they know they are supposed to walk it or do they think this is just a courtyard?

Respondent 8: A lot of them don't know what to do, they have to be educated. This is a very ancient spiritual tool. Well actually, the first time this was re-introduced was by Lauren Ardris and it was at a labyrinth that is inside at Transfiguration Episcopal Church here in Dallas. I was one of the people there at the first time it was open at a weekend workshop with her, she is from California. She had done like a doctoral study, and went to Charters and dug up all of this. She did all the research and re-introduced it to the modern world. I was there, in 1994 and 1995, and I went there regularly.... And now I totally forgot what the questions was? I went off on my on tangent.

Norton: No, no that is okay. That is how I want this to go, I want this to be more conversational.

Respondent 8: It is all about educating the people. I had to be educated too, I didn't know there was any such thing until then. I was intrigued at first, and then once it was explained to me, and then we had a workshop on how it came about, and how ancients used it. It wasn't a pagan new age thing; it was a very old age thing and in all cultures, in especially the Christian tradition or in any tradition. You know I walk it with Buddhist friends and Hindu friends, and Christians. It doesn't matter it isn't about that. It is really inter-faith or no fait. It is a meditative tool, it's whatever you need it to be for you. That is why Baylor Hospital has a labyrinth on there grounds, because it is a very smoothing and therapeutic as well.

Norton: Are there any coached or guided programs that you might have? Group walking or meditative coaching?

Respondent 8: Yes, I have done those and (name withheld) has done them here with different people as we offer it to the community. We also have a set of instructions that we got from Ardris, Lauren that she introduced in her book I believe it was called *Walking the Labyrinth* or something like that in the 90's. All the information is right in there. We tell them where it came from and what the different things mean, and it sort of educates them. And then we give them instructions on how it can be used, on different ways that it can be used. We do that whenever it is needed or if I am called to speak with a group who has just put in a new labyrinth, I'll do that.

Norton: I guess you have probably already answered this, but as an observer and a user do you perceive benefits from people walking the labyrinth?

Respondent 8: Yes. Even if you say you have no faith and don't want to use it as a spiritual tool. Simply the physicalness of walking it, causes such relaxation and the twists and turns from left brain to right brain and the slowing down of your pass is beneficial to your body.

Norton: Has this benefited the institution? Has this brought people to the church to find out what it is, and what is going on?

Respondent 8: Yes, I think a lot of people are curious, especially now. Well now, well ten years ago they were curious and sort of up in arms about what is this pagan thing right in our community. But now, there has been a lot of information out there on the labyrinths. Now whether they have had their ears to the ground or even not, they have gleaned information about it. I think that they have ventured out to sort of experience what others are claiming that is there for them, because everyone is ready in this hectic world to try... they are very hungry for spirituality of some sort. Not religion, but a deep spirituality, there are more and more people really hungry for that. This is a tool that can open that door for them. I tell them, it's a walking meditation. For those who sit, a lot of people do that, and I do too, they sit and do silent meditations, thirty minute meditations. But you have more people who can't do that, who can't sit

still that long. This is perfect for them, this is perfect for them, you don't have to sit still, they are the pacers. You walk at your own pace, and it is a meditative tool, you do it the same way as someone who would be sitting.

Norton: Yeah. I would be qualified as a pacer.

Respondent 8: Well, then you go. I always ask, can you sit still or are you a pacer (laughs)? Well then to the pacers I say well, then you need to come to the labyrinth then (laughs).

Norton: Have you guys done any formal research?

Respondent 8: Yes, yes I did. I did all kinds of research before we started building it: on the different shapes, on the different areas of the world that they are located in, on the communities and how they use them and what they used them for.

Norton: How about research on participants? I know online at the Labyrinth Society they have a survey that you can give to users to observe if they ?

Respondent 8: No, I have not done that formally. Just in the lessons instructions we have gotten together afterwards and discussed in orally, but I have not documented it.

Norton: Well, we are getting down to my last question here, and if I haven't mentioned you feel is important, or that I haven't addressed, feel free. But are there any design issues that you think influence the way people use the labyrinth. Maybe like privacy issues, materials, the overall design of it. It is kind of a general question.

Respondent 8: Well we discussed that, as far as privacy issues and distractions, and having it open like this. We had a discussion on whether we would keep it open like this, so that the community would feel like everyone was welcome, or whether try to put up tall hedges, and have privacy for the walkers, but then the community would feel like they weren't welcome. For this specific one, we decided it was more important that everyone feel welcome. I know that in other settings at the Lake where is more private, there is one with just stone and dirt. One that I walked at the Lake up North to where there wasn't traffic, there wasn't cars, or the world going on, and really able to go deep in the meditations. So there is no doubt that the silence and privacy aids,



but you also this serves as a prayer garden and trying to get people to come and use, so it better suits us open.

Norton: Well, that is all I have. Thank you so much.

Respondent 8: Thank you. I am so excited that you are doing your thesis on this. We all need, more than ever before, in this crazy world, an oasis. A place where we can escape all that, to have some quiet meditative time, and you have already seen them being built all over the place. This is just the beginning; it will be more and more, as we realize all the health features, physically, mentally and spiritually.

Respondent 9 Kessler Park United Methodist Church

Norton: Here we go. Had did the labyrinth come about here? Who recommended or advocated to get the labyrinth here?

Respondent 9: As I remember it. (name withheld) and I had mutual friend, (name withheld). I saw (name withheld) in one part of her life, and (name withheld) saw (name withheld) in another part of her life. It was (name withheld) who said, so that labyrinth that you want to at the church. What if I said there was someone who wanted one too? I was like cool. And she introduced me to Linda, even though we knew each other, but I knew her more as the pastor's wife. I am a French Congregationalist here at the church; I have been here since a kid. So I view my relationship with the church more differently than most others. I think that really, we both came up with it, but because of (name withheld) we were able to come off of it.

Norton: So had you been studying labyrinths for a while.

Respondent 9: No. It seemed like the right thing to have. It seemed like we had a neighborhood, as far as my concern, a labyrinth was in the idea, I didn't come with a lot of....

(Respondent pauses to get his dog who ran away).

Now, for me the labyrinth was something that was able to bring a community event. We do a lot of stuff for the community here, and a lot of people from the community come here, but they don't necessarily come here to go to church, but they here for the community center aspect. Being old

school here and seeing as the church was in need of money, I looked at it as more of a financial aspect than I did a spiritual aspect. It's not that I'm not spiritual. I looked at this church as being really some of my responsibility, having been a kid here, having grown up here, seeing my parents here, my friend's parents here. What am I going to do to help the longevity of the community center/church?

Norton: So, do you think that the labyrinth...

Respondent 9: To me it is profit center.

Norton: So you think it has benefited the institution by bringing people in?

Respondent 9: It has benefited the institution by having... It does bring people in, yes it does. But the real potential for this is every one of these bricks here lying on the outside, they are each worth \$250.00. There are enough bricks here to pay off the major part of the note that's held on it. If every one of these red bricks on the outside are sold, it would bring in a quarter of a million dollars. So it is something that anyone can come and participate in, at any given time, over a period of time. Meanwhile the labyrinth is working in that, we have had peace gatherings here, we have kids who gather here and run and play. People in the neighborhood I know and don't know who come and walk the labyrinth, well I mean I hear that they do that. It is really a lot of things, but for me, it was what I can do to help better this place.

Norton: So, a win/win situation. A good spot that is going to generate...

Respondent 9: Interests and income.

Norton: Excellent, Excellent. How about the, is the labyrinth being utilized here.

Respondent 9: Yeah, yes it is. I tell you what, just this last week, I came here for a memorial service for a friend. In the two days that I was here just walking up, I saw someone engaged in a meditative aspect on this labyrinth – a woman and her dog and another by herself. On Sunday when I was here for the service, I saw kids gathering in the center to meet me at the labyrinth, I saw parents coming through talking. Yeah, I think the labyrinth is used. I used to give yoga

lessons out here on Monday, Wednesday, and Fridays in the morning. It was a fabulous place to lay and watch the sky.

Norton: Do you think many people know how to use the labyrinth, other than it being just a good space?

Respondent 9: I think that there is plenty of room for conversation in understanding what a labyrinth is. Just in the pure misconception of it being a maze. One unique difference between a labyrinth and a maze is that a maze holds a specific type of energy. Don't let me weird you out too much with this, but these things come to us because of sacred Geometry, they don't come to us because of somebody's theological desire. These come to us universally speaking; this is an energy field here. When I speak to people about the labyrinth, I helped them understand that this is not a vortex, so much but an energy field. There is a lot of similar coherent thought that goes into the labyrinth, and it draws the like. And when you insert that energy into a space, that space takes the energy on. I think that there is a lot of conversation to be had on the understanding of a labyrinth. A maze is made to trick you. A labyrinth is made to take you to the center safely and return you back to the outside safely.

Norton: So is this labyrinth set up on directions?

Respondent 9: All labyrinths are corrected, or attuned, if you will to triangles. If you remember the X we made, and then we drew an X in the middle of that, then made the infamous Christmas Star. If you continue to add more X's is in there you start to develop a pattern that is consistent all the way around. This is a Thirteen,, versus a nine or seven.

Norton: Do you think the energy comes from...

Respondent 9: The intent you put into to it. That is really where energy comes from. There is an energy we know as fuel, and then there is an energy that we really don't understand yet, and that is intent. What you intend and what you think about is what you are, what you get. The intent here is generally to find or bring peace. I mean, very few people come to a labyrinth to have an

argument or hurt somebody (laughs). There might be someone who wants to do that, but generally speaking.

Norton: It is fascinating and I have read through a lot of literature and I have come across some of the ideas that you are talking about. I think it is absolutely fascinating.

Respondent 9: To you need to understand that or do you even need to know that to appreciate a labyrinth? No, a labyrinth was made, so some white guy could pass through his own courtyard, without being trampled to death by some black guy out there. Essentially these guys came to big beings out there during the crusades. They wanted to do a thing like Mecca, but they didn't really have a thing to do like Mecca so they did these things. They didn't have to go out into the element and get attacked.

Respondent 9: I have been to a lot of labyrinths in my studies, and I have come across some that are more organic. Do you think that the energy is there as well?

Respondent 9: You know, yeah. That is because it is collective.

Norton: Like you said, it is the intent, and it may not have that sacred geometry there, but it still happens.

Respondent 9: Right, I think ultimately speaking, even it is even a little crooked, even if it is a little skewed. Like because people right themselves. I do body work, I and don't mean cars or muscle building, I do primarily massage, yoga, raaki, and given the opportunity the body will heal itself. It just is, the truth always surfaces. I think that a person, specifically a person my friend who is getting ready to lay a path. Have you ever been to the labyrinth on Keist? Linda will tell you the exact name of it. They even have a house and a coffee house that is grown out of it. It is handmade and roughed out. I think that even though this was put in by the Labyrinth Company, who has done hundreds. It was made by a computer generated direction, compared to that one that was hand done, I think they are just as in tuned. I think intent is what it is really about.

Norton: This is great stuff. That is kind of one of things that I found in my research, and I don't want to generalize too much, but maybe landscape architects may think of it as more of an

ornamental object, and really don't see that intent of what the labyrinths is used for. Hopefully this will open some doors to that.

Respondent 9: You know if you were to ask me the question, where do I see the future of labyrinths in this conversation. I would say you know, I can imagine that this would be an architectural object that would go good in a home, much like a fixed up garage or an outdoor kitchen, or lord knows who else. They will probably be doing custom made sleeping rings outside. I think this is marketable as a pool. Do I think that is sacrilegious, no I mean I can't worry about that. If a person has one of these in their yard or their house, no matter how big or small it is. If they have it and they are exposed to it will rub off on them. That in itself has slowed you down to ponder.

Norton: Any coached or guided programs here at this labyrinth?

Respondent 9: Yeah, if you wanted to do... Unfortunately we do not have the signage up yet. There should be signage here, which would direct you to call the church and say I would like to do a guided tour. We have done some guided tours before and we have done a couple of little seminars, and both came about because inquired, not that we put it out. I think if I had my signs up, we would get a lot more calls. To be honest with you if my energy was into it, we would probably have a lot more calls, but my energy is in a lot of other places. It took me a little while to respond to you.

Norton: One thing that I found doing this research is that everyone I have contacted has been so willing to help, and so energized about talking about the labyrinth. That has definitely allowed my research to progress. I have not been measuring benefits of the users to see if it is relaxing, but as a user and an observed, do you perceive any benefits with people?

Respondent 9: Oh yes. Like I was saying earlier, even if you are just left to ponder what this labyrinth is, knowing absolutely nothing at all, I think the energy out of a labyrinth will come to you. You will develop, maybe not as great of a magnitude as somebody else but you know... \$100 bottle of wine, is only as good as if you like it or not. This labyrinth is fantastic as you want it

to be, and as simple as you want it to be. I really do think just sitting by it, is like water, it is filling. I don't think you have to participate to get the benefits.

Norton: We have already talked about my next question, which was the benefits to the institution.

Respondent 9: It's a draw, it's a financial advantage. If somebody wanted to come out here and do a big kickoff, huh how. We live in a community that where if I said that the church was going to go under tomorrow unless but if I sell all of these bricks, we will be able to save it, there is no doubt in my mind that all the bricks would be sold. I think it has that type of magic.

Norton: I am getting down to my last question, and if there are other things you want to talk about feel free.

Respondent 9: I do have one thing that I want to ask you, but I will wait till afterwards.

Norton: Sure, Are there any design issues with the design of the labyrinth that have an influence on its utilization? Such as privacy, materials, or overall design?

Respondent 9: That is a good question, because that leads me to the subject that I was going to ask you about. I am not hip with the landscape treatment of the labyrinth. The overall project is to include a remembrance wall, or a prayer wall, a wall of some artistic magnitude that would, kind of cover that area, make it a little more private. I personally don't think that is a problem, but whatever. The thing is that these Nadinia's will get a little taller, and these others will get taller. My feelings is this, I would have possibly liked to put in a larger shrub right along over there, for those who wanted to feel like they had some cover. I would rather have natural plantings all the way around. I don't like the idea of spending money on seasonal color, just natural plants that take care of themselves. I like to be sensitive to the materials. We have had a fair amount of wash that comes up, in the filler stand. I don't feel like you need to have a big wall around it. I have no feelings of the art wall that is Linda's concept. So, am I happy the way it is, I am very happy with it. There was a lot of love put into to.

Norton: What was your question for me?

Respondent 9: How would you plant this?

Norton: How would I plant this (laughs)? Off the record (laughs).

Respondent 9: No just in your opinion. I think the gardener planted these, it wasn't designed.

Norton: As a design specializing in plant materials, we are trained to think outside of the box.

Nardinia, Yaupons, I could see myself using a lot of Texas natives. There are a lot of beautiful Texas prairie grasses that people think gets wind and woody, but they can be contained where they still have some form. As well as a lot of perennials, like Salvia Greggii for example, Autumn Sage is beautiful. Texas Sage is an evergreen that you can kind of fill in. A self maintaining garden filled with a variety of plants, that you will have enough to provide for the change of the season, so that there is something always blooming.

Respondent 9: I think it can be done.

Norton: Thank you so much for the interview, I really appreciate it.

#### Respondent 10 Richland Community College

Norton: My first question is, had the labyrinth come about here at Richland? I guess, who recommended or advocated for it?

Respondent 10: Well, I think it was actually a combination of people who did. (name withheld), in our library, is very knowledgeable about it. I am the director of our Mind Body Health Study Institute. When we brought the Mind Body Health program here, that become something that we were interested in, and more and more people said you know we out to have a labyrinth. Then, our President, he was very supportive also and very interested in having it. At that time we had this horticulture program here, and had a landscape class, so they really worked on it. Our Landscaping professor actually, I think, drew the blueprints, if you will, for it. But the students had to do kind of do the Math; they have to do the aspects of the design. (Name withheld) who's the professor, came up with alternating the bricks and the Mexican father grass, and the path, and how the path would be. Then she and the President together... and the three of us met on more than one occasion to go over it and talk about it. I think the location is important, but there were some advantages to it being located here. Part of it became also, not just the design of the

labyrinth, but the design of this Heritage Gardens with native plantings that were here when this was a homestead. The type of plantings that would have been here at that time, and so became the labyrinth but that became that as well.

Norton: Is the labyrinth here being utilized?

Respondent 10: It is not utilized as much as we would like. We do have...part of the purpose of it being outdoors is that as a community college is we view ourselves as being part of the community, responsive to the community, and we wanted to have it open to the community. So we do have community groups that will call and contact us to use it, we have some classes and some student groups who come and use it, and it is here for individuals. We have also used it in important times in bringing the community together. One in particular that I recall was on September 12, 2001. We had a gathering here at the labyrinth where walked and read, and tried to bring our community together after September 11 events. So it has served in that purpose as well. We did have a dedication ceremony, as well, when the labyrinth was completed. So it is used by the community, it is used for some classes, and individuals as well. We would love for it more!

Norton: One thing that I found in my interviews is that they do serve as good gathering places. Most of the places I interviewed have talked about that, it's just a good place to bring people together. Do you have any coached or guided programs that you would use at this labyrinth?

Respondent 10: Oh, do you mean like materials that would help people understand it or?

Norton: Yes that, materials for understanding or maybe I guess, individuals who want to learn more. Do you have classes; you mentioned earlier that classes come out here. Or classes where you would coach people how to use the labyrinth for meditation?

Respondent 10: We did have some materials available initially, just. Part of the problem, is where do have those (laughs)? When faculty bring a class, it might be a Human Development, or it might be a Philosophy class or something of that sort, why usually then they have something. We did make them available down in our Set Development Professional Development office, we



made them available in the library, but we haven't really replenished those and because there wasn't again a large demand. Most people already had an understanding about it if they were going to use it or they read the brief description that we have there on the stand (points to plaque) or faculty bringing a class they would do the research on it first and provide it to their students. We haven't had anything of a formal nature.

Norton: Do you find any individuals students just walking it for its meditational purposes.

Respondent 10: I do, I do, I see... For example, one day I met a friend out here for lunch. We just sat out here, you know, it was a nice day. There were two students who were just out here just using the labyrinth I guess for meditation. And again, that is the type of thing that we would like to hope to happen more. But it does happen, there are people who do that.

Norton: Has the university done any formal research, or have you conducted any formal research on to... on the Labyrinth Society they actually have like a survey that you can give to users to rate their feelings before entering a labyrinth and after.

Respondent 10: Not that I am aware at, not as a college we haven't done that. Then again, being a community college, we are not very research oriented. Mostly the kind of research that we would do, was well if a program was very costly to keep up, they might do a justification research (laughs), but since it is not people kind of leave us alone. Also, it is sort of a pride for the college, so we don't have to justify it. And again, the survey that could be something that faculty might use for students to complete the survey after they have utilized it, but just to have it available, there really isn't a place to make it easily available to people. Being as open as it is, we would probably get all kind of stuff.

Norton: What you say the benefits are to the college for having this ?

Respondent 10: I would say it is consistent with values that we express as a college. One of our ten values currently, which you can find on our website, is mindfulness. Maybe two or three years, more than that, after we installed the labyrinth, we installed the Carloness????, that you

hear, which also encouraged people to consider when they here that to stop and just be mindful for those seconds that that happens. I think that it's consistent with an institution of higher education... that contemplation and reflection ought to be part of the higher education experience. Then it fits with all the programs that we have. I mentioned the Mind Body Health program, and more recently we started an Institute for Peace program, and certainly through that. We have a program now, called the Center for Renewal and Wholeness in Higher education. When our new science building is completed, part of the old science building (which is actually now a planetarium will be remodeled for the Renewal and Wholeness in Higher education and it will actually have a view across the lake to the labyrinth. I think it fits very well with who we are. Also, I think, it is another way we can offer to the community, and the community members who take advantage of it are so appreciative that it is here.

Norton: What about design? Would you have any recommendations for design professionals regarding labyrinths that might increase its utilization? It can be anything with form, materials, or issues with privacy?

Respondent 10: Well, we were aware that ours was not... first of all we looked at various patterns and decided that we wanted this particular pattern. It's probably the one that is used the most, I guess, and we had enough space to do it. I love how right now it's in the shade; I think that that is great. I love how we used the Heritage Garden as somewhat of a buffer from the parking lot, with the view of the water. I think all of those things help. I'm sure on some college campuses where it would be more secluded, so it may be easier to get into more of a meditative state. However when I work with students around the labyrinth, I use this as a paradoxical of life really. That to be meditative we also have to, there is, we are still within the world, so we have to learn to have to be in that state with the noise around us. The other thing with it being more secluded is that it would give it less visibility, and possibly even less use. We though a lot about it, we didn't want to take out any trees, we may have loss one tree, but others were planted. There were several things like that. We were very aware that ours would not be accessible to do

those in a wheelchair, so that is why we provided the finger labyrinth right beside it. This labyrinth for someone who is mobility impaired and could not walk the labyrinth. You know I have done a bunch of them, I have walked a lot of labyrinths; with a variety of materials... and this is really not my foray, I am sorry. I think each of them has been unique and each have them have been. I have been about to follow the path and get the experience.

Norton: So materials, in your opinion, materials don't matter that much, it's the experience?

Respondent 10: Location matters I think. And materials would matter depending upon who your primary audience would be. Again, for example, if you wanted to make it accessible to those in a wheelchair, obviously you would have to use a different kind of material. My own preference would be something more natural in a natural setting as opposed to concrete or something that is...

Norton: I guess it is like any outdoor design, you have to design it to fit into the surrounding features. One of the things that I am interested in, I have been to some labyrinths that were very organic shaped that kind of fall outside the normal patterns. You know, little fountains or water features, or planting intermixed within the actual circuits, but it still goes to a center and back out. Do you think the form matters as more as that goes.

Respondent 10: I don't. I don't, I think sometimes that can be more distracting. Me I would find something like that so fascinating that it might pull me out of myself, as opposed to something that is more almost hypnotic in its sameness. I would love to see something like. I think that it could be very fascinating, and beautiful, it sounds beautiful. I think well for us, and probably for a designer, if the initial funds are available for the design and building of it and the funds are there for maintaining something elaborate, I think it would be great to be real creative like that. We had to think not only the cost of putting it in, but for the upkeep. Being a tax supported institution that was important. I would love to see those and to experience them. I think if someone can afford that it would be excellent. I know some people, Linda Joe, included would love to get rid of these Mexican Feather Grasses, because we loss them and have to re-plant. But they are nice in their

wispiness, and it is sort of nice to have the contrast with the gravel and the brick to have something natural.

Norton: I think this is a great space; and it fits in very well with the nature.

Respondent 11 Baylor Medical Center

Norton: I guess my first question is who recommended or advocated to get the labyrinth here?

Respondent 11: It came out of an interfaith task force that I was chairing with doctors, nurses and other Chaplains. It was called the Interfaith Task Force, and that group saw the need of having some interfaith prayer space. This is a faith based institution, the Baptists supported it and with have a Christian Chaplin, so we wanted a place a people of all faiths could come with equal confidence "One of our founders made that statement, so we wanted to build on that. The inter-faith task force was working on education, we did a conference looking at major religions traditions and heath issues, we did a website, we expanded dietary options for patients. Then the prayer space was the big thing. We looked at indoor and outdoor spaces, and decided that outdoor, for this campus, would be accessible and right in the center of the campus. Our Centennial Baylor centennial, came up in 2003, so we started in the interfaith task force in 1998. It's been planning for some years, and the administration wanted some big new enhancement like this for the Centennial and they got behind it. Of course we had to do a lot of fundraisers and had some big donors for the interfaith task force

Norton: I wanted to mention, that I have questions here but those are a template. I want this to be very conversational, so if you think of something that I haven't asked feel free to elaborate. I am just studying them in general.

Respondent 11: They are popping up everywhere. From what I can give you is more of the history. Allen and I have been here a couple of years, and have used the labyrinth, but he wasn't here when we actually started the whole process. He was at Baylor Irving.

Norton: Do you feel like... is the labyrinth being utilized here?

Respondent 11: It is. We would like to see it utilized even more. We started some of these guided prayer walks, and then had these handouts to give to people. Our Cancer Support staff started some Relaxation Made Easy classes, meeting once a week, and one of the sessions was on walking the labyrinth. They would be guided imagery, deep breathing; it would be different focus each week, and the labyrinth was one. In cold weather, Allen may have told you that he even put up a labyrinth in the indoor space with blue tape, a modified version; it was as big as this one. We have tried some things to expand the use. We have had some concerts out there, just so people get out to the garden more our healing environment, ??? our musicians have done out reach concerts. That has gone over well, we've put tents up out there when we do that we usually have chairs on the labyrinth, and it gets people there and people ask about the labyrinth. These brochures are available all over the campus.

Norton: It is a great space to meet, to sit, and to walk. Do you find many people walking it?

Respondent 11: Yeah. I go over there, because I am an Oncology Chaplain going to the Cancer Center. I look and I see people with their IV poles walking it, and I see people in wheelchairs being pushed around it, children skipping, running and playing on it, and that is great too. Again, not as much as I would like to see it used. I don't know how much is people who don't understand and or uneducated about it, and how much is sometimes the patients are too sick and can't get out there.

Norton: Do you use that as any kind of alternative treatment? I looked through some Oncology Nursing journals and found some institutions try to incorporate that to try that even if it is to relieve stress or to get outside. I don't know if you have any guided programs that you use that with?

Respondent 11: That is what that Relaxation Made Easy is supposed to do. First of all we invite people all over the campus, but we do it in the cancer areas. It hasn't been as well attended lately, it was at first, and we do that once a month. The pain center regularly uses the labyrinth, the pain management center, they have an outpatient clinic. And they go all the way along for first four weeks, and then do, Chaplain do session on spirituality, deep breathing, they do water

therapy. But one of the things they do is walking meditation for pain management. It could be used there more in the oncology center. We are close there to the cancer center. Our hope is that more people coming in for radiation would use the labyrinth, they are more able to do that than people receiving stem cell or bone marrow transplant, those treatments are so aggressive they are not able to get out and do a lot of that treatment. Now sometimes their family members will go out to the labyrinth.

Norton: As an observer, do you perceive the users get a benefit when they walk the labyrinth?

Respondent 11: Yeah, I think so. As a user and observer I can see the benefits. Its very relaxing and centering. I have walked it with patients, and they have talked to me as they are walking, talked to me about their fears, and their stresses. Its usually more of an internal thing, but when I done that people have said that its been very helpful. Or people that I have suggested to go out there have told me that it has been very helpful. We also have a finger labyrinth, although not related to your architectural design, but we have been able to do that with some support groups when its been cold and have not been able to make it out to the labyrinth.

Norton: The finger labyrinth has intrigued me as well, although I have not researched it much for this particular study. But you find that the finger labyrinth works for meditation and stress relief as well?

Respondent 11: I don't think it (finger labyrinth) works as well, personally I don't think it works as well. There is just something about praying while using the finger labyrinth, it increases your concentration, but I don't think it works as well. I used the finger labyrinth to introduce patients to the labyrinth in the interfaith garden.

Norton: How does the labyrinth benefit the hospital? It's obviously a garden where people can pray, meditate, and de-stress; are there any other benefits?

Respondent 11: I think it advances our mission to minister to people all faiths, to be an interfaith space. The committee, I think this already answered your question on how the labyrinth came to be, decided on the interfaith garden. The people of the committee where searching for some kind

of symbol that all faiths could relate to. At first we thought, we need all these different symbols for these different religions, and we thought it would be too busy, or we might leave out a religion if we didn't have all of them. One of our doctors, had been to the San Francisco Grace Cathedral, and read the book by Lauren Artress. She also brought me the book, and said, "I think this might be a symbol, that could connect with all faiths". So when I read the book (by Lauren Artress) I said I think this is "Cool", and so we presented it to the committee, and talked about how labyrinth forms had been used in Judaism, and Native American traditions, as well as Christian traditions. I really didn't try to sell it too much this way, but with some ancient goddess traditions before the Chartres Cathedral adopted it and Christianized it. But anyway, it was obviously not just a Christian symbol, and because they were becoming more popular some people on our committee had heard about them (Labyrinth), in fact one of our administrators, said "him and his grandson had walked one at an Episcopal church so that helped. So, back to your question on how the labyrinth has helped the hospital it has been a place, where people who come from so many traditions and religions from all over the world, come to a big medical center like this, and there is a prayers space or religious space where a variety or a diversity of people can feel comfortable with and they wouldn't feel comfortable in a Christian space. So in how it's helping the center, families will stay out there before and after...

Norton: So it's really good for everyone?

Respondent 11: Yeah, that right.

Norton: Has the hospital done any formal research, such as surveying the participants?

Respondent 11: Have you done that

Norton: No, I haven't but on the Labyrinth Society they have survey templates for people to conduct research on how users are benefiting from their walk on the labyrinth. To me, that is hard to quantify, so I didn't want to get into that within this research project.

Respondent 11: Yeah, you're probably wise not to get into that, because it is hard to quantify. Look at our department and trying to do so kind of empirical research is hard. It's hard in our

cancer center, we've done a little bit with one of our support groups and quality of life. There are probably some things you could do with labyrinths, but I think you would have to use them over a period of time, I don't know if one will work. Maybe you could just do what is your stress level at the beginning of the walk, and then at the end, I just don't know.

Norton: What about design issues? Are there any design issues, you feel increases or decreases the use of a labyrinth, or just anything you could recommend to designer applying a labyrinth in a project?

Respondent 11: Flowers and trees out there, we thought there would be more in the designers initial design, and part of it is, it is still pretty young, the crape myrtle are still young, the trumpet vines, are supposed to cover the trellis. The azaleas are blooming, but there seems to be too much concrete. There needs to be more green. There is water, the water helps to dull other sounds, like traffic coming by. In outdoor versus indoor, in Texas, there are not too many days you can't go out there because its below zero or it sleeting or snowing, but there are some summer days were it is so hot that people may go out in the early morning or late afternoon. So indoor labyrinths may be used more, have you interviewed any of those.

Norton: I actually haven't interviewed at any indoor labyrinths, since my study is focused on landscape architect and outdoor environments.

Respondent 11: I would say to put more greenery, I guess there is so much concrete at Baylor anyway, I guess as most big medical institutions. I have seen outdoor labyrinth and have walked them at churches that are stone and grass, and not all concrete. Ours is really substantial and wonderful and probably lasting for the goal we have here at Baylor. But you have seen them, I sure with the grass in between, it just feels more like nature. I guess I would suggest just putting more shrubs and greenery and blooming things all around so the concrete is not as intrusive. You've seen it, don't you feel there could be a lot more green?

Norton: Yeah, and that brings to mind a question about form. Do you believe, that any particular form matters, I have been to some that are more organic, some that are based on the



classical Cretan seven circuit, and some that are really organic or more linear, but they all have the unicursal single path that goes to the center and back.

Respondent 11: Right, its not a maze, you can get lost in, that's important. With the center and the unicursal path that leads to the center and back out. I am not dogmatic on the form; I like this design (Chartres) it takes a little longer to walk, that the Cretan or the seven circuit, I walked those and they were fine with more grass around it.

Norton: Do you know the diameter on this one?

Respondent 11: No, not right off hand, it's a replica of the Chartres, so probably whatever it is.

Norton: I believe the Chartres is 42' diameter. Is there anything else you would like to comment on?

Respondent 11: I don't think so, I don't know if this would help at all, but here are some forms on what we looking for in the design and some of the designers original drawings.

Norton: Absolutely, I can keep these?

Respondent 11: Sure, there yours to keep.

Norton: Thank you for your time, I'll turn this off now.

#### Respondent 12 Designer of Richland College

Respondent and Norton are overlooking a plan of the labyrinth and the surrounding Heritage Garden.

Norton: Who recommended or advocated the labyrinth?

Respondent 12: From my recollection of what we did (name withheld) was instrumental in getting things started as well as (names withheld). Those were the people who were really behind the idea of getting it going. Since we were at Richland, and they have a good Horticulture department, and that was where I was working, they talked to me about the project, and wanted to see if I was interested. At the time I was interested in doing it, because I liked the combination of Mind Body and Health and the Plant world being a part of that.

Norton: Had you designed labyrinths before?

Respondent 12: No this was the first.

Norton: One of the things that I am interested in, and I have been studying a lot of the forms, lots of different ways to incorporating more planting materials into them. One of the things that I have been looking at in my quest of research here, is the overall form of the labyrinth, is that important? Can the path be meandering, still go to the center and back out, but have of an organic shape that allows more opportunity for plant material? Or is that distracting, does it take away from the?

Respondent 12: That is a good question. From the research that I did on labyrinths, there are two traditional forms of labyrinths. If you wanted to stick with the tradition and all the history behind there are two basic forms that you would use, and it does in some instances limit the use plant materials and that is what we encountered here. That is why this has plant material and a rock bordering because the space. We were really limited by the trees that were existing, because we really didn't want to get rid of those. This is the site that (name withheld) really wanted the labyrinth to be on. There were bigger spaces on campus that would have allowed wider paths and different plant materials, but have chosen this site we had to incorporate things that fit it. But using more plant materials and more meandering, as far as making that a labyrinth, I don't know how you would label it.

Norton: Do you know how the labyrinth was being utilized when you were there?

Respondent 12: When I was there, it did not have a formal use, but was open for any class. It was also used for the Peaceful ceremony that they had on campus. And we also used it; I am trying to think back. There were different occasions that we would meet out by the labyrinth, following a ceremony or celebration on campus. Then after that was concluded people were invited to walk through the area. It was always open to the public, and the faculty and students, and they could use it at any time. It wasn't really a formal incorporation, but really a informal open area to use.

Norton: What was the main purpose for Richland deciding to have a labyrinth?

Respondent 12: From my point at the time it was being designed they were really trying to get the Mind Body Health program off the ground, and this was really a part of that. That it fit into to that, it was right outside the building, so it was really visible. I think that was kind of the driving force behind it.

Norton: What are some of the design issues, and I know you kind of talked a little bit about the space. Do you feel like there are any design issues about this labyrinth that made it utilized or either way? That has enticed people to utilized it or do you thing there was anything to do design wise to make it more utilized or?

Respondent 12: I think the site being central to the campus, that it is a visible from the buildings and that is was not off away from the buildings and the campus, made the site very visible to the population. That enticed people to use it more. Also with the stream, if you remember the water runs over here (pointing to plan); that is a draw. The people in the neighborhoods usually come into that area. It is more like a park setting, where people that aren't enrolled in the school come into that area, also the population of the school. The main buildings are clustered around it, so they see it. It made it a good site for visibility. It was a site, as we talked about, it did give some confines because of the diameter. Like I said, we didn't want to loose the trees so that made or diameter given. We couldn't go beyond that, so it restricted that part of it.

Norton: What I am wondering, and I am catching you at the end of my interviews, so I am starting to see some patterns and everything. I noticed in several labyrinths, and what I am seeing is that visibility is important for there use. The question that comes to my mind, do you think that does privacy issues matter; as far as someone just being able to go to the labyrinth and use it as a walking meditation or for whatever purpose. How do you balance that and visibility, but..?

Respondent 12: I think that solitude is an important part of the labyrinth, I mean for my own use that is what I would prefer, to walk in calm meditation. That was the purpose of the shrubbery on the sides, to give it some buffer from the busier areas. I haven't been back lately, but I do not know if they are all still there. They were planted, but I don't know if they are still there to give that

buffer from this busy parking lot (pointing to the plans) and another small building over here. Then the trees that were back here buffered this parking lot. We kept this side open because of the water it gave it tranquil visible area from the labyrinth. But this was to help give you that privacy as well as it gives you that privacy.

(Another colleague interrupts the interview... introductions and small talk ensues)

Respondent 12: Going back to the buffers, in a campus setting we also have be aware and keep in mind, safety issues. We couldn't put anything too tall or too confining so that it would become a hazard or problem area where someone could hide. That is why the materials inside of it go with that, it couldn't be a hiding place, because of the visibility.

Norton: Well great! Do you have any other ideas for designers? Any suggestions, as far as, placement or materials, etc?

Respondent 12: That is so unique to the site. There were a lot of things; well I shouldn't say a lot of things, a few things that this site prevented me from doing because of the restrictions of the site, and the location on the campus. We had to keep all of the sides happy. We had to keep in mind maintenance issues, so the choice of the plant material had to be something that didn't require a lot of maintenance. It had to be something that didn't interfere with people walking, since the pathways were narrow. We had to consider that it needed to be something that you could brush against, so we used a soft plant material. We also had to incorporate the rock instead of another plant material, so that we didn't have to drainage. There were so low areas, so we had to consider drainage to get the water away from this area. Traditional versus freeform, you were talking about that, I don't know what you would call it?

Norton: I guess more of an organic form. They still meander, just more of open space in the path and more opportunity for plantings or a little fountain?

Respondent 12: Oh okay, so more places to meditate on the journey to the center.

Norton: I guess my question is does that distract? From my research one of the benefits of walking the labyrinth is having that path where your mind doesn't have to think about it? Not having to think about what you are doing or where you are going

Respondent 12: Yes, that part of the journey is to free your mind, just a simple walk. Where there is no thinking, no twists and turns, like a maze, where you are having to figure out where to go. You just do that mundane, almost step by step. That part of it is to help you get into the mind set of the center. The center is where you would stop to meditate or ask your question, and think about the reason you came to the labyrinth. Then the journey out is to help you have that resolution, and enter a feeling as you come out. So having things along the pathway may distract. By keeping the simple form, is, you know, part of the design and the process of going to the center to have that place to meditate. And also the length of it, the larger the diameter, the longer the walk.

Norton: Do you remember the diameter of it?

Respondent 12: Oh, gosh. Let's see (looking at the plan, and pulling out ruler). So it was a fairly good side pathway, but to get in all the rings, all the rings in, that narrowed it. They wanted to go with the eleven rings circuit.

Norton: Well that is it, I know you are very busy; do you have any more comments?

Respondent 12: Well whatever you need to help. It is something that I wish more places could accommodate or could incorporate into their landscapes. But there are some challenges with it, especially with plant materials. To do a labyrinth with rock and concrete, those without plant materials, it makes it a lot easier. But the plant materials do add another element to it, and that is something that I hope more places accommodate. One of the reasons for the choice of the feather grass is that if you were able to walk the labyrinth, the motion of the grass is very soft and soothing. We added those benches to the side, so you could sit on the side, and still get the benefits that calming meditation, without having to walk it. We also tried to make it environmentally friendly.

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## BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

William Skeet Norton was born and raised in the small farming community of Lone Oak in Northeast Texas. Prior to starting his graduate education in landscape architecture at the University of Texas at Arlington, he completed his Bachelors of Business Administration with a major in marketing from Texas A&M University – Commerce in May 2001.

As a constantly creative person, William used his innovative skills to market several businesses he owned and operated. He also pursued a career in the insurance and banking industries, where he was recognized for his creative approaches to solving business problems.

With a passion for the outdoors and a need to use his creativity, William eventually selected landscape architecture as an outlet, and enrolled in the University of Texas at Arlington's Graduate in Landscape Architecture Program.

While pursuing his new career in landscape architecture, William has had the opportunity to be included in some unique experiences. He attended a twelve-day Mike Lin Graphic Workshop in January 2007; this workshop significantly improved his hand graphics skills and instilled in him a passion for sketching. With continuous practice, William also polished his sketching and rendering skills and was awarded a Teacher's Assistant position at the Mike Lin Graphic Workshop in May 2008. William now has a "visual literacy" and often draws the world around him.

Other experiences have also added to the skill set of this aspiring landscape designer. William has held internships with Site Planning Site Development (SPSD), a landscape specialty contracting firm, where he worked his way to an Associate Estimator position. The construction and estimating skills he learned at SPSPD are invaluable because they have further prepared him to think not only about design, but also the construction and estimating process.

William has also completed an internship with Mycoskie, McInnis + Associates (MMA), allowing him to refine his technical skills as well as the experience to utilize his hand-rendering abilities on real-life projects.

William has also served as a Graduate Research Assistant for the University under Professor David Hopman. Professor Hopman guided William in many ways, and taught him the art and importance of using native plants in the landscape. He also worked with Professor Hopman in planning the campus green roof project.

William has been awarded the following awards and scholarships throughout his education at the University of Texas at Arlington:

- Texas Garden Club District Ten Scholarship,
- The Myrick Scholarship 2 times,
- Texas ASLA Scholarship, and
- Induction into Sigma Lambda Alpha

William aspires to own a landscape architecture business someday to quench his entrepreneurial spirit. His current interests are designing sustainable residential landscape architectural projects as well constructing such projects. His philosophy is that you have to start at the ground level to make significant changes.