

8-27-2012

# Keeping faith : factors contributing to spiritual transformation, identity, and maturity in church-attending adolescents

Glory Emmanuel

Follow this and additional works at: [https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/psy\\_etds](https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/psy_etds)

---

## Recommended Citation

Emmanuel, Glory. "Keeping faith : factors contributing to spiritual transformation, identity, and maturity in church-attending adolescents." (2012). [https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/psy\\_etds/38](https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/psy_etds/38)

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Electronic Theses and Dissertations at UNM Digital Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in Psychology ETDs by an authorized administrator of UNM Digital Repository. For more information, please contact [disc@unm.edu](mailto:disc@unm.edu).

Glory Emmanuel

*Candidate*

Psychology

*Department*

This thesis is approved, and it is acceptable in quality and form for publication:

*Approved by the Thesis Committee:*

Dr. Harold Delaney , Chairperson

Dr. Kamilla Venner

Dr. Bruce Smith

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**KEEPING FAITH: FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO  
SPIRITUAL TRANSFORMATION, IDENTITY, AND  
MATURITY IN CHURCH-ATTENDING ADOLESCENTS**

**by**

**GLORY EMMANUEL**

**BACHELOR OF ARTS IN PSYCHOLOGY  
MASTER OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION IN  
INTERNATIONAL MANAGEMENT**

**THESIS**

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the Degree of

**Master of Science**

**Psychology**

The University of New Mexico  
Albuquerque, New Mexico

**May 2012**

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I gratefully acknowledge Dr. Harold Delaney, my advisor and committee chair, for his guidance and encouragement throughout this research study's development and my academic career. His devotion is immeasurable. I would also like to thank my other committee members, Dr. Bruce Smith and Dr. Kamilla Venner, for their support and valuable feedback.

I am thankful for the Albuquerque church youth leaders who allowed me to collect data from their youth groups as well as for the teens who willingly sacrificed their time and effort to take the study's questionnaire. This study would not be possible without their participation.

I am grateful for the support of Drs. Robert Leland, John Wagner, and Phil Bennett, my director and managers at Sandia National Laboratories, who provided mentorship and flexibility with my work hours in order to pursue my academic dreams.

I am also grateful: to my parents, siblings, and my best friend, Dr. Mark Nelson, who provided their love and encouragement through hot cups of tea, stress management skills, and positive thinking; and, finally, to my religious community that has fostered my own spiritual development, and to a personal God that will forever provide meaning, purpose, and relationship.

**KEEPING FAITH: FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO SPIRITUAL  
TRANSFORMATION, IDENTITY, AND MATURITY  
IN CHURCH-ATTENDING ADOLESCENTS**

by

**Glory Emmanuel**

**B.A., Psychology, University of New Mexico, 2008**

**M.B.A., International Management, University of New Mexico, 2009**

**M.S., Psychology, University of New Mexico, 2012**

**ABSTRACT**

The current research study investigated factors associated with spiritual development among church-attending adolescents. Eighty five participants (12 – 19 years) attending church youth groups in the Albuquerque area were asked to complete a questionnaire measuring spiritual transformation, identity, and maturity as well as demographics, personality, religious social support, and personal devotional activities. The purpose of this research was to understand how religious social support (family, friends, church, mentorship) and personal devotional activities (prayer, worship, study of sacred texts) were related to a spiritual transformation experience, spiritual identity, and spiritual maturity. It was hypothesized that adolescents who reported having had a positive spiritual transformation and who demonstrated higher levels of spiritual identity and maturity would be more connected to religious support systems and would engage more in personal devotional activities. These hypotheses were supported, as were several others. In particular, those who reported stronger levels of spiritual identity were more actively engaged in prayer, worship, and Bible study and had more religious support from

friends, parents, church, and mentorship. Youth who had higher levels of spiritual identity also reported a desire both to be mentored by, and to mentor others. Active engagement in a greater religious community was related to having had a spiritual transformation experience. Age, relationship status, personality, personal identity, and religious coping were also associated with levels of spiritual identity and maturity. These findings may enable mental health professionals, religious leaders, and parents to better understand how to support adolescents with religious and spiritual interests in their journey of spiritual development.

*Keywords:* spirituality, religiosity, adolescents, parents, mentor, worship, prayer

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>LIST OF FIGURES .....</b>	<b>ix</b>
<b>LIST OF TABLES .....</b>	<b>x</b>
<b>INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>1</b>
Spiritual Transformation .....	4
Spiritual Identity.....	7
Spiritual Maturity .....	10
Aims and Hypotheses.....	12
Demographics .....	15
Social Support.....	16
Personal Devotional Activities .....	19
Spiritual Identity .....	19
Spiritual Maturity .....	21
Personality .....	22
<b>METHOD .....</b>	<b>24</b>
Participants .....	24
Measures and Scales.....	25
Procedure.....	32
<b>RESULTS .....</b>	<b>40</b>
Participants .....	40

Descriptive statistics for major constructs .....	41
Demographics.....	48
Social Factors .....	52
Personal devotional activities.....	58
Spiritual Identity.....	60
Personality.....	63
<b>DISCUSSION .....</b>	<b>65</b>
Hypothesis Findings.....	67
Influence of demographics (age and relationship status) on spiritual development (Hypotheses 1 & 2).....	67
Religious social support and community encourages spiritual transformation, identity, and maturity (Hypotheses 3 - 7).....	68
Personal time spent in devotional activities influences stronger spiritual identity and maturity (Hypothesis 8).....	72
Findings from personal narratives (Hypotheses 10 and 12).....	72
Constructs (Personal Identity, Religious Coping, and Personality) related to spiritual identity and maturity (Hypotheses 11 and 13).....	73
Post hoc analyses.....	77
Study limitations .....	78
Implications for future research .....	81
Conclusion.....	82



<b>REFERENCES.....</b>	<b>84</b>
<b>APPENDICES.....</b>	<b>96</b>
Appendix A: Spirituality Questionnaire.....	97
Appendix B: Adolescent and Parent Information Forms .....	125

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Summary of spirituality categories and respective definitions.....	3
Figure 2. Summary of spirituality constructs and hypothesized relationships. ....	23
Figure 3. Summary of validated measures defining spirituality constructs. ....	28
Figure 4. Social support factors and personal devotional activities measured in this study....	29
Figure 5. Frequency distributions for categorical demographic variables.....	42
Figure 6. Frequencies for spiritual transformation * . ....	43
Figure 7. Difference between relationship status and engagement in personal devotional activities.....	49
Figure 8. Church community and spiritual maturity levels for older, younger age groups.....	50
Figure 9. Levels of spiritual maturity by age group.....	51
Figure 10. Levels of spiritual maturity by mentorship groups.....	53
Figure 11. Levels of spiritual identity by mentorship groups.....	53

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Summary of research hypotheses. ....	14
Table 2. Participating Albuquerque churches. ....	24
Table 3. Hypotheses analyzed using test of correlations. ....	34
Table 4. Hypotheses analyzed using independent sample t tests. ....	35
Table 5. Hypotheses analyzed using one-way ANOVA. ....	35
Table 6. Hypotheses analyzed using binary logistic regression. ....	35
Table 7. Descriptive statistics for continuous demographic variables. ....	41
Table 8. Descriptive statistics for personal devotional activities. ....	43
Table 9. Descriptive statistics for religious social support. ....	43
Table 10. Descriptive statistics for spiritual identity and maturity. ....	44
Table 11. Descriptive statistics for religious coping, personal identity, and personality. ....	44
Table 12. Values supporting individual scale items' ability to represent primary construct. ....	46
Table 13. Rotated factor matrix supporting scale representation for spiritual identity and maturity. ....	47
Table 14. Number of participants by age. ....	51
Table 15. Mentorship group mean differences for spiritual identity and maturity. ....	52
Table 16. Relationship between parental religious activity and spiritual transformation, identity, maturity. ....	56
Table 17. Correlations of religious social support variables with levels of spiritual identity and maturity. ....	57

Table 18. Correlations of personal devotional activity variables with spiritual identity and maturity.....	59
Table 19. Correlations between spiritual identity and types of self-identity, and religious coping.....	60
Table 20. Examples from personal narratives of categorized responses. ....	62
Table 21. Relationships between spiritual identity and maturity, and the length, tone, and phrases in personal narratives .....	63
Table 22. Relationships between personality and religious social support, personal devotional activities, and spiritual maturity.....	65

## Introduction

Religiosity and spirituality (RS) are frontiers of research that have not been explored consistently throughout the history of psychology yet are of high public interest (Miller & Delaney, 2004). Religion and spirituality are of public interest in part because many people desire to live with greater inner peace and a fuller sense of meaning, direction, and satisfaction in their lives (Miller & Thoresen, 2003). As indicated by the 2011 Gallup Poll, 92% of the American public report a belief in God. Gallup Poll also found that approximately 81% of the American public say that religion is a “very important” or “fairly important” part of their lives, 43% attend religious services regularly, and very religious Americans of all major faiths demonstrate higher levels of wellbeing than those who are moderately religious or nonreligious (Gallup Poll, 2012, 2011, 2010). Further, among adults, spiritual commitment generally increases as age increases: those who are younger in age are less likely to be as spiritually committed as those who are older. This may be, according to Gallup Poll (2002), because younger individuals are less inclined to think about their own mortality and are more concerned with "making their way" in the world. They may also be more focused on material success and may not question life's "ultimate meaning" as much as older adults (Gallup Poll, 2002). Although the 2011 Gallup Poll reports that belief in God drops below 90% among younger Americans, religion continues to play a significant role in the lives of American adolescents (Smith, 2003). According to data from the Monitoring the Future project, researchers have found that although church attendance among adolescents has declined from 40% in the late 1970s to 31% in the early 1990s, overall it has been relatively stable (Donahue & Benson, 1995; Smith, Denton, Faris, & Regnerus, 2002; Smith, Fairs, Denton, & Regnerus, 2003).

Researchers have often reported the prevalence of religiosity in adolescents but less research has focused on *why* adolescents choose or choose not to incorporate a professed religious faith into their lifestyle. Even less is said about *how* adolescents become more active or noncommittal towards the religious faith they were reared in. However, one large-scale study investigated the factors contributing to dramatic spiritual change. Regnerus, Smith, and Smith (2004) investigated two waves of the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health data to better understand the context in which spiritual change occurs. An analysis of dramatic increases and decreases in religiosity revealed that demographics, social context, personality, and family dynamics all played a role in adolescents' behavior (Regnerus et al., 2004). Large increases in religiosity were primarily reported by younger (13 – 16 years old) adolescents who came from African-American or Hispanic households whereas Caucasian/Anglo, and older adolescents (age 17 and 18) were less likely to become more religious. The religiosity of schoolmates and parents consistently predicted religious development and served as protection against religious decline. Family structure also seemed to have a significant impact: adolescents living in single parent or non-parent (e.g. with grandparents, relatives) households or who had experienced parental divorce were more likely to reject or switch their religion. (Lau and Wolfinger (2011) also found that Protestants from divorced families are likely to become apostates as adults, while people growing up in unaffiliated divorced families more often become affiliated as adults.) On the other hand, two-parent families, either biological or step parents, promoted religious increases for adolescents. Additionally, having parents with advanced education and being in a family characterized by high levels of satisfaction were predictive of increases in religious salience. Similarly, Hardy, White, Ruchty, and Zhang (2011) found that family

religiousness positively predicted individual religiousness and spirituality: emerging adults (17 - 31 years) who more frequently engaged in various religious activities with their families when they were younger maintained those activities in practice when they were older. This sheds light on what types of social factors contribute to adolescents' religious choice, but questions remain regarding what specific factors contribute to spiritual development.

To further investigate the development of spirituality in adolescents, this study distinguished among three aspects of spiritual development: transformation, identity, and maturity. These categories are suggested as a continuum of spiritual growth but are not mutually exclusive. Adolescents who have had a spiritual transformation often describe their experience as a life-changing religious event that leads to a sustained spiritual commitment. Once they make a concrete decision to commit to a specific religious faith, they begin to shape their worldview through a religious lens that develops their spiritual identity. This stimulates a personal connection and relationship with God. Then, as they incorporate their worldview into their lifestyle, identity manifests itself in behavior through loving compassion towards others. This demonstrates spiritual maturity. These three “categories” of spirituality are displayed in the following figure and are further explained in detail in the immediately following sections.

*Figure 1.* Summary of spirituality categories and respective definitions.

<p><b>Transformation</b>  <i>Presence of dramatic spiritual/religious change</i></p>	<p><b>Identity</b>  <i>Personal connectedness to God</i></p>	<p><b>Maturity</b>  <i>Connectedness to others through empathy, love, compassion</i></p>
--	--	--

## **Spiritual Transformation**

Pargament (2006) defines spiritual transformation as “a fundamental change in the place of the sacred or the character of the sacred in the life of the individual” (p.18). It is central to many major religious and spiritual traditions for followers to experience a spiritual transformation experience involving a commitment of faith (Ullman, 1989). Research suggests that religious conversion and/or spiritual transformation have profound effects on values, goals, attitudes, and behaviors as well as personal identity (Paloutzian, Richardson, & Rambo, 1999). Although there is a long history of research on religious conversions (e.g., Rambo, 1993), there has been less contemporary research on the social contexts that influence transformations and how they have a positive or negative influence in fostering religious transformation. It is commonly believed that adolescence is a vulnerable stage for religiosity and a time when youth make major decisions about their faith. However, research suggests that dramatic positive and negative spiritual transformations may be uncommon even for this age group. Regnerus and Uecker’s (2006) analysis of the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health data for Waves I and II investigated how many adolescents self-reported a considerable and rapid increase or decrease in their spiritual status at a one-year follow up. Four to five percent of adolescents had an increase and 5-6% had a decrease in religiosity. This percentage was small, but it should be noted that only adolescents who reported that religion was very or fairly unimportant at Wave I and changed by at least two steps on the four-point scale at Wave II were said to have had experienced a considerable increase in religious salience. Similarly, only adolescents who reported religion to be very or fairly important at Wave I, and then changed by at least two steps on the four-point scale at Wave II, were said to have had experienced a considerable decrease in religious salience.



With less stringent criteria, a higher rate of spiritual transformation experiences may occur in adolescent populations. As one example, consider another national survey, the General Social Survey, which has since 1998 included questions regarding spiritual transformations. Our analysis of the General Social Survey's sample of 54,891 participants ages 18 to 98 years found that 34% of adolescents (ages 18 - 19 years) responded "yes" to the question, "Have you ever had a religious experience that changed your life?" and 39% answered positively to, "Have you had a turning point in your life for religion?" (NORC-GSS, 2012). This suggests that, in older adolescents, about one in three may have experienced a spiritual transformation.

Returning to Regnerus and Uecker's (2006) analysis of religious transformations, they review evidence regarding religious context as one factor influencing the "transformation" of switching one's religious affiliation to a different tradition than the religious tradition in which one was reared. Specifically, only 22-26% of liberal/mainline Protestants remain active in their religious tradition whereas 43-53% of conservative Protestants remained in their religious tradition. Although Regnerus and Uecker did not include denominational tradition as a predictor in their own study, they did find that the "born again" experience which characterizes more conservative Protestants was the strongest predictor of a rapid increase in religious attendance and salience, and one of the stronger protective factors against a rapid decline in these outcomes. Their findings also indicated that inconsistencies between personal behavior and religious beliefs contributed to reduced religious commitments. For example, youth who reported that they had already had sexual intercourse were more likely to report a large decrease in both religious attendance and salience. This is consistent with their recent book, *Premarital Sex in America: How Young*

*Americans Meet, Mate, and Think about Marrying* (Regnerus, & Uecker, 2011). An anecdote of two Evangelical Christian adolescents provides insight into the struggle between religious commitment and sexual desire. The couple was deeply committed to their spiritual faith but found themselves engaging in premarital sexual activities that they knew were “wrong because of church and because of what the Bible says.” Though they “knew it was wrong...[and they] shouldn’t do it,” they continued because “as humans we like it” (p.30). This struggle between human desire and religious beliefs caused them to withdraw from religious social support, accountability, and mentorship. Proclivity of risk-taking was also strongly connected to a dramatic religious decrease. Negative religious transformations may occur if individuals sense that their actions are at odds with religious norms and teachings (Regnerus et al., 2004). Adolescents may sense that these inconsistencies are arising, but may not alter their religious beliefs until the college years when they have more freedom to explore their worldview. These inconsistencies may motivate religious doubt, perhaps to reduce cognitive dissonance, which further contributes to declines in religious engagement. Religious doubt, as defined by Puffer and colleagues, is a divided state of mind with a rejecting response of unbelief (Puffer, et al., 2008). When older adolescents are making the transition from high school to college, they may be confronted by educators and peers with different worldviews than the ones assumed in the homes they were reared in, and thus they may question the validity of their faith. Family context also plays a role in religious doubt. Family life experiences such as problematic parenting habits (e.g., insincere religiosity, low religious commitment, minimal warmth, and high rigidity) have been found to increase adolescent doubt (Kooistra & Pargament, 1999).

Overall, spiritual transformation experiences may be pivotal to one's religious faith and can have a positive or a negative impact. The presence of a spiritual transformation may be influenced by social, family, and peer context as well as religious support, but additional research is needed to better understand contributing factors.

### **Spiritual Identity**

Personal identity refers to the relative importance that individuals place on various identity attributes or characteristics when constructing their self-definitions (Cheek, 1989). A classic conceptualization of identity development was suggested by William James who posited that identity involves two aspects of the self: the "I," which maintains a sense of continuity of self across time, and the "me" which includes the "material me," the "social me," and the "spiritual me." James described spiritual identity as a component of the "me" and therefore an important element of overall personal identity (James, 1890/1952). Spiritual identity is defined as "[t]he true, the intimate, the ultimate, the permanent me which I seek," the "core" and the "sanctuary of our life" (James, 1890/1952, as quoted in Poll & Smith, 2003, p. 130). McConnell (2011) recently developed a multiple self-aspects framework that is similar to James' conceptualization of the self. McConnell states that there are five principles which underlie the multiple-self theory: "1) The self is a collection of multiple, context-dependent self-aspects, 2) Self-aspects are associated with personal attributes, which become more accessible when the self-aspect is activated and vice versa, 3) Overall affect reflects the evaluation of one's self-aspects weighted by their accessibility, and thus feedback about a self-aspect will affect general affective states to the extent that the information has implications for one's evaluation of that self-aspect, 4) Feedback about a self-aspect

influences evaluations of other self-aspects that share greater attribute associations, and 5) The impact of information pertaining to a specific attribute on overall affect increases as the number of self-aspects associated with the attribute increases” (p.5).

From a Judeo-Christian perspective, spiritual identity can be defined as “an individual's belief that she or he is an eternal being and connected to God” (Poll & Smith, 2003). Poll and Smith state that a strong sense of spiritual identity has positive benefits for well-being and may positively relate to a strong sense of personal identity (Poll & Smith, 2003). Erikson (1950) proposed that successful spiritual identity development enables individuals to effectively progress with subsequent life tasks of intimacy, generativity, and integrity, which may support positive well-being and personal identity.

It is unclear how identity develops, but Poll and Smith (2003) theorize that identity forms in terms of four stages: Pre-awareness, Awareness, Awakening, and Integration. Pre-awareness is when an individual has a subtle interest in spirituality. This interest progresses to an integration of RS beliefs with his or her daily lifestyle and “the core being” (Integration). In Awakening, a stage many adolescents may be found to be in, activities such as meaningful prayer, fasting, worship, and meditation on sacred texts may be embraced both in a communal as well as a private setting in order to make spiritual identity more salient (Poll & Smith, 2003).

It is difficult to limit spiritual identity to a particular model; a better approach may be to establish an adolescent’s identity based on how the adolescent describes himself or herself. According to Poll and Smith (2003), “spiritual identity is developed or recognized as we organize spiritual memories into spiritual self-stories...Narrative approaches may be particularly useful for exploring how individuals experience the processes and changes in

their spiritual identities” (p.140). Individuals’ personal experiences and descriptions of their spirituality may best represent the status of their identity. Some may describe themselves to be extremely strong in their identity because of a life-changing or “quantum change” event (Miller & C’de Baca, 2001) whereas others may have been raised in a highly religious environment and as a result always felt a connection to God.

A church community is one context where spiritual identity may be fostered and maintained due to the personal benefits and the supportive social network for community participants. In fact, there is a strong, consistent, and often graded reduction in risk of mortality in church/service attendees, largely mediated by the healthy lifestyle encouraged (Powell, Shahabi, & Thoresen, 2003). Half of the 200 studies reviewed by Gartner, Larson, and Allen (1991) demonstrated salutary effects of religious involvement on outcomes such as suicide, drug use, alcohol abuse, and delinquent behavior. Additionally, religious involvement has been found to increase personal control and decrease feelings of depression (Powell et al., 2003). Hall (2004) proposed that part of the foundation for understanding spiritual functioning and mental health is the entwined relationship between social and spiritual domains. For example, when one of Hall’s clients began to withdraw from his personal relationship with God, he also decreased his involvement in his church community. Regular church attendance and service may encourage meaningful social roles that provide a sense of self-worth and purpose through the act of helping. Religious community provides a support system where individuals can rely on the assistance of like-minded individuals who share a set of values and a worldview, even in the most difficult life situations. Additionally, religious communities may offer support in non-tangible but meaningful ways: for example, individuals may be aware that others are praying to God on their behalf (Gillum & Griffith,

2010; Hill & Pargament, 2003). It may be that spiritual identity is influenced by an individual's level of church participation as well as commitment to a religious social network.

As mentioned previously, Regnerus et al. (2004) found that social context does play a role in predicting spiritual growth. In a national study of over 11,000 adolescents, these researchers reported that overall religious decline is more predictable than religious growth: personality, family, behavioral, and contextual factors were salient predictors for religious decrease. Demographics, such as race and age, were predictors of adolescents who increase their faith during high school although personality and behavioral factors were not. Family structure and satisfaction as well as religious context variables were consistent predictors of both increases and decreases in religiosity but in different ways. For example, both biological parents present in the home predicted increases in adolescents' religious faith whereas single parent family structures predicted decreases.

In summary, spiritual identity is defined as the desire one has to have a personal relationship with God. Social systems through church, family, and/or friends support positive spiritual development. Engagement in personal devotional religious activities, such as prayer, may also contribute to stronger levels of spiritual identity. The next category of spiritual development, spiritual maturity, is described in the following section.

### **Spiritual Maturity**

The final component in the journey of spiritual development is spiritual maturity. Spiritual maturity has been defined as "wisdom and compassionate action in the world" (Vaughan, 2003). Faith and religious practices for many adults are central features for how

they achieve meaning and determine their identity. Religious faith may entail not only rituals which an individual engages in but also sacrifices that are made in order to adhere to religious principles. Dollahite and colleagues surveyed seventy-seven religious adolescents and found that participants reported sacrifices in five domains: societal expectation, popular culture, comforts and pleasures, time and activities, and peer relations (Dollahite, Layton, Bahr, Walker, & Thatcher, 2009). They were willing to make sacrifices in these areas due to reasons that made it worthwhile such as: connecting to a higher meaning or purpose, God, a faith tradition, or community as well as fulfilling expectations, feeling affective benefits, and avoiding problems. They reported that their religious conviction was stronger than secular offerings incongruent with their beliefs. Adolescents who are willing to make these types of sacrifices due to religious adherence may be said to exhibit spiritual maturity because they have both a deep understanding and committed acceptance of their religion's doctrine.

In addition to personal conviction, maturity may be demonstrated through adolescents' taking action in the world based on their religious beliefs. Past research has linked religiosity to other pro-social attitudes and behaviors (Kerestes, Youniss, & Metz, 2004; Smith & Denton, 2005). In a study of 94 religiously affiliated college undergraduates, Brady and Hapenny (2010) found support for a relationship between spirituality and generative concern. While the millennial generation in general has been described as altruistic in nature with a strong concern for social justice (Broido, 2004), young adults who care deeply about their faith and participate in its customs demonstrate an increased awareness of the needs of others (Ji, Pendergraft, & Perry, 2006). This altruistic nature both displays an individual's choice of spiritual identity and illustrates spiritual maturity because of how their worldview impacts their actions and lifestyle. Ultimately, spiritual maturity

may be best captured by recording how often one engages in loving compassion behaviors to others.

Overall, defining how spiritual development occurs is a challenging as well as an under-researched area. The current study investigates how spiritual transformation, identity, and maturity may be impacted by personal devotion as well as social factors. To summarize, the stages for spiritual development are defined as:

- **Spiritual Transformation:** The presence of an experience which resulted in a significant increase or decrease in religious faith: "...a fundamental change in the place of the sacred or the character of the sacred in the life of the individual" (Pargament, 2006).
- **Spiritual Identity:** The belief one has a personal relationship with God: "An individual's belief that she or he is an eternal being...connected to God" (Poll & Smith, 2003).
- **Spiritual Maturity:** The conviction one has to love others and feel compassion for the world: "Wisdom and compassionate action in the world" (Vaughan, 2003).

### **Aims and Hypotheses**

This study investigated what factors contribute to religious and spiritual growth or digression in three domains of spiritual development. Contributing factors were grouped into two areas: 1) personal devotional activities: the engagement in prayer, worship, and the study of Bible/religious literature; and 2) religious social support, from family, friends, church community, and desire for or engagement in mentorship roles. The frequency of personal devotional activities and/or strength of social support may influence whether an adolescent



chooses to remain and grow in the faith they were reared in or pursue an alternate path.

Overall, this study aimed to:

- Understand what key factors foster a spiritual transformation (ST) experience
- Learn what key factors enable adolescents to develop a sustainable, spiritual identity
- Identify what key factors contribute to higher levels of spiritual maturity

A summary of hypotheses is presented in the following table along with the related variables that were measured.

Table 1.

*Summary of research hypotheses.*

No.	Topic	Hypothesis	Independent Variable(s)	Dependent Variable(s)
1	Demographics	Those who have a single or recently single relationship status will demonstrate higher frequency of personal devotional activities than those who are dating or in a serious relationship.	Relationship status	Personal devotional activities
2	Demographics	Older adolescents will be less engaged in church activities than younger adolescents.	Age	Church Community
3	Social Factors: Mentorship	Those who are both mentors and mentored will demonstrate a higher level of spiritual identity and maturity than adolescents who play just one role.	Mentorship Categories: <i>To Mentor, Be Mentored, or Both</i>	Spiritual Identity Spiritual Maturity
4	Social Factors: Church Community	Those who are engaged in a church community will be more likely to have had a positive spiritual transformation experience.	Church Community	Spiritual Transformation
5	Social Factors: Friendship Circle	Those who have a Christian-based friendship circle will be more likely to demonstrate a strong spiritual identity than those who do not.	Friendship Circle	Spiritual Identity
6	Social Factors: Family Beliefs	Those who have parents who are religiously active will be more likely to have had a spiritual transformation experience and demonstrate strong spiritual identity and maturity than those who do not have religiously active parents.	Parents' Religious Activity	Spiritual Transformation Spiritual Identity Spiritual Maturity
7	Social Factors: All	Those who have a high level of support through family, friends and church communities will demonstrate a stronger spiritual identity and maturity than those who have support through only one or none of these communities.	Mentorship Church Community Friendship Circle Parents' Religious Support	Spiritual Identity Spiritual Maturity
8	Personal Devotion: Prayer	Adolescents who engage in prayer, study the Bible and Christian literature, and worship regularly (Many times a day – Most days) will report stronger spiritual identity and maturity.	Prayer, Meditation, Worship Bible/Christian Literature Study	Spiritual Identity Spiritual Maturity

Table 1. Summary of research hypotheses. (Continued)

No.	Topic	Hypothesis	Independent Variable(s)	Dependent Variable(s)
9	Spiritual Identity	Those who report a strong spiritual identity will also report a high level of personal identity.	Spiritual Identity	Personal Identity
10	Spiritual Identity	Those who report a strong spiritual identity will use more phrases describing a personal, relational God than those who report lower levels of spiritual identity.	Spiritual Identity	Personal Narrative
11	Spiritual Identity	Those who report a strong spiritual identity will report higher levels of religious coping than those who do not.	Spiritual Identity	Religious Coping
12	Spiritual Maturity	Those who report a strong spiritual maturity will use more phrases describing altruistic and compassionate activities than those who report lower levels of spiritual maturity.	Spiritual Maturity	Personal Narrative
13	Personality	Those who are introverted engage more in personal devotional activities while those who are more extraverted engage in more church community activities.	Personality: Extraversion and Introversion	Personal devotional activities Church community activities

The rationale for each hypothesis is explained in further detail below:

### Demographics

**Hypothesis 1: Those who have a single or recently single relationship status will report a higher frequency of personal devotional activities than those who are dating or in a serious relationship.** In their longitudinal research, Regnerus and Uecker (2006) found that sexual status and behavior do matter for rapid significant religious decline. Youth who already have had sex are more likely to report a large decrease in attendance and personal religious salience. In this study, adolescents were asked to report their relationship status: single, recently single, casually dating, or in a serious relationship. For privacy and ethical

considerations, the current study did not ask teens about their adherence to sexual abstinence. We hypothesized that those who report being single would demonstrate a higher frequency of personal devotional activities than those who are dating or in a serious relationship.

**Hypothesis 2: Older aged adolescents will be less engaged in church activities than younger aged adolescents.** Although there is no clear religious ‘hot spot’ during adolescence, Regnerus and Uecker (2006) found that, among 13 to 18 year olds, adolescents are most unstable in their religiosity at age 18. Further, as Cannister (1999) observed, adolescents’ desire for independence and autonomy increases with age, even in regards to spiritual beliefs. Therefore, we hypothesized that older-aged adolescents (16 years and above) may be less engaged in church activities than younger-aged adolescents (15 years and below).

### **Social Support**

**Hypothesis 3: Those who are both mentors and mentored will demonstrate a higher level of spiritual identity and maturity than adolescents who play just one role or neither.** Despite adolescents’ desire for autonomy, they may benefit from an interpersonal relationship in which they are challenged and supported, such as by having a mentor. The mentor serves to anchor the developing identity of youth. Cannister (1999) emphasized the role of mentoring in a larger community: “mentoring during this time of life may be most effective in fostering mature spirituality when it occurs in a group or community framework.” Furthermore, it was also found that adolescents who mentor those younger than themselves experience benefits. Karcher (2009) found an association between serving as a cross-age peer mentor and improvements in the mentor’s academic self-esteem and

connectedness. Therefore, we predicted that adolescents who are both serving as mentors and being mentored will demonstrate a higher level of spiritual identity and maturity than adolescents who play just one role or neither.

**Hypothesis 4: Those who are engaged in a church community will be more likely to have had a positive spiritual transformation experience.** In their book *Soul searching: The religious and spiritual lives of American teenagers*, Christian Smith and Melinda Denton report results of a regression analyses using the 2002-2003 National Survey of Youth and Religion data set (2005, see, e.g., p. 285ff.). One finding regarding the impact of the social context was that merely the number of religious congregations per capita in a county was significantly associated with whether a teen living in that county reported having made a personal commitment to live life for God. Such personal commitments were also strongly influenced by the particular religious tradition in which an adolescent was reared (2005, p. 45). Thus, in regards to spiritual transformation, religious structures in America provide the organizational contexts and cultural framework for individuals to have a spiritual experience where they feel more connected to God (Smith & Denton, 2005, p. 242). These experiences may help to solidify one's religious morals and beliefs. This is consistent with Hood's conclusion from his analysis of religious experiences: "Most people who are religious see themselves as also spiritual. For these persons, religion is the conceptual system within which they are able to find meaning and give expression to their spiritual experiences (Hood, 2009, p.190). Thus, we anticipated that the more involved teens are in church, the more likely they would be to have had a spiritual transformation experience and that this experience would positively contribute to spiritual identity.

**Hypothesis 5: Those who have a religious-based friendship circle will be more likely to demonstrate a strong spiritual identity than those who do not.** Christian Smith's analyses (2005) also found a significant association between religiosity in close friendship circles and adolescents' involvement in religious services. It was found that adolescents with non- or less-religiously involved close friends were less likely to attend religious services than those who had friends who were involved in a religious community (Smith & Denton, 2005, p. 106). At the other end of the spectrum, teens who were religiously devoted and considered their faith to be an important part of their lives had more close friends who were also religiously committed (p. 111).

**Hypothesis 6: Those who have parents who are religiously active will be more likely to have had a spiritual transformation experience and demonstrate strong spiritual identity and maturity than those who have only one or no actively religious parents.** As Kooistra and Pargament (1999) reported, problematic parenting habits such as insincere religiosity, low religious commitment, minimal warmth, and high rigidity tend to increase adolescent doubt. This could influence resistance and inhibit an adolescent's openness to a spiritual experience. On the other hand, parents who are supportive and exemplify a Christian faith may construct a healthy environment for a spiritual transformation experience.

**Hypothesis 7: Those who have a high level of support through family, friends, church, and mentorship communities will demonstrate a stronger spiritual identity and maturity than those who have support through only one or none of these communities.** Regnerus et al. (2004) found that adolescents' feelings of religious importance as well as church attendance were influenced by their parents and friends. Overall, we hypothesized

that community, as manifested by parental support, church community and friendship circle, would impact the strength of one's spiritual identity and maturity.

### **Personal Devotional Activities**

**Hypothesis 8: Adolescents who engage in prayer, worship, and Bible reading regularly (Many times a day – Most days) will report a stronger spiritual identity and maturity.** In his book *Celebration of Discipline*, Richard Foster (1988) describes twelve different practices which contribute to spiritual growth. Spiritual disciplines require individual willpower and opening oneself to personal change. Engaging in different practices opens the door to inner transformation and, hence, is a pathway to spiritual depth. Prayer/meditation, worship and the study of religious texts are among these twelve disciplines. “Prayer is the central avenue God uses to transform” individuals while “meditation introduces us to the inner life... [and] study transforms our minds” (Foster, 1988, p. 33). In regards to worship, William Temple (1944), priest in the Church of England in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, stated, “to worship is to quicken conscience by the holiness of God, to feed the mind with the truth of God, to purge the imagination by the beauty of God, to open the heart to the love of God, to devote the will to the purpose of God.” The current hypothesis was based on the conjecture that practicing personal devotional activities would positively impact spiritual identity and maturity.

### **Spiritual Identity**

**Hypothesis 9: Those who report a strong spiritual identity will also report a high level of personal identity.** Spiritual identity is a difficult construct to define yet researchers

have made considerable progress in asserting key components. In their paper “The spiritual self: Toward a conceptualization of spiritual identity development,” Poll and Smith (2003) connect the strength of one’s spiritual identity to the stability of his or her personal identity. “The supposed power of spiritual identity to promote resiliency and change in individuals corresponds with research indicating that similar benefits are derived from a strong sense of personal identity” (p. 129). Therefore, we predicted that there would be a strong relationship with self-identity as defined by Cheek and colleagues (2002), specifically personal identity, and reported spiritual identity.

**Hypothesis 10: Those who report a strong spiritual identity will use more phrases in a written narrative about their spirituality describing a personal, relational God than those who report lower levels of spiritual identity.** In 267 interviews which investigated adolescents’ belief and relationship with God, researchers observed that youth who had a religious background but were not engaged in their faith used trivial or trite phrases such as, “God’s watching over us, that’s it,” or “...even if I stop believing in God, I’ll still be Catholic” (Smith & Denton, 2005, p.134). On the other hand, adolescents who had a strong spiritual identity used phrases which discussed mature Christian concepts such as personal sin, obeying and loving God, religious repentance, and the resurrection of Jesus Christ (p.167). Those who have a strong relationship with God and do more than go through religious routines tend to demonstrate this in the language they use to describe their spiritual beliefs.

**Hypothesis 11: Those who report a strong spiritual identity will report higher levels of religious coping than those who do not.** Religious coping may also be an indicator of a strong spiritual identity. The specific importance of religious identity may be



operative on multiple levels in assisting individual's coping (Pargament, 1999). When faced with trying situations, an individual's spiritual identity may increase the ability to cope because 1) there is a strong sense of self as well as a humble acceptance of a divine, beneficial purpose and, 2) there is a religious community including friends, fellow church attendees, and/or family, to provide support.

### **Spiritual Maturity**

**Hypothesis 12: Those who report a strong spiritual maturity will use more phrases in a written narrative about their spirituality describing altruistic and compassionate activities than those who report lower levels of spiritual maturity.**

Spiritual maturity is a step beyond spiritual identity in that it not only encompasses the connection one feels to God but also how one embodies their faith by loving others. In the New Testament, which governs Christian doctrine, Jesus states, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself" (NIV, Matthew 22:36-40). Hence, maturity may differentiate from spiritual identity in that it leads to a deep concern, care, and love for others. In this study, adolescents were asked to write a paragraph on how their spirituality affects their behavior. It was predicted that adolescents who are spiritually mature will use phrases about helping others more than those who are not as spiritually mature.

## Personality

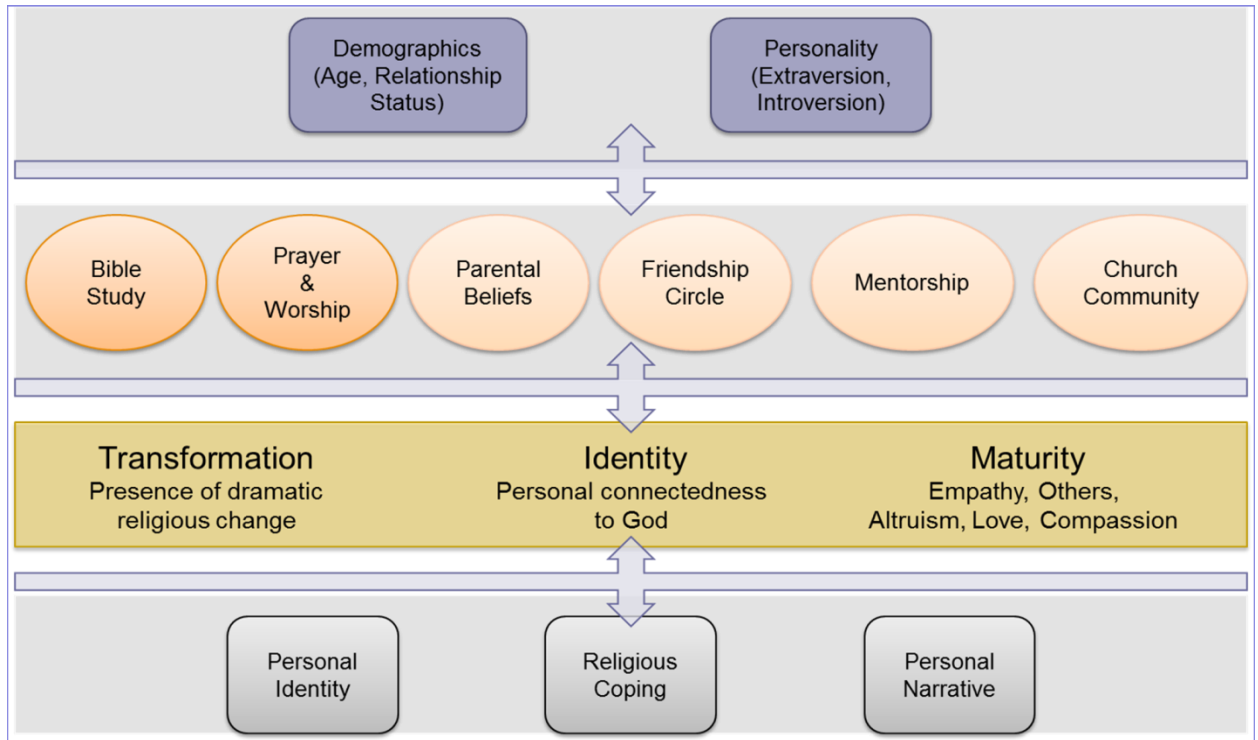
**Hypothesis 13: Those who are introverted will engage more in personal devotional activities than church community activities while those who are extraverted will engage more in church community activities than personal devotional activities.**

Personality may be an influential factor in spiritual development. Although those who are involved in religious social activities and personal devotional activities may demonstrate a higher level of spirituality, those who are more extraverted or more introverted may prefer different types of religious activities. Those who are extraverted have a preference for group interactions and therefore may engage more in church community activities than in personal devotional activities. Conversely, those who are more introverted may prefer more quiet religious settings and, as a result, engage in personal devotional activities more than church community activities (Francisa, Robbinsa, & Murray, 2010).

Ultimately, the aim of this study was to better understand what factors may be involved with adolescents' spiritual development. It was predicted that spiritual transformation, identity, and maturity would be affected by social support and devotion to personal religious activities. We also hypothesized that level of personal identity would relate to the strength of spiritual identity and that phrases used in adolescents' descriptions of their spirituality and behavior would relate to the level of their spiritual identity and maturity. Finally, personality factors of extraversion and introversion may have been influential in the level of involvement in social and personal activities.

An illustration summarizing the described hypotheses' constructs and their relationships to one another is displayed in the figure below.

Figure 2. Summary of spirituality constructs and hypothesized relationships.



## Method

### Participants

**Adolescents and youth groups.** Given the majority of teens nationally report a Protestant religious affiliation (Smith & Denton, 2005, p. 51), adolescents, ages 12 to 19 years old, attending Protestant church youth groups were sampled from the Albuquerque area. Five separate youth groups of varying Protestant denominations from different Albuquerque districts were used in the study. The following table describes the denomination and location of the Albuquerque churches used in this study. The churches were evangelical Protestant churches and had similar statements of faith. Each church had its own youth group led by a youth coordinator and met outside of regular Sunday church services at least one to two times per week. Each youth group had between 15 to 35 teens who attended regularly. The churches were chosen to represent a variety of Protestant denominations as well as districts with varying socioeconomic status and ethnicities in Albuquerque.

Table 2.

#### *Participating Albuquerque churches.*

Church	Denomination	Albuquerque District
Church A	Nondenominational	Foothills
Church B	Bible Church	Central Albuquerque
Church C	Presbyterian	Lower Northeast Heights
Church D	Nazarene	Upper Northeast Heights
Church E	Nondenominational	Southeast Albuquerque ("International District")

## Measures and Scales

In order to test the study's hypotheses, a self-report questionnaire of instruments to measure adolescents' social environment and personal devotional activities as well as beliefs and practices around spiritual transformation, identity, and maturity was compiled. The questionnaire was 25 pages long and took a maximum of one hour to complete. Demographic information was collected for gender, age, year in school, type of school, relationship status, ethnicity, church location, and religious preference. Spiritual transformation, identity, and maturity were defined using validated measures and are described below:

- The Spiritual Transformation Inventory (STI) is a scientifically developed and validated web-based assessment tool (Hall, 2004). The STI consists of five domains based on previous theory and research. The five major domains include 19 subscales validated through exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses, and having convergent validity with relevant measures. The domains are 1) spiritual meaning and vitality, 2) spiritual commitment and community, 3) secure spiritual attachment, 4) preoccupied spiritual attachment, and 5) dismissing spiritual attachment.

Spiritual transformation is defined by the presence of a religious or spiritual experience that changed the adolescent's life. Five items from the STI are used to assess the presence of a spiritual transformation experience, whether it resulted in a significant gain or loss in faith, and how old the adolescent was if they had such an experience. These items are from the Religious/Spiritual History scale developed by the Fetzer Institute (Fetzer, 1999, p. 65ff., 87) and include the following yes/no questions, "Have you ever had a religious or spiritual experience that changed your

life?,” “Did you ever have a significant gain in your faith?,” “Did you ever have a significant loss in your faith?.” Additional questions included: “How old were you when this occurred?,” and “Was this experience positive (1), negative (2), or both (3)?”

- The Brief Multidimensional Measure of Religiousness/Spirituality (BMMRS) is part of *The Multidimensional Measurement of Religiousness/Spirituality for Use in Health Research*, which is a revised report published in 2003 by the Fetzer Institute. It contains two scales: Daily Spiritual Experiences (Underwood, 1999) and Meaning (Pargament, 1999). These two validated measures are used to define spiritual identity. The Daily Spiritual Experiences scale is intended to measure the individual’s perception of God in daily life and the perception of interaction and/or involvement with the Divine. The Meaning scale investigates adolescents’ search for meaning and purpose as well the success or failure of that search.
- The Faith Maturity Scale (Benson, Donahue, & Erickson, 1993) is a 10-item measure adapted from a 38-item scale. The vertical dimension of this 10-item scale is used in defining spiritual maturity. The 5-item subscale that measures faith maturity is based on three dimensions: 1) trusts and believes in core principles of the Christian faith, 2) experiences the fruits of having faith, and 3) seeks further spiritual growth. It is correlated with importance of religion ( $r = .57$ ), frequency of prayer ( $r = .47$ ), and frequency of reading religious literature other than the Bible ( $r = .47$ ). The measure is based on a national survey of six Protestant denominations.
- Given Love (Fetzer Institute, 1999). This 10-item scale asks about how easily participants are able to demonstrate love to others and is used in defining spiritual

maturity. Responses were made on a 5-point Likert scale (1-not at all, 5-completely), with questions consisting of items such as, “How much do you treat others as you want to be treated?” and “To what extent does helping others contribute to your well-being?”

- Empathy & Perspective Taking (Davis, 1994). This scale contains 14 items and asks participants to measure their ability to understand another person’s emotions and perspective. It is used in defining spiritual maturity. All items are scored on a 5-point scale (1-strongly disagree, 5-strongly agree). Half of the questions are devoted to empathy and the other half are devoted to perspective taking. Items concerning empathy include, “I often have tender, concerned feelings for people less fortunate than me.” Items measuring perspective taking included, “I sometimes try to understand my friends better by imagining how things look from their perspective.”
- Altruistic behaviors (Rushton & Chrisjohn, 1981). This scale of 20 items is adapted from a 56-item scale and is used in defining spiritual maturity. It measures the involvement in altruistic behaviors by asking participants to check how frequently they engage in activities such as helping a stranger, giving directions to a stranger, and giving money to a charity. This has shown good reliability and validity, with  $r = 0.94$  for 2-week test-retest reliability.

These validated measures were used to define the three spiritual development categories. A summary of these measures used to define the spirituality categories is presented below. The full questionnaire is presented in Appendix A.

Figure 3. Summary of validated measures defining spirituality constructs.

<b>Transformation</b> Presence of dramatic religious change	<b>Identity</b> Personal connectedness to God	<b>Maturity</b> Connectedness to others Altruism, Love, Compassion
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Spiritual Transformation Inventory (STI)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Daily Spiritual Experiences</li> <li>•Meaning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Faith Maturity Scale - Horizontal</li> <li>•Given Love</li> <li>•Empathy</li> <li>•Altruism</li> <li>•Way of Compassion</li> </ul>

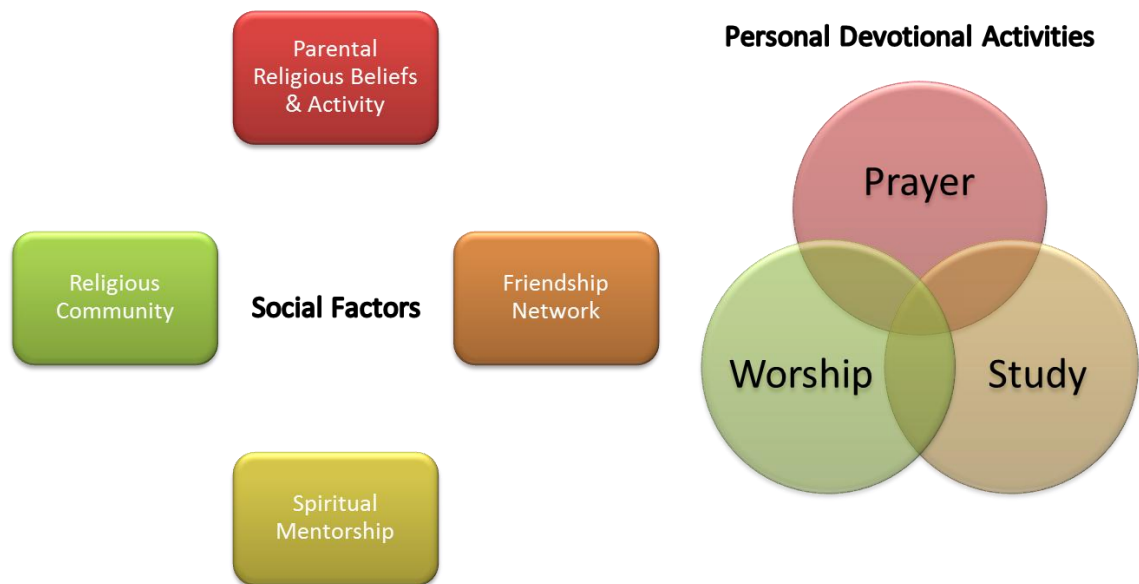
**Religious social support.** In this study, religious social support was represented by four areas: mentorship, church community, friendship circle, and parental religious beliefs and activity. Mentorship was defined by six questions that measure an adolescent’s interest and involvement in being a mentor, being mentored, or both. Items included, “There is at least one person who is a spiritual mentor in my life,” and “I have a great interest in mentoring another person.” Church community was measured by seven items that reflect interest, attendance, and connection with a church community. Items included, “I attend church activities on a regular basis,” “I am an active part of my church body,” and “I feel like I am part of a spiritual community.” The presence of a religiously supportive friendship circle was reflected by five items. These inquire about how knowledgeable and supportive friends are of the adolescent’s religious beliefs. Items included, “I spend time with friends who have the same/similar religious values as me,” “My closest friends do not know much about my spiritual life,” and “Besides at church, how often do you meet with friends who support your faith?” Family religious beliefs and activity were measured by four self-report items. The items ask adolescents to rate how characteristic the following statements are for each of their parents: 1) “my mother/father has a strong Christian faith,” and 2) “my mother/father is religiously active.”



**Personal devotional activities.** Personal devotional activities were measured according to three areas: 1) study of the Bible and religious literature, 2) prayer and/or meditation, and 3) worship. Questionnaire items asked adolescents to report on how much time they spend privately reading and studying either the Bible or other Christian literature, communicating with God privately in prayer, and offering praise to God. Adolescents were asked to respond to four self-report questions related to Bible study and reading other Christian literature in order to assess their activity in this area. Items included: “I devote time to reading and studying the Bible,” and “How often do you read other Christian literature?” Prayer, meditation, and worship were represented by 10 items that asked how much they enjoy, and how frequently they engage in these activities. Items included, “I devote time for periods of prayer and/or meditation,” “I enjoy expressing thanks to God,” and “How often do you sing and/or listen to Christian music in a private setting?”

A summary of the measured social support factors and personal devotional activities is illustrated in the following figure.

*Figure 4.* Social support factors and personal devotional activities measured in this study.



**Additional measures.** The current study aimed to understand both how religious social support and personal devotional activities influenced spiritual transformation, identity, and maturity. It also investigated how spiritual identity and maturity are manifested in adolescents' lives. In addition, we hypothesized that higher levels of spiritual identity would have a strong relationship with higher levels of personal identity and religious coping. Personal identity and religious coping were defined by the measures below:

- The Aspects of Identity Questionnaire, Version IV. (Cheek, Tropp, Chen, & Underwood, 1994). This questionnaire was used to measure aspects of self-identity. The Aspects of Identity Questionnaire incorporated different identity orientations that were judged by its writers to represent the domains of self-identity. Identity is categorized into four types: personal, relational, social, and collective identity. Respondents are asked to rate how important each item is on a Likert scale of 1 (not important to my sense of who I am) to 5 (extremely important to my sense of who I am). Statements for each identity type include, “My dreams and imagination” (personal identity), “My relationships with the people I feel close to” (relational identity), “My popularity with other people” (social identity), and “Being a part of the many generations of my family” (collective identity).
- Religious Coping, (RCOPE, Pargament, Koenig, & Perez, 2000). Seven items were used from this scale which measures how individuals are able to use their personal religious beliefs to help them cope with distressing situations. Items include, “I work together with God as partners to get through hard times,” and “I try to make sense of the situation and decide what to do without relying on God.”

The final page of the study's questionnaire contained a personal narrative section that asked adolescents to describe their religiosity/spirituality and explain how religiosity/spirituality affects their behavior. Ideally, the narrative would capture whether adolescents described their religion as being a tradition or routine (e.g. "I go to church every Sunday") or as having a personal relationship (e.g. "I have a close relationship with God"). It also aimed to measure how adolescents actively live out their faith (e.g. "I desire to love others and help those who are less fortunate").

Finally, it was hypothesized that those who are more introverted would engage more in personal devotional activities; and that those who are who are more extraverted would participate more in church community activities. Personality was measured as follows:

- A version of the Big Five Personality Inventory, (BFI; Benet-Martinez & John, 1998) consisting of 45 items was used to measure neuroticism, agreeableness, conscientiousness, and openness to experience as well as characteristics of extraversion and introversion. Extraversion is characterized by the preference and tendency to seek out stimulation and the company of others. Introverts lack the social exuberance and activity levels of extraverts and tend to be more quiet, observant, and uninvolved in the social world. Introverts may be very active and energetic, but do not express this socially (Digman, 1990). Respondents are asked on a Likert scale of 1 to 5 to state how strongly they disagree (1) or agree (5) with a statement about themselves. Statements related to extraversion include, "Is outgoing, sociable," and "Is talkative." Items for introversion include, "Is reserved," and "Is sometimes shy, inhibited."

## Procedure

**Data collection.** Participants were asked to complete the questionnaire on spiritual beliefs and practices. The initial step in data collection was to gain support and participation from local youth pastors. Ten youth leaders from churches of varying denominations and distributed across Albuquerque were contacted. Five of the ten agreed to participate in the study. Youth leaders were provided with an introduction letter and thorough explanation of the study's intent and process. An initial meeting was set up for the primary researcher to meet with the youth leaders who were interested in the study. Once permission was obtained from pastors and the university's Institutional Review Board, a date and time was set to run the study.

One week prior to the study date, participants were briefed on the data collection process and the content of the questionnaire. They were told that their participation was completely voluntary and they could withdraw from the study at any time. Every teen was sent home with an information sheet for his or her parents describing the study's intent and purpose. The information sheets (Appendix B) served as passive parental consent forms since the questionnaire did not contain invasive questions and was considered to be of low risk to participants. Other studies measuring religiosity and spirituality as well as risky behaviors such as substance use and sexual activity in adolescents have waived active parental consent given the participants were under the supervision of teachers or in an education setting (Chen, Dormitzer, Benjarano, Anthony, 2004; Dodge & Jaccard, 2008; Lock, Reisel, & Steiner, 2001; Vallente, Hoffman, Ritt-Olson, Lichtman, Johnson, 2003). This study used a similar model since participants were under the supervision of their youth leader.

Data collection occurred at the youth group's normal weekly meeting time. Questionnaires were distributed to adolescents who agreed to participate in the study and had signed an assent form. All completed questionnaires were anonymous and labeled with an arbitrary identification number. Participants were instructed to not discuss their answers while completing the forms. They were told that they could withdraw from the study at any time by turning in their questionnaire or writing the word "withdraw" at the top of their packet and remaining in the room so as not to feel embarrassed or singled-out.

**Design and analyses.** Standard scales have not yet been published to reliably measure levels of religious support, friendship network, parental religious support, or mentorship as well as commitment to prayer, worship, and Bible study. To verify that the questionnaire items proposed are accurately measuring these factors, psychometric analyses were conducted to assess the properties of these measures. Cronbach's alpha was used to verify internal consistency among the questionnaire items for each social support factor and personal devotional activity. A factor analysis was also conducted to test how well scales performed in measuring spiritual identity and spiritual maturity and if the use of two distinct constructs was supported. The personal narratives were analyzed using a phrase quantification method. After the questionnaires were collected and reviewed, common themes were determined by the researchers. A research assistant who was blind to the hypotheses of the study then coded responses by recording the number of times participants used words or phrases and categorizing them by theme.

Tests of correlations, independent sample *t* tests, one-way ANOVA, and binary logistic regression were used to test the study hypotheses. Analyses by hypotheses are provided in the following tables:

Table 3.

*Hypotheses analyzed using test of correlations.*

Test of correlations

---

- Spiritual identity will be related to personal devotional activities
  - Spiritual maturity will be related to personal devotional activities
  - Spiritual identity will be related to religious social support
  - Spiritual maturity will be related to religious social support
  - Spiritual identity will be related to personal identity
  - Spiritual identity will be related to religious coping
  - Spiritual identity will be related to use of key religious phrases in the personal narratives
  - Spiritual maturity will be related to use of key religious phrases in the personal narratives
  - Personality will be related to church activity
  - Personality will be related to personal devotional activities
-

Table 4.

*Hypotheses analyzed using independent sample t tests.*

Independent sample *t* tests

---

- Age (15 years and below, 16+) and church activity
  - Parents' religious involvement and spiritual identity
  - Parents' religious involvement and spiritual maturity
- 

Table 5.

*Hypotheses analyzed using one-way ANOVA.*

One-way ANOVA

---

- Relationship status (single, dating casually, serious relationship, recently single) and personal devotional activities
  - Mentorship role (be mentored, be a mentor, both) and spiritual identity
  - Mentorship role (be mentored, be a mentor, both) and spiritual maturity
- 

Table 6.

*Hypotheses analyzed using binary logistic regression.*

Binary logistic regression

---

- Church community and spiritual transformation (yes, no)
  - Parents' religious activity (low, high) and spiritual transformation (yes, no)
- 

Analyses are categorized by hypothesis topic and described in further detail below.

Refer back to Table 1 for a compiled list of hypotheses and variables.

***Test of correlations.***

*Relationship between spiritual identity and personal devotional activities.*

*Relationship between spiritual maturity and personal devotional activities.* Each participant's average scores from the prayer, worship, and Bible/Christian literature questionnaire sections were averaged into one composite score. The relationships between private devotional activities and spiritual identity, as well as between devotional activities and spiritual maturity were tested. It was predicted that higher engagement in private devotional activities would relate to higher levels of spiritual identity and spiritual maturity. The relationships were measured using Pearson's correlation coefficient and tested using the standard *t* distribution. It was specifically predicted that the higher the religious support from friends, the stronger spiritual identity would be.

*Relationship between spiritual identity and religious social support.* *Relationship between spiritual identity and religious social support.* The average scores from the social factor categories: mentorship, church community, friendship circle, and parental religious activity, were averaged into one composite score for each individual participant. Composite scores for identity and maturity were used. Using Pearson's correlation coefficient, the relationship between social factors and spiritual identity and the relationship between social factors and spiritual maturity were tested. It was predicted that higher levels of personal devotional activities would be related to higher levels of both spiritual identity and spiritual maturity.

*Relationship between spiritual identity and personal identity.* It is predicted that the stronger the level of spiritual identity, the stronger the level of personal identity. The Aspects of Identity scale was used to measure four types of self-identity: personal



identity, relational identity, social identity, and collective identity. The average score for each identity type was compared to the composite score for spiritual identity with emphasis on personal identity. Pearson's correlation coefficient was used to test these relationships.

*Relationship between spiritual identity and religious coping.* It was predicted that the stronger the spiritual identity, the more religious coping would be used. Religious coping was measured by taking an average composite score of the Religious Coping Scale items presented on page 23 of the Spirituality Questionnaire (Appendix A, p.23). Using Pearson's correlation coefficient, the strength of the relationship between spiritual identity and religious coping was analyzed.

*Relationship between spiritual identity and the use of key religious phrases in the personal narrative.* It was predicted that those who demonstrated a strong spiritual identity would frequently use more phrases describing a personal, intimate relationship with God compared to those who reported lower levels of spiritual identity. The themes common across the personal narrative responses, such as the number of times participants used personal names for God (e.g. Father, Jesus, Savior, etc.), were coded by the research assistant and used as the dependent variables in the analyses. Pearson's correlation coefficient was used to test the strength of the relationship between spiritual identity and spiritual relational phrases.

*Relationship between spiritual maturity and the use of key religious phrases in the personal narratives.* It was hypothesized that those who demonstrate a strong spiritual maturity will frequently use phrases describing a positive view of others as well as a desire to improve their relationship with God compared to those who report lower levels

of spiritual maturity. Using Pearson's correlation coefficient, the strength of the relationship between spiritual maturity and the common themes from the personal narratives was analyzed to test this hypothesis.

*Relationship between personality and church activity. Relationship between personality and personal devotional activities.* Pearson's correlation coefficient was used to assess the relationship between personality and church activity. Extraversion and introversion were quantified by averaging item responses related to extraversion in the Big Five Personality Assessment. Higher scores reflect extraversion while introverts report lower scores. The average of items in the church community section of the questionnaire was used to measure level of church activity. The average of averages for the personal devotional activity categories (prayer, worship, study of religious texts) was used. It was predicted that relationships would exist between extraversion and church activity, and between introversion and personal devotional activities. It was expected that those who are more extraverted would report higher levels of church activity while those who are more introverted would report higher levels of personal devotional activities.

***Independent sample t tests.***

*Relationship between age (15 years and below, 16+) and church activity.* An independent samples *t* test was conducted to assess the relationship between age and church activity. It was hypothesized that "older age" (16-18 years) would relate to lower church attendance and "younger age" (13-15 years) would relate to higher church attendance. A composite score of church attendance was achieved by averaging individual item scores from the seven Church Community items from the questionnaire.

*Relationship between parents' religious activity and adolescent's spiritual identity.*  
*Relationship between parent's religious activity and adolescent's spiritual maturity.* It was predicted that there would be a relationship between parental religiosity and spirituality: higher levels of parental religious belief and activity would relate to higher levels of spiritual identity, and of spiritual maturity. Parents' religious activity was dichotomized and used as the grouping variable to test for differences in means across groups on spiritual identity and spiritual maturity. Composite scores for identity and maturity were used.

***One-way ANOVA.***

*Relationship between relationship status (single, dating casually, serious relationship, recently single) and personal devotional activities.* An ANOVA was conducted to assess how relationship status relates to personal devotional activities. It was predicted that those who report that they are single would engage in significantly more personal devotional activities than those who are dating or in a serious relationship.

*Relationship between desired mentorship role (be mentored, be a mentor, both) and spiritual maturity.* A one-way ANOVA was used to assess whether those who both serve as mentors and are mentored related to higher levels of spiritual identity and maturity compared to adolescents who solely desired to be mentored or be a mentor. Mentorship categories were measured using the mentorship portion of the spirituality questionnaire which asked respondents to state whether they desire to be a mentor, be mentored, or both. Composite scores for spiritual identity and spiritual maturity were obtained by taking an average of identity responses and maturity responses in their respective sections in the Spirituality Questionnaire.

### ***Binary logistic regression.***

*Relationship between church community and spiritual transformation (yes, no).* It was predicted that the more involved one is in their church community the more likely one will be to report the presence of a spiritual transformation (ST) experience. Presence of a spiritual transformation experience was categorized into “yes, I have had one” and “no, I have not.” A binary logistic regression was used to test the hypothesis that higher levels of church activity were related to the presence of a spiritual transformation experience.

*Relationship between parents’ religious activity and spiritual transformation (yes, no).* It was predicted that participants who had parents with higher levels of religious belief and activity would be more likely to report the presence of a ST experience. A binary logistic regression, as well as a secondary analysis using Fisher’s exact test, was used to test the hypothesis that higher levels of parental religious activity were related to the presence of a spiritual transformation experience.

## **Results**

### **Participants**

Eighty five adolescents, ages 12 to 19 years old, attending Protestant church youth groups were sampled from the Albuquerque area. One participant withdrew from the study and two were not included in the final analyses due to discussing answers while completing the questionnaire. Another four individuals completed more than half of the questionnaire but skipped specific scales. Number of responses per measure ranged from 78 to 82 participants. Descriptive statistics on continuous demographic variables are reported in Table

7 and frequencies for categorical demographic variables are displayed in Figure 5. The average age of participants was 15 to 16 years of age with about 20% in middle school (7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade), 66% in high school, 6% not in school, and 8% transitioning from high school to college. The mean year in school was 10<sup>th</sup> grade. The majority of participants reported being single (82%), with 9% dating casually, 5% in a serious relationship, and 4% recently single. For ethnicity, 70% identified themselves as White, 12% as Hispanic, 7% as White-Hispanic, 2% as African-American, 2% as Asian/Pacific Islander, 2% as Native American/Indian, and 5% as other or unreported. As expected, participants' religious preference was almost exclusively Protestant (99%) with only one person (1%) identifying as Roman Catholic. Forty three participants attended public school (52%), nine went to a private school (11%), 22 were homeschooled (27%), and nine were not enrolled or attended other school types such as charter schools (10%).

### **Descriptive statistics for major constructs**

Descriptive statistics are displayed below and are divided according to demographics (Table 7), personal devotional activities (Table 8), religious social support (Table 9), spiritual development (Figure 6, Table 10), and additional constructs (Table 11).

Table 7.

*Descriptive statistics for continuous demographic variables.*

Demographic	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Variance	Minimum	Maximum
Age (Years)	83	15.675	1.690	2.856	12.00	19.00
Year in School	78	10.244	1.676	2.810	7.00	13.00

Figure 5. Frequency distributions for categorical demographic variables.

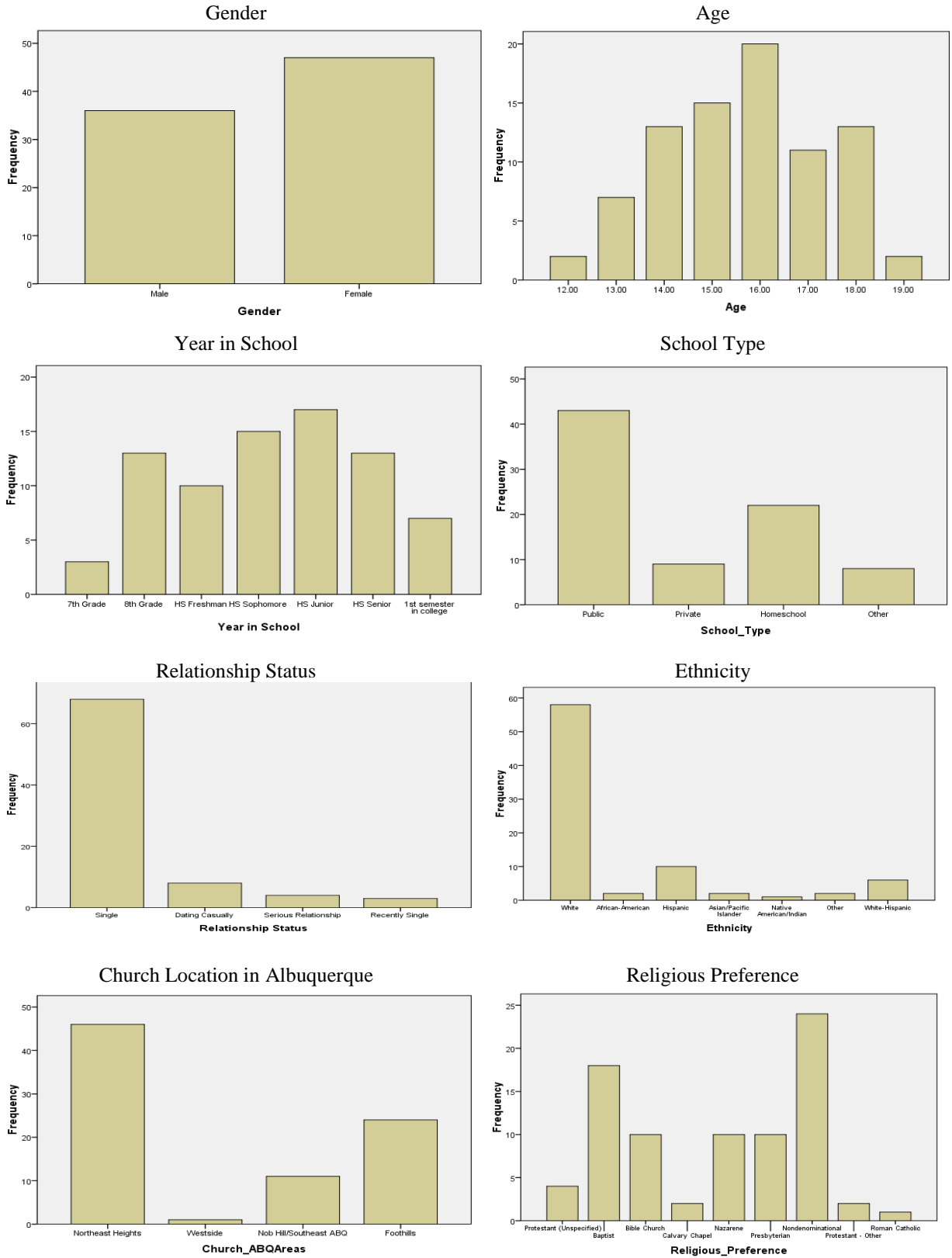


Table 8.

*Descriptive statistics for personal devotional activities.*

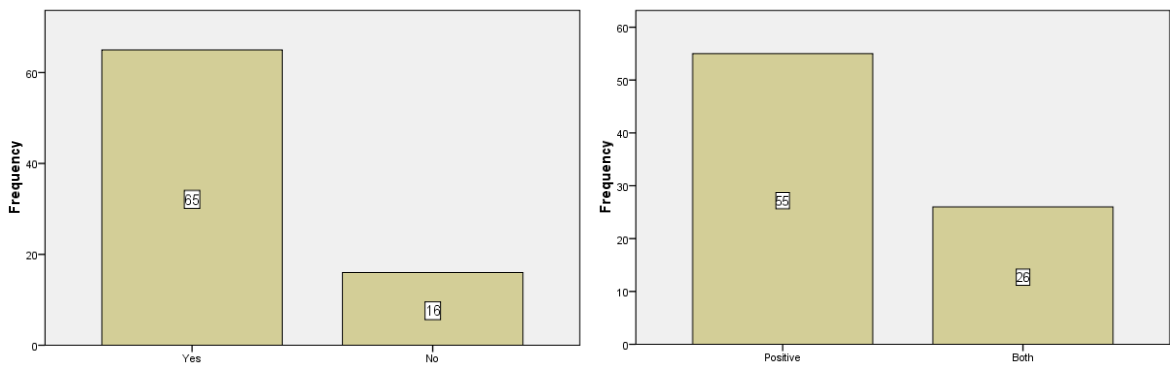
Construct	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance	Minimum	Maximum
Prayer	81	5.477	.666	.443	2.25	6.00
Bible/Christian Literature Study	81	4.096	1.141	1.301	1.25	6.00
Worship	80	5.080	.877	.782	2.00	6.00

Table 9.

*Descriptive statistics for religious social support.*

Construct	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance	Minimum	Maximum
Mentorship	82	4.419	1.115	1.242	1.00	6.00
Church Community	82	3.570	.532	.283	3.57	5.80
Friendship	80	3.310	.494	.244	1.75	4.00
Parental Support	79	5.764	1.402	1.965	1.50	7.00

Figure 6. Frequencies for spiritual transformation\*.



\*No negative responses reported

Table 10.

*Descriptive statistics for spiritual identity and maturity.*

Construct	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance	Minimum	Maximum
Spiritual Identity	81	4.152	.642	.412	2.66	5.29
Spiritual Maturity	81	3.535	.441	.194	2.56	4.56

Table 11.

*Descriptive statistics for religious coping, personal identity, and personality.*

Construct	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance	Minimum	Maximum
Religious Coping	79	3.158	.464	.215	2.00	4.00
Personal Identity	79	3.832	.528	.279	2.00	5.00
Relational Identity	79	3.915	.673	.453	2.50	5.00
Social Identity	79	3.222	.772	.596	1.14	5.00
Collective Identity	79	2.883	.730	.532	1.50	4.88
Extraversion	79	3.416	.807	.651	1.33	5.00
Openness to Experience	79	3.509	.598	.357	2.10	4.70
Neuroticism	79	2.716	.648	.419	1.38	4.12
Agreeableness	79	3.596	.562	.316	2.00	5.00
Conscientiousness	79	3.442	.547	.299	2.20	4.70

To measure the seven constructs (prayer, worship, Bible/literature study, parental religious support, friendship circle, church community, mentorship) developed for this study, items were lifted from the Brief Multidimensional Measure of Religiousness/Spirituality (BMMRS, introduced on p. 27) and categorized. Although the limited sample size did not permit a comprehensive factor analysis of the items created for the novel subscales



incorporated in the present study, repeated smaller factor analyses were conducted using only the items intended as indicators of various dimensions of religiosity. Cronbach's alpha assesses reliability via internal consistency of responses to different items on a scale. For assessing internal reliability, Nunnally's (1978) standard cutoff of .70 was used. One to two items from three of the scales: worship, friendship, and mentorship, were eliminated from the final analyses to increase internal consistency. The worship scale originally had six items. Analyses showed that one of the two reversed scored questions, "I feel uncomfortable singing or communicating thanks/praise to a God I cannot see," appeared to be misunderstood and inconsistently scored by respondents. In the friendship scale, the item "My closest friends do not know much about my spiritual life" did not relate well to the other items in the scale. Finally, in the mentorship scale, the categorical item, "I desire to be [mentored, a mentor, both]" was analyzed separately from the continuous items. Two items on the original mentoring subscale were not consistent with other items. These items were removed from their respective scales in the final analyses which made the measures more internally consistent. As shown in Table 12, the resulting Cronbach's alphas for the scales ranged from .571 to .857. Overall, scales measuring worship, Bible/Christian literature study, parental religious support, and church community reported strong levels of internal consistency. Prayer, friendship circle, and mentorship were less reliable with moderate levels of internal consistency.

To provide a rough indication of the extent to which the items on a subscale were measuring a single factor, the eigenvalue associated with the first factor and the percent of variance accounted for by that factor was calculated. For three of the seven scales (mentorship, Bible/literature study, and parental religious support) the first factor accounted

for the majority of the variance in the items. Personal devotional activities consisted of scales measuring prayer, worship, and the study of sacred texts. Religious social support consisted of scales measuring support from family, friends, and church as well as the desire for and engagement in mentorship.

Table 12 reports the number of items per scale, Cronbach's alpha, eigenvalue, and the percent of variance explained.

Table 12.

*Values supporting individual scale items' ability to represent primary construct.*

Construct	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha	Eigenvalue	% of Variance Explained
Bible/Literature Study	4	.857	2.859	71.486
Parental Religious Support	4	.834	2.896	72.399
Church Community	7	.745	2.842	40.594
Worship	5	.798	2.833	56.670
Mentorship (continuous items only)	3	.669	1.873	62.438
Prayer	4	.625	2.327	58.184
Friendship Circle	4	.571	1.812	45.312

More extensive analyses were carried out to determine if the measures of the constructs of spiritual identity and spiritual maturity were distinct, as hypothesized. First, a principal components analysis was used to evaluate how the following scales related to one another: Daily Spiritual Experiences (DSE), Meaning, Faith Maturity Horizontal Scale (FMS), Altruism, Given Love, Empathy, and Compassion. It was hypothesized that these

measures would be grouped to measure two constructs: spiritual identity and spiritual maturity. As expected, two eigenvalues greater than 1 were obtained, supporting the use of two factors, which together accounted for a cumulative percent of 58.566 of total explained variance. Next, a principal axis factor analysis was conducted with a varimax rotation method using a .40 extraction cut-off value. This verified that spiritual identity was accurately represented by DSE and Meaning. The FMS, Altruism, Given Love, Empathy, and Compassion measures hung together and were used to characterize Spiritual Maturity. This is shown by the rotated factor matrix in Table 13 below.

Table 13.

*Rotated factor matrix supporting scale representation for spiritual identity and maturity.*

	Factor	
	1	2
Spiritual Identity: Daily Spiritual Experience Scale	.389	.699
Spiritual Identity: Meaning Scale	.110	.606
Spiritual Maturity: Compassion Scale	.833	.100
Spiritual Maturity: Empathy Scale	.724	.339
Spiritual Maturity: Altruism Scale	.497	.151
Spiritual Maturity: Love Scale	.440	.257
Spiritual Maturity: Faith Maturity Scale	.399	.236

a. Rotation converged in 3 iterations.

Spiritual identity components highlighted in blue. Spiritual maturity components highlighted in green.

Because adolescents were nested within youth groups, a mixed model analysis was used to test if differences between churches influenced varying levels of spiritual identity and spiritual maturity, and therefore, if nesting should be accounted for in the analysis. The

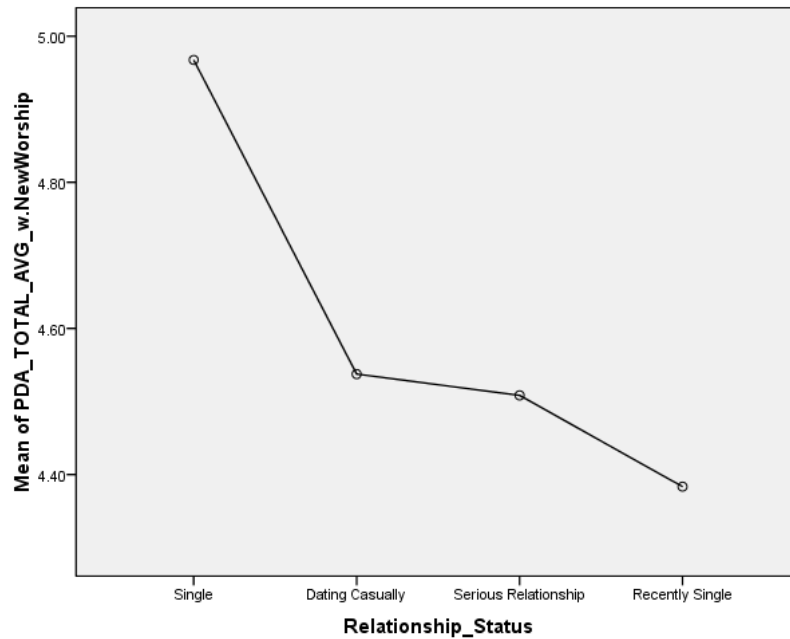
intraclass correlation coefficients were calculated. For spiritual identity, less than 1.0% of the observed variance was due to differences between churches. For spiritual maturity, 8.925% of the observed variance was due to differences between churches. Since differences between churches was limited and had a minimal impact on spiritual identity and maturity, a mixed model analysis was not used to test the study hypotheses.

Results are reported in the following sections numbered according to the list of hypotheses in Table 1.

## **Demographics**

**Hypothesis 1: Association between relationship status and personal devotional activities.** A one-way ANOVA was used to assess the influence of relationship status on engagement in personal devotional activities (prayer, worship, Bible study). The majority of the sample reported having single status (82%) while only eight participants were dating casually (10%), four were in a serious relationship (5%), and three were recently single (3%). The influence of relationship status on personal devotional activities was non-significant,  $F(3,77) = 1.817, p = .151$ . However, as illustrated in the plot below, there was a general trend for single or recently single participants to engage more in personal devotional activities than those who were dating or in a serious relationship. A follow-up post-hoc contrast compared those who were single (ongoing and recently) and those who were in a relationship (dating and serious). Findings were significant: those who were single engaged in significantly more personal devotional activities than those who were dating/in a relationship,  $t(79) = 22.541, p < .001, \text{Cohen's } d = 0.636$ .

Figure 7. Difference between relationship status and engagement in personal devotional activities.

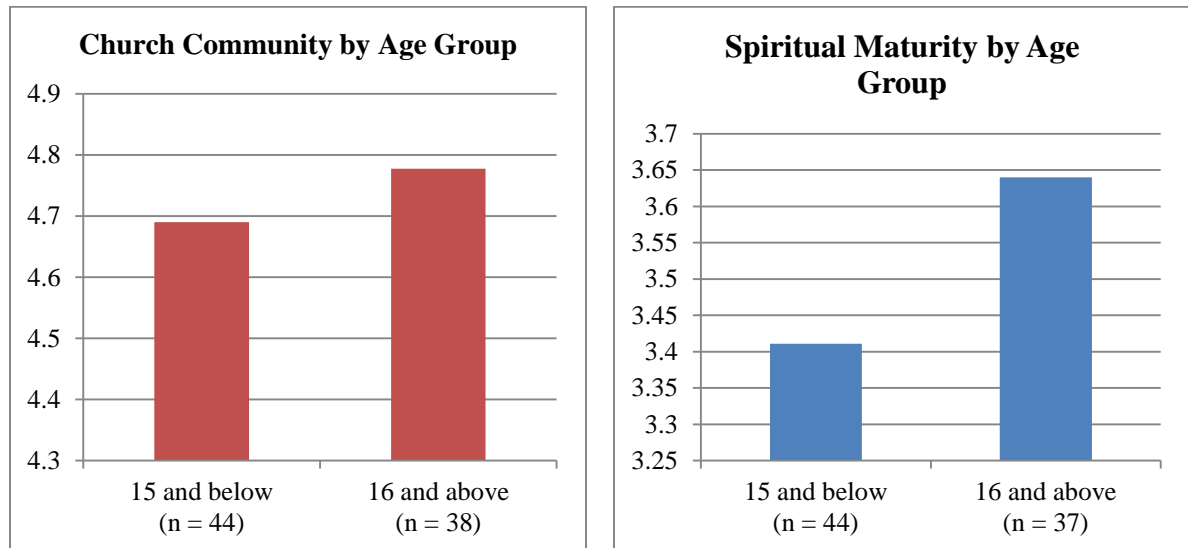


**Hypothesis 2: Associations of age with church activity and spiritual maturity.** An independent samples *t* test was used to test the effect of age on church activity. It was expected that participants who were 16 years and older would report lower church engagement. Unexpectedly, those who were older reported higher levels of church activity. Those 16 years and below reported an average church community score of 4.690 compared to the 16+ years of age, who had an average score of 4.777. The difference in church participation was not significant,  $t(80) = .740, p = .461$  with a small effect size, Cohen's  $d = 0.164$ .

Additional analyses investigated the influence age had on spiritual maturity. Participants who were older (16 years and above) reported on average a higher mean than younger participants, ( $M_{15 \text{ and younger}} = 3.411, M_{16 \text{ and older}} = 3.640$ ). This difference was

significant,  $t(79) = 2.40$ ,  $p = .019$ , Cohen's  $d = 0.535$ . These findings are illustrated in the figure below.

Figure 8. Church community and spiritual maturity levels for older and younger age groups.



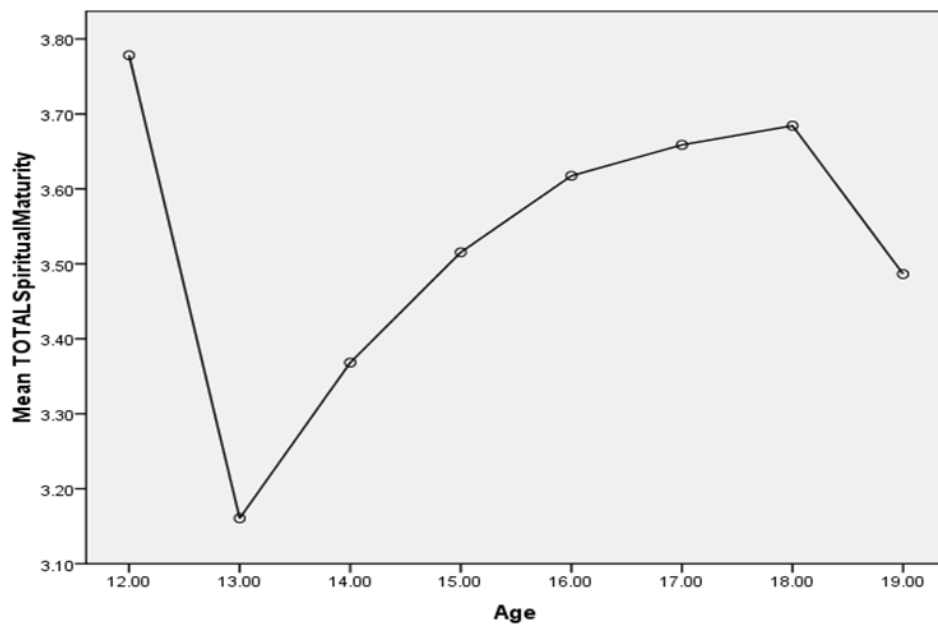
A one-way ANOVA was also used to compare levels of spiritual maturity across age. The following table reports number of participants by year of age and Figure 9 plots spiritual maturity by age groups. The trend shows a distinct rise in spiritual maturity from ages 14 – 18 years of age and then a decline at age 19, when the adolescent transitions from high school to college. The sample was not large enough to have an adequate number of participants in each age group, especially for the youngest (12 years old) and oldest (19 years old) categories where only two participants were observed. Overall, the effect of age groups on spiritual maturity was non-significant,  $F(7, 73) = 1.573$ ,  $p = .157$ .

Table 14.

*Number of participants by age.*

Age (years)	Frequency	Percent
12	2	2.4
13	7	8.4
14	14	16.9
15	15	18.1
16	19	22.9
17	11	13.3
18	12	14.5
19	2	2.4

*Figure 9. Levels of spiritual maturity by age group.*



## Social Factors

**Hypothesis 3: Associations of mentorship with spiritual identity and spiritual maturity.** A one-way ANOVA was used to assess how participants' desire for mentorship influenced spiritual identity and maturity. The mentorship scale item, "I desire to be [mentored, be a mentor, both]" was used in the analysis. On average, mentorship had a significant relationship with spiritual identity,  $F(2,63) = 3.203$ ,  $p = .048$ , and with spiritual maturity,  $F(2,61) = 7.015$ ,  $p = .002$ . On average, those who desired to both mentor and be mentored or just be a mentor reported higher scores than those who desired just to be mentored for spiritual identity, ( $M_{both} = 4.260$ ,  $SD = .582$ ;  $M_{mentor} = 4.470$ ,  $SD = .585$ ;  $M_{be-mentored} = 3.888$ ;  $SD = .682$ ), and for spiritual maturity, ( $M_{both} = 3.598$ ,  $SD = .339$ ;  $M_{mentor} = 3.833$ ,  $SD = .806$ ;  $M_{be-mentored} = 3.265$ ,  $SD = .373$ ). Tukey's HSD post hoc analyses revealed that just wanting to be mentored had a significantly lower score for spiritual maturity when compared with those wanting to mentor ( $p = .023$ ) and those wanting to do both ( $p = .005$ ). There was no significant difference between mentorship groups for spiritual identity. Results are displayed in the table and plots below.

Table 15.

*Mentorship group mean differences for spiritual identity and maturity.*

Dependent Variable	Mentorship Group	Comparison Group	Mean Difference	Std. Error	Sig.
Spiritual Maturity	Be Mentored	Be a Mentor	-.56798*	.20936	.023
		Both	-.33343*	.10216	.005
Spiritual Identity	Be Mentored	Be a Mentor	-.58258	.33583	.201
		Both	-.37199	.16387	.068

\*Difference is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).



Figure 10. Levels of spiritual maturity by mentorship groups.

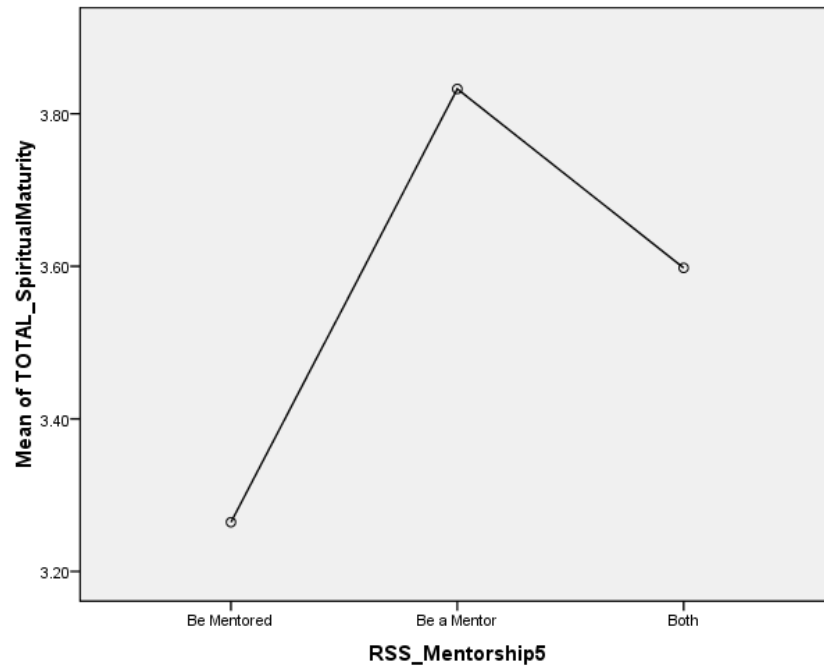
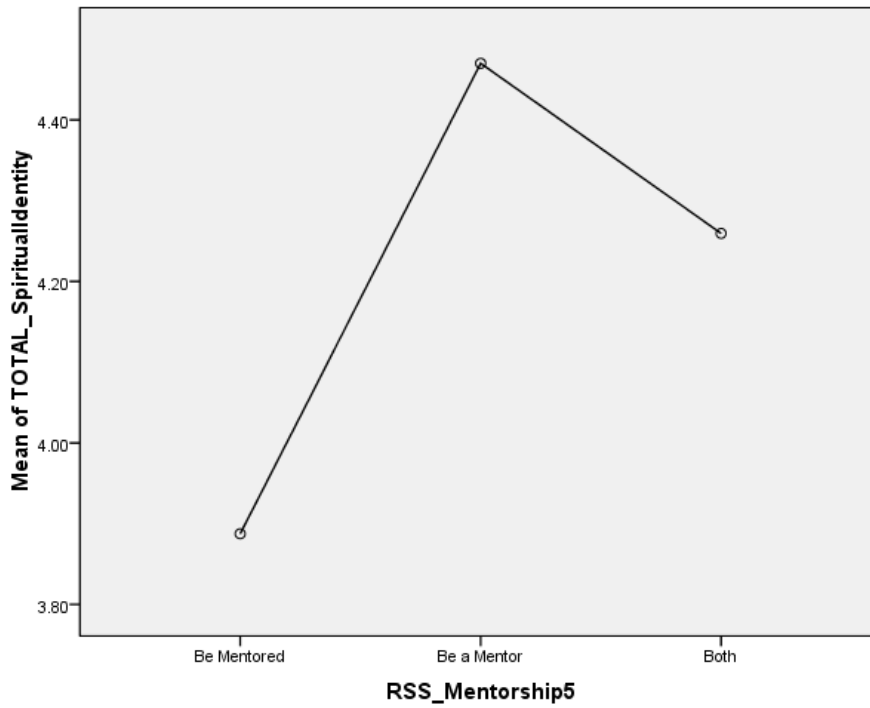


Figure 11. Levels of spiritual identity by mentorship groups.



**Hypothesis 4: Associations of church community and total religious support with spiritual transformation (ST).** In our sample, 65 participants reported that they had a spiritual transformation experience while only 16 said they have never had this type of experience. The majority of these experience were reported as being only positive ( $n = 47$ , or 72%) with the remainder ( $n = 18$ , or 28%) being reported as both negative and positive. Binary logistic regression was used to test the effect of church community on the presence of a spiritual transformation experience. The level of church community did not predict whether or not an individual had had a spiritual transformation experience,  $\chi^2(1) = 1.510$ ,  $p = .219$ . Additional analyses, however, did reveal that total religious support was predictive of whether an individual had experienced a spiritual transformation experience,  $\chi^2(1) = 5.337$ ,  $p = .021$ . On average, those who had a positive spiritual transformation experience had a significantly higher level of religious social support ( $M = 4.622$ ,  $SD = .472$ ) compared to those who had not had one ( $M = 4.277$ ,  $SD = .601$ ),  $t(79) = 2.478$ ,  $p = .015$ .

**Hypothesis 5: Association between friendship circle and spiritual identity.** Pearson's correlation coefficient was used to assess the relationship between level of support in a friendship circle and spiritual identity. The relationship was significant,  $r = .380$ ,  $p < .01$ . On average, participants who had more religious support from friends also had higher levels of spiritual identity.

**Hypothesis 6: Associations of parents' religious activity with spiritual transformation (ST), identity, and maturity.** A binary logistic regression was used to test the influence of parents' religious activity on the presence of a spiritual transformation experience. The level of parental religious activity did not predict whether or not an individual had had a spiritual transformation experience,  $\chi^2(1) = 1.911$ ,  $p = .167$ . The

hypothesis that higher levels of parental religious activity would be related to the presence of a spiritual transformation was not supported. Nonetheless, the trend was for youth whose parents were more religiously active to be more likely to report having had a spiritual transformation experience. One simple way to see this is by dichotomizing the parents' religious activity variable, specifically, classifying parents as more religiously active if their average parental religious support was 5.0 or greater ( $n = 58$ ) and as less religiously active if their average parental religious support was less than 5.0 ( $n = 21$ ). Those whose parents were religiously active were somewhat more likely to have experienced a positive spiritual transformation, (50 of 58, or 86.2%) than those who did not have parents that were as religiously engaged, (14 of 21, or 66.7%) The difference between the presence of a spiritual transformation and this dichotomous form of parental religious support was again not significant,  $p = .100$ , by Fisher's exact test.

An independent samples  $t$  test investigated the influence of parents' religious activity on levels of spiritual identity and maturity. As predicted, adolescents who had parents who were religiously active reported significantly higher levels of spiritual identity than those who did not,  $M_{active\ parents} = 4.287$ ,  $SD = .537$ ;  $M_{not\ as\ active} = 3.817$ ,  $SD = .801$   $t(77) = 2.995$ ,  $p = .004$ , Cohen's  $d = .689$ . While adolescents who had parents who were religiously active also reported higher levels of spiritual maturity than those who did not,  $M_{active\ parents} = 3.580$ ,  $SD = .422$ ;  $M_{not\ as\ active} = 3.441$ ,  $SD = .493$ , this difference was not significant,  $t(77) = 1.245$ ,  $p = .217$ , Cohen's  $d = .303$ . These findings are summarized in the table below.

Table 16.

*Relationship between parental religious activity and spiritual transformation, identity, maturity.*

	Parent Religious Activity	N	n (Percent) Reporting	Sig. (2-tailed)
Spiritual Transformation	>= 5.00	58	50 (86%)	.100* <sup>+</sup>
	< 5.00	21	14 (67%)	

	Parent Religious Activity	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Sig. (2-tailed)
Spiritual Identity	>= 5.00	58	4.287	.537	.004**
	< 5.00	21	3.817	.801	
Spiritual Maturity	>= 5.00	58	3.580	.422	.217
	< 5.00	21	3.441	.493	

\*\*Difference is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

<sup>+</sup>Fisher's Exact Test.

**Hypothesis 7: Associations of religious social support with spiritual identity and maturity.** Using Pearson's correlation coefficient, the relationship religious social support had with spiritual identity as well as with spiritual maturity was tested. Higher levels of mentorship, church community, religious friendship support, family religious activity and beliefs, and total religious social support were all significantly associated with higher levels of spiritual identity. Higher levels of mentorship, church community, and total religious support were significantly associated with higher levels of spiritual maturity. A full list of correlations is presented in the following table.

Table 17.

*Correlations of religious social support variables with levels of spiritual identity and maturity.*

		Mentorship	Church Community	Friendship	Parent Religious Activity	Total Religious Social Support	Spiritual Identity	Spiritual Maturity
Mentorship	Pearson Correlation	1.000						
	Sig. (2-tailed)							
Church Community	Pearson Correlation	.299**	1.000					
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.009						
Friendship	Pearson Correlation	.078	.278*	1.000				
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.110	.002					
Parent Religious Activity	Pearson Correlation	.041	.308**	.069	1.000			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.730	.006	.485				
Total Religious Social Support	Pearson Correlation	.652**	.583**	.390**	.742**	1.000		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001			
Spiritual Identity	Pearson Correlation	.488**	.501**	.380**	.243*	.595**	1.000	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	<.001	<.001	.031	<.001		
Spiritual Maturity	Pearson Correlation	.441**	.251*	.161	.084	.364**	.451**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	.024	.117	.464	.002	<.001	

\*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). \*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Note: Sample size ranged from 79 – 82 participants for all correlations

**Personal devotional activities**

**Hypothesis 8: Associations of personal devotional activities with spiritual identity and maturity.** Using Pearson's correlation coefficient, the relationship between personal devotional activities and spiritual identity as well as with spiritual maturity was tested. Higher levels of Bible/religious literature study, prayer, and total engagement in personal devotional activities were all significantly associated with higher levels of spiritual identity. Similarly, higher levels of prayer were significantly associated with higher levels of spiritual maturity. As expected, higher levels of desire and time spent in worship was positively associated with spiritual identity and maturity as well as with prayer and Bible/Christian literature. Devotional activities were also positively associated with one another. Those who engaged more in worship were also significantly more engaged in studying the Bible and other Christian literature,  $r_{Bible} = .481, p < .01, r_{prayer} = .358, p = < .01$ . A full list of correlations is presented in Table 18.

Table 18.

*Correlations of personal devotional activity variables with spiritual identity and maturity.*

		Bible	Prayer	Worship	Total Personal Devotional Activities	Spiritual Identity	Spiritual Maturity
Bible	Pearson Correlation	1.000					
	Sig. (2-tailed)						
Prayer	Pearson Correlation	.498**	1.000				
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001					
Worship	Pearson Correlation	.481**	.358**	1.000			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.008				
Total Personal Devotional Activities	Pearson Correlation	.879**	.717**	.771**	1.000		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	<.001	.068			
Spiritual Identity	Pearson Correlation	.550**	.617**	.667**	.752**	1.000	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001		
Spiritual Maturity	Pearson Correlation	.212	.248*	.405**	.356**	.451**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.057	.026	.009	.163	<.001	

\*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). \*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Note: Sample size ranged from 80 – 81 participants for all correlations

## Spiritual Identity

**Hypotheses 9, 11: Associations of spiritual identity with personal identity, and religious coping.** Pearson's correlation coefficient was used to test whether there was a positive relationship between spiritual identity and personal identity as well as between spiritual identity and religious coping. There was a significant relationship between spiritual identity and personal identity,  $r = .448$ ,  $p < .001$ . The association between spiritual identity and other self-identity types was also investigated. Spiritual identity was positively associated with relational identity,  $r_{relational} = .271$ ,  $p = .016$ , but not social or collective identity. There was also a significant relationship between spiritual identity and religious coping,  $r = .595$ ,  $p < .001$ . Higher levels of spiritual identity were consistently associated with higher levels of personal identity, relational identity, and religious coping. Findings are summarized in Table 19.

Table 19.

*Correlations between spiritual identity and types of self-identity, and religious coping.*

		Spiritual Identity
Personal Identity	Pearson Correlation	.448
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001
Relational Identity	Pearson Correlation	.271
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.016
Social Identity	Pearson Correlation	-.104
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.360
Collective Identity	Pearson Correlation	.163
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.362
Religious Coping	Pearson Correlation	.595**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001

Note: Sample size ranged from 78 – 79 participants for all correlations



**Hypotheses 10, 12: Associations of spiritual identity and maturity, with codings of personal narratives.** Personal narratives asking participants to describe their spirituality and how it affects their life were coded. Responses were categorized into ten categories: 1) length of the response (short, medium, long), 2) tone of the response (positive, negative), and expressions reflecting: 3) desire to improve, 4) doubt, 5) positive attitude toward others, 6) negative attitude toward others, 7) positive attitude toward self, 8) negative attitude toward self, 9) time spent with God, and 10) personal names for God. Stronger levels of spiritual identity as well as spiritual maturity were significantly associated with higher use of phrases describing a personal, intimate relationship with God,  $r_{identity} = .288, p = .01$ ;  $r_{maturity} = .235, p = .037$ . Those who reported that they enjoy spending more time with God had significantly higher levels of spiritual identity ( $r = .453, p < .001$ ) and higher levels of spiritual maturity ( $r = .285, p = .011$ ). As predicted, spiritual maturity was also significantly related to phrases expressing positive attitude towards others,  $r_{maturity} = .270, p = .016$ . Results also demonstrated that higher levels of spiritual identity was related to communicating a more positive tone ( $r_{identity} = .240, p = .033$ ), a stronger desire to improve one's spiritual relationship ( $r_{identity} = .278, p = .013$ ), more expressions of doubt ( $r_{identity} = .240, p = .033$ ), positive attitudes towards self ( $r_{identity} = .377, p = .002$ ), and motivation to spend more time with God ( $r_{identity} = .453, p < .001$ ). Example phrases extracted from narratives are presented for each category (except for length) in Table 20 below. Correlations are presented in Table 21.

Table 20.

*Examples from personal narratives of categorized responses.*

Category	Example Response
Desire to Improve	“I am actively working on building habits that will help me grow in my faith with Christ. This includes prayer, Bible reading, and being mentored.”
Doubt	“It does not feel like I am close to God, but I still try to persevere.”
Positive Attitude towards Others	“I try my best to show others that there's a better life waiting for them, and I try to help others make good decisions, or I try to help them through a life of suffering by showing them God.”
Negative Attitude towards Others	“...all my friends in the youth group moved away. After they left it seemed no matter how hard I tried to get back in with the members of the youth no one would accept me.”
Positive Attitude towards Self	“I accepted Christ into my life at the age of 16. And just this year alone my personality has been totally reversed. Before I was shy, uncaring, and a bit of a trouble maker. Now I am not afraid, outgoing, more positive, and love everyone.”
Negative Attitude towards Self	“Sometimes things get tough and I get irritable. My "spirituality" helps me take a step back and view things in a different manner which helps solve problems and what not.”
Time to Spend with God	“When I spend time with God, my day is usually much better and I am much kinder. When I don't have time with God, my day is much worse.”
Personal Names for God	“I believe that Christ is the Son of God, and that He sacrificed for our sins once for all when he offered Himself. To reject Him means to reject the Father who appointed Him.”

Table 21.

*Relationships between spiritual identity and maturity, and the length, tone, and phrases in personal narratives.*

		Spiritual Identity	Spiritual Maturity
Length	Pearson Correlation	.154	.107
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.175	.349
Tone	Pearson Correlation	.240*	.062
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.033	.589
Desire to Improve	Pearson Correlation	.278*	.167
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.013	.141
Doubt	Pearson Correlation	.240*	.062
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.033	.589
Positive Attitude to Others	Pearson Correlation	.138	.270*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.227	.016
Negative Attitude to Others	Pearson Correlation	.080	-.067
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.481	.560
Positive Attitude to Self	Pearson Correlation	.337**	.180
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.002	.112
Negative Attitude to Self	Pearson Correlation	.072	.140
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.528	.217
Spend time with God	Pearson Correlation	.453**	.285*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	.011
Personal Names for God	Pearson Correlation	.288**	.235*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.010	.037

\*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). \*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).  
Note: N = 79 participants for all correlations

## Personality

**Hypothesis 13: Associations of introversion and extraversion with church activity and personal devotional activities.** Pearson's correlation coefficient was used to assess the relationship between personality and church activity, and personal devotional activities. As shown in the table below, there was little to no observed relationship between church community and extraversion. Although a negative

relationship was found between extraversion and Bible/Christian literature study, indicating that higher levels of introversion was more associated with private Bible study, the relationship was not significant,  $r_{extraversion\&Bible} = -.023, p = .840$ . Total personal devotional activities was significantly and positively related to agreeableness,  $r_{agreeableness\&PDA} = .232, p = .040$ . Additional analyses investigated the relationship personality had with mentorship, worship, and spiritual maturity. Mentorship was significantly positively associated with openness to experience and agreeableness,  $r_{openness} = .267, p = .018$ ;  $r_{agreeableness} = .332, p = .003$ . There was a significant, positive relationship between worship and agreeableness,  $r = .293, p = .009$ . Spiritual maturity had significant, positive associations with extraversion, openness, and agreeableness,  $r_{extraversion} = .279, p = .013$ ;  $r_{openness} = .361, p = .001$ ;  $r_{agreeableness} = .438, p < .001$ .

Table 22.

*Relationships between personality and religious social support, personal devotional activities, and spiritual maturity.*

		Extraversion	Openness	Neuroticism	Agreeableness	Conscientiousness
Mentorship	Pearson Correlation	.141	.267*	-.156	.332**	.170
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.217	.018	.170	.003	.134
Church Community	Pearson Correlation	.005	.022	-.004	.063	.091
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.968	.846	.974	.584	.427
Bible/Christian Literature	Pearson Correlation	-.023	.108	-.087	.139	.213
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.840	.342	.448	.223	.060
Prayer	Pearson Correlation	.042	-.100	.091	.139	-.081
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.713	.380	.423	.223	.479
Worship	Pearson Correlation	.067	.170	.041	.293**	.140
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.558	.137	.719	.009	.222
Personal Devotional Activities	Pearson Correlation	.040	.101	-.009	.232*	.144
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.730	.377	.936	.040	.205
Spiritual Maturity	Pearson Correlation	.279*	.361**	.111	.438**	.140
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.013	.001	.330	<.001	.220

\*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). \*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Note: Sample size ranged from 78 – 79 participants for all correlations

## Discussion

The current study investigated what factors contribute to spiritual development. Evidence was found to support the role of demographics, religious social support, and personal devotional activities on spiritual transformation experience(s), identity, and maturity. Specifically, the presence of a spiritual transformation was related to stronger levels of religious social support. Spiritual identity related to stronger levels of religious social support through mentorship, church, friends, and parents as well as of personal

devotional activities such as Bible/Christian literature study, worship, and prayer. Higher levels of spiritual maturity were related to higher levels of religious social support through mentorship and church community as well as personal devotional activities such as worship and prayer.

Additionally, personal identity was positively associated with spiritual identity, which indicates that those who had a stronger relationship with God also had a stronger self-identity. Religious coping was related to spiritual identity, suggesting that those with higher connectedness to God also had higher religious-based coping skills to help with life stressors. Extraversion and introversion were not found to relate to personal devotional activities or religious social support but those who were reportedly more agreeable were more engaged in mentorship and worship, and reported higher levels of spiritual maturity. Openness to experience was also positively correlated with mentorship.

This study uniquely articulated three stages of spiritual development: transformation, identity, and maturity, and investigated the influence of religious social support and personal devotional activities on development. This study also explicitly measured contextual factors, such as religious social support, as well as assessed four constructs, personal devotional activities; religious social support; spiritual identity; and spiritual maturity. For the first time these constructs were defined and measured by specific scales available in the public domain. Factor analyses and initial psychometrics were reported to support the measurement of each construct. Cotton, McGrady, and Rosenthal (2011) recently reviewed 100 articles to understand the nature and quality of studies measuring the relationship between religious/spiritual factors and adolescent

development. One criticism of the review was that while the majority of articles investigated frequency of religious attendance, personal importance of religion, and religious affiliation, measurements did not incorporate contextual factors such as parental and peers beliefs and behaviors. Another critique from this review was the absence of measures for various dimensions of religion and spirituality. The study addressed both of these gaps in the literature. Contributions of the current study are discussed in turn for each tested hypothesis in the following sections.

### **Hypothesis Findings**

#### **Influence of demographics (age and relationship status) on spiritual development (Hypotheses 1 & 2)**

Our findings, as shown in Figure 8, unexpectedly demonstrated that older adolescents, ages 16 and above, tended in this sample to have higher levels of church engagement and spiritual maturity, although findings were non-significant. Although the difference was significant only when comparing the spiritual maturity of those age 16 or older with that of those age 15 or younger, the clear trend for ages 13 through 18 was a consistently increasing level of spiritual maturity with increasing age (see Figure 9). Although the means for ages 12 and 19 seem to be inconsistent with this pattern, each of those age categories included only 2 participants in the current study and thus do not warrant detailed speculations about the meaning of those statistics. It would not be surprising however if in a larger sample spiritual maturity did show a decline for 19 years olds. Teens may be so focused on their emerging adulthood and the transition from high school to college that it is difficult to spend time in devotional activities or actively

demonstrate one's spirituality by connecting with others. The religious support system may also be changing during this time as teens are planning to move out of the house or out of state to attend college. Teens may not have their parents, church, friends, and mentors as readily available during the preparation for high school graduation and transition to college and fail to rebuild this community once they enter college.

Although numbers for those casually dating, in a serious relationship, and recently single were relatively small, those who were dating or in a relationship were not as engaged in personal devotional activities as those who were single. There was a significant difference in devotional activity between those who were single versus those who were seriously/casually dating. Teens distracted by a significant other may not be as focused on their spiritual development and grow in their identity compared to single teens that have more time to spend in devotional activities.

### **Religious social support and community encourages spiritual transformation, identity, and maturity (Hypotheses 3 - 7)**

Religious social support is a key factor in spiritual development. Religious social support helps teens to maintain and grow in their personal relationship with God as well as demonstrate an outer Christian love towards the world. Higher levels of mentorship, church community, religious friendship support, and parental religious activity aggregated together was related to higher levels of spiritual identity. Higher levels of mentorship, church community, and total religious support were associated with higher levels of spiritual maturity.



Mentorship is able to provide guidance for both growing in one's spiritual identity as well as maturity. By receiving mentorship, adolescents are able to have spiritual beliefs and behaviors modeled for them. By providing mentorship, they are able to benefit in helping others and are motivated to be a model of beliefs and behaviors. This two-way effort of receiving and providing mentorship contributed to a stronger spiritual identity and maturity more than those who were only receiving mentorship.

Church community was also significantly associated with higher levels of spiritual identity and maturity. This is an opportunity to hear sermons and receive guidance from religious leaders, spend time with others who share similar values and beliefs, receive mentorship from adults, youth leaders and/or older teens, and develop a social network and friendships.

Parenting and friendship religious support are critical aspects of the spiritual development process. Parents can serve as mentors and provide a model of spirituality which aids in identity and maturity development. Parents serve as a constant and authoritative resource to answer questions and have discussions around spiritual topics. Desrosiers, Kelley, and Miller (2011) surveyed 615 adolescents and young adults of varying ethnicities and religious affiliations to measure the religious and spiritual contributions of parents and friends. Results showed that mothers and fathers made specific and significant contributions. Adolescents who had an affectionate relationship with their father had a more positive association with relational spirituality. Mothers who provided spiritual support through discussion and spiritual transparency also had teens that were more positively associated with relational spirituality. It was also suggested that mothers who offer support for spiritual individuation encourage their teens to have

friends who also share these same values, building a stronger religious support community. This study found that “a capacity for relational spirituality may emerge through a window of development in adolescence that can be facilitated by specific contributions from relationship with parents and, in turn, peers” (p.49).

Spiritual maturity was defined in this study as manifesting one’s spiritual identity and connectedness to God by having compassion on the outer world. Higher levels of maturity were positively associated with active engagement in mentorship, church community, worship, and prayer. It was also related to higher reports of positive attitudes towards self and others. Spiritual maturity may help adolescents to be more pro-social as they build a stronger religious support community, and show a deeper concern and connectedness to others. Resnick, Harris, and Blum (1993) studied over 36,000 7<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> graders to identify protective factors against adolescent social pathologies such as emotional disturbances and acting out behaviors. Multivariate models consistently showed that youth who had a sense of spirituality, cared for others, and were connected, especially to school and family, were more protected against social pathologies. Measures of caring and connectedness surpassed demographic variables such as two-parent versus single-parent family structure as protective factors against high risk behaviors. This supports the current study’s finding that although parental support is related to spiritual maturity, youth who engage in a collective religious social network with supportive parents, friends, mentors, and church community may have a stronger support system to nurture their spiritual maturity. In addition, youth who are not fostered in a caring, positively social environment, may be better served by connecting to a

religious community where they witness and experience significant, caring relationships with adults.

Spiritual transformation (ST) is an integral part of the spiritual development process. It is a powerful feeling of awareness and connectedness to the Divine. Positive spiritual transformation experiences are life-changing religious events which may initiate or help maintain a sustaining spiritual commitment. Having religious support from multiple communities such as through parents, friends, mentors, and church provides an atmosphere where teens are more likely to experience a spiritual transformation. Support from a variety of sources may help teens to think more about their spirituality and religious faith, consider what it means on a personal level, and be in an environment where this type of event is accepted. Our findings supported this. Those who had a positive spiritual transformation experience had a higher level of religious social support compared to those who had not had such an experience. As expected, adolescents who had parents who were more religiously active were on average more likely to have experienced a positive spiritual transformation. Although this finding was not significant, this could suggest that youth with actively religious parents are more inclined to be at church and in an environment where they are encouraged to have their own personal ST experience. Those who had higher levels of total religious social support were more likely to experience a spiritual transformation experience. This suggests that the more support an adolescent has from different social networks, the more engaged they may be in a religious environment and therefore more susceptible to a ST.

### **Personal time spent in devotional activities influences stronger spiritual identity and maturity (Hypothesis 8)**

It was found that religious social support helps adolescents in their spiritual growth. However, only engaging in a religious community can make adolescents focus more on the social aspects rather than on their spiritual development. Prayer, worship, and Bible study are more private behaviors that enable teens to reflect on what they believe and feel a spiritual connectedness so they can communicate with God on a personal level. As the study's findings suggest, taking time to spend alone in devotional activities related to higher reports of spiritual identity and maturity. This may help teens to base their spirituality on their personal experiences of connection and communication with the Divine.

### **Findings from personal narratives (Hypotheses 10 and 12)**

The adolescents' personal narrative used in the study's questionnaire was an opportunity to describe their spirituality in their own words. The adolescents' choice of words was reflective of their level of spiritual identity and maturity. The expressions adolescents used to describe their relationship with God, and their attitude towards themselves and others was reflective of their spiritual identity. More frequently used personal names for God (Father, Jesus, Savior) and/or phrases suggesting teens were more positive about their own sense of self was associated with a stronger spiritual identity. The use of intimate terms to describe God is reflective of a personal connectedness, a relationship an adolescent has with the Divine. Those who had a high sense of identity also expressed a desire to improve their relationship and spend more

time in devotional activities in order to spiritually grow. Those who had a higher spiritual identity were also more comfortable in expressing doubt. Statements such as, “It does not feel like I am close to God, but I still try to persevere,” may demonstrate a higher level of faith and identity. Even when these adolescents do not *feel* close to the Divine, they still *believe* He exists and continue to engage in devotion and community. Higher spiritual maturity was related to phrases expressing positive attitude towards others. This is consistent with the notion, as discussed earlier (p.15) that spiritual maturity is when individuals manifest their connectedness to God by showing compassion, empathy, and love to others. This is consistent with the Christian faith which emphasizes the connection between relationship with God and others: “Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress,” and, “He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God,” (James 1:27, Micah 6:8, New International Version).

**Constructs (Personal Identity, Religious Coping, and Personality) related to spiritual identity and maturity (Hypotheses 11 and 13)**

This study found that a strong spiritual identity is related to higher levels of personal identity, relational identity, and greater use of religious coping skills. Personal identity as well as relational identity was positively related to spiritual identity. This can be interpreted in terms of McConnell’s multiple aspects of self-conceptualization. McConnell states the “the self is a collection of multiple, context dependent self-aspects” (p.5). Adolescents who have high levels of spiritual meaning and feel a connectedness to

a Higher Power may as a result feel a stronger sense of self-purpose. The positive relationship that both personal and relational identity had with spiritual identity suggests that individuals who are more spiritually connected may also be more secure in their identity of self and with others.

In regards to religious coping, being able to cope effectively with negative life experiences may be associated with harboring a strong spiritual identity and maturity. Those who have a stronger identity may have learned to rely on their religious faith to deal with frustration and stress. As found by Carlozzi and colleagues, in early adolescence, spiritual beliefs and practices may be criticized or challenged by peers and other value systems (Carlozzi et al., 2010). According to Winterowd and colleagues, youth may not be able to cognitively address challenges to their religious beliefs or have the reflective ability to respond to questions about their spiritual development (Winterowd, Harrist, Thomason, Worth, & Carlozzi, 2005). This may lead to more frustration and anxiety, especially when their values are opposed to the social environment they regularly interact with. This supports the notion that a strong religious community from friends, mentors, church, and parents is critical for adolescent spiritual development. Adolescents may learn to use religious coping skills to address their personal feelings of stress and anger towards life stressors and peers who may oppose their beliefs. They may also rely on religious support as a coping mechanism to buffer stress. This is consistent with past research that has shown that as adolescents develop their worldview around meaning and purpose, their religiosity and spirituality serve to enhance coping abilities as well as provide more positive outcomes for mental health,

psychological well-being, and academic learning (Kim & Esquivel, 2011; King, Carr, & Boitor, 2011).

Personality did not play as large of a role in spiritual practices as was originally expected. According to this sample, extraversion and introversion did not relate to whether adolescents chose more social activities, such as being part of a church community, or more private and personal activities, as in Bible study and prayer. Teens who participated in mentorship, especially those who choose to both mentor and be mentored, demonstrated higher levels of spiritual identity and maturity. Findings demonstrated that adolescents who were more extraverted, open to experience, and agreeable were more likely to engage in mentorship activities and were more spiritually mature. This may be useful for youth leaders serving as mentors. It may be more natural for adolescents who are extraverted, open to experience, and agreeable to pursue mentorship opportunities. Adolescents who are more introverted and less open and agreeable may need more encouragement from youth leaders to engage in mentorship or may benefit from learning about other personal spiritual activities (e.g. prayer and Bible study) to develop a strong spiritual identity.

Although this study did not find strong connections between spiritual activities and personality, the relationships between personality and spiritual maturity are consistent with past research. Saraglou's (2000) meta-analytic review of studies on religion and the Five Factor Model revealed that religiosity is related to agreeableness, conscientiousness, and extraversion; openness is negatively related to religious fundamentalism (weighted mean  $r = -0.14$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ); and extrinsic religiosity is followed by high neuroticism. McCullough, Tsang, and Brion (2003) found that in a 19-year

longitudinal sample of 492 adolescents, ages 12 to 18 years old, conscientiousness in adolescence was uniquely related to higher religiousness in early adulthood. Their findings, coupled with a cross-sectional analysis of other studies on personality and religiousness, allow researchers to conclude that conscientious adolescents grow up to be relatively religious adults. They conclude that further research should not simply examine the linear relationships between personality traits and religiosity but consider how personality might moderate the effects of people's social worlds (e.g., the extent to which they were raised in religious homes) on the development of a sustainable religious commitment. Similarly, it was found that in a sample of 209 men and women conscientiousness in adolescence significantly predicted religiousness in late adulthood, and openness in adolescence predicted spiritual seeking in late adulthood (Wink, Ciciolla, Dillon, & Tracy, 2007). Even though the current study did not find associations between personality factors such as conscientiousness, and spiritual development, the literature suggests that conscientiousness, extraversion, and openness to experience relate to spirituality. Future research may also benefit from investigating the role of personality on spirituality by using constructs outside of the Five Factor Model (FFM). MacDonald (2000) examined the relation of spirituality to the FFM and found that the FFM dimensions relate to the key elements of RS but may not represent major aspects of spirituality. MacDonald outlines five robust dimensions of spirituality not represented in the FFM: Cognitive orientation towards spirituality, experiential/phenomenological dimension, existential well-being, paranormal beliefs, and religiousness. Measures were constructed from these dimensions and compiled into a new inventory named the



Expressions of Spirituality Inventory. This may help researchers to understand spirituality and personality outside of the FFM.

### **Post hoc analyses**

Post hoc analyses were also conducted to further investigate findings. Although the presence of a spiritual transformation was not significantly related to church community, an independent sample *t* test revealed that it was significantly related to higher levels of total religious social support  $t(79) = 2.40, p = .019$ .

Additionally, although it was expected that younger adolescents (15 and below) would be more spiritually mature due to a stronger engagement in a religious social network, the opposite was found. Older adolescents (16 - 18 years old) reported significantly higher scores of spiritual maturity than younger adolescents,  $t(79) = 2.40, p = .019$ . The research literature suggests that spiritual involvement decreases with age. The current findings that older adolescents were reportedly more mature may be due to the sample of this study. This study sampled youth who are attending a church youth group. It could be that, in general, older youth are less engaged, but this study's sample captured older adolescents who are still attending church and, hence, are not surprisingly more spiritually mature than younger adolescents.

Regarding personality, the five factors did not significantly correlate with prayer, Bible/Christian literature study or religious social support factors except for mentorship and worship. However, post hoc analyses suggested that personality, specifically higher levels of extraversion, openness to experience, and agreeableness, were found to

positively relate to higher levels of spiritual maturity,  $r_{extraversion} = .279, p = .013$ ;  $r_{openness} = .361, p = .001$ ;  $r_{agreeableness} = .438, p < .001$ .

### **Study limitations**

The current study examined factors which may contribute to a spiritual transformation experience and the formulation of spiritual identity and maturity. To decrease variability, this study only investigated a Protestant sample of youth groups in the Albuquerque area. The sample of participants was primarily Caucasian with minor representation from the Hispanic community. Past research has found RS to benefit adolescents across different ethnicities and cultures (Jang et al., 2006; Lavrič, & Flere, 2008; Okulicz-Kozaryn, 2010). A study by Sabatier and colleagues specifically investigated the relationship between religiosity and family orientation and found that in France ( $n = 172$ ), Germany ( $n = 270$ ), Poland ( $n = 348$ ), and the United States ( $n = 287$ ), religiosity had a positive impact on adolescent family orientation which in turn related to higher life satisfaction (Sabatier, Mayer, Friedlmeier, Lubiewska, & Trommsdorff, 2011). Future research should investigate the role of religious social support and personal devotional activities on spiritual development in a more ethnically diverse population, especially for the Albuquerque area which has large Hispanic/Latino and Native American communities.

Many of the measures asked participants to report on behaviors and constructs that were specific to the Christian faith. This should be noted for future studies of spiritual development which may focus on non-Christian populations. While prayer, worship, the study of sacred texts, and avenues for religious social support may be consistent themes across religions, they may not be viewed in the same way. For example

prayer tends to be an informal constant, personal behavior for Protestants but a more ritualistic activity for Muslims who are required to pray five times a day. Berry and colleagues discuss the challenges and implications when assessing diverse religious/spiritual groups and encourage researchers to consider the differences between minority religious groups in the U.S. (Berry, Bass, Forawi, Neuman, & Abdallah, 2011). Assessments should be used which reflect the constructs of the measured religious population. The Spiritual Meaning Scale (Fetzer Institute, 1999), used in this study to measure spiritual identity, contains items such as “God plays a role in how I choose my path in life,” and “My purpose in life reflects what I believe God wants for me.” For Protestants, this highlights the encouraged personal relationship between God and man. As Berry et al. (2011) discuss, the first item might be better adapted to fit a Jewish population by stating, “*Judaism* plays a role in how I choose my path in life,” while the second statement could state, “My purpose in life reflects what I believe God wants *from* me,” for a Muslim population (p.847, *italics* added to represent differences). Such considerations should be taken into account in future research investigating religious and spiritual constructs.

Other limitations that should be noted are the small sample size and issues with data collection. While many church youth leaders were excited about the study, they were not able to interrupt their youth program to host data collection. Future research would benefit from having a larger sample size to confirm the salience of our findings. A small sample size limited the ability to find effects and may explain why hypothesized relationships were not found. The method of data collection could also be improved. The questionnaire could be shortened or complemented with a type of reward (e.g. free

food, candy) to keep adolescents' more engaged in responding. The measures regarding worship, mentorship, friendship circle, and prayer reported lower levels of internal reliability and could be improved for future studies to better represent their respective constructs. The question on preference of mentorship was an important part of the findings, but it was the most skipped item. Eighty two participants responded to the four of the five mentorship items but 19 skipped the question on mentorship preference (be mentored, mentor, or both). This may have been accidental as this was last item in the mentorship scale and was at the bottom of the page. To determine if this was accidental or deliberate, the scale can be reformatted and a "neither" category added for participants to mark if they are not interested in mentorship activities. Mentorship was found to be an essential part of spiritual development and should be further explored.

## **Implications for future research**

The current study focused on adolescents, 12 to 19 years of age. As described earlier, the college years are considered to be the “vulnerable stage” when many young adults choose to leave the religious faith they were reared in. Religiosity and/or spirituality may be seen by young adults as a burden of structure that they are free to shed once they transition out of their parent/guardian’s household. Regardless, current research on adolescents and college students has shown that involvement in RS has positive effects. Desrosiers and Miller (2008) state that a direct, personal relationship with God serves as one of the most robust protective factors against different forms of psychopathology, such as depression and alcohol use, during the adolescent development period. Cotton and colleagues measured belief in God/Higher Power and the importance of religion in 134 high school adolescents and found that those with higher levels of RS had fewer depressive symptoms and fewer risk-taking behaviors (Cotton, Larkin, Hoopes, Cromer, & Rosenthal, 2005). Berry and York (2011) longitudinally surveyed 214 college students attending public or religious universities and found that RS served to be a protective factor against depression. Similar results have also been found for cigarette and alcohol use (Gryczynski & Ward, 2011; Haber, Grant, Jacob, Koenig, & Heath, 2011). Teens that have a higher spiritual connectedness, particularly interconnectedness among spiritual friends, also have a lower likelihood for high risk, voluntary sexual activity (Holder, Durant, Harris, Daniel, Obedidallah, Goodman, 2000). In general, teenagers who choose to foster a strong level of spiritual identity and maturity prior to college may be more resilient against a variety of health risk factors such as substance use, high risk sexual activity, depression, stress, and anxiety. The benefits of

religiosity and spirituality are many, and therefore, inspired the current study which focused on how religious community and personal activities could further enhance adolescents' spiritual development.

## **Conclusion**

As demonstrated by the implications and findings of this study, religiosity and spirituality are important constructs that benefit adolescents. In order to properly serve adolescents, spiritual development must be properly fostered through middle and high school, before adolescents transition to college. This study found that religious social support, especially through parental activity and mentorship, as well as engagement in personal devotional activities, positively related to spiritual transformation, identity, and maturity. Wink and Dillon (2003) used a longitudinal study observing RS in early adulthood. Results showed that religiosity was positively related to well-being from relationship with others, involvement in social and community life tasks, and generativity. Spirituality was positively related to well-being from personal growth, creativity, and wisdom. In order to enable adolescents to develop a strong spiritual identity and maturity, it is important to understand what factors foster development.

This study not only has implications for younger and older adulthood, but also for preadolescents. Spirituality is influential and impacts the development of children and preadolescents. From about ages 9 to 10 years, girls begin to report stronger feelings of closeness and a greater need for guidance from God compared to boys the same age (Tamminen, 1994). Children's ability to self-regulate themselves may indicate an internalization of spiritual beliefs which in turn fosters the development of spiritual

identity (Bosacki, 2005). Batson et al. also suggested that religiosity may be closely related to a sense of moral self-worth which further promotes a positive attitude towards self (as cited in Bosaki et al., 2005). Ellison and Levin (1998) argued that self-regulation may enable adolescents to be better adapted in community environments and demonstrate more pro-social behaviors such as empathy, which would help in the development of spiritual maturity.

This study investigated what factors contribute to three phases of spiritual development: transformation, identity, and maturity. It was found that the frequency of personal devotional activities and the strength of religious social support influenced how adolescents grow in their religious faith. Findings specifically suggested that parental religious belief and activity was positively related to adolescents' spiritual identity. This is consistent with past research which has found that religious commitment in adolescence is anchored in religious traditions, connectedness to God, church community, parental influence, relationship with religious leaders (mentorship), and time spent in devotional activities (Layton, Dollahite, & Hardy, 2011). These findings may enable mental health professionals, religious leaders, and parents to better understand how to support adolescents in their journey of spiritual development. This furthers our understanding of what fosters spiritual transformation (ST) experiences, enables adolescents to develop deeper levels of spiritual identity and maturity, and overall maintain a religious, spiritual commitment.

## References

Batson, C., Schoenrade, D., & Ventis, W. (1993). *Religion and the individual: a social-psychological perspective*. In Bosacki, S. L., Moore, K., Talwar, V., & Park-Saltzman, J. (2011). Preadolescents' gendered spiritual identities and self-regulation. *Journal of Beliefs & Values-Studies in Religion & Education*, 32(3), 303-316.

Benet-Martinez, V., & John, O. P. (1998). Los Cinco Grandes across cultures and ethnic groups: Multitrait multimethod analyses of the Big Five in Spanish and English. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 75, 729-750. doi: 10.1037/0022-3514.75.3.729.

Benson, P. L., Donahue, M. J., & Erickson, J. A. (1993). The Faith Maturity Scale: Conceptualization, measurement, and empirical validation. In M. L. Lynn & D. O. Moberg, (Eds.), *Research in the social scientific study of religion* (vol. 5), Greenwich, CT: JAI Press, 1-26.

Berry, D. M., Bass, C. P., Forawi, W., Neuman, M., & Abdallah, N. (2011). Measuring religiosity/spirituality in diverse religious groups: A consideration of methods. *Journal of Religion & Health*, 50(4), 841-851.

Berry, D. M., & York, K. (2011). Depression and religiosity and/or spirituality in college: A longitudinal survey of students in the USA. *Nursing & Health Sciences*, 13(1), 76-83.

Bosacki, S. L., Moore, K., Talwar, V., & Park-Saltzman, J. (2011). Preadolescents' gendered spiritual identities and self-regulation. *Journal of Beliefs & Values: Studies in Religion & Education*, 32(3), 303-316.



Brady, L. L. C. & Hapenny, A. (2010). Giving back and growing in service: Investigating spirituality, religiosity, and generativity in young adults. *Journal of Adult Development, 17*, 162-167. doi: 10.1007/s10804-010-9094-7.

Broido, E. M. (2004). Understanding diversity in millennial students. In E. J. Whitt and J. H. Schuh (Eds.), *New Directions for Student Services* (pp. 73-85). Malden, MA: Wiley Periodicals, Inc.

Cannister, M. W. (1999). Mentoring and the spiritual well-being of late adolescents, *Adolescent, 34*(136), 769-79.

Carlozzi, B. L., Winterowd, C., Harrist, R. S., Thomason, N., Bratkovich, K., & Worth, S. (2010). Spirituality, anger, and stress in early adolescents. *Journal of Religion & Health, 49*(4), 445-459.

Chen, C. Y., Dormitzer, C. M., Benjarano, J., & Anthony, J. C. (2004). Religiosity and the earliest stages of adolescent drug involvement in seven countries of Latin America. *American Journal of Epidemiology, 159*(12), 1180-88.

Cheek, J. M. (1989). Identity orientations and self-interpretation. In D. M. Buss & N. Cantor (Eds.), *Personality Psychology: Recent Trends and Emerging Directions* (pp. 275-285). New York: Springer-Verlag.

Cheek, J. M., Smith, S.M., & Tropp, L. R. (2002). *Relational identity orientation: A fourth scale for the AIQ*. Paper presented at the meeting of the Society for Personality and Social Psychology, Savannah, GA.

Cheek, J. M., Tropp, L. R., Chen, L. C., & Underwood, M. K. (1994). *Identity orientations: Personal, social, and collective aspects of identity*. Paper presented at the meeting of the American Psychological Association, Los Angeles, CA.

Cotton, S., Larkin, E., Hoopes, A., Cromer, B. A., & Rosenthal, S. L. (2005). The impact of adolescent spirituality on depressive symptoms and health risk behaviors. *The Journal of Adolescent Health, 36*(6).

Cotton, S., McGrady, M. E., & Rosenthal, S. L. (2010). Measurement of religiosity/spirituality in adolescent health outcomes research: Trends and recommendations. *Journal of Religion & Health, 49*(4), 414-444.

Davis, M. H. (1994). *Empathy: A social psychological approach*. Wisconsin: Brown & Benchmark.

Desrosiers, A., Kelley, B. S., & Miller, L. (2011). Parent and peer relationships and relational spirituality in adolescents and young adults. *Psychology of Religion and Spirituality, 3*(1), 39-54.

Desrosiers, A., & Miller, L. M. (2008). Substance use versus anxiety: Are some disorders more spiritual than others? *Research in the Social Scientific Study of Religion, 19*, 611-641. doi: 10.1163/ej.9789004166462.i-299.89.

Digman, J. M. (1990). Personality structure: Emergence of the five-factor model. *Annual Review of Psychology, 41*, 417-440.

Dodge, T., & Jaccard J. J. (2008). Is abstinence an alternative? Predicting adolescent athletes' intentions to use performance enhancing substances. *Journal of Health Psychology, 13*(5), 703-711.

Dollahite, D. C., Layton, E., Bahr, H. M., Walker, A. B., & Thatcher, J. Y. (2009). Giving up something good for something better. *Journal of Adolescent Research, 24*(6), 691-725. doi: 10.1177/0743558409343463.

Donahue, M. J., & Benson, P. L (1995). Religion and the well-being of adolescents. *Journal of Social Issues, 51*, 145-160. doi: 10.1111/j.1540-4560.1995.tb01328.x.

Erikson, E. H. (1950). Childhood and society. Cited in T. B. Poll & J. B. Smith article. (2003). The spiritual self: Toward a conceptualization of spiritual identity development. *Journal of Psychology and Theology, 31*(2), 129-142.

Fetzer Institute. (1999). *Multidimensional measurement of religiousness/spirituality for use in health research*. Kalamazoo, MI: Fetzer Institute.

Foster, R. J. (1988). *Celebration of discipline*. San Francisco, CA.: HarperCollins Publishers Inc.

Francisca, L. J., Robbinsa, M., & Murray, L. (2010). Psychological type and religious orientation: Do introverts and extraverts go to church for different reasons? *Mental Health, Religion, and Culture, 13*(7-8), 821-827.

Gallup Organization. (2012). In U.S., very religious have higher wellbeing across all faiths. *Gallup Poll*. Retrieved from <http://www.gallup.com/poll/152732/Religious-Higher-Wellbeing-Across-Faiths.aspx>.

Gallup Organization. (2011). More than 9 in 10 Americans continue to believe in God. *Gallup Poll*. Retrieved from <http://www.gallup.com/poll/147887/americans-continue-believe-god.aspx>.

Gallup Organization. (2011). Christianity remains dominant religion in the United States. *Gallup Poll*. Retrieved from <http://www.gallup.com/poll/151760/Christianity-Remains-Dominant-Religion-United-States.aspx>.

Gallup Organization. (2010). Americans' church attendance inches up in 2010. *Gallup Poll*. Retrieved from <http://www.gallup.com/poll/141044/americans-church-attendance-inches-2010.aspx>.

Gallup Organization. (2002). Spiritual commitment by age and gender. *Gallup Poll*. Retrieved from <http://www.gallup.com/poll/7963/spiritual-commitment-age-gender.aspx>.

Gartner, J., Larson, D. B., & Allen, G. D. (1991). Religious commitment and mental health: A review of the empirical literature. *Journal of Psychology and Theology*, 19, 6-25.

Gillum, F., & Griffith, D. M. (2010). Prayer and spiritual practices for health reasons among American adults: The role of race and ethnicity. *Journal of Religion and Health*, 49, 283-295.

Gryczynski, J., & Ward, B. W. (2011). Social norms and the relationship between cigarette use and religiosity among adolescents in the United States. *Health Education & Behavior*, 38(1), 39-48.

Haber, J. R., Grant, J. D., Jacob, T., Koenig, L. B., & Heath, A. (2012). Alcohol milestones, risk factors, and religion/spirituality in young adult women. *Journal of Studies on Alcohol and Drugs*, 73(1), 34-43.

Hall, T. (2004). Christian spirituality and mental health: A relational spirituality paradigm for empirical research. *Journal of Psychology and Christianity*, 23 (1), 66-81.

Hall, T.W. (2004). Spiritual Transformation Inventory™, web-based inventory available through Concentus Assessment Solutions.

Hardy, S. A., White, J.A., Zhang, Z., & Ruchty, J. (2011). Parenting and the socialization of religiousness and spirituality. *Psychology of Religion and Spirituality*, 3(3), 217-230.

Hill, P. C., & Pargament, K. I. (2003). Advances in the conceptualization and measurement of religion and spirituality. *American Psychologist*, 58 (1), 64-74.

Holder, D. W., Durant, R. H., Harris, T. L., Daniel, J. H., Obedidallah, D., & Goodman, E. (2000). The association between adolescent spirituality and voluntary sexual activity. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 26(4), 295-302. doi: 10.1016/S1054-139x(99)00092-0.

Hood, R. W. (2009). Mystical, religious, and spiritual experiences. In M. de Souza, L. J. Francis, J. O'Higgins-Norman, & D. Scott (Eds.), *International Handbook of Education for Spirituality, Care and Wellbeing* (pp. 189-208). New York: Springer.

James, W. (1952). *Principles of psychology*. In R. M. Hutchins (Ed.), *Great Books of the Western World* (Vol 53). Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica. (Original work published 1890). doi: 10.1037/1941-1022.S.1.3.

Jang, Y., Borenstein, A. R., Chiriboga, D. A., Phillips, K., & Mortimer, J. A. (2006). Religiosity, adherence to traditional culture, and psychological well-being among African American elders. *Journal of Applied Gerontology*, 25(5), 343-355. doi: 10.1177/0733464806291934.

Ji, C.H.C., Pendergraft, L., & Perry, M. (2006). Religiosity, altruism, and altruistic hypocrisy: Evidence from protestant adolescents. *Review of Religious Research, 48*(2), 156-178.

Karcher, M. (2009). Increases in academic connectedness and self-esteem among high school students who serve as cross-age peer mentors. *Professional School Counseling, 12* (4), 292-299. doi: 10.5330/PSC.n.2010-12.292.

Kerestes, M., Youniss, J., & Metz, E. (2004). Longitudinal patterns of religious perspective and civic integration. *Applied Developmental Science, 8*, 39-46.

doi: 10.1207/S1532480XADS0801\_5.

Kim, S., & Esquivel, G. B. (2011). Adolescent spirituality and resilience: Theory, research, and educational practices. *Psychology in the Schools, 48*(7), 755-765.

King, P. E., Carr, D., & Boitor, C. (2011). Religion, spirituality, positive youth development, and thriving. *Advances in Child Development and Behavior, 41*, 161-195.

Kooistra, W. P., & Pargament, K. I. (1999). Religious doubting in parochial school adolescents. *Journal of Psychology and Theology, 27*, 33-42.

Lavrič, M., & Flere, S. (2008). The role of culture in the relationship between religiosity and psychological well-being. *Journal of Religion and Health, 47*(2), 164-175. doi: 10.1007/s10943-008-9168-z.

Lau, H. H., & Wolfinger, N. H. (2011). Parental divorce and adult religiosity: Evidence from the General Social Survey. *Review of Religious Research, 53*(1), 85-103. doi: 10.1007/s13644-011-0004-7.

Layton, E., Dollahite, D. C., & Hardy, S. A. (2011). Anchors of religious commitment in adolescents. *Journal of Adolescent Research*, 26(3), 381-413.

Lock, J., Reisel, B., & Steiner, H. (2001). Associated health risks of adolescents with disordered eating: How different are they from their peers? Results from a high school survey. *Child Psychiatry and Human Development*, 31(3), 249–265. doi: 10.1023/A:1026433506298.

MacDonald, D. A. (2000). Spirituality: Description, measurement, and relation to the five factor model of personality. *Journal of Personality*, 68(1), 153-197. doi: 10.1111/1467-6994.00094.

McConnell, A. (2011). The multiple self-aspects framework: Self-concept representation and its implications. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 15(1), 3-27.

McCullough, M. E., Tsang, J., & Brion, S. (2003). Personality traits in adolescence as predictors of religiousness in early adulthood: Findings from the Terman Longitudinal Study. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 29(8), 980-991. doi: 10.1177/0146167203253210.

Miller, W. R., & Delaney, H. D. (Eds.). (2004). *Human nature, motivation, and change: Judeo-Christian perspectives on psychology*. Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association.

Miller, W. R., & C'de Baca, J. (2001). *Quantum change*. New York: The Guilford Press.

Miller, W. R., & Thoresen, C. E. (2003). Spirituality, religion, and health: An emerging research field. *American Psychologist*, 58 (1), 24-35. doi: 10.1037/0003-066X.58.1.24.

NORC-General Social Survey cumulative data file, 1972–2010 [Data file]. (2012). Storrs, CT: Roper Center for Public Opinion Research.

Nunnally, J. C. (1978). *Psychometric theory*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Okulicz-Kozaryna, A. (2009). Religiosity and life satisfaction across nations. *Mental Health, Religion, and Culture*, 13(2), 155-169. doi: 10.1080/13674670903273801.

Paloutzian, R. F., Richardson, J. T., & Rambo, L. R. (1999). Religious conversion and personality change. *Journal of Personality*, 67(6), 1047-1079. doi: 10.1111/1467-6494.00082.

Pargament, K. I. (2006). The meaning of spiritual transformation. . In J. D. Koss-Chioino & P. Hefner (Eds.), *Spiritual transformation and healing: Anthropological, theological, neuroscientific, and clinical perspectives* (pp. 10-39), Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press.

Pargament, K. I. (1999). The psychology of religion *and* spirituality? Yes and no. *International Journal for the Psychology of Religion*, 9, 3–16. doi: 10.1207/s15327582ijpr0901\_2.

Pargament, K. I., Koenig, H. G., & Perez, L. M. (2000). The many methods of religious coping: Development and initial validation of the RCOPE. *Journal of Clinical Psychology*, 56(4), 519–543. doi: 10.1002/(SICI)1097-4679(200004)56:4<519::AID-JCLP6>3.0.CO;2-1.



Poll, T. B., & Smith, J. B. (2003). The spiritual self: Toward a conceptualization of spiritual identity development. *Journal of Psychology and Theology*, 31(2), 129-142.

Powell, L. H., Shahabi, L., & Thoresen, C. E. (2003). Religion and spirituality: Linkages to physical health. *American Psychologist*, 58(1), 36-52. doi: 10.1037/0003-066X.58.1.36.

Puffer, K. A., Pence, K. G., Graverson, T. M., Wolfe, M., Pate, E., & Clegg, S. (2008). Religious doubt and identity formation: Salient predictors of adolescent religious doubt. *Journal of Psychology and Theology*, 36(4), 270-284.

Regnerus, M. D., Smith, C., & Smith, B. (2004). Social context in the development of adolescent religiosity. *Applied Developmental Science*, 8(1), 27-38. doi: 10.1207/S1532480XADS0801\_4.

Regnerus, M. D., & Uecker, J. E. (2006). Finding faith, losing faith: The prevalence and context of religious transformations during adolescence. *Review of Religious Research*, 47(3), 217-237.

Regnerus, M., & Uecker, J. (2011). *Premarital sex in America: How young Americans meet, mate, and think about marrying*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Resnick, M. D., Harris, L. J., & Blum, R. W. (1993). The impact of caring and connectedness on adolescent health and well-being. *Journal of Pediatrics and Child Health*, 29(1), S3-S9. doi: 10.1111/j.1440-1754.1993.tb02257.x

Rushton, J. P., & Chrisjohn, R. D. (1981). The altruistic personality and the Self-Report Altruism Scale. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 2(4), 293-302.

Sabatier, C., Mayer, B., Friedlmeier, M., Lubiewska, K., & Trommsdorff, G. (2011). Religiosity, family orientation, and life satisfaction of adolescents in four countries. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology, 42*(8), 1375-1393.

Saraglou, V. (2000). Religion and the five factors of personality: A meta-analytic review. *Personality and Individual Differences, 32*(1), 15-25.

Smith, C., & Denton, M. L. (2005). *Soul-searching: The religious and spiritual lives of American teenagers*. New York: Oxford.

Smith, C., Denton, M. L., Faris, R., & Regnerus, M. D. (2002). Mapping American adolescent religious participation. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion, 41*, 597-612. doi: DOI: 10.1111/1468-5906.00148.

Smith, C., Faris, R., Denton, M. L., & Regnerus, M. D. (2003). Mapping American adolescent subjective religiosity and attitudes of alienation toward religion: A research report. *Sociology of Religion, 64*, 111-123.

Tamminen, K. (1994). Religious experience in childhood and adolescence: A viewpoint of religious development between the ages of 7 and 20. *International Journal for the Psychology of Religion, 4*, 51-58.

Temple, W. (1944). Quoted in In *Famous Quotes online*. Retrieved from <http://www.famousquotes.com/show/1044437/>.

Ullman, C. (1989). *The transformed self: The psychology of religious conversion*. New York: Plenum.

Vallente, T. W., Hoffman, B. R., Ritt-Olson, A., Lichtman, A., & Johnson, C. A. (2003). Effects of a social-network method for group assignment strategies on peer-led

tobacco prevention programs in schools. *American Journal of Public Health*, 93(11), 1837-1843.

Vaughan, F. (2003). What is spiritual intelligence? *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*, 42(2), 16-33. doi: 10.1177/0022167802422003.

Wink, P., Ciciolla, L., Dillon, M., & Tracy, A. (2007). Religiousness, spiritual seeking, and personality: Findings from a longitudinal study. *Journal of Personality*, 75(5), 1051-1070. Doi: 10.1111/j.1467-6494.200700466.x.

Wink, P., & Dillon, M. (2003). Religiousness, spirituality, and psychosocial functioning in late adulthood: Finding from a longitudinal study. *Psychology and Aging*, 18(4), 916-924. doi: 10.1037/0882-7974.18.4.916.

Winterowd, C., Harrist, R. S., Thomason, N., Worth, S., & Carlozzi, B. L. (2005). The relationship of spiritual beliefs and involvement with the experience of anger. *Journal of College Student Development*, 46, 517-531.

## APPENDICES

## Appendix A: Spirituality Questionnaire

# QUESTIONNAIRE ON SPIRITUALITY

---

*The following set consists of different questionnaires. This should take approximately one hour to complete. Please read all instructions carefully as they vary across scales. If you have any questions, you may ask the research assistant at any time. Please circle the letter for all items to the best of your ability and double check that you have not overlooked any items or pages. You may skip an item you are not comfortable responding to.*

---

## Demographics

Please answer the following by checking the appropriate boxes:

Gender:  Male  Female

Age:  Years Old

Year in School:  (e.g. 9<sup>th</sup> grade)

Type of School:  Public  Private

Home-school  Other (describe)

Relationship Status:  Single  Dating Casually

Serious Relationship  Recently Single (< 1 mo)

Ethnicity:  White  African-American

Hispanic  Asian/Pacific Islander

Native American/Indian  Other (describe)

Church Details: Area in Albuquerque (Circle One):

- Northeast Heights
- South Valley
- Nob Hill
- Westside
- Southeast Heights
- Foothills

## DEMOGRAPHICS

---

### Religious Preference

Check one of the following which best describes your religious preference

- 1. Roman Catholic
- 2. Protestant
  - a. Assemblies of God
  - b. Baptist
  - c. Bible Church
  - d. Calvary Chapel
  - e. Nazarene
  - f. Non-denominational
  - g. Other \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. Mormon/Latter-Day Saints
- 4. Jehovah's Witness
- 5. Jewish (Reformed, Conservative, Orthodox)
- 6. Buddhist, Hindu
- 7. Muslim
- 8. Other religion \_\_\_\_\_
- 9. Atheist/Agnostic

## RELIGIOUS SOCIAL SUPPORT

### *Mentorship*

1.	There is at least one person who is a spiritual mentor in my life.		
	A. Very true of me	B. Mostly true	C. More true than false
	D. More false than true	E. Mostly false	F. Very false of me
2.	I spend time regularly sharing about my spiritual life with a spiritual mentor.		
	A. Very true of me	B. Mostly true	C. More true than false
	D. More false than true	E. Mostly false	F. Very false of me
3.	I tend not to talk about my spiritual life with people.		
	A. Very true of me	B. Mostly true	C. More true than false
	D. More false than true	E. Mostly false	F. Very false of me
4.	I have a great interest in mentoring another person.		
	A. Very true of me	B. Mostly true	C. More true than false
	D. More false than true	E. Mostly false	F. Very false of me
5.	I desire to: A. Be Mentored      B. Be a Mentor      C. Both		

### *Church Community*

1.	I feel like I am part of a spiritual community.		
	A. Very true of me	B. Mostly true	C. More true than false
	D. More false than true	E. Mostly false	F. Very false of me
2.	I attend church activities on a regular basis.		
	A. Very true of me	B. Mostly true	C. More true than false
	D. More false than true	E. Mostly false	F. Very false of me
3.	I am an active part of my church body.		
	A. Very true of me	B. Mostly true	C. More true than false
	D. More false than true	E. Mostly false	F. Very false of me
4.	People in my church community know me well.		
	A. Very true of me	B. Mostly true	C. More true than false
	D. More false than true	E. Mostly false	F. Very false of me



## RELIGIOUS SOCIAL SUPPORT

5.	How often do you attend church or church activities?		
A. More than once a week	B. Every week	C. Once/twice a month	
D. Every month or so	E. Once/twice a year	F. Never/almost never	
6.	If you were ill, how much would your church help you out?		
A. A great deal	B. Quite a bit	C. Somewhat	D. Not at all
7.	If you had a problem/difficult situation how much would the people in your congregation be willing to help you?		
A. A great deal	B. Quite a bit	C. Somewhat	D. Not at all

### *Friendship Circle*

1.	My closest friends do not know much about my spiritual life.		
A. Very true of me	B. Mostly true	C. More true than false	
D. More false than true	E. Mostly false	F. Very false of me	
2.	I spend time with friends who have the same/similar religious values as me.		
A. A great deal	B. Quite a bit	C. Somewhat	D. Not at all
3.	If you were ill, how much would your friends be willing to help?		
E. A great deal	F. Quite a bit	G. Somewhat	H. Not at all
4.	If you had a problem/difficult situation how much comfort would your friends provide?		
A. A great deal	B. Quite a bit	C. Somewhat	D. Not at all
5.	Besides at church, how often do you meet with friends who support your faith?		
A. More than once a week	B. Every week	C. Once/twice a month	
D. Every month or so	E. Once/twice a year	F. Never/almost never	

## RELIGIOUS SOCIAL SUPPORT

---

### *Family Religious Beliefs and Activity*

	Not characteristic			Very characteristic		
My mother has a strong Christian faith	1 4	2	3	5	6	7
My father has a strong Christian faith	1 4	2	3	5	6	7
My mother is religiously active	1 4	2	3	5	6	7
My father is religiously active	1 4	2	3	5	6	7

## PERSONAL DEVOTIONAL ACTIVITIES

### *Study of the Bible/Religious Literature*

1.	I devote time to reading and studying the Bible.		
	A. Every day	B. A few times a week	C. Once a week
	D. A few times a month	E. A few times a year	F. Never/almost never
2.	How often do you read the Bible?		
	A. Every day	B. A few times a week	C. Once a week
	D. A few times a month	E. A few times a year	F. Never/almost never
3.	How often do you read other Christian literature?		
	A. Every day	B. A few times a week	C. Once a week
	D. A few times a month	E. A few times a year	F. Never/almost never
4.	How often do you study the Bible privately seeking to understand it, letting it speak to you?		
	A. Every day	B. A few times a week	C. Once a week
	D. A few times a month	E. A few times a year	F. Never/almost never

## PERSONAL DEVOTIONAL ACTIVITIES

### *Prayer/Meditation*

1.	I take time for periods of prayer and/or meditation.		
	A. Every day	B. A few times a week	C. Once a week
	D. A few times a month	E. A few times a year	F. Never/almost never
2.	How often do you pray privately in places other than at church?		
	A. Every day	B. A few times a week	C. Once a week
	D. A few times a month	E. A few times a year	F. Never/almost never
3.	How often are prayers/grace said before or after meals you eat?		
	A. Every day	B. A few times a week	C. Once a week
	D. A few times a month	E. A few times a year	F. Never/almost never
4.	Other than at mealtime, how often do you pray on average to God privately?		
	A. Every day	B. A few times a week	C. Once a week
	D. A few times a month	E. A few times a year	F. Never/almost never

### *Worship*

1.	How often do you sing and/or listen to Christian music in a private setting? (car, room, etc)		
	A. Many times a day	B. Every day	C. Most days
	D. Some days	E. Once in a while	F. Never/almost never
2.	I feel comfortable thanking and praising God when I am alone.		
	A. Very true of me	B. Mostly true	C. More true than false
	D. More false than true	E. Mostly false	F. Very false of me
3.	I do not benefit from worshipping God when I am by myself.		
	A. Very true of me	B. Mostly true	C. More true than false
	D. More false than true	E. Mostly false	F. Very false of me
4.	I enjoy expressing thanks to God.		
	A. Very true of me	B. Mostly true	C. More true than false
	D. More false than true	E. Mostly false	F. Very false of me

## PERSONAL DEVOTIONAL ACTIVITIES

---

5.	I feel uncomfortable singing or communicating thanks/praise to a God I cannot see.		
	A. Very true of me	B. Mostly true	C. More true than false
	D. More false than true	E. Mostly false	F. Very false of me
6.	How often do you worship God in a private setting by verbally expressing thanks (singing, saying thanks, etc)?		
	A. Many times a day	B. Every day	C. Most days
	D. Some days	E. Once in a while	F. Never/almost never

## SPIRITUAL TRANSFORMATION

---

1.	Have you ever had a religious or spiritual experience that changed your life?	Y or N
1a.	If Yes, have you had more than one such experience in your lifetime?	Y or N
2.	Did you ever have a significant gain in your faith?	Y or N
2a.	How old were you when this occurred?	Yrs
3.	Did you ever have a significant loss in your faith?	Y or N
3a.	How old were you when this occurred?	Yrs
4.	Would you say that your experience changed you in ways that were (Circle one): Positive                      Negative                      Both	

# SPIRITUAL IDENTITY

## Daily Spiritual Experiences

Fetzer Institute. (1999). Multidimensional Measurement of Religiousness/Spirituality for Use in Health Research: A Report of the Fetzer Institute/National Institute on Aging.

Instructions: Please circle one letter for each question. How much have you experience each of the following during the past month?

1.	I feel God's presence.		
	A. Many times a day	B. Every day	C. Most days
	D. Some days	E. Once in a while	F. Never/almost never
2.	I experience a connection to all of life.		
	A. Many times a day	B. Every day	C. Most days
	D. Some days	E. Once in a while	F. Never/almost never
3.	At times when I am connecting with God, I feel joy which lifts me out of my daily concerns.		
	A. Many times a day	B. Every day	C. Most days
	D. Some days	E. Once in a while	F. Never/almost never
4.	I find strength in my religion or spirituality.		
	A. Many times a day	B. Every day	C. Most days
	D. Some days	E. Once in a while	F. Never/almost never
5.	I find comfort in my religion or spirituality.		
	A. Many times a day	B. Every day	C. Most days
	D. Some days	E. Once in a while	F. Never/almost never
6.	I feel deep inner peace or harmony.		
	A. Many times a day	B. Every day	C. Most days
	D. Some days	E. Once in a while	F. Never/almost never
7.	I ask for God's help in the midst of daily activities.		
	A. Many times a day	B. Every day	C. Most days
	D. Some days	E. Once in a while	F. Never/almost never
8.	I feel guided by God in the midst of daily activities.		
	A. Many times a day	B. Every day	C. Most days
	D. Some days	E. Once in a while	F. Never/almost never

## SPIRITUAL IDENTITY

9.	I feel God's love for me, directly.		
	A. Many times a day	B. Every day	C. Most days
	D. Some days	E. Once in a while	F. Never/almost never
10.	I feel God's love for me, through others.		
	A. Many times a day	B. Every day	C. Most days
	D. Some days	E. Once in a while	F. Never/almost never
11.	I am spiritually touched by the beauty of creation.		
	A. Many times a day	B. Every day	C. Most days
	D. Some days	E. Once in a while	F. Never/almost never
12.	I feel thankful for my blessings.		
	A. Many times a day	B. Every day	C. Most days
	D. Some days	E. Once in a while	F. Never/almost never
13.	I desire to be closer to God or in union with Him.		
	A. Not at all close	B. Somewhat close	C. Very close
			D. As close as possible
14.	In general, how close do you feel to God?		
	A. Not at all close	B. Somewhat close	C. Very close
			D. As close as possible



## SPIRITUAL IDENTITY

### Meaning

Fetzer Institute. (1999). Multidimensional Measurement of Religiousness/Spirituality for Use in Health Research: A Report of the Fetzer Institute/National Institute on Aging.

Instructions: Please circle one number for each question. How much have you experience each of the following during the past month?

1.	My spiritual beliefs give meaning to my life's joys and sorrows.		
	A. Strongly disagree	B. Disagree	C. Neutral
	D. Agree		E. Strongly agree
2.	The goals of my life grow out of my understanding of God.		
	A. Strongly disagree	B. Disagree	C. Neutral
	D. Agree		E. Strongly agree
3.	Without a sense of spirituality, my daily life would be meaningless.		
	A. Strongly disagree	B. Disagree	C. Neutral
	D. Agree		E. Strongly agree
4.	The meaning in my life comes from feeling connected to other living things.		
	A. Strongly disagree	B. Disagree	C. Neutral
	D. Agree		E. Strongly agree
5.	My religious beliefs help me find a purpose in even the most painful and confusing events in my life.		
	A. Strongly disagree	B. Disagree	C. Neutral
	D. Agree		E. Strongly agree
6.	When I lose touch with God, I have a harder time feeling that there is purpose and meaning in life.		
	A. Strongly disagree	B. Disagree	C. Neutral
	D. Agree		E. Strongly agree
7.	My spiritual beliefs give my life a sense of significance and purpose.		
	A. Strongly disagree	B. Disagree	C. Neutral
	D. Agree		E. Strongly agree
8.	My mission in life is guided/shaped by my faith in God.		
	A. Strongly disagree	B. Disagree	C. Neutral
	D. Agree		E. Strongly agree

## SPIRITUAL IDENTITY

9.	When I am disconnected from the spiritual dimension of my life, I lose my sense of purpose.		
	A. Strongly disagree	B. Disagree	C. Neutral
	D. Agree		E. Strongly agree
10.	My relationship with God helps me find meaning in the ups and downs of life.		
	A. Strongly disagree	B. Disagree	C. Neutral
	D. Agree		E. Strongly agree
11.	My life is significant because I am a part of God's plan.		
	A. Strongly disagree	B. Disagree	C. Neutral
	D. Agree		E. Strongly agree
12.	What I try to do in my day-to-day life is important to me from a spiritual point of view.		
	A. Strongly disagree	B. Disagree	C. Neutral
	D. Agree		E. Strongly agree
13.	I am trying to fulfill my God-given purpose in life.		
	A. Strongly disagree	B. Disagree	C. Neutral
	D. Agree		E. Strongly agree
14.	Knowing that I am part of something greater than myself gives meaning to my life.		
	F. Strongly disagree	G. Disagree	H. Neutral
	I. Agree		J. Strongly agree
15.	Looking at the most troubling or confusing events from a spiritual perspective adds meaning to my life.		
	A. Strongly disagree	B. Disagree	C. Neutral
	D. Agree		E. Strongly agree
16.	My purpose in life reflects what I believe God wants for me.		
	A. Strongly disagree	B. Disagree	C. Neutral
	D. Agree		E. Strongly agree
17.	Without my religious foundation, my life would be meaningless.		
	A. Strongly disagree	B. Disagree	C. Neutral
	D. Agree		E. Strongly agree

## SPIRITUAL IDENTITY

---

18.	My feelings of spirituality add meaning to the events in my life.		
	A. Strongly disagree	B. Disagree	C. Neutral
	D. Agree		E. Strongly agree
19.	God plays a role in how I choose my path in life.		
	A. Strongly disagree	B. Disagree	C. Neutral
	D. Agree		E. Strongly agree
20.	My spirituality helps define the goals I set myself.		
	A. Strongly disagree	B. Disagree	C. Neutral
	D. Agree		E. Strongly agree

# SPIRITUAL MATURITY

---

## Faith Maturity Scale

Benson, Peter L., Donahue, Michael J., & Erickson, Joseph A. (1993). "The Faith Maturity Scale: Conceptualization, Measurement, and Empirical Validation." In Lynn, Monty L., & Moberg, David O. (eds.), *Research in the Social Scientific Study of Religion* (vol. 5), Greenwich, CT: JAI Press, 1-26.

1 = Very False of Me

2 = Mostly False

3 = More False than True

4 = More True than False

5 = Mostly True

6 = Very True of Me

1.	I care a great deal about reducing poverty in the United States and throughout the world	
2.	I am active in efforts to promote world peace.	
3.	I feel a deep sense of responsibility for reducing pain and suffering in the world.	
4.	I am active in efforts to promote social justice	
5.	I speak out for equality for women and minorities	

# SPIRITUAL MATURITY

Altruistic Behaviors. *Rushton, J. P., & Chrisjohn, R. D. (1981). The altruistic personality and the Self-Report Altruism Scale. Personality and Individual Differences, 2(4). 293-302.*

**Instructions: Check the category on the right that conforms to the frequency with which you have carried out the following acts.**

	Never	Once	More than 1X	Often	Very Often
1. I have helped a stranger when they needed help.					
2. I have given directions to a stranger.					
3. I have made change for a stranger.					
4. I have given money to a charity.					
5. I have given money to a stranger who needed it (or asked me for it).					
6. I have donated goods or clothes to a charity.					
7. I have done volunteer work for a charity.					
8. I have donated blood.					
9. I have helped carry a stranger's belongings (books, parcels, etc.)					
10. I have delayed an elevator or held the door open for a stranger.					
11. I have allowed someone to go ahead of me in a lineup (e.g. at the supermarket)					
12. I have given a stranger a lift in my car.					
13. I have pointed out a clerk's error (at a bank, at the supermarket) in undercharging me for an item.					
14. I have let a neighbor whom I didn't know too well borrow an item of some value to me.					
15. I have bought 'charity' items deliberately because I knew it was a good cause.					
16. I have helped a classmate who I did not know that well with a homework assignment when my knowledge was greater than his/hers.					
17. I have before being asked, voluntarily looked after a neighbor's pets/children without being paid.					
18. I have offered to help a handicapped or elderly stranger across a street.					
19. I have offered my seat on a bus or train to a stranger who was standing.					
20. I have helped an acquaintance to move.					

# SPIRITUAL MATURITY

---

Given Love. *Field Test Instrument (Dec. 2001) from Fetzer Institute*

**Instructions:** This questionnaire asks about how easily you find it to give love to others. Please answer all the questions. If you are unsure about which response to give to a question, please choose the best one you can. There are no right or wrong answers. We ask that you think about how easy you find it to give love in the **last two weeks**.

## Response code for 1-6

(1) Not at all (2) Not much (3) Moderately (4) A great deal (5) Completely

1. To what extent are you able to feel love and compassion for others? \_\_\_\_\_
2. To what extent are you able to help others without being interested in anything in return? \_\_\_\_\_
3. How much are you able to accept others? \_\_\_\_\_
4. How much are you able to express your love to others? \_\_\_\_\_
5. How much satisfaction does it give you to put others needs before your own? \_\_\_\_\_
6. How much do you treat others as you want to be treated? \_\_\_\_\_

## Response code for 7

(1) Never (2) Seldom (3) Quite Often (4) Very Often (5) Always

7. How often are you able to help others with whom you do not agree? \_\_\_\_\_

## Response code for 8-10

(1) Not At All (2) Not Very Much (3) Moderately (4) Very Much (5) Extremely

8. To what extent are you able to accept people who think and behave differently from you? \_\_\_\_\_
9. To what extend does taking care of other people provide meaning of life for you? \_\_\_\_\_
10. To what extent does helping others contribute to your well-being? \_\_\_\_\_

## SPIRITUAL MATURITY

---

Empathy & Perspective Taking. Davis, M.H. (1994). *Empathy: A social psychological approach*. Madison, WI: Brown & Benchmark.

**Instructions:** Please read each statement and decide how much you disagree/agree with it. Circle one number for each statement using the following scale.

1 = strongly disagree   2 = disagree   3 = neutral   4 = agree   5 = strongly agree

- |  |   |   |   |   |   |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. I often have tender, concerned feelings for people less fortunate than me.                            | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. I sometimes find it difficult to see things from the “other person’s” point of view.                  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. Sometimes I don’t feel very sorry for other people when they are having problems.                     | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. I try to look at everybody’s side of a disagreement before I make a decision.                         | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5. When I see someone being taken advantage of, I feel kind of protective towards them.                  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6. I sometimes try to understand my friends better by imagining how things look from their perspective.  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 7. Other people’s misfortunes do not usually disturb me a great deal.                                    | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 8. If I’m sure I’m right about something, I don’t waste much time listening to other people’s arguments. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 9. When I see someone being treated unfairly, I sometimes don’t feel very much pity for them.            | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 10. I am often quite touched by things that I see happen.  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 11. I believe that there are two sides to every question and try to look at them both.                   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 12. I would describe myself as a pretty soft-hearted person.   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 13. When I’m upset at someone, I usually try to “put myself in his/her shoes” for a while.               | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 14. Before criticizing somebody, I try to imagine how I would feel if I were in their place.             | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

# SPIRITUAL MATURITY

---

The Way of Compassion. Post, S., & Neimark, J. (2007). *Why good things happen to good people*. New York: Broadway Books.

**Instructions:** Please read each statement and decide how much you disagree or agree with it. Write in one number for each statement using the following scale.

1 – strongly disagree  
2 – disagree  
3 – slightly disagree

4 – slightly agree  
5 – agree  
6 – strongly agree

1. When someone in my family experiences something upsetting or discouraging, I make a special point of being kind. \_\_\_\_\_

2. I can't resist reaching out to help when one of my family members seems to be hurting or suffering. \_\_\_\_\_

3. When my loved ones are having problems, I do all I can to help them. \_\_\_\_\_

4. I'm probably a bit too preoccupied to be as compassionate as I could be with my family members. \_\_\_\_\_

5. I don't give my family members the kind or quality of attention they need when they are feeling sad, lonely, or frustrated. \_\_\_\_\_

6. When friends are sick, I make a point of paying them a visit. \_\_\_\_\_

7. I drop everything to care for my friends when they are feeling sad, in pain or lonely. \_\_\_\_\_

8. When friends of mine are experiencing problems, I do everything I can to help them. \_\_\_\_\_

9. I may be too busy with my own concerns to be as compassionate as I could be with my friends. \_\_\_\_\_

10. I don't give my friends the amount of attention they need when they are feeling sad, lonely, or frustrated. \_\_\_\_\_

11. When neighbors and friends are ill, I make a point of paying them a visit. \_\_\_\_\_

12. I drop everything to help my neighbors and coworkers when they are having problems. \_\_\_\_\_

13. When people in my neighborhood or place of work are having problems, I do all I can to help them. \_\_\_\_\_

14. Sometimes I notice myself being unsympathetic when co-workers or \_\_\_\_\_



## PERSONAL IDENTITY

---

neighbors seem to be having problems.

15. It's hard for me to feel sorry for people in my community or place of work who are struggling in life. \_\_\_\_\_

16. I frequently donate to charities that are working to ease the plight of the unfortunate around the world. \_\_\_\_\_

17. I have often come to the aid of a stranger who seemed to be having difficulty. \_\_\_\_\_

18. I do not hesitate to lend my support to causes around the world that seek to help people who are unfortunate. \_\_\_\_\_

19. It's hard for me to feel compassion for complete strangers, even if they seem to be having problems. \_\_\_\_\_

20. When I hear about people who are suffering in other parts of the world, my typical response is to ignore it. \_\_\_\_\_

## PERSONAL IDENTITY

---

*Cheek, J. M., Tropp, L. R., Chen, L. C., & Underwood, M. K. (1994, August). Identity Orientations: Personal, social, and collective aspects of identity. Paper presented at the meeting of the American Psychological Association, Los Angeles, CA. Adapted from: Cheek, Underwood & Cutler (1985)*

**INSTRUCTIONS:** These items describe different aspects of identity. Please read each item carefully and consider how it applies to you. Fill in the blank next to each item by choosing a number from the scale below:

- 1 = Not important to my sense of who I am
- 2 = Slightly important to my sense of who I am
- 3 = Somewhat important to my sense of who I am
- 4 = Very important to my sense of who I am
- 5 = Extremely important to my sense of who I am

- \_\_\_ 1. The things I own, my possessions
- \_\_\_ 2. My personal values and moral standards
- \_\_\_ 3. My popularity with other people
- \_\_\_ 4. Being a part of the many generations of my family
- \_\_\_ 5. My dreams and imagination
- \_\_\_ 6. The ways in which other people react to what I say and do
- \_\_\_ 7. My race or ethnic background
- \_\_\_ 8. My personal goals and hopes for the future
- \_\_\_ 9. My physical appearance: my height, my weight, and the shape of my body
- \_\_\_ 10. My religion
- \_\_\_ 11. My emotions and feelings
- \_\_\_ 12. My reputation, what others think of me
- \_\_\_ 13. Places where I live or where I was raised
- \_\_\_ 14. My thoughts and ideas
- \_\_\_ 15. My attractiveness to other people
- \_\_\_ 16. My age, belonging to my age group or being part of my generation
- \_\_\_ 17. My gestures and mannerisms, the impression I make on others
- \_\_\_ 18. The ways I deal with my fears and anxieties
- \_\_\_ 19. My sex, being a male or a female
- \_\_\_ 20. My social behavior, such as the way I act when meeting people

## PERSONAL IDENTITY

---

### Continued

- 1 = Not important to my sense of who I am
- 2 = Slightly important to my sense of who I am
- 3 = Somewhat important to my sense of who I am
- 4 = Very important to my sense of who I am
- 5 = Extremely important to my sense of who I am

- \_\_\_ 21. My feeling of being a unique person, being distinct from others
- \_\_\_ 22. My relationships with the people I feel close to
- \_\_\_ 23. My social class, the economic group I belong to whether lower, middle, or upper class
- \_\_\_ 24. My feeling of belonging to my community
- \_\_\_ 25. Knowing that I continue to be essentially the same inside even though life involves many external changes
- \_\_\_ 26. Being a good friend to those I really care about
- \_\_\_ 27. My self-knowledge, my ideas about what kind of person I really am
- \_\_\_ 28. My commitment to being a concerned relationship partner
- \_\_\_ 29. My feeling of pride in my country, being proud to be a citizen
- \_\_\_ 30. My physical abilities, being coordinated and good at athletic activities
- \_\_\_ 31. Sharing significant experiences with my close friends
- \_\_\_ 32. My personal self-evaluation, the private opinion I have of myself
- \_\_\_ 33. Being a sports fan, identifying with a sports team
- \_\_\_ 34. Having mutually satisfying personal relationships
- \_\_\_ 35. Connecting on an intimate level with another person
- \_\_\_ 36. My occupational choice and career plans
- \_\_\_ 37. Developing caring relationships with others
- \_\_\_ 38. My commitments on political issues or my political activities
- \_\_\_ 39. My desire to understand the true thoughts and feelings of my best friend or romantic partner
- \_\_\_ 40. My academic ability and performance, such as the grades I earn and comments I get from teachers
- \_\_\_ 41. Having close bonds with other people

## PERSONAL IDENTITY

---

### Continued

- 1 = Not important to my sense of who I am
- 2 = Slightly important to my sense of who I am
- 3 = Somewhat important to my sense of who I am
- 4 = Very important to my sense of who I am
- 5 = Extremely important to my sense of who I am

- \_\_\_\_\_ 42. My language, such as my regional accent or dialect or a second language that I know
- \_\_\_\_\_ 43. My feeling of connectedness with those I am close to
- \_\_\_\_\_ 44. My role of being a student in college
- \_\_\_\_\_ 45. My sexual orientation, whether heterosexual, homosexual, or bisexual

## RELIGIOUS COPING

1.	I think about how my life is part of a larger spiritual force.			
	A. A great deal	B. Quite a bit	C. Somewhat	D. Not at all
2.	I work together with God as partners to get through hard times.			
	A. A great deal	B. Quite a bit	C. Somewhat	D. Not at all
3.	I look to God for strength, support and guidance.			
	A. A great deal	B. Quite a bit	C. Somewhat	D. Not at all
4.	I feel that stressful situations are God's way of punishing me for my sins or lack of spirituality			
	A. A great deal	B. Quite a bit	C. Somewhat	D. Not at all
5.	I wonder whether God has abandoned me.			
	A. A great deal	B. Quite a bit	C. Somewhat	D. Not at all
6.	I try to make sense of the situation and decide what to do without relying on God.			
	A. A great deal	B. Quite a bit	C. Somewhat	D. Not at all
7.	To what extent is your religion involved in understanding or dealing with stressful situations?			
	A. Very involved	B. Somewhat involved	C. Not very involved	D. Not involved at all

# BIG FIVE PERSONALITY FACTORS

Reference: Benet-Martinez, V. & John, O.P. (1998). *Los Cinco Grandes across cultures and ethnic groups: Multitrait multimethod analyses of the Big Five in Spanish and English. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 75, 729-750.*

**Instructions:** Please read each statement and decide how much you disagree or agree with it. Circle one number for each statement using the following scale.

1 = strongly disagree   2 = disagree   3 = neutral   4 = agree   5 = strongly agree

Do you see yourself as someone who....

- |  |   |   |   |   |   |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Is outgoing, sociable.                          | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. Is considerate and kind to almost everyone.     | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. Has few artistic interests.                     | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. Is relaxed, handles stress well.                | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5. Does a thorough job.                            | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6. Can be moody.                                   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 7. Tends to be disorganized.                       | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 8. Is inventive.                                   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 9. Is talkative.                                   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 10. Is depressed, blue.                            | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 11. Tends to be quiet.                             | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 12. Is original, comes up with new ideas.          | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 13. Likes to cooperate with others.                | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 14. Has an assertive personality.                  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 15. Does things efficiently.                       | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 16. Is helpful and unselfish with others.          | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 17. Values artistic, aesthetic experiences.        | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 18. Makes plans and follows through with them.     | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 19. Is sometimes shy, inhibited.                   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 20. Is a reliable worker.                          | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 21. Starts quarrels with others.                   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 22. Is sophisticated in art, music, or literature. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 23. Has a forgiving nature.                        | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 24. Generates a lot of enthusiasm.                 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 25. Is somewhat careless.                          | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

## BIG FIVE PERSONALITY FACTORS

---

26. Can be tense.	1	2	3	4	5
27. Perseveres until the task is finished.	1	2	3	4	5
28. Tends to be lazy.	1	2	3	4	5
29. Is generally trusting.	1	2	3	4	5
30. Has an active imagination.	1	2	3	4	5
31. Is easily distracted.	1	2	3	4	5
32. Likes to reflect, play with ideas.	1	2	3	4	5
33. Worries a lot.	1	2	3	4	5
34. Can be cold and aloof.	1	2	3	4	5
35. Can be somewhat careless.	1	2	3	4	5
36. Remains calm in tense situations.	1	2	3	4	5
37. Is full of energy.	1	2	3	4	5
38. Is ingenious, a deep thinker.	1	2	3	4	5
39. Tends to find fault with others.	1	2	3	4	5
40. Is curious about many different things.	1	2	3	4	5
41. Is emotionally stable, not easily upset.	1	2	3	4	5
42. Is reserved.	1	2	3	4	5
43. Gets nervous easily.	1	2	3	4	5
44. Is sometimes rude to others.	1	2	3	4	5
45. Prefers work that is routine.	1	2	3	4	5

## PERSONAL NARRATIVE

---

**In this box, describe how your religiosity/spirituality affects your behavior.**

**In this box, explain how you describe your religiosity/spirituality.**



## **Appendix B: Adolescent and Parent Information Forms**

**PERMISSION FORM TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH (AGES 13 – 18)**  
**THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW MEXICO**

Research Study Title: “Keeping Faith: Factors Contributing to Spiritual Transformation, Identity, and Maturity in Church-Attending Adolescents”

You are being asked to participate in a research study that is being done by Glory Emmanuel, the Principal Investigator, and Dr. Harold Delaney from the Department of Psychology. You are being asked to join a study to better understand spirituality across Christian youth groups in the Albuquerque area. Participants must be 13 to 18 years of age and actively involved in a Christian church youth group. Approximately 100 teenagers will participate in this study.

If you agree to participate, you will be given a **20-page questionnaire**, which will take about one hour to complete. The questionnaire contains items asking you about a significant spiritual experience, your personal relationship with God as well as demographics, personality, religious social support, and how often you engage in Bible reading, worship, and prayer. Your youth pastor has looked over this questionnaire and approved it for this study.

This is an anonymous survey. Your responses will not be shared with anyone in your church or family. All your answers will be confidential and cannot be traced back to you. To ensure this, please do not write your name or any identifying information on the questionnaire. The questionnaire will be completed at church in the room of your youth pastor's choice. This may be your youth room or a room close by. Once you have completed the questionnaire, you will place it in a pile at the front of the room. The researcher will collect all questionnaires at the end. This will prevent researchers and others from matching the questionnaire responses to the participant. Please do not ask anyone including peers or youth workers how they answered items on the questionnaire. You have no further obligation to the study once you have turned in the questionnaire.

There will be no benefit to you from participating in this study. However, it is hoped that information gained from this study will help to better understand spirituality in the Albuquerque area.

There are no known risks in this study, but some individuals may experience mild discomfort or fatigue when completing the questionnaire. You may decline to answer any question and you may withdraw from the study entirely at any time. If you have a question on any of the items, feel free to ask the research investigator at any time. All data will be kept for 5 years in a locked file in the investigator's office and then destroyed.

After participating in this study, if you do feel distressed or want further explanation on any of the items in the questionnaire, you may talk to the researcher, Glory Emmanuel. You may also contact the AGORA-UNM Crisis Clinic (505) 277-3013 for further assistance.

You are not required in any way to be a part of this study. Even if you decide to be in this study, you can change your mind at any time. There is no penalty for withdrawing from the study.

HRPO #: 11-426

Page 1 of 2

Version: 09/09/2011

APPROVED: 14-Oct-2011

OFFICIAL USE ONLY

EXPIRES: 13-Oct-2012



**UNM**

*Human Research Protections Office*

The University of New Mexico Institutional Review Board (HRRC/MCIRB)

**PERMISSION FORM TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH (AGES 13 – 18)**  
**THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW MEXICO**

If you have questions, please contact Glory Emmanuel (505-610-1671, [gemmanue@unm.edu](mailto:gemmanue@unm.edu)). If you would like to speak with someone other than the research team, you may call the UNM IRB at (505) 272-1129. The IRB is a group of people from UNM and the community who provide independent oversight of safety and ethical issues related to research involving human subjects. For more information, you may also access their website at <http://hsc.unm.edu/som/research/hrrc/>.

Signing this form means you have decided to join this study. You will be given a copy of this form.

Print Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Sign Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

HRPO #: 11-426

Page 2 of 2

Version: 09/09/2011

APPROVED: 14-Oct-2011

OFFICIAL USE ONLY

EXPIRES: 13-Oct-2012



**UNM**

*Human Research Protections Office*

The University of New Mexico Institutional Review Board (HRRC/MCIRB)

**PARENT INFORMATION SHEET FOR RESEARCH PROJECT  
THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW MEXICO**

Research Study Title: “Keeping Faith: Factors Contributing to Spiritual Transformation, Identity, and Maturity in Church-Attending Adolescents”

Your teenager is being asked to participate in a study which aims to understand teenagers’ spiritual development. Teenagers being asked to participate are between 13 to 18 years of age and active in Christian youth groups across the Albuquerque area. Approximately 100 teenagers will participate in this study.

Permission forms will be given to individuals in the youth group that explains the study purpose and activities. If he/she agrees to participate, your teenager will be asked to fill out an anonymous **20-page questionnaire**, which will take about one hour to complete. The questionnaire contains items asking about a significant spiritual experience, their personal relationship with God as well as demographics, personality, religious social support, and how often they engage in Bible reading, worship, and prayer. The church youth pastor has looked over this questionnaire and approved its use for this study.

There are no known risks in this study, but some individuals may experience discomfort when answering questions. There will be no benefit to your teenager from participating in this study. However, it is hoped that information gained from this study will help to better understand spirituality in the Albuquerque area.

Your teenager’s anonymity is important. No one in the church or the youth pastor will have access to your teen’s responses. The questionnaire will only be marked with an ID number but will not ask for your child’s name. Once they have completed the questionnaire, they will place it in a pile at the front of the room. The researcher will collect all questionnaires at the end. This will prevent researchers and others from matching the questionnaire responses to the participant.

Your teenager is not required to be a part of this study. Even if they decide to be in this study, they can change their mind at any time. There is no penalty for withdrawing from the study.

If you have questions, please contact Glory Emmanuel at 505-610-1671, [gemmanue@unm.edu](mailto:gemmanue@unm.edu). If you would like to speak with someone other than the research team, you may call the UNM IRB at (505) 272-1129. The IRB is a group of people from UNM and the community who provide independent oversight of safety and ethical issues related to research involving human subjects. For more information, you may also access their website at <http://hsc.unm.edu/som/research/hrrc/>.

If you **DO NOT** want your child to participate in this study, please call the researcher at the number above or inform your church’s youth pastor.

HRPO #: 11-426

Page 1 of 1

Version: 09/09/2011

APPROVED: 14-Oct-2011

OFFICIAL USE ONLY

EXPIRES: 13-Oct-2012



**UNM**

*Human Research Protections Office*

The University of New Mexico Institutional Review Board (HRRC/MCIRB)