A DEVELOPMENTAL APPROACH TO MEASURING

SPIRITUAL MATURITY FROM A CHRISTIAN

PERSPECTIVE

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Spirituality is an important issue for many people in the United States including college

students (Astin & Astin, 2010; Salsman & Carlson, 2005). The increase of interest in studying

spirituality has resulted in a myriad of recent research studies (Hill & Pargament, 2003). The

ponderous quantity of instruments used to measure spirituality reflects the attention within

psychology to determine the components of this construct (e.g., Hill & Hood, 1999; Hill &

Pargament, 2003). Personal orientations to spirituality affect a sense of identity and the

relationship that identity shares with what is considered to be morally good (Taylor, 1989;

Tummala-Narra, 2009). These perceptions, in turn, can affect psychological health and

functioning in many ways (Barnett, 2009).

One of the challenges and opportunities in understanding the underlying conceptual

nature of spirituality is the multi-dimensionality of this construct. That is, although the

relationship between spirituality and human health and functioning has been established, it is

contingent upon the specific definitions of spirituality and domains of well-being that are under

study (Hill & Pargament, 2003; Salsman & Carlson, 2005). For example, people who feel

securely attached to God report higher levels of self esteem and less depression

(e.g., Maton, 1989). Secure attachment to God leads to higher levels of relationship maturity

(e.g., Hall, Brokaw, Edwards, & Pike, 1998) and psychosocial competence (e.g., Pargament,

Kennell, Hathway, Grevengoed, Newman, & Jones, 1988). On the other hand, people

extrinsically motivated to use religion to derive personal benefits have demonstrated

maladaptive outcomes (Salsman & Carlson, 2005). Thus, the relationship between spirituality

with psychological health is a potentially complex one and in need of continuing study.

For the purpose of this study, Christian spiritual maturity was conceptualized in terms of

Christ's two greatest commandments found in the Christian Bible: to love God and to love

humanity (Matt. 22.38-39; Mark 12.30-31). While the youngest Christians can begin practicing

obedience to these edicts, Fowler's (1981) theory of faith development suggests that the

expression of Christians' love for God and for one another could become richer and deeper as

their faith develops. Christians are challenged to demonstrate that they are Jesus' disciples by

their love for one another (John 13.35). Further, the greatest love that Christians can show one

another is defined by preferring the interests of others—particularly those with fewer resources

and less power—above their own selfish interests (Matt. 25.31-45), as modeled by Christ's self-

giving (John 15.12-15).

Background to the Problem

The precise relationship between spirituality and psychological health is unclear.

Although spirituality has been correlated with positive outcomes such as greater satisfaction

with life and less depression (Yoon & Lee, 2004), higher quality relationships with others (Hall

& Edwards, 1996) and general psychological adjustment (Maton, 1989; Pargament et al., 1988),

spirituality has correlated with distress (Salsman & Carlson, 2005) and narcissism as well

(Watson, Jones, & Norris, 2004). Moreover, religious doubting has been related to

psychological crisis, even though religious doubting might seem a logical consequence of the

identity formation task, given that true commitments require careful introspection (Bergen,

2008; Hunsberger, Pratt, & Pancer, 2001). That is, identity achievement requires individuals to

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thoroughly examine their beliefs before making commitments to them (Hunsberger et al., 2001).

Identity-achieved individuals were more inclined than foreclosed volunteers to solve problems by seeking out information that both threatened their beliefs and confirmed their beliefs (Hunsberger et al., 2001). These findings, as well as the dearth of developmental approaches, demonstrate the need for further study of the basic constructs in question.

Researchers' reliance upon secular frameworks to understand the spiritual development of people of faith is another substantively significant problem in measuring Christian spirituality (Johnson, 2007). Certainly modern psychological theory is a valuable tool in assessing the behavioral health of spiritual participants, but neglecting to take into consideration the unique beliefs and subsequent values that motivate spiritual individuals contributes to the lack of clarity in constructing valid models of spiritual development. Many researchers have acknowledged the disparity between views and telic goals that modern theories purport for spiritual subjects in contrast to participants' own perspectives and aims for themselves. The complex work of integrating the two fields of psychology and theology to generate a model of Christian spiritual development that is palatable to both perspectives is still in its infancy (Hall et al., 1998; Simpson, Newman, & Fuqua, 2008; Slater, Hall, & Edwards, 2001).

Psychology has been heavily influenced by the interests and opinions of U.S. behavioral scientists (Fuchs & Milar, 2003). Yet, psychologists have been recently challenged to reexamine assumptions about what is considered psychologically desirable in the United States and to consider whether or not these values are globally valued as cross-culturally adaptive (David & Buchanan, 2003). For example, self-determination theory's (SDT) autonomy has often been mistakenly understood as individualism and independence, which has led to dissonance in understanding one of autonomy's complementary nutriments, relatedness. In a study of 559 subjects across four different cultures, however, SDT's autonomy predicted well-being in collective cultures that devalue the individualism and independence traditionally prized in the United States, supporting the nutriments while differentiating them from the idiosyncratic

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U.S. values of individualism and independence (Chirkov, Ryan, Kim, & Kaplan, 2003). The postmodern reshaping of views that were previously understood to be scientific realities in the modern era of empiricism has called for redefinition of many assumptions as scientists recognize their own socio-historical situatedness (Morawski, & Bayer, 2003). The study of spirituality similarly calls for careful inspection not only of the relationships among variables such as Christian spiritual maturity and psychological well-being, but also of what these outcomes mean to researchers and participants.

Statement of the Problem

For many individuals who adhere to a biblical interpretation of Christian spiritual maturity, the foundation of the individual's relationship with God presupposes a human inability to earn God's favor. That is, belief in cardinal sin acknowledges 1) that humanity's capacity to sin leads to separation from God and 2) restoration of this relationship requires God's extension of grace, not the individual's deeds, which could never be great enough to entitle one to God's favor. Thus, the Christian relationship is based upon the free gift of salvation conferred by God upon the believer due to the perfect work of Christ rather than the work of the believing individual, who is unconditionally loved and reconciled to God by grace through faith (1 Cor. 4.7; Eph. 2.8-9). Thus, Christian spiritual maturity cannot be measured merely by using an index that tallies how many noble acts an individual performs, since good deeds may be performed by anyone and do not necessarily reflect one's spiritual growth, particularly if they are not intrinsically motivated (e.g., Matt. 15.7-9).

Paradoxically, however, the Christian believes that through the free gift of salvation he or she becomes fundamentally transformed into a new creation, one who now shares in the nature of God and has been made an heir with Christ as God's own adopted child (2 Cor. 5.17; Gal. 4.4-7; Rom. 8:14-17). This new nature, then, naturally presupposes attitudinal and behavioral changes that align themselves more and more closely with the attitudes and behaviors of God as the individual grows in spiritual maturity. Yet, these transformed beliefs and actions

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should not be confused with religious acts of piety that are intended to win God's approval (Gal. 4.7-11). Instead the Christian is admonished to grow in love and to live as Christ lived (1 John 2.3-6). While Christians are not brought into relationship with God by their good work (Gal. 3.1-3), they are exhorted to demonstrate their faith by their good work (James 2.14-18). Many Christians believe that there are attributes, or fruits, of God's Spirit that are manifest in the lives of those who are in right relationship with God: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Gal. 5.22-23). Thus, Christian spiritual maturity should result in transformed beliefs and behaviors but these changes derive from an internal change in the Christian, are engendered by the power of God's Spirit enabling the changed lifestyle, spring from faith that originates with one's right-standing with God, and are thus detached from fear or threat of condemnation (Rom. 8:1-4). In sum, a spiritually mature Christian should demonstrate measurable attitudes and behaviors, but these quantifiable features should not be motivated by an extrinsic desire to invoke quid pro quo in an attempt to earn the right to God's blessing (Phil. 2.12-13). Identifying and measuring these subtleties in belief, action, and motivation is arguably the greatest challenge to constructing valid models of Christian spiritual maturity.

Theoretical Framework of the Study

Much scriptural support abounds for generating a framework of Christian spiritual maturity. This study adopted a Johannine perspective of love that agrees with the broader biblical context and simplifies the development of a model for Christian spiritual maturity. First, this conceptual field presupposes that those who exist in right relationship with God have been internally transformed to share in the nature of Christ (1 John 3.1-2; 4.17) and that God will help them to develop that nature in practice, restoring them when they make mistakes (1 John 1.8-9). As a result of this spiritually secure position, the individual enjoys confidence before God, knowing that his or her supplications will be answered (1 John 3.18-22; 5.14-15).

Second, this framework identifies godly love as an indicator of Christian spiritual maturity. Specifically, God is understood to be love and anyone who identifies as living in fellowship with God must also exemplify that love (1 John 4.7-8; 4.16). Moreover, a spiritually mature Christian cannot claim to love God, whom he or she cannot see, if he or she does not also love people, whom he or she can see (1 John 4.20-21). Finally, this love should manifest itself in behavior. That is, spiritually mature Christians demonstrate their love for one another "not in word or speech, but in truth and action" (NRS, 1 John 3.18). Christ modeled his love for God and for others, not just by laying down his life to serve their interests above his own, but in that their interests were his interests: Christ perceived himself as one with humanity and lived and died to serve them, rather than identifying himself only with the divine and cloistering himself to live apart from humankind (John 1.14; 3.16-17). Thus, spiritually mature Christians do not perceive themselves and their interests as separate from God's or their fellow human beings' interests, which is why they, like Christ, love God and people and are compelled to express that love through measurable behavior (1 John 3.17).

Borrowing from St. Bernard of Clairvaux's staircase of Christian Maturity (*On Loving God*, n.d.), Christian growth was conceptualized in this study as epigenetic stage development that is consistent with both Fowler's (1981) and Erikson's (1968) developmental theories. On step one, the focus is egocentric as the individual loves self for self's sake and enjoys the benefits of God's love without being aware of the source of those benefits. On step two, the individual becomes aware of God as the source of benefits and thus begins to love God for self's sake. On step three, the individual's appreciation for God grows and he or she begins to love God for God's sake, as an entity worthy of love apart from the benefits derived from the relationship. On step four, the individual's appreciation for God grows to the extent that he or she adopts God's own love for the whole of creation, loving the redefined self for God's sake. This elusive, final developmental step is commensurate with Fowler's (1981) final stage of faith development when the individual's sense of self has expanded to include all of humanity as a

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whole, as opposed to being centered upon his or her own needs and interests. In contrast to Fowler's conceptualization, however, which maintains that a select minority of people can attain the final stage, the final step of the staircase of Christian Maturity is partially hypothetical in that it is not considered frequently attainable in this incarnation or, when it is achieved, to be sustainable for more than brief durations of time.

To accommodate the exploratory nature of this study, I proposed a model that tests for significant relationships among several variables. In line with previous studies, the new measure of Christian Maturity should correlate with other measures in predictable ways. First, Christian Maturity should correlate with other instruments measuring attitudes and behaviors that are broadly accepted as indicators of Christian spiritual maturity. While other measures have tended to demonstrate a ceiling effect, however, it is hoped that the new measure of Christian Maturity should better differentiate at the higher levels of spiritual development (Slater et al., 2001). The new measure should similarly relate to measures of object relations development, shedding light on whether reported attitudes and behaviors accompany secure attachment to God, suggesting an intrinsic motivation to align one's self with godly attributes. Conversely, high scores on a broad measure of desirable Christian attitudes and behaviors that relate to insecure attachment would suggest an extrinsic motivation to align one's self with God by affecting perceived godly attributes. This more extrinsic motivation should relate to lower levels of identity development, subjective well-being, and interpersonal adjustment.

Dweck (2008) has found that the beliefs that one harbors play a meaningful role in how one interprets experience. Individuals who believe their morality is a fixed entity are more likely to interpret setbacks as evidence of an unchangeable aspect of self, while people who believe that morality is malleable and can be changed are more resilient, handling inevitable challenges with a realistic adaptiveness. Thus, participants' implicit theories of morality should also uncover important information about how they are able to respond to life's trials and subsequent questions and doubts. People holding incremental theories have more malleable

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views of morality and would be expected to score higher on measures of intrinsic spirituality. People holding entity theories would likely score lower on measures of empathy given that incremental theories have been related to openness when confronted with information contradicting beliefs about others belonging to an outgroup. This openness lies in contrast to entity theories, whose subscribers were more likely to overlook this kind of information (Levy, Plaks, Hong, Chiu, & Dweck, 2001; Plaks, Stroessner, Dweck, & Sherman, 2001).

A moderate relationship between Christian Maturity and orthodox beliefs seems tenable, given that acceptance of orthodoxy would suggest a sense of relatedness with the larger Christian context. On the other hand, Fowler's (1981) theory allows for the symbolic nature of faith that may evoke less agreement from some individuals depending upon the nature of their current relationship with God. Past studies have differentiated orthodoxy from fundamentalism, with fundamentalism being positively related to discriminatory attitudes and orthodoxy having a negative or no relationship with discriminatory attitudes (Kirkpatrick, 1993). Thus, orthodoxy might be expected to have either positive or no relationship with empathy, incremental theories of morality, and intrinsic spirituality.

Participants whose scores reflect higher levels of Christian spiritual maturity presumably would demonstrate higher levels of spiritual ego identity, stronger relationships with incremental theories of a developing morality, small to moderate agreement with orthodoxy, and higher levels of subjective well-being. Finally, a measure of empathy should reveal more about whether or not participants' attitudes and behaviors derive from a genuine, intrinsic identification with the feelings of others or an extrinsic sense of obligation to espouse certain beliefs believed to be godly. Higher levels of empathy should correlate with more incremental theories of morality, in that people believed capable of developing morality would be more likely to engender compassion and identification than people believed to be innately immoral and incapable of redemption.

The nature of spirituality is complex and the development of spiritual maturity, similar to other developmental trajectories, reflects an ongoing, dynamic process displayed through beliefs, behaviors, and affects. This developmental complexity is reflected in the various ways that individual orientations to the sacred interact with other psychological variables such as spiritual maturity, identity development, implicit theories, Christian beliefs, empathy, and subjective well-being. Spiritual maturity will be conceptualized in this study as the successful integration of cognitive and emotional values that are congruent with both theological beliefs and subjective well-being. Christian spiritual maturity, then, should facilitate healthy adjustment for Christian college students.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to conceptualize and operationalize a model of spiritual development that accurately approximates Christian spiritual maturity as expressed through the ability to love as God loves, according to Scripture. Many contemporary developmental theories such as Erikson's psychosocial stages allow for uneven, epigenetic growth (e.g., Bergen, 2008). This model of Christian spiritual maturity allows for development that, while generally linear and progressive in direction, can accommodate fluctuations. First, there is a necessary overlap between steps as development at lower steps precipitates development at higher steps. Second, progression to a higher step of development may lead to concurrent readjustments in insights previously gained at lower levels of development. As such, it would be expected that while most individuals will report high scores on the step corresponding to their highest achieved level of development, they should likely report high scores on the steps corresponding to the lower levels which have precipitated their current level of development. Discrepancies may occur as some individuals revisit earlier stages of growth to renegotiate their prior understandings in light of more recent insights.

This study has conceptualized spiritual maturity in terms of epigenetic stage development defined by Jesus' two greatest commandments: love God and love humanity (Matt.

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22.37-39; Mark 12.30-31). On Clairvaux's (n.d.) first step, the individual loves self for self's sake. On step two, the individual loves God for self's sake. On step three, the individual loves God for God's sake. On step four, the individual identifies with God's love and loves self for God's sake. Practically, step four is a hypothetical point of development, largely believed to be unattainable in this incarnation, the fulfillment of which would not be realized until the eschaton. The new measure of Christian spiritual maturity consists of two subscales that have been designed to differentiate between stages two and three of Clairvaux's (n.d.) stages of Christian maturity. While love of self for self's sake is a step that does not require a Christian understanding of God and loving self for God's sake is a step that few if any Christians are able to realize, loving God for self's sake and loving God for God's sake are experiences familiar to many Christians. Thus, these two middle steps are the focus of this study.

At its center, the distinction between love of God for self's sake and love of God for God's sake lie in two related but distinct motivations to love in response to the person of God: one of gratification, realizing how God's goodness leads to blessings, and one of devotion, realizing how God's goodness is inherently worthy of reciprocal love. Arguably, both of these responses are healthy and appropriate. Similarly, healthy relationships between people include aspects of the two responses described above. That is, loving relationships include both gratitude for the benefits derived for one individual due to being related to the other and affection derived from a genuine appreciation for the attributes of one individual made known to the other through the relationship. Thus, a healthy love for God should include both kinds of love, rather than only one kind of love over the other. Christians learn to love from God's model, as recipients and as witnesses of his loving acts. Scripture teaches that they love God because he loved them first. In addition, Christians believe that as they spend time in his presence they are transformed to be like Christ, so that they actually take on his loving character, which expresses itself in love toward all of humanity (2 Cor. 3.18).

Since much of Jesus' teaching reflected dissatisfaction with extrinsic indicators of faith (e.g., Matt. 23.23-39), this study addresses the line of reasoning by Benson, Donahue, and Erickson (1993) that religious maturity should be reflected in Christian values manifested through devotional and prosocial attitudes and behaviors. Given that Christian spiritual development has been conceptualized here as the progressive climb upward onto correlated steps of Christian Maturity, it is expected that scores should sum to yield an inherently uni-dimensional indication of Christian spiritual maturity, although subscale scores should provide insight into the two conceptual dimensions being explored.

Research Questions

The multi-dimensionality of spirituality presents a challenge and an opportunity in understanding the underlying conceptual nature of the construct. The expansive supply of instruments measuring spirituality reflects the perspectives of researchers attempting to quantify this latent variable (e.g., Hill & Hood, 1999). That is, depending upon the research agenda, spirituality can be measured according to behaviors ranging from church attendance to serving the poor, beliefs ranging from degree of agreement with orthodox theology to rejection of absolute truth, or affects ranging from defensiveness to spiritual well-being (Hill & Hood, 1999).

Several research questions are central to this study. The first two questions address the psychometric properties of the newly scaled items:

1) To what extent do the new Christian Maturity scales demonstrate internal consistency and temporal stability?

2) What is the empirical structure of the CMS items across subscales?

The following four questions explore the relationship of the latent variable Christian spiritual maturity that is shared with its construct validity indicators:

3) What is the relationship of the CMS subscales to other measures of spiritual maturity?

4) What is the relationship of the CMS subscales to measures of subjective well-being?

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5) What is the relationship of the CMS subscales to measures of beliefs?

6) Moreover, what is the relationship of the CMS subscales to measures of spiritual identity formation?

The exact nature of the relationship between spirituality and psychological health remains unclear. That is, spirituality has been shown to correlate with positive psychological outcomes such as subjective well-being (Yoon & Lee, 2004), better interpersonal relationships (Hall & Edwards, 1996) and psychological adjustment (Maton, 1989; Pargament et al., 1988). Conversely, however, spirituality has been correlated with problematic psychological outcomes, particularly when extrinsic orientations are present (Salsman & Carlson, 2005; Watson, Jones, & Norris, 2004). Further, religious doubting has been associated more with psychological crisis and less with identity exploration. This finding is unexpected because identity achievement requires individuals to thoroughly examine their beliefs before making commitments to them (Hunsberger et al., 2001). On the other hand, identity-achieved individuals, though not inclined to religious doubting, were more likely to seek both belief-confirming and belief-threatening sources of information when searching for answers to their questions (Hunsberger et al., 2001). These findings demonstrate the need for further study of the basic constructs in question.

Definitions

For the purposes of this research, operational definitions of important constructs are provided:

Spirituality – A broad term referring to a general search for that which is sacred or transcendent (Hill & Hood, 1999; Slater et al., 2001).

Christian spirituality – Christian spirituality is subsumed under spirituality but is distinctly Christian in its commitment to imitating Christ as its ultimate exemplar. Additionally, Christian spirituality is socially negotiated, relying on fellowship with a like-minded group to provide accountability and legitimacy (Hill & Hood, 1999; Slater et al., 2001).

F*aith development* – The individual's openness to the sacred throughout the concurrent processes of intense, transformative belief changes alongside slower, maturational belief changes (Fowler, 1981).

E*go identity* – The developmental state in which one is consistently being true to oneself (Erikson, 1968).

S*ubjective well-being* – Individuals' personal evaluations of and satisfaction with their lives (Lucas & Diener, 2008).

Beliefs – Understandings that shape appraisals and interpretations of reality, resulting in consistent patterns of thought and behavior (Dweck, 2008).

S*piritual maturity* – The fruitful synthesis of emotions and cognitions that are harmonious with personal spiritual commitments and psychological adjustment (Erikson, 1968; Marcia, 1966).

Christian spiritual maturity – The increasing relational accord between the individual, God, and other people as reflected by progressive movement away from egocentricity and toward union by emulating the model of Christ and his relationship with God and humanity (John 17.20-23).

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

A surge of interest in spirituality has inspired a plethora of research in this area. Entering the search term *spirituality* to initiate an online search yielded 14,814 results through EBSCO Host's Academic Search Complete, a database comprised of over 11,400 publications that entail more than 6,100 peer-reviewed journals, including 1,034 psychology journals and 404 religion journals. Of these 14,814 results, 14,295 were published after 1990 and 11,450 were published during the past ten years. Additional search terms including *religious maturity*, *development*, *identity formation*, *empathy*, *altruism*, *social responsibility*, *orthodoxy*, *implicit theories, personality, health, morality, subjective well-being*, and *measurement* generated a snowball sampling of the literature as the search described above, in conjunction with advisement from other researchers in the field, led to successive iterations in a fruitful data searching process.

At its inception in the seventeenth century when psychology first took root as a field distinct from both physiology and philosophy, the discipline's pioneers were decisively scientific. While Wilhelm Wundt's studies focused upon the examination of self-reported sensory phenomena (1873-1874), William James (1890; 1892) called for more empirical

methods that ultimately moved psychology far away from metaphysical considerations. The

American positivist ethos permeated scientific inquiry across disciplines and spiritual axiology

was treated with varying degrees of skepticism and mistrust (Fuchs & Milar, 2003; Johnson,

2007).

Despite psychology's origins in secular logical positivism, however, social and

behavioral scientists in the United States came to realize that the qualitative aspects of

personality could not be ignored. Notably, Gordon Allport acknowledged the impact of

contemporary issues upon personality development that must be taken into account (Barenbaum

& Winter, 2003; Wrightsman, 1994) and developed a framework for assessing American

spiritual maturity (Allport, 1950). Although he was later criticized for his narrow, White

Protestant framework, his development of a two-factor model of spirituality reflecting an

extrinsic motivation and a more mature intrinsic motivation is still invoked in contemporary

studies (e.g., Weeks, Weeks, & Daniel, 2008).

While spirituality itself may have been viewed as unfounded superstition by many

(Johnson, 2007), humanist approaches designed to minimize the deleterious effects of

reductionist views took into account clients' values. Carl Rogers's call for a combination of

psychoanalytic prerequisites (i.e., therapist authenticity, unconditional acceptance, congruence,

and empathy) toward his or her clients laid a foundation for legitimizing individuals' spiritual

convictions (Routh & Reisman, 2003). The increased attention upon client perceptions has

garnered more respect for the significance of spirituality in the lives of many individuals (Baker,

2003; Barnett, 2009; Rose, Westefeld, & Ansley, 2008; Tummala-Narra, 2009). Alternatively,

social psychology has rigorously studied the significance of people's shared cultural beliefs

(Morawski & Bayer, 2003). Spirituality in religious contexts has come to be viewed as a

powerful social construction that warrants systematic study (Stets & Turner, 2008). The

contents of spiritual beliefs themselves, however, have been often deemphasized as attention has

focused on the undeniably influential effects of spirituality upon individuals situated within

group contexts (Shweder, Jaidt, Horton, & Joseph, 2008). The varied psychological approaches have resulted in research designs that have differently examined spirituality.

First, from an object relations psychoanalytic framework, researchers have studied participants' self-reported attachment to God as a measure of spiritual maturity. For instance, a study of 76 predominantly single, female participants demonstrated significant correlations between measures of faith maturity and object relations development, suggesting that people more spiritually mature also experience higher levels of relationship development with others (Hall et al., 1998). Similarly, faith maturity was correlated with secure attachment styles among a sample of 215 adults enrolled in a conservative seminary (Tenelshof, 2000).

Second, personality theorists have studied the relationship of spiritual measures with individual traits. Rowatt and Kirkpatrick (2002) found that anxious attachment to God was linked to neuroticism and negative affect in adults while avoidant attachment to God was negatively related to agreeableness (N = 374). Positive relationships between prosocial behaviors, conscientiousness, and spirituality, as measured by a scale developed by one of the authors, were reported in a study of 256 Spanish college of education students from a Catholic background (Saroglou & Muñoz-García, 2008).

Third, social psychologists have investigated spirituality employing a variety of methods. Using a representative sample of new mothers (N = 1,156), factor analysis suggested that religious social support was positively associated with interpersonal relationships and personal health. When a covariate of general social support was included, however, the relationships became statistically insignificant, even while qualitative data made clear the importance of spirituality to participants (Willoughby, Cadigan, Burchinal, & Skinner, 2008). Data drawn from a national sample showed that members of large churches tended to report lower levels of both anticipated social support and negative informal interpersonal interactions. These findings suggest that members of large churches preferred this combination of negative

and positive effects associated with these variables (Ellison, Krause, Shephard, & Chaves, 2009).

Fourth, spirituality has been evaluated as an emotionally-laden variable. Using analysis of variance, researchers found that participants (N = 60) who were more religiously open-minded, or high on the Quest orientation (Batson, & Schoenrade, 1991), reported being more likely to employ helping behaviors toward others even when they were perceived to be unlike themselves. On the other hand, these same individuals who were high on Quest, which is characterized by religious questioning and doubt, were less likely to help people perceived as more close-minded if the high-Quest individuals believed their helping behaviors would promote close-minded behavior. That is, spiritually open-minded people were more helpful toward conservative disclosers they thought were trying to visit relatives than they were toward conservative disclosers they thought were trying to attend a fundamentalist religious rally (Batson, Denton, & Vollmecke, 2008). Another study with emotional overtones employed ordinary least squares and logistic regression to analyze data from a cross-sectional national probability sample (N = 694). The authors found that children of parents with very disparate religious orientations were more likely to use marijuana and to engage in underage drinking than children whose parents had compatible religious orientations, although parents' marital religious disparity was not linked to children's self-esteem, life satisfaction, school delinquency, or grades (Petts, & Knoester, 2007).

Fifth, questions about spirituality's impact upon cognition have been empirically addressed. One study examined the implicit relationship between religious and paranormal beliefs. Using an Implicit Association Test (IAT) along with self-report measures of paranormal belief and intrinsic and extrinsic religiosity (N = 63), the researchers found that faith in science and Allport's (1950) intrinsic religiosity moderated the relationship between beliefs in these two constructs. Higher levels of intrinsic religiosity and faith in science related to weaker implicit associations with belief in paranormal phenomena (Weeks et al., 2008).

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In another study of cognition, Allport's (1950) conception of religious maturity in terms of intrinsic over extrinsic orientations was similarly revisited to challenge the recent view that religious maturity is best conceptualized by a Quest orientation (Batson, & Schoenrade, 1991) of cognitive religious complexity. A scale was developed to measure attitudes toward religious cognition (i.e., thoughts), affect (i.e., feelings), and conation (i.e., congruent behaviors) using expert judges. A principal component analysis was performed on the items and results were consistent with the expert ratings. Internal consistency coefficients for the sub-scales retained for analysis ranged from .72-.90. In a 3 x 3 split plot analysis of variance (N = 340), the authors found that individuals high on cognitive religious complexity (i.e., Quest orientation) and high in extrinsic religious orientations had relatively higher levels of cognition but lower levels of affect and conation. Conversely, individuals high in intrinsic religious orientations had lower levels of cognition and higher levels of affect and conation. These findings suggest that Quest may be a better measure of a preference for cognitive complexity than a spiritual measure, since religious maturity would logically be presumed to result in outcomes such as positive affect and behaviors consistent with spiritual values (Kristensen, Pedersen, & Williams, 2001).

Sixth, concerns with morality have led researchers to ask diverse questions and to derive a variety of answers, often leaving notions of God out of the discussion. A series of three studies (Total N = 218) using repeated measures ANOVA with self-report items and an Implicit Association Test (IAT) demonstrated that participants viewed responsible health behaviors such as exercising and eating properly as morally superior to non-healthy behaviors. These findings confirm popular perceptions of obesity as a moral failure rather than simply a negative physical state, but make no apparent associations between morality and spirituality (Hoverd & Sibley, 2007). On a broader scale, examination of data from 427 societies compiled in a published atlas along with surveys from 34 additional countries demonstrated that beliefs in the supernatural or gods did not influence people's moral judgments. Instead, perceptions that played a role in

imposing moral order required that God be construed as a conscious being actively involved in human decisions and behaviors (Stark, 2001).

Seventh, included in the body of correlational research of spirituality, health behavior studies often highlight the relationship between healthier lifestyle behaviors with spiritual variables. In a national sample of Presbyterian woman (N = 1,070), multivariate logistic regression analysis demonstrated that church attendance as well as the belief that spiritual health is linked with physical health were both positively related to mammogram use as a pre-cancer screening tool (Benjamin, Trinitapoli, & Ellison, 2006). Ordinary least squares regression analysis of a representative Canadian sample (N = 1,393) resulted in similar findings, where higher levels of subjective religiosity and church attendance were related to health and subjective well-being (i.e., less depression and anxiety) as well as lower levels of alcohol use (Schieman, 2008).

Eighth, existential and phenomenological perspectives have taken into account the importance of each individual's work in negotiating his or her own spiritual frameworks as these frameworks contribute to one's sense of identity. Taylor (1989) elaborated on the significance of identity development in terms of reconciling what each person considered to be morally good, and coming to terms with one's perceived orientation to that good. For many people, spiritual perspectives play a vital role in helping them define the contours of their own moral identities (Taylor, 1989). Tummala-Narra (2009) has extended this reasoning by pointing out that the search for meaning and for how that meaning relates to one's sense of identity are the aims of both psychoanalytic and spiritual work, necessitating that spirituality be incorporated into psychotherapy.

<div align="center">**Domain of Observables**</div>

Previous studies have established known correlates of spirituality. The new measure of Christian Maturity would be expected to demonstrate relationships with these variables in predictable directions and magnitudes.

Subjective well-being and ego identity. The relationship of identity status to religious commitment and subjective well-being has not been often studied (Hofer, Busch, Chasiotis, & Kiessling, 2006). Sanders (1998) investigated the relationship of faith maturity using Benson, Donahue, and Erikson's (1993) Faith Maturity Scale with ego identity status among 292 college students (mean age = 19.8 years). Sanders (1998) found that both foreclosed and achieved individuals scored high on the vertical dimension of faith maturity, indicating commitment to their relationship with God. On the horizontal dimension, however, achieved individuals scored higher, suggesting that achieved participants had better learned how to relate to humanity through the prosocial attitudes and behaviors taught in Scripture.

Hunsberger et al. (2001) studied a sample of 939 adolescents (mean age = 17.5) and found that identity-achieved and foreclosed young adults represented greater levels of ideological commitment than did individuals in the diffusion and moratorium stages. Greater ideological commitment, logically, has been associated with less religious doubting, as confirmed by Hofer et al. (2006) in their study of 177 participants ranging in age from 17 to 43 years (mean age = 22.46). Further, religious doubting has been associated more with psychological crisis than with true identity exploration (Hunsberger et al., 2001). Notably, identity-achieved individuals, while not disposed to religious doubting, were likely to consult both belief-confirming and belief-threatening sources of information when working to resolve personal questions. Foreclosed individuals, however, were more likely to seek out belief-confirming sources of information only and to avoiding belief-threatening information, perhaps suggesting a more tenuous attachment to God than displayed by their more confident achieved counterparts (Hunsberger et al., 2001).

Moreover, identity-achieved individuals have demonstrated greater personal adjustment and subjective well-being than those in diffusion and moratorium. A foreclosed status appeared unrelated to personal adjustment (Hunsberger et al., 2001). On the other hand, Waterman (2007) found foreclosure to be negatively associated with measures of psychological well-being,

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even though this status was unrelated to measures of subjective and eudaimonic well-being. Achieved individuals were the only group with positive correlations with all three types of well-being (i.e., psychological, subjective, and eudaimonic). Additionally, identity-achieved individuals displayed greater congruence between implicit and explicit motives, and this congruence was associated with increased emotional satisfaction. Foreclosed individuals, however, displayed greater motive incongruence, which was believed to result in greater emotional dissatisfaction (Hofer et al., 2006).

Beliefs and empathy. The relationship between religiosity and discrimination is important in differentiating spiritual maturity according to the model conceptualized by the new Christian Maturity scale. That is, people who express discriminatory attitudes toward those perceived to be different contradict Jesus' command to love humanity (Matt. 22.39). Spirituality studies have highlighted important issues about the distinctions between religious fundamentalism, generally described as strict adherence to biblical teachings, and religious orthodoxy, generally described as conforming to doctrine as expressed through the biblically-based creeds of the early church.

In his study of 426 college students from the United States and Canada, Kirkpatrick (1993) found that while religious fundamentalism was positively associated with discriminatory attitudes (e.g., racial, sexual, and political), Christian orthodoxy either was not associated with these attitudes or was negatively associated with them. This finding suggests that the complex relationship between spirituality and charity may be reflected in both spiritual maturity status and the contents of spiritual beliefs that reflect a preference for either orthodoxy or fundamentalism. The distinction between the two constructs of orthodoxy and fundamentalism may well lie in the confident fundamentalist presumption of how to interpret and subsequently adhere to the tenets of Scripture, versus the orthodox presumption that understanding God's will for humanity is a challenging task best approached collectively, with much humility and through diligent study.

Individual's implicit theories reflect their beliefs about the nature of socio-moral reality, themselves, and their roles (e.g., Chiu, Dweck, Tong, & Fu, 1997). Logically, people who share similar belief systems are inclined to affiliate with one another. Consequently, intergroup affiliations may lead to conflicts with others perceived to be outside one's affiliation, resulting in intolerant attitudes and behaviors (e.g., Levy et al., 2001; Plaks et al., 2001). In an extensive review of the literature, Levy et al. (2001) documented how people with implicit theories of a malleable reality (i.e., incremental theorists) have been more likely to attend to information that contradicted negative beliefs about individuals not belonging to an in-group. During a course of four experimental studies (Total N = 389), Plaks et al. (2001) demonstrated that individuals who believed that traits were fixed (i.e., entity theorists) were more likely to attend to consistent information confirming stability than were people who believed that traits were malleable. People who believed that traits were dynamic (i.e., incremental theorists) were more likely to attend to information that was inconsistent. Thus, intergroup conflicts were more likely to be averted by individuals who subscribed to incremental person theories (e.g., Levy et al., 2001; Plaks et al., 2001).

Given that the standard of biblical Christian maturity is to love others as Christ did (John 13.34), the extent to which participants are compassionate to others will provide construct validity for the new measure of Christian Maturity scale. Some literature suggests that altruistic beliefs are not necessarily supported by compassionate behaviors. For example, extensive data were analyzed from a sample of 11,481 Christian adolescents drawn from private schools affiliated with a conservative evangelical denomination in the United States and Canada using stratified random sampling (53% female, 44% secondary high school, 56% secondary middle school). Results showed positive correlations between Christian orthodoxy and supportive beliefs about altruism, but they also demonstrated negative correlations between these positive beliefs and actual altruistic practices, a discrepancy that authors named altruistic hypocrisy (Ji, Pendergraft, & Perry, 2006). Similarly, a recent study of 14,527 students from 136 diverse

colleges and universities showed that over a three year period, the only measure of religious maturity upon which participants did not demonstrate self-reported gains was a behavioral indicator measuring actual acts of service performed on behalf of those less fortunate (Astin & Astin, 2010).

An important contribution to this discussion, however, is Salsman and Carlson's (2005) finding that participants who scored higher on the horizontal dimension of the faith maturity scale (Benson et al., 1993), which measures prosocial helping attitudes and behaviors toward others, also reported higher levels of psychological distress. The study's authors speculated that this correlation might suggest that participants suffering from psychological distress sought out helping opportunities as an outlet to relieve their own symptoms. Conversely, the positive relationship could indicate that the prosocial behaviors themselves contributed to participants' psychological discomfort, or both outcomes could be related to another unidentified variable (Salsman & Carlson, 2005).

The Faith Maturity Scale (Benson et al., 1993) was designed to measure participants' self-reported Christian attitudes and behaviors, including feelings and acts of compassion toward those in need (e.g., Matt. 9.26; 14.14; 15.32; 20.34). Ji et al., (2006), however, noted that while students reported having appropriate Christian attitudes toward those in need of care, they were not necessarily able to report acts of service. The paradox between faith and good work that is central to Christian theology conflates the problem of using good deeds, or reporting the attitudes believed to accompany good deeds, as indicators of Christian spiritual maturity. That is, Jesus taught his disciples to serve the poor, hungry, and defenseless as if they were serving him, and not to neglect those in need of care (Matt. 25.33-46). On the other hand, the Apostle Paul made clear that Christians were not reconciled to God because of any deeds of service they performed that rendered them worthy of the relationship (e.g., Gal. 2.16). Instead, salvation was a free gift (e.g., Eph. 2.8-9). Nevertheless, a true disciple's faith was to be evident through his or her behavior (e.g., James 2.14-20). Thus, an accurate measure of Christian

maturity should draw a distinction between a person's ability to feel, think, and behave more empathically than would be expected of someone at a less developed point in his or her relationships with God and people.

Subjective well-being and intrinsic spirituality. Regardless of the manner in which religiosity and beliefs are correlated with actual prosocial behaviors such as altruism, there is continued overwhelming support for the positive association between intrinsic religiousness and subjective well-being (Hill & Pargament, 2003; Salsman & Carlson, 2005). For instance, Yoon and Lee (2004) found positive relationships between spirituality and subjective well-being in a sample of elderly, rural participants across Caucasian, African American, and Native American cultures (N = 215, mean age = 72 years). Of 81 participants (mean age = 46 years), correlational and hierarchical regression analyses demonstrated that people at higher levels of spiritually-based object relations development also reported higher levels of psychological well-being (Maton, 1989). Hall et al. (1998) found significant correlations indicating that individuals reporting secure attachment to God also indicated more highly developed interpersonal adjustment (N = 76). Finally, a study of 197 church attendees (mean age = 46 years) suggested that healthy attachment to God was related to higher levels psychosocial competence (Pargament et al., 1988).

On the other hand, people extrinsically motivated to use religion to in order to gain benefits have demonstrated undesirable outcomes. For example, in a sample of 416 undergraduates, Watson et al. (2004) found positive relationships between extrinsic religiosity and narcissism as well as more Power-Prestige narcissistic attitudes toward money, while intrinsic religiosity was related to lower levels of narcissism and reduced desire for money. Additionally, in a sample of 251 young adults (mean age = 19 years) negative religious striving was associated with troubling psychological outcomes (Salsman & Carlson, 2005). Specifically, extrinsic religiousness has been associated with psychological distress, negative religious striving has been associated with maladaptiveness, and institutionalized forms of religion that

include prosocial acts of service have been positively related to psychological distress (Salsman & Carlson, 2005). Thus, the relationship of spirituality with psychological adjustment appears to be complex.

<center>**Review of Developmental Frameworks**</center>

Developmental frameworks have tended to overlook spirituality. Reexamining these theories in light of spirituality and its known correlates should contribute to better understandings of spiritual maturity.

Object relations. Developmental psychological approaches have largely neglected to examine spiritual variables. Recent work to frame object relations development in terms of interpersonal relationship development with God and others, however, has provided interesting insights into the psychodynamic/spiritual interface of development (Hall & Edwards, 1996). That is, some researchers have extended object relations theory to include God as the primary object, or Other, with whom the individual seeks relationship (e.g., Hall et al., 1998). This unique application is fruitful in considering not only one's individual attachment to God, but also in offering a framework for considering how the maturity of that ultimate relationship is reflected in individuals' relationships with a variety of important others (Simpson et al., 2008).

Traditional object relations development interpretations have conceptualized development in terms of the successful resolution of discrepancies between the inner world of one's psyche with the outer world shared with others that in turn leads to healthier and more mature relationships in one's interpersonal life (Wrightsman, 1994). The newer spiritual applications of this theory take into account the mystical nature of one's relationship to the divine, then, in which the individual's important Other is known but shrouded in mystery. At lower levels of development, this mystery can result in misunderstanding and maladjustment, but at higher levels, the dawning reality of God as a person rather than a mere projection is accepted and celebrated, which leads to increasing intimacy at both the practical and devotional levels (Simpson et al., 2008).

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Cognitive theories. Cognitive developmental psychology theorists have typically either left notions of spirituality out of their discussions or have dismissed faith as a symptom of lower levels of moral development. In fact, moral development theories have not yielded much research with reference to the role of spirituality. One exception might include Quest researchers' (e.g., Batson, & Schoenrade, 1991) assertions that spiritual maturity, like cognitive maturity, develops along a trajectory away from simple faith in the divine toward increasingly more complex spiritual beliefs that include an element of doubt. This doubt has been purported to be evidential of developing cognitive and emotional structures that allow one to realistically accept and even seek out ambiguity with reference to spiritual issues (Batson, & Schoenrade, 1991). The view that this questioning and doubt reflects developmental supremacy may be an extension of cognitive structural moral development frameworks that assess moral certainty as symptomatic of lower developmental levels while moral uncertainty reflects the sophisticated consideration of subtle contextual nuances at higher levels. Piaget's moral games (1965), for instance, which begin with nonnegotiable rules at low levels of developmental maturity and become progressively more conditional and collectively negotiated, share qualities with Kohlberg's theory of moral development (Bergen, 2008). Kohlberg (1969) further expounded upon the premise that beliefs in absolute concepts such as right and wrong reflect immature moral reasoning. Moral decision-making that takes into account a myriad of possible acceptable outcomes, on the other hand, is considered more mature (Bergen, 2008; Wrightsman, 1994).

Psychosocial stages. Alternatively, a developmental theory that may be conducive to a Christian spiritual framework is Erikson's developmental theory of psychosocial stages (1968). Erikson's theory is based upon the belief that individuals must negotiate through various stages at different points of life in order to secure healthy developmental outcomes, or ego strengths (i.e., hope, will, purpose, competence, fidelity, love, care, and wisdom) (Erikson, 1968). Young adults in particular must negotiate the stage of identity versus role confusion in order to forge the ego strength of fidelity, or being true to oneself, reflecting some of the existential tasks in

identity formation brought forth by Taylor (1989) and Tummala-Narra (2009). Marcia (1966) operationalized the young adult's identity formation task into four statuses: foreclosure, diffusion, moratorium, and achievement. Foreclosure indicates that the young adult has made commitments to his or her identity but without exploring other options. Diffusion indicates that the individual has not made identity commitments and neither is he or she seeking to resolve this reality. Moratorium suggests that the young adult has not yet made identity commitments but is actively seeking to do so. Finally, achievement signals that the individual has explored possible options and has arrived at identity commitments that are consistent with his or her socio-emotional needs (Marcia, 1966).

This theory postulates that there is positive and negative tension at each developmental stage that must be negotiated in order to continue healthy development. While stage theories in general have been criticized for grossly oversimplifying the nature of development and Erikson's theory in particular has been criticized for normalizing males as the universal standard, characteristics of this theory may still offer some utility for examining spirituality's role in development (Bergen, 2008). Perhaps because of Erikson's personal interest in spirituality (e.g., Kiesling, Sorrell, Montgomery, & Colwell, 2008), this theory makes room for the value of redemption as it frames developmental progress not in terms of uncertainty and cognitive doubt, but in terms of successfully facing uncertainty and ambiguity while maintaining hope and forging fidelity. This growth continues to trend toward the positive polarity until the individual finally reaches the end of his or her life and the hope won in the first stage is transformed into faith in the Ultimate Other (Erikson, 1984).

Further, in contrast to the formal structuring of hierarchical stages that cognitive theorists such as Piaget (1936; 1965) and Kohlberg (1969) required, Erikson (1968; 1984) considered ego development to be an epigenetic unfurling of the self, with the resolution of tensions at each stage never fully complete since the progression through stages both necessitated building upon previous stages and allowed for revisiting and more skillfully

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negotiating and refining strengths forged at previous stages. Thus, for Erikson, development did chronologically unfold through stages in terms of passing time, but the stages of development could be described as more spiral than linear in nature, progressing forward with age while still allowing individuals cognitively and emotionally to loop back in time and reframe past events using wisdom gleaned through experience (Bergen, 2008; Wrightsman, 1994).

Faith Development Theory. The greatest utility of Erikson's theory to this study, however, may lie in its twin applications as both a complement to an object relations perspective and as a contribution to Fowler's (1981) Faith Development Theory (FDT). The latter benefit provides for slightly different interpretations than might be allowed should Fowler's adherence to the contributions of Piaget (1936; 1965) and Kohlberg (1969) be the only guiding principles for understanding the developmental nature of spiritual growth. In fact, perhaps due to the emphasis upon the sequential staging of FDT, more empirical support has been garnered for faith development as a universal stage theory, while the psychosocial aspect of faith development remains largely unsubstantiated (Parker, 2010). This shortcoming suggests that more study specifically focused upon evaluating the links between faith development and psychosocial crisis negotiation is warranted.

Some background explaining the rather serendipitous events that influenced Fowler's early work may prove helpful in evaluating FDT. Fowler himself has appeared to value this contextualized account as he has provided lengthy descriptions of the circumstances under which he began to articulate spiritual maturity as a development of faith (e.g., 2001, 2004). He incubated his theory while working at Harvard in the middle to latter half of the 20th century. Concurrently, Kohlberg was also at Harvard, crafting his own theory of moral development. At this time, several conditions influenced Fowler's thinking. First, he had been invited into Kohlberg's inner circle of colleagues where he was introduced to Piagetian theories and Kohlberg's work. Second, Fowler enjoyed the company and regard of enthusiastic graduate theology students eager to make religious practice and thought relevant in the modern age.

Third, Fowler and a research team of students secured funding to conduct hundreds of interviews with participants ranging from four years to 80 years of age and their findings from these data served as the foundation of Fowler's faith development theory (FDT) (Fowler, 2004).

FDT offered an explanation for faith development that tried to do many things at once: It betrayed its author's dissertation research into Christian ethics, it reflected his avid interest in Eriksonian notions of psychosocial development of the self, and it paid obeisance to the Piagetian structuralism of cognitive stage development introduced to him by Kohlberg, who himself adopted this hierarchy and applied it to his own work (Fowler, 2001). Faith Development Theory is an elegant and intuitively attractive explanation of the dynamic process of spiritual growth. Heywood (2008) points out that the resonance of FDT with so many audiences, to some degree, validates the importance of Fowler's work. Heywood (2008) further argues, on the other hand, that this resonance is possibly owed to the content of the qualitative interviews that share the participants' stories of faith and not to the forced hierarchical stages of the theory itself.

Fowler's (1981) multi-stage theory of faith development draws from Erikson's theory of psychosocial stage development (1968), Piaget's theory of cognitive development (1936; 1965), and Kohlberg's theory of moral development (1969). Fowler developed his theory to accommodate both the role of formative experience that occurs in one's family and early faith communities and the role of doubting (Fowler, 1981). His framework distinguishes between the content of beliefs and the structures of cognitive and emotional development that support the development of faith. That is, one's particular stage of faith development may have less to do with what one believes than with the cognitive and emotional development that supports the way one perceives the world, the self, and the relationship between the two (Parker, 2006). Many proponents of the theory, however, have called for renewed attention to the contents of one's spiritual beliefs themselves as important components of faith development (Streib, 2004).

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The general developmental trajectory is toward increasingly complex, differentiated, activist faith (Leak, Loucks, & Bowlin, 1999).

Fowler's faith development suggests a moderate relationship between stages and age, particularly at the lower levels, as well as a moderate relationship between faith development and moral development, validating his claim that the two constructs are related but not identical (Parker, 2006). Stage one is the projective-intuitive faith of a small child. Stage two is the mythical-literal faith of an uncritical believer of a faith tradition. Stage three is the synthetic-conventional faith of a person consciously aligned with a religious group context. Stage four is the individuative-reflective faith of someone who is more abstract and individuated in their faith understanding. Stage five is the conjunctive faith of someone who perceives the symbolic nature of truth. Stage six is the universalizing faith reached by only a few individuals who are so committed to the needs of others that their own sense of self is "decentered" (Fowler, 1981, p. 168).

A common outgrowth of the modernist thinking that was prevalent at the time Fowler articulated FDT was an intellectual desire to universalize sequential stages of development so that the culminating stage of any growth process was a near-utopian achievement inevitably consistent across individuals and groups (e.g., Fowler, 2001, 2004). Fowler has admitted his initial motivation to present a contemporary interpretation of faith that would be palatable to the liberal intellectual community of the mid-20th century academy. He has appeared to realize that the theorizing spawned from his past motivation to be relevant in the previous century has perhaps contributed to the postulation that his work has become irrelevant in the present century, in which feminist and postmodern critiques have postulated weaknesses in his theoretical approach (2001).

Ironically, feminist and postmodern criticisms that have threatened conservative religious ideologies have reopened the door to invite context-specific perspectives back into the forum of intellectual debate (Melcher, 2008). That is, taking ownership of the situatedness of an

exclusively Christian view of faith development earns Christian theorists the right to their position. Conversely, the intellectually liberal theorists of the previous era are viewed with suspicion in many contemporary discussions in part because their arguments presuppose they are capable of an objectivity that their critics believe is unattainable (Heywood, 2008).

Current Problems Measuring Spiritual Maturity

Fowler's work nevertheless holds wide appeal for providing a developmental theory that accounts for the faith development process. Consequently, FDT has been borrowed and applied by a variety of researchers. Streib (2004) has argued for complex research designs that concurrently evaluate the structural stages of faith development, specific spiritual beliefs in terms of their meaning to the faith of the participant, and narrative analysis of the faith interview. This sophistication would strive to differentiate between where the volunteer lies on the faith developmental trajectory, to what he or she ascribes meaning, and how he or she describes his or her faith journey. While this ambitious undertaking would likely afford more nuanced understandings of faith development from the perspective of Fowler's framework, it would certainly require labor- and time-intensive studies.

Leak et al. (1999) have developed an eight-item Faith Development Scale (FDS) for quantitative global measurement of Fowler's faith maturity that does not attempt to evaluate stage progression. The measure was dubiously developed using small sample sizes (e.g., n < 100) and internal consistency coefficients from recent studies using larger samples (e.g., n > 500) indicated that the reliability of the instrument appears mediocre (e.g., .76) (Leak, 2008). Further, construct validity indicators demonstrated positive associations with the Quest orientation but non-significant relationships with neuroticism, agreeableness, and a single item measure of how closely volunteers self-identified with Allport's (1950) qualitative description of the spiritually mature individual (Leak et al., 1999). These results have led the studies' authors to speculate that Fowler's Faith Development Theory might actually describe a cognitive rather than a spiritual orientation, reflecting thought patterns and preferences rather

than the kind of spiritual development logically presumed to result in quantifiable behavioral and affective distinctions (Leak et al, 1999). Measurable differences in cognition, affect, and connation among participants' self-reported levels of faith maturity as conceptualized by Benson et al. (1993) lend further credibility to the distinction between preferences for cognitive complexity and spiritual development (Kristensen et al., 2001).

In addition to the reliability and validity limitations of the Faith Development Scale, the items have been criticized by proponents of Fowler's theory for being too narrow in its Christian orientation (e.g., Streib, 2004). Ultimately, the Fowlerian goal of applying FDT to people across all religious groups, rather than allowing its application to be limited to a context-specific group whose developmental goals reflect a *telos* exclusive to their particular spiritual understanding, lies at the heart of the limitations of FDT to assess uniquely Christian spiritual maturity. To attempt to smear out and render functionally insignificant the contents of belief that set Christianity apart from other faiths is arguably to disregard the explicit values and behaviors that Christian individuals hold sacred and to which disciples of Christ aspire (Heywood, 2008).

Alternatively, more recent developments to measure uniquely Christian attributes of spiritual well-being and maturity have led to concerns about "illusory spiritual health" and "ceiling effects" in development (Slater et al., 2001, pp. 6-7). That is, many participants who purport to be Christian disciples have tended to yield high scores on existing quantitative measures such as the Faith Maturity Scale (Benson et al., 1993) causing researchers to speculate that individuals socialized in Christian religious contexts may have quickly learned what responses are associated with spiritual health and maturity. This challenge has made difficult the task of differentiating Christian spiritual maturity at higher levels of development.

Christian Developmental Model

In order to develop reliable measures of spiritual maturity, values specific to the faith communities under study must be taken into account (Hill & Pargament, 2003). That is, a reliable and context-specific measure of spiritual maturity should be conceptualized within a framework that is meaningful to the participants. A caveat, however, is that this measure should also be able to differentiate developmental levels by evaluating Christian spiritual maturity in a way that protects not only against social desirability distortions but also against stimuli that are so obvious that the responses do not offer much discriminant validity.

For many Christians, Scripture is the ultimate authority in defining the parameters of their moral frameworks. Further, Scripture has challenged them to demonstrate that they are followers of Christ by their love for one another (John 13.35). Moreover, the greatest love that they can show one another is to lay their lives down for each other, as Christ has done for them (John 15.12-13; 1 John 3.16-24). Christians are often chagrined when nonbelievers seem to exhibit greater obedience to this latter charge than do those in the Church (Matt. 5.43-48). Christ taught his disciples that the greatest command is to love God with all of one's being. He told them that the second greatest command was like it, to love one's neighbor as one's self (Matt. 22.36). Christians' love for God and one another is expected to grow progressively richer and deeper as they grow into the likeness of Christ (2 Cor. 3.18).

A twelfth century abbot, St. Bernard of Clairvaux (1090-1153), wrote a letter at the behest of the cardinal deacon and chancellor of the Roman church entitled *On Loving God* (n.d.) that articulated a spiritual development process consistent with a biblical framework for conceptualizing Christian spiritual maturity. Clairvaux based the following framework upon five biblical assumptions: 1) God is love, 2) People are created in God's image, 3) God desires people's love, 4) learning to reciprocate God's love is a process through which people can progress only with God's help, and 5) God rewards people's love. Thus, the very nature of God, which is love, impelled him to create people and to desire their reciprocal affection. People,

however, are not born with the developed capacity to reciprocate God's love. Instead, they are born with the potential to develop the capacity to reciprocate God's love. God, then, meets them at their present location upon the developmental trajectory and assists them in developing their capacity to love. As they then grow in their ability to reciprocate God's love, they are rewarded with the object of their love, that is, the person of God (Clairvaux, *On loving God*, p. 9).

Staircase of Christian Maturity

The process through which people learn to reciprocate God's love can be conceptualized as a staircase of Christian maturity. All people begin on the lowest step of this staircase and they become able to progress upward with God's help. One should bear in mind, however, that each successive step is based upon the growth that occurs on the preceding step(s). That is, movement to the second step does not make obsolete the growth that occurred on the first step. Instead, the growth that occurs on the first step makes it possible to move up the staircase to the second step. Growth on the second step subsumes the growth from the first. Thus, one's developmental position on the staircase should not be regarded as a point of either shame or pride, since the ability to love God is solely dependent upon God's grace at work in their lives. As he has chosen to bear with them in love on whatever step they are, then, so too they should endeavor to bear with themselves and with one another as all learn to reciprocate God's love more perfectly and to subsequently enjoy the reward of love, which is the person of God.

It is upon the lowest and foundational step that humanity first meets with God. Clairvaux maintains that nonbelievers can recognize that they owe their existence and the world that sustains them to God, the creator (e.g., Rom. 1.18-25). Thus, it is natural and appropriate for even those who do not know Christ to recognize and to love the God who created them. When Clairvaux refers to the natural obedience of the first commandment to love God, he stipulates, "Nature is so frail and weak that necessity compels her to love herself first" (p. 12). He suggests that this concept is the reason that Paul wrote, "'That was not first which is spiritual

but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual' (I Cor. 15.46)" and 'No man ever yet hated his own flesh' (Eph. 5.29)" (p. 12). Logically, then, humanity's love for itself inspires love for God, who not only created people but also all of the things that gratify them.

According to Clairvaux, just as it is natural for created humankind to love God, its creator, it is also natural for people to love one another. To protect against the susceptibility of the love that humanity has for itself to grow "excessive and, refusing to be contained within the restraining banks of necessity, should overflow in the fields of voluptuousness," the second commandment "checks the flood, as if by a dike: 'Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.' And this is right: for he who shares our nature should share our love, itself the fruit of nature'" (p. 12). Clairvaux concludes that at least partial fulfillment of the greatest two commandments can and does occur naturally on the first step of spiritual maturity, in that "our selfish love grows truly social, when it includes our neighbors in its circle" (p. 12).

At this stage of development, people begin to realize that in order to love one another, they need God, since it is from God that they receive both love itself and the capacity to love others. Clairvaux compares the person coming to this realization as a "wise man, animal and carnal by nature" who recognizes that it is with God that he or she "can accomplish all things that are good" but that without him, he or she "can do nothing" (p. 13). Loving self for self's sake will be defined as loving self because that is the natural order. As created beings, people are instinctively driven to nurture themselves and to foster and enrich their own survival, even through their instrumental relationships with others. An example of thinking at this stage might be, *"I want to be happy."* Another example of thinking at this stage might be, *"I want relationships with others that make me happy."* Thus, the focus of development at this stage is upon gratifying the individual self's needs.

As previously noted, movement to the second step is made possible by the growth that occurs on the first step. Clairvaux suggests that after learning on the first step of the staircase to look to God for the satisfaction of their needs, on the second step, people's hearts become

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"softened by the goodness of such a Savior" (p. 13). They experience for themselves that God is good (Ps. 34.8). People at this stage of development are beginning to perceive that not only is God the source of their fulfillment, but also that the one who meets them so faithfully and unselfishly is himself deserving of love. Here it becomes even more natural to fulfill the second command, since "whosoever loves God aright loves all God's creatures" (p. 13).

Loving God for self's sake will be defined as loving God because of what God does for people. This is a biblical precept because Scripture teaches that people love God because he loved them first (1 John 4.19). An example of thinking at this stage might be, *Everything good in my life comes from God. Nothing good in my life has been given to me apart from God.* Another example of thinking at this stage might be, *God has shown me how to love. I would not be able to love others except that God has taught me how.* Thus, the focus of development at this stage is the dawning realization of God's potential to enrich the life of the individual and his or her personal relationships in meaningful and important ways that are deserving of love.

Again, movement to the third step is precipitated by the growth that occurred on the second step, which was made possible by the growth that occurred on the first. Movement to the third step does not make the growth that occurred on the previous steps irrelevant. Instead, the growth that occurs on the third step simply places the growth occurring at lower levels into a wider perspective as the individual's developing capacity to reciprocate God's love becomes deeper and more richly nuanced.

The person on the third step has experienced the faithfulness of God in his or her life. He or she has recognized God's gracious and perfect character. Further, he or she has grown to understand the irresistible and praiseworthy nature of God that renders him worthy of love apart from what the individual may have personally gained as a result of his or her association with God. According to Clairvaux, "Whosoever praises God for his essential goodness, and not merely because of the benefits he has bestowed, does really love God for God's sake, and not selfishly" (p. 13).

Loving God for God's sake will be defined as loving God because of who God is. Clairvaux refers to the psalmist as an example of someone at this stage when he proclaimed, "'O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is gracious' (Ps. 118.1)" (p. 13). An example of thinking at this stage might be, *"I love God because of his essential goodness."* Another example of thinking at this stage might be, *"God alone is worthy of adoration."* Thus, the focus of development at this stage is upon recognizing God's supreme, divine, and praiseworthy character.

According to Clairvaux, the fourth and final step is likely not attainable in this incarnation, although it may be possible to experience momentary glimpses of the insight required to sustain this level of development. On this step, "One loves himself only in God" (p. 13). Clairvaux speculates that in this life people are not really capable of perfect obedience to the first command because "the heart must take thought of the body; and the soul must energize the flesh; and the strength must guard itself from impairment. And…seek to increase" (p. 14). Consequently, as long as "we must accommodate our purposes and aspirations to these fragile, sickly bodies of ours" (p. 14) it is impossible for people to give themselves up entirely in abandonment to their love for God, even if it is their desire to do so.

On the other hand, Clairvaux acknowledges that anyone is "blessed and holy" if, while still in this fleshly life, he or she were granted "for even an instant to lose thyself, as if thou were emptied and lost and swallowed up in God" (p. 14). He maintains that since God created everything for his glory (Isa. 43.7), it is fitting that the creation should conform to his will. This utter surrender of self-interests to serve God's interests would lead to rapturous transcendence of the worldly concerns and responsibilities that are so distracting to people. Clairvaux expounds:

> But if sometimes a poor mortal feels that heavenly joy for a rapturous moment, then this wretched life envies his happiness, the malice of daily trifles disturbs him, this body of death weighs him down, the needs of the flesh are imperative, the weakness of corruption fails him, and above all brotherly love calls him back to duty. (p. 14)

This mortal struggle recalls the Apostle Paul's conflict between leaving this incarnation

to be with God or staying in this life to serve his brothers and sisters (Phil. 1.21-24). Clairvaux

concludes that until people take on their celestial bodies at the eschaton, development at this

step cannot be sustained. Even so, he calls for patience. Reminding the reader of Romans 8.28,

he assures:

> The body is a help to the soul that loves God, even when it is ill, even when it is dead, and all the more when it is raised again from the dead: for illness is an aid to penitence; death is the gate of rest; and the resurrection will bring consummation. So, rightly, the soul would not be perfected without the body, since she recognizes that in every condition it has been needful to her good. The flesh then is a good and faithful comrade for a good soul: since even when it is a burden it assists. (p. 15)

Loving self for God's sake will be defined as loving self as God's created vessel, wholly

reflecting the glory of God as a living expression of God's will. Clairvaux summarizes, "The

fourth degree of love is attained for ever when we love God only and supremely, when we do

not even love ourselves except for God's sake" (p. 16). An example of thinking at this stage

might be, *"My purpose is to live in perfect and uninterrupted union with God."* Another

example of thinking at this stage might be, *"God is now in all and nothing merely human

remains in his people."* Thus, the focus of development at this stage is upon perfect union with

God in the absence of earthly distraction. As a result of this uninterrupted communion, one's

perspective of the self as an individual would be refined. The redefined view perceives the self

as part of the whole of creation made one with God. Paradoxically, according to Scripture,

people do not appear free to remain on this step for more than a few fleeting moments at a time

(Rom. 8.22-23; 2 Cor. 5.1-5). Preoccupation with this level, therefore, particularly if

development has been immature on the lower steps, may suggest a developmental challenge.

A Developmental Approach to Measuring Christian Maturity

The purpose of this study was to conceptualize and operationalize a model of spiritual

development that accurately approximates Christian maturity as expressed through the ability to

love as God loves, according to Scripture. Many contemporary developmental theories such as

Erikson's (1968) psychosocial stages allow for uneven, epigenetic growth (Bergen, 2008). This model of Christian Maturity also allows for development that, while generally linear and progressive in direction, can accommodate fluctuations. First, there is a necessary overlap between steps as development at lower steps precipitates development at higher steps. Second, progression to a higher step of development may lead to concurrent readjustments in insights previously gained at lower levels of development. As such, it would be expected that while most individuals will report high scores on the step corresponding to their highest achieved level of development, they should also report high scores on the steps corresponding to the lower levels which have precipitated their current level of development. Discrepancies may occur as some individuals revisit earlier stages of growth to renegotiate their prior understandings in light of more recent insights.

This study has conceptualized spiritual maturity in terms of epigenetic stage development defined by Jesus' two greatest commandments: To love God and to love humanity (Matt. 22.37-39; Mark 12.30-31). On step one, the individual loves self for self's sake and enjoys the benefits of God's love without being aware of the source of those benefits. On step two, the individual becomes aware of God as the source of benefits and begins to love God for self's sake. On step three, the individual begins to love God for God's sake apart from the benefits derived from the relationship. On step four, the individual adopts God's own love for the whole of creation, loving the redefined self for God's sake. Practically, step four is a hypothetical point of development, largely believed to be unattainable in this incarnation, the fulfillment of which would not be realized until the eschaton.

The new measure of Christian Maturity consists of two subscales that have been designed to differentiate between stages two and three of Clairvaux's (n.d.) stages of Christian maturity. While love of self for self's sake is a step that does not require a Christian understanding of God and loving self for God's sake is a step that few if any Christians are able

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to realize, loving God for self's sake and loving God for God's sake are experiences familiar to many Christians. Thus, these two middle steps are the focus of this study.

At its center, the distinction between love of God for self's sake and love of God for God's sake lies in two related but distinct responses to the person of God: an extrinsic response of gratitude, realizing how God's goodness leads to blessings, and an intrinsic response of devotion, realizing how God's goodness is inherently worthy of reciprocal love. Arguably, both of these responses are healthy and appropriate. Similarly, healthy relationships between people include aspects of the two responses described above. That is, loving relationships include both gratitude for the benefits derived on behalf of one individual due to being related to the other and affection derived from a genuine appreciation for the attributes of one individual made known to the other through the relationship. Thus, a healthy love for God should include both kinds of love, rather than only one kind of love without the other. Christians learn to love from God's model, as recipients and as witnesses of his loving acts. Scripture teaches that Christians love God because he loved them first. In addition, as they spend time in his presence they are transformed to be like him, so that they actually take on his loving character, which expresses itself in love toward all of humanity (2 Cor. 3.18).

A question that arises in conceptualizing Christian spiritual maturity is how does godly love reflect Christian spiritual growth? Many religions specify behaviors and beliefs appropriate for their followers but Christianity is unique in its foundational premise that followers of Christ need only believe in the grace offered to them through Jesus' death and resurrection to be brought into personal relationship with God (1 Cor. 4.7; Eph. 2.8-9). Through this relationship, Christians are believed to experience the presence of God's spirit at work in their lives, subsequently transforming them into the very image of Christ, the firstborn of many children (Rom. 8.29; 1 John 3.2).

Since much of Jesus' teaching reflected dissatisfaction with extrinsic indicators of faith (e.g., Matt. 23.23-39), this study addresses the line of reasoning by Benson, Donahue, and

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Erickson (1993) that religious maturity should be reflected in Christian values manifested through devotional and prosocial attitudes and behaviors. Given that Christian spiritual development has been conceptualized as the progressive climb upward onto correlated steps of Christian Maturity, scores would be expected to sum to yield an inherently uni-dimensional indication of Christian spiritual maturity, although subscale scores should provide insight into the two conceptual dimensions being explored.

Social desirability has not been found to skew participant responses on measures of religiosity, particularly when anonymity is protected (Slater et al., 2001). Even so, given that there has been a documented ceiling effect in measures of religious maturity that inhibits differentiation among participants at the higher levels, other measures of relevant attitudes and behaviors will be utilized to ensure construct validity (Slater et al., 2001). Spiritual maturity will be viewed as the successful integration of cognitive and emotional values that are congruent with both theological beliefs and subjective well-being. Spiritual maturity among college students, then, should facilitate healthy identity exploration and adjustment to college learning experiences (Hunsberger et al., 2001). Context-specific Christian spiritual maturity will be measured by assessing participants' scores on the new measure of Christian Maturity.

The issue of measurement is paramount in assessing religious maturity and its role in identity formation. Given that the glut of existing global measures reflects a narrow focus upon White Protestant Christians in the United States (Hill & Hood, 1999; Slater et al., 2001), efforts should be made to better differentiate among Christians in the West (Hill & Pargament, 2003). Reliable measures of context-specific spirituality are necessary for a valid understanding of the construct (Hill & Pargament, 2003). Demographic variables should include age, gender, and ethnicity, as well as religious preferences such as Catholic or Protestant denominations. Further, a measure of religious socialization should include the number of years or months that participants have been part of a religious community, if any. Other variables of interest should

include identity development, implicit theories and Christian beliefs, empathy, and subjective well-being.

The multi-dimensionality of spirituality presents promising possibilities in better understanding its underlying conceptual nature and its relationship to other important constructs. That is, the relationship of spirituality with psychological outcomes depends upon the definitions and domains of psychological well-being that are under study (Salsman & Carlson, 2005). The relationship between spirituality with psychological adjustment and well-being has been established (e.g., Hall et al., 1998; Hill & Pargament, 2003; Maton, 1989; Pargament et al., 1988; Salsman & Carlson, 2005). Spiritual struggles, however, have been associated with a range of negative outcomes including anxiety, depression, psychological distress, panic disorder, and suicidal tendencies. Conversely, spiritual struggles have been correlated with positive outcomes such as self-actualizing, spiritual growth, and increased open-mindedness (Hill & Pargament, 2003). Thus, the clear relationship between spirituality and psychological health is a potentially complex one, well worth continuing study.

CHAPTER III

METHOD

This research study was designed to gather empirical data to validate a model of Christian spiritual maturity based upon a Johannine conceptualization of love. In addition to testing the newly constructed items that comprise the new measure of Christian Maturity, I will examine the relationships between the latent variable and other relevant correlates of spirituality.

Participants

College students enrolled in a private Christian university in the Midwestern United States were recruited from required survey classes of biblical literature. The researcher contacted instructors known to her, who consequently contacted instructors known to them using a script approved by the Institutional Review Board (Appendix A). The paper survey was then administered to willing students during a regularly scheduled class.

Volunteers were drawn from freshman-level Bible survey courses designed either for theology majors or non-majors. Out of 464 enrolled non-theology majors, 395 responded (85%). Out of 172 enrolled theology majors, 146 responded (85%). Of 541 participants, 395 were non-theology majors. Four hundred and seventy volunteers were between the ages of 18-25 years and 273 were female. One hundred and seventy one students were in their first year of

college, 185 were in their second year, 98 were in their third year, and 72 were in their fourth year or higher. Three hundred and twenty eight volunteers self-identified as White while 195 affiliated with another ethnicity (Asian = 26, Black = 94, Hispanic = 35, Other = 40).

Three hundred and ninety eight participants self-identified as Assembly of God/Non-denominational/Pentecostal, while 126 were affiliated with another denominational group (Baptist = 21, Catholic = 14, Methodist = 16, Other = 75). Three hundred and twenty nine volunteers indicated that they had been converted for 8 years or longer. Seventy five students reported 4-7 years since conversion, 40 reported 1-3 years since conversion, and 7 reported less than 1 year since conversion. Fifty nine participants reported never having been converted. Two hundred and fifty six volunteers described themselves as intellectually conservative while 185 described themselves as moderate and 39 described themselves as liberal.

Four hundred and forty four students had never been married, while 28 were married, 12 were divorced, and 4 were widowed. Four hundred and ninety one participants did not have children, 17 had one child, 4 had two children, 9 had three children, and 4 had four or more children. Three hundred and seventy four volunteers reported that their parents were married, 91 reported their parents were divorced, 19 reported one of their parents had been widowed, and 30 reported their parents had never married.

In the follow-up test-retest study, out of 86 enrolled theology majors, 50 completed both administrations (58%). Of the 50 participants, 32 were male. Forty-five were between the ages of 18 and 25 years. Twenty-five reported being enrolled in their first year of college, 12 their second year, 10 their third year, and 3 their fourth year or higher. Thirty-six of these volunteers self-identified as White, 5 as Black, 6 as Hispanic, and 3 as Other. Forty of these students self-identified their denominational affiliation as Assembly of God/Non-denominational/Pentecostal denomination, 1 as Baptist, 1 as Methodist, and 7 as Other. Finally, thirty-one of the students reported having been converted for 8 years or longer, 10 from 4-7 years, 5 from 1-3 years, and 4 reported never having been converted.

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Item Development

The new measure of Christian Maturity was used to assess religious maturity according to the biblical tenet that Christians should be distinguishable by their love for God and their love for humanity (e.g., John 13.35). Borrowing from the theoretical framework outlined by St. Barnard of Clairvaux (n.d.), sample items were drafted to represent each of the four levels of love (Appendix B). Next, subject matter experts consisting of five graduate students and two professors with graduate degrees in theology were asked to study brief descriptions of each level along with the sample items and to generate additional items consistent with the developing framework (Appendix C). The resulting items were then examined and revised to improve clarity. Revised items from subscales reflecting the two middle levels were then given to four different college professors from varying fields of theological expertise (i.e., two instructors with Ph.D. degrees in biblical literature, one instructor with a doctorate in Missions and one instructor with a graduate degree in practical Christian education) as subject matter experts. The revised items were accompanied by brief statements explaining the two middle levels of Christian Maturity and the experts were asked to sort each item into the appropriate level (Appendix D). Items that were correctly sorted by each expert were retained and administered to volunteers (Appendix E).

Since the development of Christian Maturity is presumed to be built upon preceding growth, the stages of Christian Maturity are expected to be correlated. Subsequently, scores were expected to sum to obtain a uni-dimensional indication of spiritual maturity as measured by the new measure of Christian Maturity, although subscale scores were expected to provide insight into the two conceptual dimensions being explored.

Research Questions

1.) To what extent do the new Christian Maturity scales demonstrate internal consistency and temporal stability?

2.) What is the empirical structure of the CMS items across subscales?

3.) What is the relationship of the CMS subscales to other measures of spiritual maturity?

4.) What is the relationship of the CMS subscales to measures of subjective well-being?

5.) What is the relationship of the CMS subscales to measures of beliefs?

6.) Moreover, what is the relationship of the CMS subscales to measures of spiritual identity formation?

Measures

A battery of self-report measures were administered to students in class at the convenience of their instructors. Instruments measured correlates of Christian spiritual maturity, thus assessing its relationship to other measures of spiritual maturity, identity formation, beliefs, and subjective well-being.

Spiritual maturity. A revised form of Benson, Donahue, and Erickson's (1993) Faith Maturity Scale (Simpson, Newman, & Fuqua, 2010b) (Appendix F), which has been correlated with a number of spiritual measures, along with three subscales (Instability, Defensiveness, and Awareness) from the Spiritual Assessment Inventory (Hall & Edwards, 1996) (Appendix G) was administered. In addition, the new measure of Christian Maturity was used to assess spiritual maturity according to love for God and love for humanity (e.g., John 13.35).

In their study of 251 college students, Salsman and Carlson (2005) reported Cronbach's alpha coefficients to be .93 for the vertical Faith Maturity Scale (FMS-V), .83 for the horizontal scale (FMS-H), and .89 for the total scale (FMS-T). The authors reported correlations with other spiritual measures including a revised measure of Allport's Intrinsic and Extrinsic Religious orientations (Gorsuch & McPherson, 1989), which yielded internal consistency coefficients of .83 for intrinsic scale, .72 for the extrinsic personal scale, .68 for the extrinsic social scale, and .71 for the combined extrinsic scales. Salsman and Carlson (2005) found the following correlations with the FMS-V: Intrinsic Religious Orientation ($r = .80$, $p < .001$), Extrinsic Personal Orientation ($r = .41$, $p < .001$), and Extrinsic Social Orientation ($r = .17$). FMS-H correlations included Intrinsic religious orientation ($r = .39$, $p < .001$), Extrinsic

Personal Orientation (r = .23, *p* < .01), and Extrinsic Social Orientation (r = .20, *p* < .01).

Additionally, Salsman and Carlson (2005) administered the Quest measure (Batson &

Schoenrade, 1991), which yielded a Quest-total internal consistency coefficient of .83. The

Quest scale did not significantly correlate with either dimension of the FMS or Allport's

extrinsic religious orientations and, notably, yielded a negative and significant correlation with

Allport's intrinsic religious orientation (r = -.26, *p* < .001).

In their multiple correlation analyses of several measures of maturity, including the

Faith Maturity Scale, Simpson et al. (2010b) reported an internal consistency coefficient of .87

on the vertical scale (FMS-V) and .71 on the horizontal scale (FMS-H) in their study of 370

Christian adults with a mean age of 40 years. Additionally, the authors found significant

correlations between Allport's (1950) intrinsic religious orientation (Gorsuch & McPherson,

1989), the FMS-V (r = .64, *p* < .05), and the FMS-H (r = .23, *p* < .05). Moreover, Simpson et al.

(2010b) found significant correlations between the FMS and the Spiritual Assessment Inventory

(SAI) (Hall & Edwards, 1996; 2002). Specifically, the Awareness of God subscale was

significantly correlated with both the FMS-V (r = .68, *p* < .05) and the FMS-H (r = .29, *p* < .05)

and the FMS-V was also positively and significantly correlated with the Realistic Acceptance

subscale (r = .44, *p* < .05). None of the negatively-framed measures of relationship quality with

God (i.e., Disappointment, Grandiosity, and Instability) were significantly correlated with the

FMS-H, while significant negative correlations were reported between the FMS-V with

Disappointment with God (r = -.23, *p* < .05) and Instability (r = -.34, *p* < .05) (Simpson et al.,

2010b). Internal consistency coefficients for the FMS in this sample were .96 (composite), .96

(FMS-V), and .87 (FMS-H).

The three subscales from the Spiritual Assessment Inventory (SAI) employed for this

research were obtained from Hill and Hood's (1999) compendium of spiritual measures.

According to Tisdale (1999), these three subscales of the SAI were correlated in the expected

directions with the Bell Object Relations Inventory (BORI) (Bell, 1991), supporting the validity

of this instrument with religious college students similar to the participants in this study. Cronbach's alphas for the sub-scales have been reported to be .88 for Instability, .91, for Defensiveness, and .90 for Awareness (Tisdale, 1999). Cronbach's alphas for the SAI in this sample were .89 (composite), .87 (Awareness), .91 (Defensiveness), and .91 (Instability).

Identity development. The Objective Measure of Ego Identity Status religious subscale (Adams, Shea, & Fitch, 1979) (Appendix H) was used to assess participants' religious identity status. In the test manual, Adams (1998) noted that Cronbach's alphas reported from 20 studies of the full versions of both interpersonal and ideological scales have ranged from .30 to .91, with a median alpha of .66.

Using a different measure for religious identity that operationalized Marcia's (1966) identity statuses, Sanders (1998) analyzed the Faith Maturity Scale (Benson et al., 1993) using a 2 (gender) x 3 (age in three ranges) x 4 (identity statuses) factorial MANOVA design on data from 292 college students (48% Catholic; 52% Protestants from various denominational backgrounds). Internal consistency coefficients were not reported for the data in this sample. Sanders (1998) found a main effect for status only, $F(6, 566) = 12.15$, $p < .01$. Due to the high level of inter-correlation between the FMS-V and FMS-H, a step-down analysis was conducted, revealing the vertical dimension of faith maturity made the larger contribution in score variation, $F(3,284) = 15.65$, $p < .01$, $\eta^2 = 17.5$, and the horizontal dimension a smaller contribution, $F(3,283) = 8.80$, $p < .01$, $\eta^2 = 8.50$. Tukey HSD post hoc mean comparisons for the FMS-V and FMS-H suggested that achievement, moratorium, and foreclosure were significantly different from diffusion ($p < .05$). Post hoc comparisons for the FMS-H further demonstrated that achievement was significantly statistically different from foreclosure.

The seven items from Adams et al.'s (1979) original subscale of religious ego identity status were simplified and expanded to include 15 items (Appendix H). For example, items containing compound sentences were simplified so that only one clause was retained for each item. Cronbach's alpha for all 15 items was a disappointing .67 with internal consistency

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coefficients for the four subscales ranging from .29 for Achievement to .76 for Moratorium. Because alpha for the Achievement subscale was so low, this dimension was dropped from the analysis. For statistical and theoretical reasons, item 12 ("I attend the same church as my family has always attended") was eliminated from the Foreclosure subscale for two reasons: deleting this item improved alpha and item 13 ("I've never really questioned why I attend the same church I always have") seemed to more precisely measure the Foreclosure status, which is defined by a lack of introspection about why one subscribes to his or her religious practices and not by the external practices themselves. Composite alpha for the retained items was .77 (Diffusion = .69, Moratorium = .76, and Foreclosure = .69).

Beliefs. The implicit measures of morality (IMM) (Dweck, Chiu, & Hong, 1995) (Appendix I) and The Christian Orthodoxy Scale (Fullerton & Hunsberger, 1982) (Appendix J) provided information about the participants' epistemological and Christian beliefs. Dweck, Chiu, and Hong, (1995) reported an internal consistency coefficient of .85 for their study with a sample size of 184. Hunsburger reported coefficient alpha to be .98 in a study of 641 introductory psychology students in his analysis of The Christian Orthodoxy Scale (1989).

Using the implicit measures of morality (Dweck et al.,1995), several studies examining implicit theories have revealed that participant beliefs that morality can change are less likely to be associated with discriminatory attitudes toward members of an out-group than are participant beliefs that morality is fixed (e.g., Levy et al., 2001; Plaks et al., 2001). Along a similar vein of inquiry, religious fundamentalism has been associated with discriminatory attitudes toward members of an out-group, while Christian orthodoxy has been either negatively correlated or not correlated with discrimination (Kirkpatrick, 1993). The internal consistency coefficient for the implicit measures of morality (IMM) in this sample was .83. Cronbach's alpha for the Christian Orthodoxy Scale (COS) in this sample was .93.

The Empathy Quotient (Baron-Cohen & Wheelwright, 2004) (Appendix K) was used to assess empathic beliefs that participants hold in relationship to others. Coefficient alpha for the

Empathy Quotient (EQ) scale has been reported to be .88 on a sample of 1,761 college students with a mean age of 21 years (Wakabayashi, Baron-Cohen, Wheelwright, Goldenfield, Delaney, Fine, Smith, & Weil, 2006).

Even though the Faith Maturity Scale (Benson et al., 1993) measures whether participants report Christ-like attitudes and behaviors of compassion toward those in need (e.g., Matt. 9.26; 14.14; 15.32; and 20.34), Ji et al., (2006) reported a discrepancy between students' self-reported Christian attitudes and their actual acts of compassion. Thus, an additional challenge in operationalizing Christian maturity lies in correctly identifying the qualitative changes in a person's development that compel him or her to feel and think differently than he or she might have done at a less mature point in his or her developing relationships with God and, subsequently, the people whom God is believed to have created.

Developed as a measure to differentiate between normal gender differences and high-functioning autistic or Aperger's Syndrome symptoms, the Empathy Quotient was designed to detect the extent to which participants report feeling the appropriate emotion in response to another person's situation (e.g., the sadness of one person inspires a feeling of sadness in another), separate and apart from whether or not he or she feels sympathy, which the authors define as a subset of empathy that compels one to act on behalf of another (Baron-Cohen & Wheelwright, 2004). Based upon instances in which Christ reported genuine intrinsic compassion that inspired his extrinsic action on behalf of others, the probability that Christian maturity should correlate with a measure of empathy that is related to but still distinct from acts of service seems tenable. Cronbach's alpha for the EQ in this sample was .81.

Subjective well-being. The Beck Depression Inventory (Beck, Ward, Mendelson, Mock, & Erbaugh, 1961) (Appendix L), the UCLA Loneliness scale (Russell, 1996) (Appendix M), and the Life Satisfaction scale (Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985) (Appendix N) were used to assess subjective well-being. Coefficient alpha for the Beck Depression Inventory (BDI) is generally high. For example, the internal consistency coefficient was reported to be .89

for a sample of 1,022 undergraduate psychology students with a mean age of 20 years (Dozois, Dobson, & Ahnberg, 1998). Russell has reported coefficient alphas for the UCLA Loneliness scale from four studies, each with sample sizes greater than 300, ranging .89 to .94 (Russell, 1996). Coefficient alpha for the Life Satisfaction Scale has been reported to be .85 from a study of 215 adults (Bailey, Eng, Frisch, & Snyder, 2007), and .83 for a study with a sample size of 215 older adults (Yoon & Lee, 2004).

Simpson et al. (2010b) reported significant negative correlations between the UCLA Loneliness scale and the Faith Maturity Scale (FMS-V: r = -.31, $p < .05$; FMS-H: r = -.14 $p < .05$). Using regression analyses, Yoon and Lee (2004) found that while spirituality did not predict life satisfaction for elderly White participants, religious beliefs ($\beta = .24$, $p < .01$) and coping skills ($\beta = .40$, $p < .01$) were significant predictors of life satisfaction among elderly Black volunteers, and spiritual forgiveness ($\beta = .33$, $p < .01$) was a significant predictor of life satisfaction among elderly Native American participants. Significant correlations in the expected direction have been reported for measures of spirituality with subjective well-being in other studies (e.g., Hill & Pargament, 2003; Salsman & Carlson, 2005).

Cronbach's alpha for the Beck Depression Inventory (BDI) in this sample was .91. The internal consistency coefficient for the UCLA Loneliness Scale was .87. Cronbach's alpha for the Life Satisfaction Scale (LSS) in this sample was .72.

Data Analyses

Data analysis to assess the two scales of Christian Maturity consisted of three stages. First, an item analysis examined the scales at the item level and a factor analysis examined the scales' structure. Second, construct validity was examined using multiple correlation analyses to evaluate the two sets of scaled items and/or empirical factor scores and how they were empirically related to the validity indicators. Third, analyses of variance revealed whether or not there were meaningful differences between groups of participants.

Procedures

The investigator visited the classes of instructors known to her who were willing to make participation available to their students. Amenable students were provided with information about the purposes of the research. Participants were informed of their rights to consent to volunteer and to decline to participate. The researcher then gave volunteers a packet of self-report measures. Research volunteers were asked to work independently and to turn in their completed surveys to the investigator when they were finished. The researcher then placed each individually-submitted answer sheet into a file that was carried directly to her locked office for analysis (Appendix A).

To improve the subject-to-item ratio and to safeguard against order effects, the items were bundled into nine different versions of the test (i.e., codes 000-888) and systematically randomly distributed to the participants. Each version of the test consisted of the 42 new items comprising the Christian Maturity scale. In addition, the FMS and SAI were administered in different order to approximately one third of the sample (i.e., 000 and 111), the OMEIS, BDI, UCLA Loneliness Scale, and LSS were administered in different order to approximately one third of the sample (i.e., 222, 333, 444, and 555), and the IMM, COS, and EQ were administered in different order to the remainder of participants (i.e., 666, 777, and 888).

In a follow up study to compute a test-retest reliability coefficient of the shortened form of the CMS, participants enrolled in a freshman-level Bible survey course designed for theology majors were administered the two 10-item subscales approximately 6 weeks (i.e., 40 days) apart. Participants were asked to respond to the same 10 demographic questions that were administered in the initial study. After the first administration, test forms were collected and placed in the investigator's locked office. To protect participants' confidentiality, the secured forms were not examined until the second administration. The forms were then anonymously scanned to create the data file, which was then subjected to analysis after all identifiers were removed.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

An empirical examination was conducted to test the psychometric properties of the new measure of Christian Maturity. Further, the underlying conceptual nature of Christian spiritual maturity and its relationship to other psychological measures of spiritual maturity, ego identity status, subjective well being, and beliefs were explored. Six specific research questions were addressed:

Research Questions

1.) To what extent do the new Christian Maturity scales demonstrate internal consistency and temporal stability?

2.) What is the empirical structure of the CMS items across subscales?

3.) What is the relationship of the CMS subscales to other measures of spiritual maturity?

4.) What is the relationship of the CMS subscales to measures of subjective well-being?

5.) What is the relationship of the CMS subscales to measures of beliefs?

6.) Moreover, what is the relationship of the CMS subscales to measures of spiritual identity formation?

Descriptive Statistics

Data were initially analyzed to ensure that responses for every item fell within the possible range of score values. Descriptive statistics were calculated and are summarized in Table 1. The table also includes the coefficient alphas for each of the ten scales in the current sample.

Table 1

Psychometric Properties of the Major Study Variables

Variable	n	M	SD	α
Christian Maturity Scale	541	73.62	13.25	.90
Faith Maturity Scale	218	196.51	29.16	.96
Spiritual Assessment Inventory	217	75.25	16.31	.89
Objective Measure of Ego Identity Status	191	24.45	7.80	.77
Beck Depression Inventory	191	44.99	16.21	.91
UCLA Loneliness Scale	191	48.30	11.96	.87
Life Satisfaction Scale	190	17.53	4.32	.72
Implicit Measures of Morality	141	6.15	3.33	.83
Christian Orthodoxy Scale	142	109.47	11.84	.93
Empathy Quotient	142	86.44	11.53	.81

Note. The variation in sample sizes is due to systematic random sampling to improve the subject-to-item ratio. See description of procedures on pages 49-50.

Scale Development of the CMS

Cronbach's alpha for the initial 42 items of the CMS was .90. Internal consistency coefficients for Clairvaux's staircase of Christian Maturity, Step 2: Loving God for Self's Sake, was .90 and for Step 3: Loving God for God's Sake, was .86. Deletion of items did not suggest an improvement in alpha, but moderate to high inter-item correlations (.26 - .56) suggested that the scale could be shortened for better utility (Appendix E).

Ten items from each subscale were retained for further analysis. Step 2: Loving God for Self's Sake items that shared the highest inter-item correlations (.57 - .73) yielded an internal consistency coefficient of .91. Step 3: Loving God for God's Sake items that shared the highest inter-item correlations (.42 - .62) yielded a Cronbach's alpha of .82. Alpha for the 20-item short version of the CMS, comprised of ten items from each subscale with inter-item correlations ranging from .26 - .71, was .86. Results are summarized in Table 2 and Table 3. The utility value of offering a shorter measure was deemed appropriate. The test-retest reliability coefficient in the follow up study of shortened subscales was .77 for Step 2 and .56 for Step 3.

Table 2

Reliability Statistics for Loving God for Self's Sake

Item	Variance if Item Deleted	Item-Total Correlation	Alpha if Item Deleted
The more we do for God, the more God does for us.	102.36	.57	.90
The more we love God, the more he blesses us.	103.55	.57	.90
God's love protects us from being dishonored.	103.28	.59	.90
We love God so that we won't suffer.	100.45	.73	.89
We love God so he will honor us.	98.42	.73	.89
We love God so he will take care of us.	99.82	.69	.89
We love God so he won't judge us.	101.40	.68	.90
We give to others so God will give to us.	102.10	.62	.90
We love God so he will bless us.	97.99	.72	.89
We love God so he will take care of our loved ones.	98.10	.73	.89
Scale Statistics	123.08		.91

Table 3

Reliability Statistics for Loving God for God's Sake

Item	Variance if Item Deleted	Item-Total Correlation	Alpha if Item Deleted
We serve people even when they do not like us.	19.85	.47	.81
We give all glory to God.	19.82	.55	.80
We only want to please God.	17.86	.42	.83
We love God even when we're suffering.	19.11	.57	.80
We love God because of who he is.	20.14	.53	.81
I want to do well so God will get the glory.	19.04	.62	.80
We obey God even in difficult circumstances.	19.38	.54	.80
I want other people to know God's goodness.	20.61	.59	.80
We don't need recognition for serving God.	19.54	.46	.81
We serve God to honor him.	20.54	.55	.81
Scale Statistics	23.71		.82

Thus, the answer to question one is that the scales appear to have a moderate to high degree of internal consistency. With reference to temporal stability, however, the answer is less clear. While .77 is not necessarily low, .56 for the subscale measuring the theorized higher developmental level warrants closer attention.

Structure of the Scales

The second research question addressed the relationship of the CMS items across subscales. First, the correlation matrix among items was analyzed and correlations were found to range from .01-.82. Bartlett's test of sphericity ($X^2 = 4584.07$, 190 *df*, p = .000) and a KMO value of .89 suggested that it was highly appropriate to factor analyze the correlation matrix. Principal axis factor analysis produced three factors yielding eigenvalues greater than one; however, both the scree plot and the study's theoretical framework supported a two-factor solution. Two factors were rotated with direct oblimin (r = .06) to account for 43.23% of the variance. Given that bivariate correlations between the factor scores and the scaled scores were high ($\geq$ .98), the subscale scores were used in all further analyses.

Table 4

Factor Loadings for Principal Axis Factor Analysis with Direct Oblimin Rotation of CMS Items

Item	Self's Sake	God's Sake	h²
10. The more we do for God, the more God does for us.	.60 (.60)	.14 (.10)	.37
12. The more we love God, the more he blesses us.	.60 (.59)	.20 (.16)	.38
17. God's love protects us from being dishonored.	.62 (.61)	.13 (.09)	.39
19. We love God so that we won't suffer.	.77 (.77)	-.06 (-.11)	.60
20. We love God so he will honor us.	.77 (.78)	-.03 (-.08)	.61
22. We love God so he will take care of us.	.74 (.74)	-.06 (-.11)	.55
25. We love God so he won't judge us.	.72 (.73)	-.04 (-.09)	.53
26. We give to others so God will give to us.	.65 (.66)	.03 (-.01)	.43
32. We love God so he will bless us.	.77 (.77)	.05 (00)	.59
33. We love God so he will take care of our loved ones.	.77 (.77)	.04 (-.01)	.60
5. We serve people even when they do not like us.	-04 (-.08)	.52 (.53)	.28
8. We give all glory to God.	.10 (.06)	.61 (.61)	.38
15. We only want to please God.	.25 (.22)	.47 (.46)	.27
16. We love God even when we're suffering.	.07 (.03)	.62 (.62)	.39
21. We love God because of who he is.	-.05 (-.09)	.60 (.60)	.37
23. I want to do well so God will get the glory.	.10 (.06)	.70 (.69)	.49
29. We obey God even in difficult circumstances.	.02 (-.02)	.59 (.59)	.35
38. I want other people to know to God's goodness.	-.05 (-.10)	.66 (.67)	.45
39. We don't need recognition for serving God.	.00 (-.04)	.50 (.50)	.25
40. We serve God to honor him.	.07 (.03)	.62 (.61)	.38

Initial Eigenvalues	5.57	4.19
Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings	5.06	3.61
Percentage of Variance	25.39	17.84

Note. Structure weights are given along with pattern coefficients. The latter are placed within parentheses. Together these coefficients demonstrate the whole relationships of the items with the factors as well as the unique relationships shared with the factors when inter-item correlations are removed.

The answer to question two is that the CMS items appear to represent the proposed two scale structures of the CMS very well. The negligible correlation of the two factors indicated the structures are nearly orthogonal.

CMS Relationship to Other Spiritual Measures

The last four research questions addressed the relationship of the CMS subscales to other variables of interest. The first set of these variables were measured with instruments assessing faith maturity (Faith Maturity Scale) and object relations development (Spiritual Assessment Inventory). A simultaneous multiple regression analysis was performed to answer the third question about the relationship of the CMS to the other measures of spirituality. Bivariate correlations between the FMS and the SAI subscales ranged from -.04 (between SAI Awareness and Instability) to .74 (between FMS Vertical and Horizontal dimensions). When the subscales for both instruments were entered as predictors in a multiple regression analysis using Step 2: Loving God for Self's Sake subscale as the criterion variable, a small but statistically significant proportion of variance in the CMS scores was explained, $R^2 = .09$; $F(5, 208) = 4.24$, $p = .001$. Beta weights, t values, and correlations are summarized in Table 5.

A fairly sizeable difference between the zero order correlations and the semipartial correlations suggested some multi-collinearity among the predictors. SAI Defensiveness and SAI Instability seemed to reflect the largest relationships with Step 2: Loving God for Self's Sake, although Defensiveness yielded a larger difference than did Instability between the zero order and semipartial correlations. Hence, Instability seemed to contribute more unique variance than did Defensiveness.

Table 5

Multiple Regression Analysis Predicting Step 2: Loving God for Self's Sake from Spiritual Measures: Faith Maturity Scale-Vertical, Faith Maturity Scale-Horizontal, Spiritual Assessment Inventory Subscales Measuring Awareness, Defensiveness, and Instability

Measures	Unstandardized beta	Standardarized Beta	t	p	Zero Order r	Semipartial r
SAI Awareness	.03	.02	.18	.856	.06	.01
SAI Defensiveness	.01	.01	.10	.924	.20	-.01
SAI Instability	.41	.32	3.23	.001	.29	.21
FMS Vertical	.02	.04	.35	.725	-.01	.02
FMS Horizontal	.08	.06	.57	.568	.05	.04

The subscales for the measures of spiritual maturity were again simultaneously entered into a multiple regression, this time using Step 3: Loving God for God's Sake as the criterion. This analysis demonstrated a larger relationship as a moderate proportion of variance was accounted for, $R^2 = .23$; $F(5, 206) = 12.05$, $p = .000$. Beta weights, t values, and correlations are summarized in Table 6. These variables also reflected differences between the variance shared with the whole predictor set and the unique variance that individual predictors contributed. In this analysis, SAI Awareness, FMS-Vertical, and FMS-Horizontal seemed to share the larger relationships with Step 3: Loving God for God's Sake, with FMS-Horizontal demonstrating the greatest reduction in unique variance contributed after the correlation among predictors was partialed out. SAI Defensiveness, however, contributed the greatest unique variance among all of the predictors, despite its smaller zero order correlation.

Table 6

Multiple Regression Analysis Predicting Step 3: Loving God for God's Sake from Spiritual Measures: Faith Maturity Scale-Vertical, Faith Maturity Scale-Horizontal, Spiritual Assessment Inventory Subscales Measuring Awareness, Defensiveness, and Instability

Measures	Unstandardized beta	Standardized Beta	t	p	Zero Order r	Semipartial r
SAI Awareness	.15	.22	2.61	.010	.39	.16
SAI Defensiveness	.16	.24	2.80	.006	-.16	-.17
SAI Instability	.09	.15	1.68	.094	-.11	.10
FMS Vertical	.05	.25	2.17	.031	.41	.13
FMS Horizontal	.03	.05	.55	.583	.34	.03

Taken together, these relationships among spiritual measures might suggest that although the CMS was measuring Christian spiritual maturity as were the FMS and the SAI,

perhaps Clairvaux's model addressed a different aspect of the spiritual development process than do the theoretical frameworks underpinning the other two measures, thus supporting its discriminant validity. Alternatively, the CMS might possibly have measured a latent variable other than the intended construct of Christian spiritual maturity. Hence, the relationships shared among the CMS subscales and other known correlates of spiritual maturity warrant inspection.

CMS Relationship to Measures of Subjective Well Being

The fourth research question addresses the relationship of the CMS subscales with measures of subjective well being. Bivariate correlations among the Beck Depression Inventory (BDI), the UCLA Loneliness Scale, and the Life Satisfaction Scale (LSS) ranged from -.27 (BDI and LSS) to .56 (BDI and UCLA). The measures of subjective well-being were entered simultaneously into a multiple regression analysis to predict Step 2: Loving God for Self's Sake. This analysis produced a small but statistically significant result, $R^2 = .05$; $F(3, 179) = 3.41$, $p = .019$. Beta weights, t values, and correlations are summarized in Table 7. Both the zero order and semipartial correlations suggested that the BDI shared the largest relationship with the criterion and the predictor set.

Table 7

Multiple Regression Analysis Predicting Step 2: Loving God for Self's Sake from SWB Measures: Beck Depression Inventory, UCLA Loneliness Scale, and Life Satisfaction Scale

Measures	Unstandardized beta	Standardized Beta	t	p	Zero Order r	Semipartial r
LSS	.24	.09	1.16	.248	.01	.08
BDI	.14	.20	2.33	.021	.22	.17
UCLA	.07	.07	.75	.456	.14	.05

Next, the same predictors were entered into a multiple regression using Step 3: Loving God for God's Sake as the criterion variable. Overall results for these analyses were very similar, suggesting that there may not be much difference between the subscales' relationships to subjective well being, $R^2 = .05$; $F(3, 179) = 3.26$, $p = .023$. Beta weights, t values, and correlations are summarized in Table 8. On the other hand, the BDI seemed to share a larger relationship with Step 2: Loving God for Self's Sake but the LSS seemed to share a larger

relationship with Step 3: Loving God for God's Sake, which may indicate a distinction between

the two dimensions measured by the CMS.

Table 8

Multiple Regression Analysis Predicting Step 3: Loving God for God's Sake from SWB
Measures: Beck Depression Inventory, UCLA Loneliness Scale, and Life Satisfaction Scale

Measures	Unstandardized beta	Beta	t	p	Zero Order r	Semipartial r
LSS	.23	.18	2.27	.024	.22	.17
BDI	.01	.01	.16	.872	-.10	-.01
UCLA	.03	.07	.72	.472	-.16	-.05

CMS Relationship to Measures of Beliefs

The fifth research question addressed the relationship of the CMS scales to measures of

beliefs such as the implicit measures of morality (IMM), the Christian Orthodoxy Scale (COS),

and the Empathy Quotient (EQ). Correlations among these measures of beliefs ranged from -.29

(IMM and EQ) to .54 (IMM and COS). When simultaneously entered into a multiple regression

analysis to predict Step 2: Loving God for Self's Sake, a moderate proportion of the variance in

scores was accounted for by these variables, $R^2 = .31$; $F(3, 135) = 20.34$, $p = .000$. Beta

weights, t values, and correlations are summarized in Table 9. The sizes of the zero order

correlations among all three predictors were substantially reduced when their shared variance

was removed, suggesting quite a bit of multi-collinearity among the set. In both their

relationships with the whole set and in their unique relationships with the criterion variable, the

COS and the IMM shared larger relationships with Step 2: Loving God for Self's Sake, with the

IMM contributing the most variance of all three variables.

Table 9

Multiple Regression Analysis Predicting Step 2: Loving God for Self's Sake from Belief
Measures: Empathy Quotient, the Christian Orthodoxy Scale, and the Implicit Measures of
Morality

Measures	Unstandardized beta	Standardized Beta	t	p	Zero Order r	Semipartial r
EQ	.05	.05	.63	.531	-.21	-.05
COS	.21	.22	2.58	.011	.44	.18
IMM	1.29	.39	4.52	.000	.52	.32

The same predictors were entered into another multiple regression using Step 3: Loving God for God's Sake as the criterion variable, producing a smaller although still statistically significant result $R^2 = .14$; $F(3, 135) = 7.40$, $p = .000$. Beta weights, t values, and correlations are summarized in Table 10.

In this analysis, multi-collinearity was again reflected in the discrepancy between zero order and semipartial correlations, although the differences were less dramatic in predicting Step 3: Loving God for God's Sake. Notably, the COS contributed substantially less in Step 3: Loving God for God's Sake than it did in predicting Step 2: Loving God for Self's Sake. In addition, the EQ shared the largest relationship with Step 3: Loving God for God's Sake of all three predictors despite its negligible relationship with Step 2: Loving God for Self's Sake. Finally, the IMM again made significant contributions to total variance and unique variance shared with the criterion variable, albeit the relationship was inverse and smaller in the latter analysis than it was in the former one.

Table 10

Multiple Regression Analysis Predicting Step 3: Loving God for God's Sake from Belief Measures: Empathy Quotient, the Christian Orthodoxy Scale, and the Implicit Measures of Morality

Measures	Unstandardized beta	Standardized Beta	t	p	Zero Order r	Semipartial r
EQ	.12	.30	3.53	.001	.32	.28
COS	.06	.16	1.68	.095	-.04	.13
IMM	.31	.23	2.40	.018	-.23	-.19

CMS Relationship to Ego Identity Status

The final research question addressed the relationship of the CMS subscales to the dimensions of ego identity status as operationalized by Marcia (1966) and measured by a revised version of Adams et al.'s (1979) spiritual subscale (Appendix H). Bivariate correlations among the subscales ranged from .17 (Moratorium and Foreclosure) to .45 (Moratorium and Diffusion). The measures of ego identity status were simultaneously entered as predictors into a multiple regression equation using Step 2: Loving God for Self's Sake as the criterion variable

with a moderate proportion of variance accounted for, $R^2 = .18$; $F(3, 179) = 12.85$, $p = .000$.

Beta weights, t values, and correlations are summarized in Table 11. Multi-colllinearity was

again reflected in the differences between the sizes of the whole correlations and the semipartial

correlations. In both cases, however, Foreclosure appeared to share the largest relationship with

Step 2: Loving God for Self's Sake.

Table 11

Multiple Regression Analysis Predicting Step 2: Loving God for Self's Sake from Ego Identity Status

Measures	Unstandardized beta	Standardized Beta	t	p	Zero Order r	Semipartial r
Diffusion	.26	.08	1.03	.304	.24	.07
Moratorium	.33	.12	1.56	.120	.21	.11
Foreclosure	1.10	.34	4.79	.000	.39	.33

When the same predictors were again simultaneously entered into a multiple regression,

this time using Step 3: Loving God for God's Sake as the criterion variable, a smaller proportion

of variance was accounted for although the relationship was still statistically significant: $R^2 =$

$.10$; $F(3, 179) = 6.94$, $p = .000$. Beta weights, t values, and correlations are summarized in Table

12. In this analysis, Foreclosure shared a much smaller relationship with the variable set in

general and with the criterion in particular. Although both Diffusion and Moratorium shared

similar whole relationships with the set, Moratorium contributed considerably more unique

variance than did the other two predictors.

Table 12

Multiple Regression Analysis Predicting Step 3: Loving God for God's Sake from the from Ego Identity Status

Measures	Unstandardized beta	Standardized Beta	t	p	Zero Order r	Semipartial r
Diffusion	.18	.12	1.44	.152	-.22	-.10
Moratorium	.35	.26	3.29	.001	-.31	-.23
Foreclosure	.04	.03	.34	.733	-.06	.02

Demographic Variables

Several demographic variables were captured in order to explore potential relations with

Step 2: Loving God for Self's Sake, and Step 3: Loving God for God's Sake. The variables of

greatest interest included Major, Age, Sex, Ethnicity, Education Level, Denomination, and

Years from Conversion. Each of these variables will be addressed individually.

Academic major. The first demographic variable of interest was academic major. That

is, participants were drawn from required freshman-level biblical survey courses designed for

either theology majors or non-majors. Due to a significant Levene's test (p = .000) between

theology majors and non-majors on the Christian Maturity subscale Step 2: Loving God for

Self's Sake, the Brown-Forsythe procedure was employed. The difference between groups was

statistically significant, $F(1,326.29) = 91.22$, $p = .000$. The distance between the means of these

two groups (8.72) divided by their standard deviation (11.18) yielded an effect size of .78, which

is generally considered to be large. These findings revealed that Theology Majors scored

significantly lower than did Non-majors. Results are summarized in Table 13.

Table 13

ANOVA on Step 2: Loving God for Self's Sake by Major

Variable	n	M	SD	95% CI	
				LL	UL
Major (0)	146	21.29	8.73	19.87	22.72
Non-Major (1)	395	30.01	11.08	26.71	31.11

Note. Parenthetical values following variable names indicate the number associated with the
item response. For example, majors were labeled with a "0" and non-majors were labeled with a
"1." CI = confidence interval; LL = lower limit; UL = upper limit.

Logically, the analysis was run again using Step 3: Loving God for God's Sake as the

dependent variable to investigate whether the same pattern would be revealed, confirming a true

difference between Majors and Non-majors. In this instance, however, Levene's test was not

significant and there were no significant differences in the mean scores between Majors and

Non-majors on this subscale, $F(1, 537) = 1.22$, $p = .270$.

These findings revealed that both groups scored lower on Clarivaux's Step 2: Loving

God for Self's Sake and higher on Step 3: Loving God for God's Sake. Additionally, there was

no difference in scores between groups at the third step, postulated to be a higher level of

development. Conversely, there was a substantive difference in scores at the second step,

postulated to be a lower level of development. In sum, Non-majors identified more instrumental reasons for their love of God than did Majors who were pursuing some type of biblical study or ministry as a vocation.

Age. The second demographic variable of interest was age. Despite the developmental nature of the Christian spiritual maturity construct, there were no significant differences detected among participants of differing ages on Step 2: Loving God for Self's Sake, $F(4, 508) = .155$, $p = .185$. Similarly, no significant differences were detected on Step 3: Loving God for God's Sake, $F(4, 506) = .367$, $p = .832$.

Sex. Another variable of interest was sex. Significant differences were not detected on this variable for Step 2: Loving God for Self's Sake, $F(4, 464) = .1.63$, $p = .166$. Moreover, differences among participants were not revealed on Step 3: Loving God for God's Sake, $F(4, 462) = .1.68$, $p = .153$.

Ethnicity. A fourth demographic variable of interest was ethnicity. Statistically significant differences were revealed on this variable, $F(4, 520) = 5.43$, $p = .000$. Post hoc comparisons using Tukey's HSD showed honestly significant differences between Black and White participants (mean difference = 5.59, SD = 11.23, $p = .000$, $\Delta = .50$). This effect size is generally considered moderate. Results are summarized in Table 14.

Table 14

ANOVA on Step 2: Loving God for Self's Sake by Ethnicity

Variable	n	M	SD	95% CI	
				LL	UL
Asian (1)	26	29.65	10.57	25.39	33.92
Black (2)	94	31.67	11.61	29.29	34.05
Hispanic (3)	35	29.09	11.36	25.18	32.99
White (4)	330	26.08	10.82	24.91	27.25
Other (5)	40	29.48	11.32	25.86	33.09

Note. Parenthetical values following variable names indicate the number associated with the item response. For example, self-identified Asian participants responded with a "1." CI = confidence interval; LL = lower limit; UL = upper limit.

The analysis examining differences on Ethnicity using Step 3: Loving God for God's Sake as the dependent variable revealed a different pattern among the means than the previous

investigation yielded. Due to a significant Levene's test (p = .002), the Brown-Forsythe

procedure was employed and statistically significant differences were revealed, $F_{(4, 89.93)}$ =

2.96, p = .024. In this case, no significant differences were detected among the mean scores

between Black participants and White participants. Significant differences were revealed,

however, between participants who self-identified as Asian and participants who self-identified

as Black (mean difference = 3.80, SD =5.10, p = .003, Δ = .75). This effect size is generally

considered moderate to large. Results are summarized in Table 15.

Table 15

ANOVA on Step 3: Loving God for God's Sake by Ethnicity

Variable	n	M	SD	95% CI	
				LL	UL
Asian (1)	26	43.69	7.48	40.67	46.71
Black (2)	94	47.49	3.88	46.69	48.29
Hispanic (3)	35	46.40	4.65	44.80	48.00
White (4)	328	46.09	4.68	45.58	46.59
Other (5)	40	46.25	4.11	44.94	47.56

Note. Parenthetical values following variable names indicate the number associated with the item response.
For example, self-identified Asian participants responded with a "1." CI = confidence interval; LL = lower
 limit; UL = upper limit.

Educational level. A fifth demographic variable of interest was educational level, or

number of years in college. Differences among participants were statistically significant, $F_{(4, 521)}$ = 3.56, p = .007. Post hoc comparisons using Tukey's HSD showed honestly significant

differences between participants in their first year of college and participants in their fourth year

(mean difference = 5.47, SD = 10.83, p = .015, Δ = .51). This effect size is generally considered

moderate. Results are summarized in Table 16. Despite a significant Levene's test in the

analysis using Step 3: Loving God for God's Sake as the dependent variable (p = .001), the

Brown Forsythe procedure revealed that there were no statistically significant differences among

participants of differing educational levels, $F_{(4, 217.45)}$ =2.05, p = .088.

Table 16

ANOVA on Step 2: Loving God for Self's Sake by Educational Level

Variable	n	M	SD	95% CI	
				LL	UL
1st year (1)	171	29.40	10.97	27.74	31.05
2nd year (2)	185	27.95	11.15	26.33	29.56
3rd year (3)	98	27.43	11.96	25.03	29.83
4th year (4)	53	23.92	9.28	21.37	26.48
5th year or higher (5)	19	22.63	11.71	16.99	28.27

Note. Parenthetical values following variable names indicate the number associated with the item response. For example, participants in their first year of college responded with a "1." CI = confidence interval; LL = lower limit; UL = upper limit.

Denomination. A sixth demographic variable captured was the church denomination with which members affiliated. Due to a significant Levene's test on Step 2: Loving God for Self's Sake (p = .050), the Brown-Forsythe procedure was employed. Differences among participants were statistically significant, $F(4, 73.24) = 3.04$, p = .022. Post hoc comparisons using Tukey's HSD showed honestly significant differences between participants who self-identified as Assembly of God/Non-denominational/Pentecostal and those who self-identified as Catholic (mean difference = 8.78, SD = 10.82, p = .031, Δ = .81). This effect size is generally considered large. Moreover, honestly significant differences were detected between participants who self-identified as Catholic and those who self-identified as Other (mean difference = 9.70, SD = 13.07, p = .023, Δ = .74). This effect size is generally considered moderate to large. Taken together, these findings suggest there may be real differences between Catholic participants and other denominations on Step 2: Loving God for Self's Sake. Results are summarized in Table 17.

Table 17

ANOVA on Step 2: Loving God for Self's Sake for Participants by Denomination

Variable	n	M	SD	95% CI	
				LL	UL
Assembly of God/Non-denominational/Pentecostal (1)	398	27.29	10.58	26.25	28.34
Baptist (2)	21	33.29	12.27	27.70	38.87
Catholic (3)	14	36.07	14.19	27.88	44.27
Methodist (4)	16	30.75	12.56	24.06	37.44
Other (5)	75	26.37	12.36	23.53	29.22

Note. Parenthetical values following variable names indicate the number associated with the item response. For example, participants who self-identified as Assembly of God/Non-denominational/Pentecostal responded with a "1." CI = confidence interval; LL = lower limit; UL = upper limit.

When the analysis was conducted using the Step 3: Loving God for God's Sake as the dependent variable, Levene's test was again significant (p = .001). Moreover, statistically significant differences were found using the Brown-Forsythe procedure, $F(4, 92.81) = 2.83$, p = .029. Post hoc comparisons using Tukey's HSD showed honestly significant differences between participants who self-identified as Assembly of God/Non-denominational/Pentecostal and those who self-identified as Other (mean difference = 1.69, SD = 4.55, p = .031, $\Delta = .37$). This effect size is generally considered small to moderate. These findings are difficult to interpret, however, in that little is known about the reasons that participants self-identified as Other. Results are summarized in Table 18.

Table 18

ANOVA on Loving God for God's Sake by Denomination

Variable	n	M	SD	95% CI	
				LL	UL
Assembly of God/Non-denominational/Pentecostal (1)	397	46.73	3.99	46.34	47.12
Baptist (2)	21	44.43	5.21	42.06	46.80
Catholic (3)	14	45.57	4.69	42.87	48.28
Methodist (4)	16	44.13	5.84	41.01	47.24
Other (5)	74	45.04	6.69	43.49	46.59

Note. Parenthetical values following variable names indicate the number associated with the item response. For example, participants who self-identified as Assembly of God/Non-denominational/ Pentecostal responded with a "1." CI = confidence interval; LL = lower limit; UL = upper limit.

Years from Conversion. A final demographic variable of interest was the number of years from the point of conversion. Statistically significant differences were revealed on this variable, $F(4, 505) = 4.03$, $p = .003$. While the omnibus test was significant, however, post hoc comparisons using Tukey's HSD showed no honestly significant differences between participants (mean differences ranged from .35 – 10.69). Results are summarized in Table 19. When the analysis was conducted using Step 3: Loving God for God's Sake as the dependent variable, Levene's test was significant ($p = .009$), however, the Brown Forsythe procedure yielded no differences among the means on this variable, $F(4, 70.64) = 1.53$, $p = .204$.

Table 19

ANOVA on Loving God for Self's Sake by Years from Conversion

Variable	n	M	SD	95% CI	
				LL	UL
Never (1)	59	30.39	11.67	27.35	33.43
Less than 1 year (2)	7	37.00	10.07	27.69	46.31
1-3 years (3)	40	29.58	12.65	25.53	33.62
4-7 years (4)	75	29.23	11.01	26.69	31.76
8 years or more (5)	329	26.31	10.80	25.14	27.48

Note. Parenthetical values following variable names indicate the number associated with the item response. For example, participants who reported never having had converted responded with a "1." CI = confidence interval; LL = lower limit; UL = upper limit.

Summary of Findings

Consistent with theory, these results suggest that Step 2: Loving God for Self's Sake may be related to lower levels of development in that Instability, Depression, Christian Orthodoxy, and Foreclosure appeared to share the more significant relationships with this dimension. Further, individuals who scored higher at this level tended not to have been converted for as many years, to have acquired as many years of education, or to be seriously pursuing biblical study or ministry for their future vocations. It should be noted that all individuals scored lower on this dimension of Christian spiritual maturity, although individuals purported to be at higher levels of development yielded much lower scores than did their counterparts.

On the other hand, Step 3: Loving God for God's Sake may suggest higher levels of development in that Awareness, Vertical Faith Maturity, Life Satisfaction, Empathy, and negative relationships with the doubting dimensions of identity development (Diffusion and Moratorium) appeared to share more significant associations with this level of Christian spiritual maturity. It should be noted that all research volunteers tended to score higher on this dimension of Christian spiritual maturity.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

Many challenges in measuring Christian spiritual maturity have contributed to the design of this study. Perhaps most importantly, recognition that Christians' goals for their own development may clash with psychologists' notions of developmental health had to be taken into account in order to forge a valid and reliable measure potentially acceptable to both (Hall et al., 1998; Simpson et al., 2008; Slater et al., 2001). Secondarily, the multi-dimensionality of spirituality and its complex relationships with other psychological variables required a research design that allowed for the concurrent evaluation of the construct with multiple validity indictors (e.g., Hill & Pargament, 2003; Salsman & Carlson, 2005).

Specific to this study, spirituality was defined as a latent structure representing a broad search for that which is transcendent or sacred (Hill & Hood, 1999). Subsumed under spirituality, Christian spirituality was defined as the socially-negotiated commitment to emulate Christ with maturity conceptualized in terms of a Johannine perspective of love and obedience to Christ's greatest two commandments: love God and love people (Matt. 22.37-39; Mark

12.30-31). Several research questions were formulated in an effort to focus this study.

To What Extent Do the New Christian Maturity Scales Demonstrate Internal Consistency and Temporal Stability?

Reliability analyses yielded high internal consistency coefficients for the initial 42 items. Large inter-item correlations made tenable the selection of only 20 items to represent the two postulated dimensions of Clairvaux's staircase of spiritual maturity: Loving God for Self's Sake and Loving God for God's Sake. Cronbach's alpha for the 10-item subscale Step 2: Loving God for Self's Sake was .91. Cronbach's alpha for the 10-item subscale Step 3: Loving God for God's Sake was .82, indicating that the new Christian Maturity scales appear to demonstrate a moderate to high level of internal consistency.

On the other hand, while the test-retest coefficient for Step 2 was .77, which is not necessarily low, the coefficient for Step 3 was .56, leading to questions about this measure's stability over time. Although the lower test-retest coefficient for Step 3: Loving God for God's Sake might be attributable to measurement error, an alternative explanation might derive from the developmental framework from which these scales were constructed. That is, the higher developmental construct, Loving God for God's Sake, may be less stable among this sample of late adolescents and early adults, whose ego identities are presumably still in formation. This latter interpretation could be theoretically significant, given that internally consistent measures suggesting fluctuations in stability may reflect the malleability of the volunteers' spiritual commitments, possibly rendering them vulnerable to the deleterious effects of confusion that is commensurate with Erikson's (1968) identity formation task (i.e., identity versus confusion).

What is the Empirical Structure of the CMS Items across Subscales?

Principal axis factor analysis revealed a simple structure that appeared to measure the proposed framework. All items were associated with the anticipated dimensions and the resulting factors were nearly orthogonal, suggesting that two very different aspects of Christian spiritual maturity were identified. The potential value of orthogonal scales is that each provides

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unique information, increasing the potential predictive value of the measures. Developmental theories have long been criticized for postulating hierarchical stage progressions that prove to be correlated in empirical studies (e.g., Adams et al., 1979) and that do not necessarily resonate with individuals' lived experiences (e.g., Fowler, 1981; 2001). That the CMS scales do in fact seem to represent two discrete stages in Christian spiritual development suggests that Clairvaux's framework may offer more utility than had previously been supposed. That is, the empirical data from this sample provide support for the validity of his developmental staircase.

The orthogonality of the two scales was unexpected, however, given that this study's initial framework proposed correlated steps in which mature development was predicated upon previous development. One admonition to heed in trying to understand these findings is that the homogeneous sample of young adults enrolled in a private Christian university may have contributed to a possible restriction in range. That is, the participants' similarities may have attenuated the correlation between the two scales, subsequently underestimating the strength of the association between the two. That the two scales seemed to tap two different aspects of spiritual maturity that are distinct from one another requires more attention be paid to understanding and articulating Clairvaux's conceptual field.

One possible explanation for the distinction between steps may lie in the simple assumption that progression upward onto one step (e.g., Loving God for God's Sake) would require moving away from the previous step (e.g., Loving God for Self's Sake). Participants at lower developmental levels might then be expected to bear more weight on the lower step, figuratively speaking, while their counterparts at higher developmental levels do not, as the discrepancy in scores between theology majors and non-majors and people enrolled in private Christian university longer seemed to reflect. One limitation of this explanation, of course, is that no subscale was developed to measure Clairvaux's fourth step, Loving Self for God's Sake. Thus, this study does not provide enough data to speculate if the participants at higher levels of development had begun to move toward that more developed stage at Step 4, which would be

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reflected in higher scores on that step than would their counterparts have yielded at lower levels of development.

Closer examination of the actual items and the patterns in scores, however, suggests a different explanation may be warranted. That is, all participants scored lower on the subscale measuring the lower developmental Step 2: Loving God for Self's Sake, than on the higher Step 3: Loving God for God's Sake. Moreover, all participants' scores tended to be the same at the higher level, regardless of other characteristics. Another interpretation, then, might be that Clairvaux's steps as depicted by these items do not represent developmental movement upward from one location on a figurative staircase to another. Rather, these steps may represent a developmental orientation, or point of view, that is adopted by individuals as a result of their stage of development in their relationships with God. All Christians have likely been attracted to their faith by Christ's redefinition of power and politics (e.g., John 13.12-17; Matt. 25.34-40; 20.25-28). Hence, all Christian participants seem able to agree with Step 3's reasons motivating love for God (i.e., an intrinsic appreciation for God in his own right, independent of how a relationship with such a God personally benefits the individual).

Although the Christian's relationship with God is made possible by accepting the free gift of Christ's salvation (Eph. 2.8-9; 1 Cor. 4.7), Christian spiritual maturity is based upon emulating Christ, who defined greatness in God's kingdom as service to God and other people (Matt. 20.25-28). Christ championed "the least of these" (NRS, Matt. 25.34-40) in particular, who possessed few resources and who were not well-regarded in their communities. Possibly the more enmeshed in this type of service that a Christian becomes, the less likely the instrumental reasons motivating love for God would be salient. This reorientation might logically result in lower scores on the Step 2 subscale. For example, when one regularly devotes one's time and energy to serving others in Christ's name, that individual will likely experience not only positive appreciation from others but will also be susceptible to burnout, criticism, disappointment, setbacks, and complaints (John 16.33). Persisting in Christian service, then,

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may cultivate the reorientation that causes the spiritually mature Christian to recognize that the reasons motivating love for God do not often derive from the blessings that he or she receives. To the contrary, those blessings likely may seem less resonant when one is embroiled with other people and their problems on the front lines of ministry, whether as a professional or as a lay person. Instead, the more enduring attributes of God may sustain this individual so that he or she reaffirms and strengthens the intrinsic reasons that motivate his or her devotion.

One caution in this interpretation is that one cannot deny that extrinsic benefits derived from one's relationship with God do exist, nor should it be suggested that these benefits are unimportant. Scripture teaches that Christians love God because he loved them first (1 John 4.19) and the Lord's Prayer states that the Christian receives divine forgiveness as he or she forgives others (Matt. 6.12). Just as it is natural for small children initially to love their parents for gratifying their needs and ensuring their survival, it is appropriate for Christians to experience a similar primal love for the God they believe has rescued them from a kingdom of darkness, transferring their citizenship to a kingdom of light (Col. 1.13-14; 1 Pet. 2.9). Similarly, while securely attached children are confident that their needs will be met by their parents, children should also grow to appreciate their parents as unique people and not only because of what parents are able to do for their children. So, too, should securely attached Christians trust that God will meet their needs as well as develop an appreciation for the Ultimate Other as a person intrinsically worthy of love (Erikson, 1984; Hall et al., 1998).

What is the Relationship of the CMS Subscales to Other Measures of Spiritual Maturity?

Clairvaux's Step 2: Loving God for Self's Sake shared a small but statistically significant relationship with the other measures of spiritual maturity ($R^2 = .09$, $p = .001$). Of this association, the two negative variables, Defensiveness and Instability, contribute the most variance. Instability—or insecure attachment to God—shared the most unique variance with this dimension ($r = .21$). The items that measure Loving God for Self's Sake focus upon extrinsic motivators of love for God such as the expectation of blessings, protection, and honor.

Consistent with the literature, this more extrinsic form of spirituality appears to be related to more negative outcomes than positive (Hill & Pargament, 2003; Salsman & Carlson, 2005).

Clairvaux's Step 3: Loving God for God's Sake shared a larger relationship with the other measures of spiritual maturity (R^2 = .23, p = .000). Of this association, the positive variables Awareness, Vertical Faith Maturity, and Horizontal Faith Maturity contributed the most variance. Moreover, Awareness (r = .16) and Vertical Faith Maturity (r = .13) contributed the most positive unique variance while Defensiveness contributed the most negative unique variance (r = -.17). The items that measure Loving God for God's Sake focus upon an intrinsic appreciation for God's innate worth and a subsequently selfless desire to serve God's interests without thought for reward. Again, these findings are consistent with the literature that intrinsic religiosity is associated with behaviors and attitudes consistent with those expected of a mature Christian (Allport, 1950).

What is the Relationship of the CMS Subscales to Measures of Subjective Well-Being?

Loving God for Self's Sake had a small but statistically significant relationship with subjective well-being (R^2 = .05, p = .019). Of this small association, depression as measured by the BDI was the largest contributor of unique variance (r = .17). This finding was useful in revealing that the size of the relationship between Loving God for Self's Sake and subjective well-being was not very large, indicating that higher scores on this dimension did not necessarily reflect poor psychological adjustment. On the other hand, that depression does contribute the most variance is meaningful for its further support of previous findings that extrinsic religiousness is associated with poorer subjective well-being than is intrinsic spirituality (Salsman & Carlson, 2005).

Loving God for God's Sake, again, had a small but statistically significant relationship with subjective well-being (R^2 = .05, p = .023). Of this small association, Life Satisfaction contributed the most unique variance (r = .17). Moreover, Depression (r = -.01) and Loneliness (r = -.05) shared a miniscule but inverse relationship with high scores on this dimension. These

findings further confirm that while subjective well-being seemed to have a small relationship with Clairvaux's dimensions of spiritual maturity in this sample, the intrinsic spirituality measured by this subscale was associated with better psychological adjustment than was extrinsic religiousness (Hill & Pargament, 2003; Salsman & Carlson, 2005).

What is the Relationship of the CMS Subscales to Measures of Beliefs?

Loving God for Self's Sake shared a sizeable relationship with the belief measures (R^2 = .31, p = .000). Of this association, the largest contributor of unique variance was agreement with entity beliefs that morality was a stable, unchangeable trait (r = .22). Also contributing a significant amount of unique variance (r = .18) was agreement with Christian orthodox beliefs. Notably, this dimension also shared a small but negative relationship with empathy (r = -.05). This finding provides important information about the construct of Christian spiritual maturity. Extrinsic spirituality logically seems to be more highly associated with a contractual aspect of religiousness rather than with the quality of the relationship one shares with God and others. Implicit entity beliefs that morality is a fixed trait may underlie the focus upon the obligations implied in the spiritual relationship, which may help to explain the stronger association of Loving God for Self's Sake with Instability, or poor attachment to God. That is, if one believes that he or she must fulfill certain obligations in order to maintain a relationship with God, or if one perceives God's faithfulness in terms of the blessings to which he or she believes that he or she is entitled, then insecure attachment seems a defensible interpretation.

These outcomes could hint at why extrinsic spirituality was negatively related to empathy: The extrinsically motivated person appeared to be insecurely attached to God and believed the moral condition of self and others could not be changed much. Entity theorists often strive to promote the impression that they possess the trait (i.e., morality) that they believe is fixed (e.g., Levy et al., 2001). This self-preservation, along with the notion that others' morality is also stable (ergo, others are believed to be either innately better or worse than the extrinsically spiritual individual), might logically lead to a lack of identification with and

subsequent empathy for others. That is, this extrinsic orientation that is associated with insecure attachment to God might not allow for the production of enough emotional capital to empathize with other people.

Loving God for God's Sake shared a smaller but still meaningful relationship with beliefs (R^2 = .14, p = .000). In this case, empathy shared the largest positive unique association with this dimension (r = .28). Agreement with Christian orthodoxy shared some positive unique variance with this subscale as well (r = .13). On the other hand, agreement with entity beliefs that one's moral condition is fixed shared a sizeable negative relationship with Loving God for God's Sake (r = -.19).

Literature examining the role of implicit theories of morality has demonstrated that incremental theorists who believe that morality can change have tended to be more open towards others than were entity theorists (Chiu et al., 1997; Levy et al., 2001; Plaks et al., 2001). The association of empathy and implicit theories of morality with Loving God for God's Sake is meaningful in that it provides support for a developing notion that intrinsic spirituality rejects the idea that people cannot be redeemed from their current moral condition and subsequently promotes compassion for others.

What is the Relationship of the CMS Subscales to Measures of Spiritual Identity Formation?

Loving God for Self's Sake was positively related to the less developed aspects of religious ego identity development (R^2 = .18, p = .000). The largest unique contributor in this relationship was Foreclosure, or making spiritual commitments without introspection (r = .33). This finding further builds upon the idea that extrinsic spirituality reflects less upon the relationship that one shares with God and more upon the contractual obligations inherent in many religious structures. The relationship of this dimension with Foreclosure suggests that the extrinsically spiritual individual has made superficial commitments to religious doctrines rather

than developing authentic spiritual convictions born of a deepening and maturing relationship with God.

Loving God for God's Sake, however, shared a smaller but still statistically significant negative relationship with the less mature ego identity statuses (R^2 = .10, p = .000). Diffusion (r = -.10) and Moratorium (r = -.23) were the largest unique contributors. This finding continues to develop the notion that Loving God for God's Sake reflects a more spiritually mature dimension and that the intrinsically spiritual individual has not made religious commitments without introspection. Consistent with the literature, however, this stage of development does not mean that the individual is lost in indecision: Neither paralyzed by doubt nor avoiding challenges to his or her faith, the spiritually mature individual assertively seeks out information to help answer personal questions (Hofer et al., 2006; Hunsberger et al., 2001).

Demographic Variables

Perhaps most significant among the analyses of demographic variables was the finding that theology majors scored significantly lower on the subscale Loving God for Self's Sake than did non-majors (p = .000, Δ = .78). This difference provides substantial construct validity to the developmental nature of Clairvaux's conceptualization of Christian spiritual maturity. Participants who had chosen a vocation in ministry or biblical study scored lower on this more extrinsic dimension than did their counterparts pursuing other career paths. Similarly, scores on this subscale were lower among participants who had been enrolled in a private Christian university longer than their counterparts, possibly because students were socialized to be less self-involved during their matriculation.

Differences on this subscale among participants of different ethnicities and denominational backgrounds were also significant. Many possible explanations for these differences exist. For example, members of minority groups who had historically been oppressed might resonate more with concrete benefits and protections associated with a relationship with God. Another possibility for these differences might be that members of

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denominations that teach the laity are to depend upon the sacraments and church leaders could be socialized to expect both extrinsic and intrinsic benefits via the relationship with God, rather than to identify with God and subsequently to see themselves as conduits of benefits to others. Ultimately, however, these questions require much more careful examination than the present research allows. That the confidence intervals were substantively narrower among White participants (N ≥ 328) and Assembly of God/Non-denominational/Pentecostal participants (N ≥ 397) than they were among the other ethnic and denominational groups suggests the sample means for these over-represented demographic variables were more trustworthy estimates of their respective populations. Thus, adequately interpreting the differences among these groups lies beyond the scope of this study.

A final characteristic of the CMS subscales brought to light in examining differences on scores among different demographic characteristics is that all participants scored significantly lower on Step 2: Loving God for Self's Sake, signifying that there was much less agreement that volunteers loved God for extrinsic reasons. Conversely, all participants scored higher on Step 3: Loving God for God's Sake and there was little distinction among groups on this measure, suggesting that all volunteers seemed to identify more with intrinsic reasons for loving God (Step 2 Mean = 27.66; Step 3 Mean = 46.14) . The difference in standard deviations between scales across groups are noteworthy (Step 2 SD = 11.18; Step 3 SD = 4.98). That is, the standard deviations were consistently smaller for Step 3: Loving God for God's Sake than for Step 2: Loving God for Self's Sake. Although social desirability has not been shown to be a validity threat in past spirituality studies when anonymity was protected, a reasonable inference for the high scores on Step 3 across groups might be that all participants more easily distinguished what were the expected answers associated with Christian spiritual maturity at this level (Slater et al., 2001). That there was more variance on the Step 2 extrinsic scale suggests that it could be a useful measure for differentiating Christian spiritual maturity at higher levels,

ostensibly combating the artifacts of "illusory spiritual health" and the "ceiling effects" lamented by Slater et al. (2001, pp. 6-7).

Limitations

The CMS subscales demonstrated good reliability and validity in this sample. Limitations in the study design, however, must be taken into account. First, given that the study was strictly quantitative, important nuances in participant responses to the items could not be captured. For example, more mature individuals might self-report comparatively lower scores on Step 3 because of heightened sensitivity to the discrepancies between Christ's ideal and their own actual experiences. Conversely, less mature individuals might be less sensitive to this discrepancy and thus self-report comparatively higher agreement with the Step 3 items than would their more developed, and possibly humbler, counterparts. Additionally, the sample was largely homogeneous in marital status, number of children, and denominational background. Moreover, White volunteers outnumbered all other ethnic group members combined. Because all participants were enrolled in the same private Christian university, it is impossible to know if these findings would replicate in a more heterogeneous sample. Further, the participants in this sample were primarily young adults, which made them ideal candidates for evaluating Marcia's (1966) ego identity statuses, but limited variability on other important indicators such as measures of spirituality, subjective well-being, and beliefs.

One possible caveat of using a fairly homogenous sample is the possible introduction of a restriction in range. Because this correlational analysis was based upon a selected group of individuals (i.e., young adults enrolled in a private Christian university), all of the correlations may have been attenuated, underestimating the size of all of the relationships examined. Particularly noteworthy were the small variances and standard deviations on the subscale Step 3: Loving God for God's Sake. These statistics may point to the homogeneity of the sample, suggesting that the participants were too similar to provide as much unique information about

how the subscale scores related to the construct validity indicators, and to one another, than a more heterogeneous sample might have offered.

Future Research

This exploratory study has led to many questions. Study designs aiming to address these new areas of interest should provide more information useful in testing theories of spirituality and in refining existing models of spiritual maturity. Future studies should recruit volunteers from a wider range of age, ethnicity, religious backgrounds, and family structures. One of the primary goals of this study was to choose a large enough sample of Christian participants to differentiate between volunteers at higher levels of development (Slater et al., 2001). The subscale representing Step 2: Loving God for Self's Sake has made some useful contributions toward this end. On the other hand, a more general sample would provide considerably more variability to evaluate the generalizability of Clairvaux's framework. Moreover, the framework could be better evaluated for its validity as a developmental construct if subscales representing Step 1: Loving Self for Self's Sake and Step 4: Loving Self for God's Sake were available. These new subscales should prove particularly useful in a more general population. Further, examination of contrasted groups would likely shed light on the psychological typologies of participants who score high on one dimension and low on the others, as well as those who score either high or low on more than one dimension.

Another goal of this study was to relate Clairvaux's model of Christian spiritual maturity to Marcia's (1966) ego identity statuses. Again, this sample of young adults was ideal for evaluating participants' progress as they negotiated the identity formation task (Erikson, 1968), but this sampling limited the range of respondents who provided information on the CMS scales. For example, while the CMS scales were uncorrelated among university students and the two dimensions of spiritual maturity seemed to be developing concurrently, participants in middle and late adulthood might demonstrate a different maturational pattern. The theoretical implications might be very different if the two dimensions proved to be inversely related in an

older population, for instance, if these young adults were sampled again in 15 years and changes in their responses were reflected. Further, if an older sample also included but was not limited to ministry-minded individuals such as pastors, elders, deacons, and Sunday School teachers, then more possibilities might be explored about why there were differences between theology majors and non-majors in this sample. If the two dimensions maintained orthogonality in other populations then more support would be garnered for the notion that that these two steps do indeed reflect uncorrelated, discrete stages or perspectives inherent to the Christian spiritual development process.

Providing for a broader range in age and maturity in the sample would additionally allow for further empirical testing of the temporal stability of the subscales. That is, more support would be garnered for both Marcia's (1966) and Clairvaux's (n.d.) theoretical frameworks if the subscale measuring Step 3: Loving God for God's Sake proved to be more stable among relatively mature participants. Late adolescents and early adults should logically reflect more flux at the higher levels of spiritual development as they negotiate Erikson's (1968) ego identity crisis. Thus, more instability on Step 3 might have been a developmentally appropriate outcome among this sample of young adults. The plausibility of this explanation could be empirically tested with a broader sample.

The relationships of the CMS subscales to other indicators should be further explored. For example, this study examined the idea of intrinsic and extrinsic spirituality (Allport, 1950) and the relationship of the CMS subscales to implicit theories of morality (Dweck, 2008). How would preferences for other intrinsic or extrinsic motivators or attributional tendencies relate to the CMS subscales? Would different types of subjective well-being such as hedonic versus eaudaimonic well-being provide more insight about the dimensions' associations with the subjective well-being construct? This study focused upon Christian spiritual maturity in terms of a Johannine conceptualization of love and an object relations developmental framework. How would other measures of object relations development with significant others relate to the

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CMS subscales (e.g., Bell, 1991)? How would other measures of love relate to these constructs (e.g., Beck, 2006; Sternberg, 1997)?

Other fruitful spirituality studies have adopted different psychological frameworks. How would the CMS subscales relate to personality factors (e.g., Simpson, Newman, & Fuqua, 2007)? For example, might scores on Step 2 be more closely related to the dimensions of personality than to a developmental stage? How would the CMS subscales relate to individuals' cognitive styles or preferences (e.g., Kristensen et al., 2001; Simpson, Newman, & Fuqua, 2010a)? That is, would scores on the CMS subscales be more reflective of individual predispositions than an orientation derived from developed spiritual maturity?

Qualitative studies that provide rich descriptions of Christian spiritual maturity from participants' perspectives would further help to develop the conceptualization of Clairvaux's model. Although quantitative methods are indispensible in generating and testing theory, qualitative studies provide important validity information when authentic understanding is sought (Padgett, 2004). Particularly useful would be focus groups to discuss participant reactions to individual items, as well as interviews with volunteers from various experiences, backgrounds, and areas of expertise to share their perspectives on researcher interpretations of Clairvaux and this framework's relationship to other variables. Alternatively, peer-report items completed by a significant other (e.g., pastor, spouse, sibling, close friend, child, etc.) or the averaged score of a dyad of significant others that could be correlated with self-report items might better address the possibility of comparatively lower scores due to humility among more mature participants.

Finally, the CMS subscales should be administered along with measures derived from secular models of spirituality, broader measures of spiritual maturity, and measures derived from other context-specific religious frameworks. For instance, how do secular measures of spirituality relate to the CMS subscales? Is there a positive or negative relationship between these variables and, if so, why? If the CMS subscales and other measures of spirituality are

unrelated, why might that be? Further, how do the CMS subscales relate to variables associated

with other faiths such as beliefs, behaviors, and attitudes? For example, would the same

structure emerge in samples from the other Abrahamic traditions (i.e., Judaism and Islam)?

Could the items be modified to apply to other belief systems such as Buddhism and Hinduism

and, if so, would the latent structures look the same or different? The relationships between the

CMS subscales and other spirituality measures should be evaluated to better understand the

broad construct of spiritual maturity and its relationship to more narrow applications of faith.

Concluding Comments

The CMS subscales have yielded useful information in this study and hold promise for

future research. The relationships among the subscales and the construct validity indicators

suggest much about the nature of the relationships among the variables of interest. Clairvaux's

conceptualization of Christian spiritual maturity using a Johannine framework seems consistent

with Allport's (1950) work articulating intrinsic and extrinsic dimensions in a manner that is

appropriate for both the disciplines of theology and psychology.

Spirituality is important for many individuals. The complex nature of this multi-

dimensional construct has contributed to a myriad of psychological studies and interpretations

over the past several decades (Hill & Pargament, 2003; Salsman & Carlson, 2005). Continuing

research that examines specific aspects of spirituality as it meaningfully relates to individuals

should lead to better understandings of spirituality in general and of contextualized spiritual

practice as it impacts people in their daily lives. Clairvaux's staircase of spiritual maturity

provides a framework for comprehending Christian spiritual maturity in new ways. These new

insights should lead to further productive research in this exciting field of study.

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APPPENDIX A

Oklahoma State University Institutional Review Board

Date: Tuesday, June 01, 2010

IRB Application No ED1D65

Proposal Title: Assessment of Religious Maturity and Identity Formation

Reviewed and Exempt
Processed as:

Status Recommended by Reviewer(s): Approved Protocol Expires: 5/31/2011

Principal
Investigator(s):
Angela Watson   Diane Montgomery
          424 Willard
          Stillwater, OK 74078

The IRB application referenced above has been approved. It is the judgment of the reviewers that the rights and welfare of individuals who may be asked to participate in this study will be respected, and that the research will be conducted in a manner consistent with the IRB requirements as outlined in section 45 CFR 46.

☒ The final versions of any printed recruitment, consent and assent documents bearing the IRB approval stamp are attached to this letter. These are the versions that must be used during the study.

As Principal Investigator, it is your responsibility to do the following:

1. Conduct this study exactly as it has been approved. Any modifications to the research protocol must be submitted with the appropriate signatures for IRB approval.
2. Submit a request for continuation if the study extends beyond the approval period of one calendar year. This continuation must receive IRB review and approval before the research can continue.
3. Report any adverse events to the IRB Chair promptly. Adverse events are those which are unanticipated and impact the subjects during the course of this research; and
4. Notify the IRB office in writing when your research project is complete.

Please note that approved protocols are subject to monitoring by the IRB and that the IRB office has the authority to inspect research records associated with this protocol at any time. If you have questions about the IRB procedures or need any assistance from the Board, please contact Beth McTernan in 219 Cordell North (phone: 405-744-5700, beth.mcternan@okstate.edu).

Sincerely,

Shelia Kennison, Chair
Institutional Review Board

Solicitation Script

Dear _____,

My name is Angela Watson. I earned a M.A. in Education from Oral Roberts University in 2006 and I am currently working toward my Ph.D. in Educational Psychology at OSU. For my dissertation, I am studying the relationship between religious maturity and identity formation and its impact on subjective well-being.

Would you be amenable to providing your students with an opportunity to participate? Participation should only require 20-30 minutes. If you would be willing to allow me to visit your class so that I can administer my pencil and paper survey, please email or call so that I can schedule a convenient time for data collection.
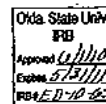
Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Angela Watson, Doctoral Student

OSU Educational Psychology

angela.watson@okstate.edu

Announcement

Angela Watson earned a M.A. in Education from Oral Roberts University in 2006 and she is currently working toward her Ph.D. in Educational Psychology at Oklahoma State University. Angela is interested in the relationship of spiritual maturity with people's sense of identity, particularly as it affects perceptions of well-being among college students. For her dissertation study, she is working to develop a new measure of Christian Love. If you are willing to help Angela with her research, she has made arrangements to collect data from our class on _____ (date) at _____ (time) in _____ ____ (location). Your participation should only require 20-30 minutes of your time and will be very valuable. Thank you for thoughtfully considering whether or not you can help Angela with her study.

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INFORMED CONSENT

Project Title:	Assessment of Religious Maturity and Identity Formation
Investigator:	Angela Watson College of Education, Oklahoma State University.
Purpose:	The purpose of this study will be to better understand individuals' religious maturity and identity formation.
Procedures:	The Principal Investigator (PI) will ask you to complete pencil-and-paper survey of questions based on the extent to which the statements reflect agreement or disagreement with your opinions. The session should last about 20-30 minutes. You will work independently and turn in your responses to the PI when you have completed the survey.
	Questions will use a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from either "Always True" to "Never True" or "Agree" to "Disagree" to learn some of your feelings about Christian theology, about yourself and your life, and about your relationships with others. There will also be some questions that ask about demographic characteristics such as age, sex, ethnicity, educational level, religious denomination, marital status, parent's marital status, and number of years since your conversion.
Risks of Participation:	There are no known risks associated with this project which are greater than those ordinarily encountered in daily life or in a routine psychological examination. If you feel upset by any of the questions, however, you are encouraged to talk about your feelings with a trained professional. A short list of local counseling services is provided.
Benefits:	Results from this research will be used to help the researcher better understand students' development and subjective well-being.
Confidentiality:	Your responses to the survey are confidential. By proceeding with the study, you give your informed consent to proceed.
	No names will be allowed on any research documents. All data will be stored electronically in a data file on a USB flash drive to be stored in the locked office of the principal investigator. Only the researcher and her dissertation committee will have access to the raw data obtained. Additionally, no individual subject identifiers will be connected to the data. Descriptive statistics and demographic information will be reported in aggregate on the overall sample. Paper copies of the data will be stored in the principal investigator's office in a locked file for a one-year period after the study files close with the IRB, at which time they will be shredded.

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The OSU IRB has the authority to inspect consent records and data files to assure compliance with approved procedures.

Contacts:

Please feel free to contact the Principal Investigator (PI), Angela Watson, or her academic advisor, Dr. Diane Montgomery, if you have questions or concerns about this research project.

Angela Watson, Principal Investigator, _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ , or angela.watson@okstate.edu

Dr. Diane Montgomery, PI Advisor, 424 Willard, Stillwater, OK 74078, 405-744-9441, or diane.montgomery@okstate.edu

If you have questions about your rights as a research volunteer, you may contact Dr. Shelia Kennison, IRB Chair, 219 Cordell North, 405-744-3377, or irb@okstate.edu.

Participant Rights:

Participation in the current research activity is entirely voluntary. You are free to decline to participate and may stop or withdraw from the activity at any time. There is no penalty for withdrawing your participation.

Consent:

I have read and fully understand the consent form. I understand that my participation is voluntary. By proceeding to complete the survey, I am indicating that I freely and voluntarily agree to participate in this study and I also acknowledge that I am at least 18 years of age.

It is recommended that you retain a copy of this consent page for your records.

APPPENDIX B

Working Definitions

Introduction

Christians have been challenged to testify that they are Jesus Christ's disciples by their love for one another (John 13.35). Further, the greatest love that we can show one another is to lay our lives down for each other, as Christ gave his life for us (John 15.12-13). Often, Christians are chagrined when non-believers seem to exhibit greater obedience to this charge than those in the church do. The purpose of this study is to postulate a biblical framework by which God meets with his creation to begin transforming us to reflect his nature as we were created to do.

Context for Conceptual Framework

Jesus Christ taught his disciples that the greatest command is to love God with all of one's being. He told them that the second greatest command was like it, to love one's neighbor as one's self. While the youngest Christian can begin practicing obedience to these commands, the reasons that we love God and one another become richer and deeper as we grow into the likeness of Christ.

The following framework is based upon five assumptions: 1) God is love, 2) God has created people in his image, 3) God desires our love, 4) learning to reciprocate God's love is a process through which we can progress only with his help, and 5) God rewards our love. Thus, the very nature of God, which is love, impelled him to create us and to desire our reciprocal affection. People, however, are not born with the developed capacity to reciprocate God's love. Instead, we are born with the *potential to develop the capacity* to reciprocate God's love. God, then, meets us at whatever point in our developmental trajectory where we are and assists us in developing our capacity to love. As we then grow in our ability to reciprocate God's love, we are rewarded with the object of our love, God himself (Clairvaux, On loving God, p. 9).

Staircase of Christian Maturity

The process through which people learn to reciprocate God's love can be conceptualized as a staircase of Christian Maturity. Everyone begins on the lowest step of this staircase and we become able to progress upward with God's help. One should bear in mind,

however, that each successive step is based upon the growth that occurs on the preceding steps. That is, movement to the second step does not make obsolete the growth that occurred on the first step. Instead, the growth that occurs on the first step makes it possible to move up the staircase to the second step. Growth on the second step subsumes the growth from the first. Thus, one's developmental position on the staircase should not be regarded as a point of either shame or pride, since our ability to love God is solely dependent upon his grace at work in our lives. As he has chosen to bear with us in love on whatever step we are, then, so too we should endeavor to bear with ourselves and with one another as we all learn to reciprocate God's love more perfectly and to subsequently enjoy the reward of our love, which is God himself.

The First Step: Loving Self for Self's Sake

It is upon this lowest and foundational step that humanity first meets with God. Clairvaux maintains that even infidels can recognize that they owe their existence and the world that sustains them to God, the creator (e.g., Rom. 1.18-25). Thus, it is natural and appropriate for even those who do not know Christ to recognize and to love God who created them. When Clairvaux refers to the natural obedience to the first commandment to love God, he stipulates, "Nature is so frail and weak that necessity compels her to love herself first" (p. 12). He suggests that this concept is the reason that Paul wrote, "'That was not first which is spiritual but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual' (I Cor. 15.46)" and "'No man ever yet hated his own flesh' (Eph. 5.29)" (p. 12). Logically, then, humanity's love for itself inspires love for God, who created people and all of the things that gratify us.

According to Clairvaux, just as it is natural for created humankind to love God, its creator, it is also natural for people to love one another. To protect against the susceptibility of the love that humanity has for itself to grow "excessive and, refusing to be contained within the restraining banks of necessity, should overflow in the fields of voluptuousness," the second commandment "checks the flood, as if by a dike: 'Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.' And this is right: for he who shares our nature should share our love, itself the fruit of nature'" (p. 12). Clairvaux concludes that at least partial fulfillment of the greatest two commandments can and does occur naturally at the first rung of spiritual maturity, in that "our selfish love grows truly social, when it includes our neighbors in its circle" (p. 12).

At this stage of development, people begin to realize that in order to love one another, they need God, since it is from God that we receive both love itself and the capacity to love him and others. Clairvaux compares the person coming to this realization as a "wise man, animal and carnal by nature" who recognizes that it is with God that he or she "can accomplish all things that are good" but that without him, he or she "can do nothing" (p. 13).

Loving self for self's sake will be defined as loving self because that is the natural order. As created beings we are instinctively driven to nurture ourselves and to foster and enrich our own survival, even through our instrumental relationships with others. An example of thinking at this stage might be, *"I want to be happy."* Another example of thinking at this stage might be, *"I want relationships with others that make me happy."* Thus, the focus of development at this stage is upon gratifying the individual's needs.

The Second Step: Loving God for Self's Sake

As previously noted, movement to the second step is made possible by the growth that occurs on the first step. Clairvaux suggests that after learning on the first step of the staircase to look to God for the satisfaction of our needs, on the second step our hearts become "softened by the goodness of such a Savior" (p. 13). We experience for ourselves that God is good (Ps. 34.8).

People at this stage of development come to understand that not only is God the source of their fulfillment, but that the very nature of the one who meets them so faithfully and unselfishly requires that God is deserving of love. Here it becomes even more natural to fulfill the second command, since "whosoever loves God aright loves all God's creatures" (p. 13).

Loving God for self's sake will be defined as loving God because of what God does for us. This is a biblical precept since the Scripture teaches that we love God because he loved us first (I John 4.19). An example of thinking at this stage might be, *"Everything good in my life comes from God. Nothing good in my life has been given to me apart from him."* Another example of thinking at this stage might be, *"God has shown me how to love. I would not be able to love others except that God has taught me how."* Thus, the focus of development at this stage is the dawning realization of God's potential to enrich the life of the individual and his or her personal relationships in meaningful and important ways.

The Third Step: Loving God for God's Sake

Again, movement to the third step is precipitated by the growth that occurred on the second step, which was made possible by the growth that occurred on the first. Movement to the third step does not make the growth that occurred on the previous steps irrelevant. Instead, the growth that occurs on the third step simply places the growth occurring at lower levels into a wider perspective as the individual's developing capacity to reciprocate God's love becomes deeper and more richly nuanced.

The person on the third step has experienced the faithfulness of God in his or her life. He or she has recognized God's gracious and perfect character. Further, he or she has grown to understand the irresistible and praiseworthy nature of God that renders him worthy of love apart from what the individual may have personally gained as a result of his or her association with God. According to Clairvaux, "Whosoever praises God for his essential goodness, and not merely because of the benefits he has bestowed, does really love God for God's sake, and not selfishly" (p. 13).

Loving God for God's sake will be defined as loving God because of who God is. Clairvaux refers to the psalmist as an example of someone at this stage when he proclaimed, "'O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is gracious' (Ps. 118.1)" (p. 13). An example of thinking at this stage might be, **"I love God because of his essential goodness."** Another example of thinking at this stage might be, **"God alone is worthy of adoration."** Thus, the focus of development at this stage is upon recognizing God's supreme and divine, praiseworthy character.

The Fourth Step: Loving Self for God's Sake

According to Clairvaux, this final step is likely not attainable in this incarnation, although it may be possible to experience momentary glimpses of the insight required to sustain this level of development. On this step, "One loves himself only in God" (p. 13). Clairvaux speculates that in this life we are not really capable of perfect obedience to the first command because "the heart must take thought of the body; and the soul must energize the flesh; and the strength must guard itself from impairment. And ….seek to increase" (p. 14). Consequently, as long as "we must accommodate our purposes and aspirations to these fragile, sickly bodies of ours" it is impossible to give ourselves up entirely in abandonment to our love for God, even if it is our desire to do so.

On the other hand, Clairvaux acknowledges that anyone is "blessed and holy" if, while still in this fleshly life, he or she were granted "for even an instant to lose thyself, as if thou were

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emptied and lost and swallowed up in God" (p. 14). He maintains that since God created everything for his glory (Isa. 43.7), it is fitting that the creation should conform to his will. This surrender of self-interests to serve God's interests would result in a rapturous transcendence of the worldly concerns and responsibilities that distract us.

Clairvaux expounds:

But if sometimes a poor mortal feels that heavenly joy for a rapturous moment, then this wretched life envies his happiness, the malice of daily trifles disturbs him, this body of death weighs him down, the needs of the flesh are imperative, the weakness of corruption fails him, and above all brotherly love calls him back to duty. (p. 14)

This mortal struggle recalls the Apostle Paul's conflict between leaving this incarnation to be with God or staying in this life to serve his brothers and sisters (Phil. 1.21-24). Clairvaux concludes that until we take on our celestial bodies, development at this step cannot be sustained. Even so, he calls for patience. Reminding the reader of Romans 8.28, he assures:

The body is a help to the soul that loves God, even when it is ill, even when it is dead, and all the more when it is raised again from the dead: for illness is an aid to penitence; death is the gate of rest; and the resurrection will bring consummation. So, rightly, the soul would not be perfected without the body, since she recognizes that in every condition it has been needful to her good. The flesh then is a good and faithful comrade for a good soul: since even when it is a burden it assists. (p. 15)

Loving self for God's sake will be defined as loving self as God's created vessel, wholly reflecting the glory of God as a living expression of God's will. Clairvaux summarizes, "The fourth degree of love is attained for ever when we love God only and supremely, when we do not even love ourselves except for God's sake" (p. 16). An example of thinking at this stage might be, **"My purpose is to live in perfect and uninterrupted union with God."** Another example of thinking at this stage might be, **"God is now in all and nothing merely human remains in his people."** Thus, the focus of development at this stage is upon perfect union with God in the absence of earthly distraction. Paradoxically, until God's will has been done and his kingdom has come upon earth as it is in heaven (Matt. 6.10), we do not appear to be free to remain on this step for more than a few fleeting moments at a time, since the fields are still ripe for harvesting (John 6.34-35). Preoccupation with this level, therefore, particularly in the absence of high scores on all the lower steps, may suggest a developmental challenge.

Implications

The purpose of this study is to conceptualize a model of spiritual development that accurately approximates Christian maturity as expressed through the ability to love as God loves. Many contemporary developmental theories allow for uneven, epigenetic growth (e.g., Bergen, 2008) and this model also allows for development that, while generally linear and progressive in direction, can also accommodate fluctuations. First, there is a necessary overlap between steps as development at lower steps precipitates development at higher steps. Second, progression to a higher step of development may lead to concurrent re-adjustments in insights gained previously at lower levels of development. As such, it would be expected that while most individuals will report high scores on the step corresponding to their highest achieved level of development, they should also report high scores on the steps corresponding to the lower levels which have precipitated their current level of development. Discrepancies may occur as some

individuals re-visit earlier stages of growth to re-negotiate their prior understandings in light of more recent insights.

Conceptual Model: The Staircase of Christian Maturity

1. Loving Self for Self's Sake: **loving self because that is the natural order.** The focus of development at this stage is upon gratifying the individual's needs.
   a. *"I want to be happy."*
   b. *"I want relationships with others that make me happy."*
   c. *"The happiness of others makes me happy."*
   d. *"I want my life to bring happiness to others."*
2. Loving God for Self's Sake: **loving God because of what God does for us.** The focus of development at this stage is the dawning realization of God's potential to enrich the life of the individual and his or her personal relationships in meaningful and important ways.
   a. *"Everything good in my life comes from God."*
   b. *"God's love in my life makes my relationships with others more satisfying."*
   c. *"God has shown me what love is and my life is happier as a result."*
   d. *"God has shown me how to love others. I would not have happy relationships with others except that God has taught me how to love."*
3. Loving God for God's Sake: **loving God because of who God is.** The focus of development at this stage is upon recognizing God's supreme and divine character.
   a. **"I love God because of his essential goodness."**
   b. **"God's love for me compels me to love others in return."**
   c. **"God alone is worthy of adoration not simply for what he has done for me, but because of who he is."**
   d. **"Having experienced God's love, I can no longer resist serving those for whom He has died."**
4. *Loving Self for God's Sake: **loving self as God's created vessel, wholly reflecting the glory of God as a living expression of God's will.** The focus of development at this stage is upon perfect union with God in the absence of earthly distraction.
   a. **"My sense of unity with God makes it difficult for me to ascertain where I start and God begins."**
   b. **"My sense of unity with God makes it impossible for me to be assimilated into the culture around me."**
   c. **"I have no pleasure except seeing God's purposes accomplished through my life."**
   d. **"It is impossible for me to experience happiness when others are lost and suffering."**

*Paradoxically, until God's will has been done and his kingdom has come upon earth as it is in heaven (Matt. 6.10), we do not appear to be free to remain on this step for more than a few fleeting moments at a time, since the fields are still ripe for harvesting (John 6.34-35). Preoccupation with this level, therefore, particularly in the absence of high scores on all the lower steps, may suggest a developmental challenge.

APPPENDIX C

Level 1 Subject Matter Expert-Generated Items

1. Loving Self for Self's Sake: **loving self because that is the natural order.** The focus of development at this stage is upon gratifying the individual's needs.
   e. ***"I want to be happy."***
   f. ***"I want relationships with others that make me happy."***
   g. ***"The happiness of others makes me happy."***
   h. ***"I want my life to bring happiness to others."***
   i. *"I want activities that make me happy."*
   j. *"I want material goods that will make me happy."*
   k. *"The approval of others makes me happy."*
   l. *"I am happy when my needs are met."*
   m. *"I am happy when I am able to meet the needs of others."*
   n. *"I try to organize my day to do the things that I love."*
   o. *"I try to organize my day to meet the needs of those I love."*
   p. *"My happiness depends on who I hang out with."*
   q. *I want my status and position to make others happy."*
   r. *"I love God to honor my heritage."*

2. Loving God for Self's Sake: **loving God because of what God does for us.** The focus of development at this stage is the dawning realization of God's potential to enrich the life of the individual and his or her personal relationships in meaningful and important ways.
   e. ***"Everything good in my life comes from God."***
   f. ***"God's love in my life makes my relationships with others more satisfying."***
   g. ***"God has shown me what love is and my life is happier as a result."***
   h. ***"God has shown me how to love others. I would not have happy relationships with others except that God has taught me how to love."***
   i. *"I want activities that make God love me."*
   j. *"The more I can do for God, the more God will love me."*
   k. *"If I come to God, he will affirm me."*
   l. *"I love God so that my name is not dishonored."*

m. "I am willing to love God so long as I am not persecuted."
n. "I love God so that God will honor me."
o. "My love for God is seen in my relationships with others."
p. "I love God so he will take care of me."
q. "I love God so I won't be judged by him."
r. "I give to others so God will give to me."

3. Loving God for God's Sake: **loving God because of who God is.** The focus of development at this stage is upon recognizing God's supreme and divine character.
   e. **"I love God because of his essential goodness."**
   f. **"God's love for me compels me to love others in return."**
   g. **"God alone is worthy of adoration not simply for what he has done for me, but because of who he is."**
   h. **"Having experienced God's love, I can no longer resist serving those for whom He has died."**
   i. "The activities God gives me allow me to show my love for him."
   j. "The contentment I have with what God provides me demonstrates my love for him."
   k. "The influence God affords me allows me to demonstrate his love."
   l. "Instead of recognition from people for serving God, I only need to know he is pleased with my service."
   m. "I love God so that his name is given honor."
   n. "I am willing to love God in spite of persecution."
   e. "My identity is not associated with what I do for a living."
   f. "My identity is not associated with what I have."
   g. "My identity is not dependent upon the opinions or approval of others."
   o. "I obey God even in difficult circumstances."
   p. "Because of my love for God I obey his command to love others."
   q. "Because of my love for God I obey his command to love those who use me."
   r. "Because of my love for God I obey his command to love those whom I dislike."

4. *Loving Self for God's Sake: **loving self as God's created vessel, wholly reflecting the glory of God as a living expression of God's will.** The focus of development at this stage is upon perfect union with God in the absence of earthly distraction.
   a. **"My sense of unity with God makes it difficult for me to ascertain where I start and God begins."**
   b. **"My sense of unity with God makes it impossible for me to be assimilated into the culture around me."**
   c. **"I have no pleasure except seeing God's purposes accomplished through my life."**
   h. **"It is impossible for me to experience happiness when others are lost and suffering."**
   i. "I pray to God, "Glorify yourself even at my expense.'"
   j. "My commitment to God is more important than my happiness."
   k. "I love myself because he has taught me to trust his grace."
   l. "I serve God even if it costs me my life."

m.   "Because of my love for God I obey his command to love those who are my enemies."

n. "Because of my love for God I obey his command to love those who wish me harm."

o. "Because of my love for God I am willing to give all the resources that I have to see his will accomplished on earth as it is in heaven."

p. "Because of my love for God I am willing to spend all the time that I have to see his will accomplished on earth as it is in heaven."

q. "Because of my love for God I am willing to leave my home and go anywhere in the world he might send me to see his will accomplished on earth as it is in heaven."

r. "Because of my love for God I am willing to leave my friends and family and go anywhere in the world he might send me to see his will accomplished on earth as it is in heaven."

APPPENDIX D

Level 2 Subject Matter Expert Sorting Items

This model conceptualizes two important dimensions of loving God:

D) Devotional: Loving God because of who God is. The focus of development at this stage is upon **devotion to God** and recognizing God's supreme and divine character, both in our relationship with him and in our relationships with other people.

I) Instrumental: Loving God because of all that God does for us. The focus of development at this stage is upon **blessings from God** and the dawning realization of God's potential to enrich life for the individual and his or her personal relationships in meaningful ways.

Please place either a "D" (for devotional) or an "I" (for instrumental) in the blank next to the statement that you think best categorizes the statement.

___ "Everything good in life comes from God."
___ "God's love compels us to love others."
___ "God alone is worthy of adoration."
___ "God makes relationships satisfying."
___ "We serve people even when they do not like us."
___ "God makes life good."
___ "God teaches us how to have happy relationships."
___ "We give all glory to God."
___ "We love God because he loves us."
___ "The more we do for God, the more God loves us."
___ "We don't love God *only* because of what he has done for us."
___ "The more we love God, the more he blesses us."
___ "We don't need people to approve of us."
___ "When we serve God, things go well for us."

___ "We only want to please God."
___ "We love God even when we're suffering."
___ "God's love protects us from being dishonored."
___ "Our social status is not important to us."
___ "We love God so that we won't suffer."
___ "We love God so he will honor us."
___ "We love God because of who he is."
___ "We love God so he will take care of us."
___ "Our love for God makes us content."
___ "We don't need possessions to make us happy."
___ "We love God so he won't judge us."
___ "We give to others so God will give to us."
___ "We love God because he meets our needs."
___ "Someone's opinion of our occupation is not important."
___ "We obey God even in difficult circumstances."
___ "We love God because he gives us joy."
___ "We love God because he gives us peace."
___ "We love God so he will bless us."
___ "We love God so he will take care of our loved ones."
___ "We love God because of his essential goodness."
___ "We can't resist serving people Jesus died for."
___ "When we come to God, he affirms us."
___ "God gives us ways to show our love for him."
___ "We can show God's love to people who respect us."
___ "We don't need recognition for serving God."
___ "We serve God to honor him."
___ "We serve people even when they take advantage of us."
___ "We forgive others so God will forgive us."

Christian Maturity Scale

Directions: Write the number that best describes your response for each statement in the blank provided. Be as honest as possible, describing how true it <u>really</u> is and <u>not</u> how true you would like it to be. Choose from these responses:

1	2	3	4	5
<u>Never True</u>	<u>True Once in a While</u>	<u>Sometimes True</u>	<u>Often True</u>	<u>Always True</u>

Item	**Inter-Item r**
1. ___ Everything good in life comes from God.	.28
2. ___ God's love compels us to love others.	.26
3. ___ God alone is worthy of adoration.	.41
4. ___God makes relationships satisfying.	.40
5. ___ We serve people even when they do not like us.	.29
6. ___God makes life good.	.43
7. ___ God teaches us how to have happy relationships.	.46
8. ___ We give all glory to God.	.39
9. ___ We love God because he loves us.	.28
10. ___ The more we do for God, the more God does for us.	.52
11. ___ We don't love God *only* because of what he has done for us.	.26
12. ___ The more we love God, the more he blesses us.	.56
13. ___ We don't need people to approve of us.	.30
14. ___ When we serve God, things go well for us.	.49
15. ___ We only want to please God.	.47
16. ___ We love God even when we're suffering.	.39
17. ___ God's love protects us from being dishonored.	.53
18. ___ Our social status is not important to us.	.34
19. ___ We love God so that we won't suffer.	.50
20. ___ We love God so he will honor us.	.51
21. ___ We love God because of who he is.	.30
22. ___ We love God so he will take care of us.	.47
23. ___ I want to do well so God will get the glory.	.44

Item	Inter-Item r
24. ___ We don't need possessions to make us happy.	.28
25. ___ We love God so he won't judge us.	.47
26. ___ We give to others so God will give to us.	.48
27. ___ We love God because he meets our needs.	.47
28. ___ Someone's opinion of our occupation is not important.	.30
29. ___ We obey God even in difficult circumstances.	.34
30. ___ We love God because he gives us joy.	.48
31. ___ We love God because he gives us peace.	.44
32. ___ We love God so he will bless us.	.55
33. ___ We love God so he will take care of our loved ones.	.56
34. ___ We love God because of his essential goodness.	.40
35. ___ We can't resist serving people Jesus died for.	.42
36. ___ When we come to God, he affirms us.	.44
37. ___ We don't need anything other than God.	.44
38. ___ I want other people to know to God's goodness.	.32
39. ___ We don't need recognition for serving God.	.30
40. ___ We serve God to honor him.	.40
41. ___ We serve people even when they take advantage of us.	.30
42. ___ We forgive others so God will forgive us	.43

Faith Maturity Scale

Directions: Write the number that best describes your response for each statement in the blank provided. Be as honest as possible, describing how true it <u>really</u> is and <u>not</u> how true you would like it to be. Choose from these responses:

1	2	3	4	5
Never True	True Once in a While	Sometimes True	Often True	Always True

___I help others with their religious questions and struggles.
___I seek out opportunities to help me grow spiritually.
___I feel a deep sense of responsibility for reducing pain and suffering in the world.
___I give significant portions of my time and money to help other people.
___I feel God's presence in my relationships with other people.
___My life is filled with meaning and purpose.
___I care a great deal about reducing poverty in the United States and throughout the world.
___I try to apply my faith to political and social issues.
___My life is committed to Jesus Christ.
___I talk with other people about my faith.
___I have a real sense that God is guiding me.
___I am spiritually moved by the beauty of God's creation.
___I find my best service to God is in my service to others.
___My relationship with God leads me to seek out others.
___I find it necessary to share my love of God with others.
___Compassion for others is fundamental to my faith.
___I feel a spiritual connection to other people of faith.
___I spend time in prayer and meditation.
___Reading scripture deepens my connection with God.
___I am sometimes surprised at how close I feel to God.
___I sense God's involvement in my life.
___I am now closer to God than I was before.

1	2	3	4	5
Never True	True Once in a While	Sometimes True	Often True	Always True

___It is easy to receive affection from others who share my faith.
___My relationship with God is at the center of my life.
___I feel close to God.
___I sometimes sense that God is speaking to me.
___I have an intimate prayer life with God.
___I meditate on the word of God.
___I believe that my relationships with others reflect my relationship with God.
___My faith is a very real part of my life.
___My relationship with God is growing stronger.
___I believe God speaks to me through the Bible.
___God's presence is very real to me.
___I feel like I know God personally.
___Jesus Christ is the Lord of my life.
___God's presence in my relationships with others is obvious to me.
___My relationship with Jesus is a very personal one.
___The Holy Spirit helps me to understand the Bible.
___I believe Jesus hears me when I pray.
___I demonstrate my love for the Lord through obedience to His word.
___The Holy Spirit is constantly with me.
___I grow spiritually when I am around others.
___The Holy Spirit reveals God's will to me.
___Jesus is my personal Lord and Savior.
___I seek the Holy Spirit's guidance in decision-making.
___I look forward to my quiet times with the Lord.
___I am well familiar with the peace God brings into my life.
___When I help others, I feel more connected to God.

Spiritual Assessment Inventory: Awareness, Instability, and Defensiveness subscales

Directions: Write the number that best describes your first response for each statement in the blank provided. Try not to spend too much time thinking about your answer. Be as honest as possible, describing how true it <u>really</u> is and <u>not</u> how true you think it should be. Choose from these responses:

1	2	3	4	5
Never True	True Once in a While	Sometimes True	Often True	Always True

___I have a good sense of how God is working in my life.
___I regularly sense God speaking to me through other people.
___There are times when I feel disappointed in God.
___I am frequently aware of God prompting me to do something.
___There are times when God frustrates me.
___My experiences of God's responses to me impact me greatly.
___I frequently bargain with God.
___I am regularly aware of God's presence in my interactions with other people.
___I am very afraid that God will give up on me.
___My emotional connection to God is very unstable.
___I am very sensitive to what God is teaching me in my relationships with other people.
___I almost always feel completely cut off from God.
___There times when I feel irritated at God.
___I am aware of God responding to me in a variety of ways.
___I frequently fear that God is angry at me and punishing me.
___I am aware of God attending to me in times of need.
___There are times when I feel angry at God.
___I have a good sense of the direction in which God is guiding me.
___There are times when I feel like God doesn't come through for me.
___There are times when I feel betrayed by God.

1	2	3	4	5
Never True	True Once in a While	Sometimes True	Often True	Always True

___No matter how hard I try to avoid them, I still experience many difficulties in my relationship with God.

___I often worry that I will be left out of God's plans.

___When I consult God about decisions in my life, I am aware of his direction and help.

___There are times when I feel frustrated by God for not responding to my prayers.

___I often feel I have to please God or he might reject me.

___There are times when I feel like God has let me down.

___I often completely withdraw from God.

___God does not seem to exist when I'm not praying or reading/hearing the Bible.

APPENDIX H

Objective Measure of Ego Identity Status religion subscale

Directions: Write the number that best describes your first response for each statement in the blank provided. Try not to spend too much time thinking about your answer. Be as honest as possible, describing how you really feel. Choose from these responses:

1	2	3	4	5
Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Unsure	Somewhat agree	Agree

1.___When it comes to religion, I haven't found anything that appeals to me.
2.___When it comes to religion, I don't care about finding something that appeals to me.
3.___I don't give religion much thought.
4.___Religion doesn't bother me one way or the other.
5.___A person's religion is unique to each individual.
6.___I've spent a lot of time thinking about religion and know what I can believe.
7.___Even though I've changed my mind about religion a lot I now feel comfortable with what I can believe.
8.___I'm not really sure what religion means to me.
9.___I'd like to make up my mind about my religious views but I'm not done thinking it over yet.
10.___Religion is confusing to me right now.
11.___I keep changing my views on what religious views are right and wrong for me.
12.___I attend the same church as my family has always attended.
13.___I've never really questioned why I attend the same church I always have.
14.___I've never really questioned my religion.
15.___If my religion is right for my family then it must be right for me.

APPENDIX I

Implicit Measure of Morality

<u>Directions</u>: Write the number that best describes your response for each statement in the blank provided. Be as honest as possible, describing how true it <u>really</u> is and <u>not</u> how true you would like it to be. Choose from these responses:

1	2	3	4	5
Never True	True Once in a While	Sometimes True	Often True	Always True

___A person's moral character is something very basic about them and can't be changed much.

___Whether a person is responsible and sincere or not is deeply ingrained in their personality. It

can't be changed much.

___There is not much that can be done to change a person's moral traits (e.g., conscientiousness,

uprightness, and honesty).

The Christian Orthodoxy Scale

Directions: Write the number that best describes your first response for each statement in the blank provided. Try not to spend too much time thinking about your answer. Be as honest as possible, describing how you really feel. Choose from these responses:

1	2	3	4	5
Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Unsure	Somewhat agree	Agree

___God exists as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
___Humans are special creatures made in the image of God.
___Humans are simply a recent development in the process of human evolution.
___Jesus Christ was the divine son of God.
___The Bible is the word of God.
___The Bible was given to people to guide us to grace and salvation.
___Those who feel God answers prayers are just deceiving themselves.
___It is ridiculous to believe that Jesus Christ could be both human and divine.
___Jesus was born of a virgin.
___The Bible is an important book of moral teachings.
___The Bible is no more inspired by God than any other book like it in human history.
___The concept of God is an old superstition.
___The concept of God is no longer needed to explain things in contemporary times.
___Christ will return to the earth someday.
___Most religions have miracle stories in their traditions.
___There is no reason to believe the miracle stories in any faith tradition, including those from Christian teachings.
___God hears all of our prayers.
___Jesus Christ was a great ethical teacher.
___ Jesus was no more the divine son of God than any other great ethical teacher in human history.
___God made man of dust in his own image and breathed life into him.
___Through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, God provided a way for the forgiveness of people's sins.
___There is no such thing as a God who is aware of people's actions.

1	2	3	4	5
Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Unsure	Somewhat agree	Agree

___Jesus was crucified, dead, and buried, but on the third day he arose from the dead.

___In all likelihood, there is no such thing as a person's God-given immortal soul.

___It is unlikely that people can live on spiritually after physical death.

___Jesus of Nazareth is dead now and will never walk the earth again.

___ Jesus of Nazareth may very well have never really existed.

___Jesus miraculously changed real water into wine.

___There is a God who is concerned with everyone's actions.

___Jesus' death on a cross did nothing in and of itself to save humankind.

___Jesus' death on a cross may very well be a fictitious story, not something that really happened.

___There is really no reason to believe that Jesus was born of a virgin.

___Jesus' life and teachings showed better than any myths that he was exceptional.

___There is really no reason to rely on old myths like the virgin birth that don't even make sense.

___The resurrection of Jesus proves beyond a doubt that Jesus was the Christ, or Messiah, of God.

The Empathy Quotient

<u>Directions</u>: Write the number that best describes your first response for each statement in the blank provided. Try not to spend too much time thinking about your answer. Be as honest as possible, describing how you really feel. Choose from these responses:

1	2	3	4	5
<u>Disagree</u>	<u>Somewhat disagree</u>	<u>Unsure</u>	<u>Somewhat agree</u>	<u>Agree</u>

___I can easily tell if someone else wants to enter a conversation.
___I really enjoy caring for other people.
___I find it hard to know what to do in a social situation.
___I often find it difficult to judge if something is rude or polite.
___In a conversation, I tend to focus on my own thoughts rather than on what my listener might be thinking.
___I can pick up quickly if someone says one thing but means another.
___It is hard for me to see why some things upset people so much.
___I find it easy to put myself in somebody else's shoes.
___I am good at predicting how someone will feel.
___I am quick to spot when someone in a group is feeling awkward or uncomfortable.
___I can't always see why someone should have felt offended by a remark.
___I don't tend to find social situations confusing.
___Other people tell me I am good at understanding how they are feeling and what they are thinking.
___I can easily tell if someone else is interested or bored with what I am saying.
___Friends usually talk to me about their problems as they say that I am very understanding.
___I can sense if I am intruding, even if the other person doesn't tell me.
___Other people often say that I am insensitive, though I don't always see why.
___I can tune into how someone else feels rapidly and intuitively.
___I can easily work out what another person might want to talk about.
___I can tell if someone is masking their true emotion.
___I am good at predicting what someone will do.
___I tend to get emotionally involved with a friend's problems.

Beck Depression Inventory

Directions: Write the number that best describes your first response for each statement in the blank provided. Try not to spend too much time thinking about your answer. Be as honest as possible, describing how you really feel. Choose from these responses:

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Once in a While	Sometimes	Often	Always

___How often do you feel so sad you can hardly bear it?
___How often do you feel your future is hopeless?
___How often do you feel like a total failure as a person?
___How often do you feel you can't get pleasure from the things you used to enjoy?
___How often do you feel overwhelmingly guilty?
___How often do you feel that you're being punished?
___How often do you feel that you dislike yourself?
___How often do you feel that you're to blame for everything bad that happens?
___How often do you feel that you would kill yourself if you had the chance?
___How often do you feel that you want to cry, but can't?
___How often do you feel so restless or agitated that you have to keep moving or doing
      something?
___How often do you feel it's difficult to get interested in anything?
___How often do you feel you have trouble making any decisions?
___How often do you feel utterly worthless?
___How often do you feel you don't have enough energy to do anything?
___How often do you feel that your sleep patterns are unhealthy (e.g., you sleep all the time/you
      don't sleep at all)?
___How often do you feel that you are irritable all the time?
___How often do you feel that your appetite is unhealthy (e.g., you have no appetite at all/you
      are hungry all the time)?
___How often do you feel like you can't concentrate on anything?
___How often do you feel you are too tired or fatigued to do the things you used to do?
___How often do you feel that you have lost all interest in sex?

Appendix M

UCLA Loneliness Scale

<u>**Directions**</u>: Write the number that best describes your first response for each statement in the blank provided. Try not to spend too much time thinking about your answer. Be as honest as possible, describing how you really feel. Choose from these responses:

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Once in a While	Sometimes	Often	Always

___How often do you feel that you are "in tune" with the people around you?
___How often do you feel that you lack companionship?
___How often do you feel that there is no one you can turn to?
___How often do you feel alone?
___How often do you part of a group of friends?
___How often do you feel that you have a lot in common with the people around you?
___How often do you feel that you are no longer close to anyone?
___How often do you feel that your interests and ideas are not shared by those around you?
___How often do you feel outgoing and friendly?
___How often do you feel close to people?
___How often do you feel left out?
___How often do you feel that your relationships with others are not meaningful?
___How often do you feel that no one really knows you well?
___How often do you feel isolated from others?
___How often do you feel you can find companionship when you want it?
___How often do you feel that there are people who really understand you?
___How often do you feel shy?
___How often do you feel that people are around you but not with you?
___How often do you feel that there are people you can talk to?
___How often do you feel that there are people you can turn to?

Appendix N

Life Satisfaction Scale

Directions: Write the number that best describes your first response for each statement in the blank provided. Try not to spend too much time thinking about your answer. Be as honest as possible, describing how you really feel. Choose from these responses:

1	2	3	4	5
Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Unsure	Somewhat agree	Agree

___In most ways my life is close to ideal.

___The conditions of my life are excellent.

___I am satisfied with my life.

___So far I have gotten the important things I want in life.

___If I could live my life over, I would change almost nothing.

VITA

Angela L. Watson

Candidate for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Thesis: A DEVELOPMENTAL APPROACH TO MEASURING SPIRITUAL
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Scope and Method of Study: Although broad measures have revealed relationships
        between spirituality and other psychological variables, the exact nature of these
        remains unclear. Further, many measures fail to consider values significant to
        practitioners of faith and of psychology. The purpose of this study was to
        formulate a measure of spiritual maturity that took into account both the beliefs of
        Christian participants and indices of behavioral health considered important to
        secular psychologists. Employing the expertise of two sets of subject matter
        experts, first to construct items and then to evaluate their face validity, resulted in
        42 items comprising two subscales of the new Christian Maturity scale based
        upon Clairvaux (n.d.): Loving God for Self's Sake and Loving God for God's
        Sake. The items were administered along with multiple construct validity
        indicators to 541 young adults enrolled in a private Christian university.

Findings and Conclusions: Item analysis revealed large inter-item correlations. Ten
        items were retained for each of the two subscales, yielding good internal
        consistency coefficients. Principal axis factor analysis with direct oblimin
        rotation resulted in two uncorrelated factors that well represented the theorized
        dimensions of Christian spiritual maturity. Small to moderate correlations in the
        expected directions with other measures of spiritual maturity, subjective well-
        being, beliefs, and ego identity status supported the construct validity of the
        subscales. Analyses of variance indicated that there were differences between
        theology majors and non-majors on the subscale, Step 2: Loving God for Self's
        Sake, with theology majors identifying substantially fewer extrinsic, or
        instrumental, reasons motivating their love for God than did their non-major
        counterparts. There were no significant differences between theology major and
        non-major means on the subscale, Step 3: Loving God for God's Sake. All
        participants scored lower on the Step 2 subscale and higher on the Step 3
        subscale. Test-retest was moderate for Step 2 but lower for Step 3, possibly
        lending empirical support for the theoretical framework, which postulates that
        Step 3 is a higher developmental level and thus a less stable construct in this type
        of maturing sample of young adults. Limitations and implications for future study
        were discussed.

ADVISER'S APPROVAL: Dale Fuqua