

A NEW MODEL AND MEASUREMENT  
OF SPIRITUALITY

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Faith and religion have been the focus of scholarly research for many years (Allport, 1950; James, 2002; Otto, 1958). It has been noted that religious beliefs are found within every culture (Boyer 2001; Norenzyan & Heine, 2005) and that these beliefs impact peoples' sense of happiness (Hill & Pargament, 2003) and self-concept (Emmons, 1999; Tarakeshwar, Stanton & Pargament, 2003). Within the last 20 years there has been a growing interest in studying faith and religion in an attempt to understand more fully the role they play in the lives of individuals and more specifically, how faith develops over time (Green & Hoffman, 1989; Ingersoll, 1994; Streib, 2001).

Within the United States, faith plays an integral role in the lives of many. According to the Barna Research Group (2007), sixty-nine percent of Americans believe that God is the all-powerful, all-knowing perfect creator of the universe who rules our world today. Of those who believe in God, 61percent report being a member of a religious organization (Gallup Poll, 2008). Barna (2007) reveals that following the attack on the World Trade Center in 2001, forty-eight percent of American adults (representing roughly 100 million people) claimed their faith played a significant role in helping them



deal with the tragedy. Similarly, other studies have found that faith is used as a coping mechanism to help individuals deal with severe stressors including the loss of a loved one (Graham-Pole, Wass, Eyeberg & Chu, 1989; Hughes, McCollom, Sheftel & Sanchez, 1994; Tebbi, Mallon, Richards & Bigler, 1987). The American Psychiatric Association (1994) seemed to acknowledge the tremendous influence faith has in the lives of individuals when it included “Religious or spiritual problem” in the fourth edition of the DSM. Also, it has been noted the field of psychology as a whole seems to be gaining awareness of the need to examine in more depth the effects faith has on psychological well-being (Jones, 1994); and while there are increasingly more articles being written and more studies being conducted on faith, there is still very little understanding about how faith develops or what is the “deeper structure of religious belief” (Cohen, Shariff & Hill, 2008). Within the literature on faith there appear to be two major obstacles in advancing our understanding of faith development: a) how it is conceptualized and b) how it is measured.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The first obstacle relates to how faith is conceptualized, and one of the contributing factors to this problem is the terminology used. When people discuss issues related to faith they will invariably talk about religion and use the terms interchangeably. For instance, when individuals are asked to talk about their faith they often respond by sharing their religion (e.g. Baptist, Catholic). Some scholars have felt that the term faith is inherently laden with meaning related to organized religion and consequently opt to use the term spirituality to encompass a broader meaning (Schneiders, 2003). However, Pargament, Sullivan, Balzer, Van Haitsma and Raymark (1995) found that the difference between religiousness and spirituality is not clearly understood in the general population either. Even in the scientific literature on religion these terms are being used interchangeably (Hill et al., 2000; Hood et al., 1996). Therefore, due to a growing recognition that spirituality plays an important role in the lives of people combined with uneasiness with organized religion, researchers are becoming increasingly aware of the need to differentiate between these terms.

Love (2001) has asserted that religion is a common set of beliefs, values or doctrines that serve as a framework for the worship of and the belief in a supernatural

power that is held as creator or director of the universe. In contrast, Parks (2000) contends that spirituality is the search for meaning and purpose, wholeness, and a sense of transcendence. She views this as a pursuit of spirit as the life-giving nature at the core of life, and this pursuit is an individual experience as opposed to a more structured corporate experience.

In an empirical study, Rose (2001) attempted to distinguish between spirituality and religion. He found that while there may be no suitable definitions, there are some prerequisites that appear in the use of the terms. For spirituality, he found that: a) while it does not have to be tied to a specific religious affiliation, it must still contain some element of dealing with ultimate questions; b) there must be an adherence to some standard by a continual striving toward the ideal of that standard and; c) a person's life is marked by altruistic behaviors and ultimately love for others. In essence, religion is a framework in which spirituality may operate, but religion is not necessary in order for a person to be spiritual. This argument has permeated the study of faith.

#### *Current theories of spiritual development*

Perhaps the biggest leap forward in the study of spiritual development came in 1981 when James Fowler proposed his *Stages of Faith* theory (Fowler, 1981). Fowler proposed seven stages that may occur in the development of one's faith. The stages are: a) undifferentiated, b) intuitive-projective, c) mythic-literal, d) synthetic-conventional, e) individuative-reflective, f) conjunctive and g) universalizing. Fowler states that the stages are "invariant, sequential, and hierarchical" (p. 57). He theorizes that each stage must be navigated before the next stage can be reached. Individuals may move through the stages at varying speeds depending on the time needed to navigate any one stage.

Those rates may vary from individual to individual or even from stage to stage for any given individual. At any point, an individual may stop in a given stage and remain in that stage indefinitely. The stages themselves represent change that moves an individual from a spirituality modeled after others to a spirituality that is personal and presents itself in such a way as to appear owned by the individual. While Fowler proposes seven stages, he states that most people do not move beyond stages three or four. Fowler argues that “Faith, rather than belief or religion, is the most fundamental category in the human quest for relation to transcendence” (p. 14). Thus, he promotes the view that religion is not a necessary component of spirituality.

McDargh (2001) stated that Fowler’s theory has given psychologists a theoretical framework to study faith and it remains the predominant theory. Despite this however, Fowler’s theory has received considerable criticism over the years. One of the critiques is that the theory is overly structural (Jardine & Viljoen, 1992). Additionally, Strieb (2001) suggests Fowler’s theory does not account for the impact of content. He asserts that individual experiences and beliefs may also play a role in spiritual development. Strieb proposes that focus be placed on an individual’s *life history* as a means of addressing these criticisms. Strieb contends that spiritual development should be viewed as

a complex process of entangled factors: of structural development, of *schemata* of interpersonal relationships, and of *themata*, which are presented to the individual by experiences—and sometimes traumas—in earlier life history and that may change and vary as the interpersonal, social, and societal relationships change over a lifetime (p. 146).

Consequently, Streib proposes a *styles* approach, as opposed to a stage approach, to spiritual development. He suggests these styles are like layers and that these layers may coexist, though one layer will be predominant. And while Streib acknowledges the need to include content in evaluating the spirituality of an individual, he continues to maintain the view that spirituality is separate from religion.

More recently, Clore and Fitzgerald (2002) also found that Fowler's stages do not seem to adequately represent data analyzed by factor analysis. They agree with Streib and suggest that part of the problem is related to Fowler's lack of emphasis on content. Instead they proposed a model for measuring faith development based on Lonergan's model of intentional faith which proposes four *Ways of Faith* (*Common, Thoughtful, Responsible, and Transcendent Faith*). These *Ways* constitute distinct levels that increase in both differentiation and integration. Clore and Fitzgerald theorize that these *Ways of Faith* are ways of organizing thoughts that allow the individual to constantly redefine and rework his or her faith rather than moving to a successive stage and leaving the others behind. For them, spirituality is "the search for an integrating center of value and meaning that is cognitional in nature, developmental in process, and transcendental in its dimensions" (p. 106). They argue this approach corrects the structural and content problems associated with Fowler's theory.

As mentioned previously, one of the obstacles to understanding spiritual development is the way in which spirituality is conceptualized. Current theories view spirituality as separate from religion. In fact it would appear that within the literature, the relationship between the two is predominantly viewed in one of two ways. Schneiders (2003) states that one of these views suggests spirituality and religion are *strangers*.

According to this view, the two are separate and do not have any necessary connection with each other. Schneiders (2003) states a second view considers spirituality and religion as *rivals*. According to this view, the two are competitors in that the more religious one is the less spiritual he or she is and vice versa. However, Schneiders (2003) suggests a third alternative. This alternative supports the notion that spirituality and religion are “two dimensions of a single enterprise” (p. 164). According to this perspective the two should be viewed as *partners*, at times creating tension, yet essential to one another. Evidence for such a view can be seen in the difficulty that exists in trying to differentiate between spirituality and religion.

Returning to the study by Rose (2001), he claims that religion and spirituality should basically be viewed as strangers. One is not necessary for the other. However, he does state that in order to be spiritual there needs to be a *standard* to which individuals strive. This is a tacit admission that religion is necessary to spirituality. The reason is that practically and realistically, religion is what provides the values or doctrines related to that standard. This by no means suggests that all persons who are spiritual must subscribe to a similar religion, but rather at the core of any standard of spirituality are doctrines and ideals that are delineated by a religion, whether formal or informal. Therefore religion should be viewed as the *partner* that informs the intellectual understanding of the ideals that must be attained.

Spirituality according to Parks (2000) is the pursuit of spirit at the core of life that provides purpose and a sense of transcendence. Rose (2001) stated that spirituality must deal with ultimate questions or the things that make us aware of, and connected to, an intangible reality (e.g. Divinity, Truth, mindfulness). This means that spirituality is

focused on an experiential knowledge, beyond what can be discerned solely by our physical senses (i.e. touching, tasting, smelling, hearing, seeing), with an intangible reality. For instance, one could become aware of this intangible reality by experiencing an infusion of inner peace and yet not be able to physically touch, taste, feel, see or hear any evidence of the experience other than the resulting peace. From this vantage point spirituality should be construed as the *partner* that informs one's spirit. If one construes spirituality and religion in this way it seems clear that it is not possible to separate religion from spirituality. Such a construal then necessitates an approach that emphasizes content (religion) as well as the pursuit of spirit (spirituality).

Figure 1 represents such an approach proposed by this study and shows the suggested relationship between an individual's religious beliefs or content (outer circle) and an individual's spirituality (inner circle) at varying levels of growth or maturity. This novel approach assumes that within all persons is the seed for spirituality, or rather the capacity for spiritual growth. Even within those who do not acknowledge the existence of an intangible reality is the possibility that, under certain circumstances, they may become aware and begin to develop spiritually. Spiritual growth results when one's knowledge and beliefs of the standard to which one adheres causes one to become aware of, or connect with, the intangible reality in a way that provides meaning and helps the person to make sense of the world. As such, the process of spiritual growth should be viewed as integration of religious beliefs with one's spirit.

In order for religious beliefs to cause one to become aware of and connect with an intangible reality, the nature of the religious beliefs must have this as a chief aim. That is, a person's belief must cause one to focus on the intangible reality. If a person's belief

does not do this, then spiritual growth cannot happen. For instance, imagine a person who claims to adhere to the Buddhist tradition and believes that “the very purpose of our lives is to seek happiness” (Dalai Lama & Cutler, 1998, p. 15) and thus eschew suffering. It is possible for this person to espouse that belief and yet attempt to find happiness in material things and miss the intangible reality of Buddhist contentment. Similarly, it is possible that one’s religious beliefs actually prevent awareness of and connection with the intangible reality. This can be seen in individuals who hold beliefs that are inaccurate with regard to their standard. For example, imagine a person who adheres to the Christian tradition but holds the belief that the purpose of attending Mass is to show obedience to the Pope. This belief would prevent the individual from experiencing the Eucharist in a way that would connect him or her to the intangible reality of Christ’s presence. In either case, the Buddhist or the Christian, the individual’s beliefs do not help him or her focus on ultimate questions (i.e. the intangible reality), and result in a lack of spiritual growth.

As mentioned previously, integration requires that one’s religious beliefs be used as a way of making spiritual sense of the world. If a person claims to hold a belief but does not use it to make sense of the world then that belief will not lead to spiritual growth. For instance, a person who says prayer is important, but never prays has obviously not integrated this belief. In such a case it becomes clear that this person does not see prayer as a way to meaningfully construe his or her world. Similarly, a person who says prayer is important but *only* prays out of habit or pressure is not using his or her belief in a meaningful way. This person also demonstrates that prayer, regardless of how often he or she prays, is not a meaningful way to construe his or her world and connect to



the intangible reality. Thus it is not simply the act of prayer that makes the individual spiritual; rather it is using prayer as a way to provide meaning that makes him or her spiritual.

It is important to understand that a person's religious beliefs provide parameters regarding spiritual growth (see Figure 1), but having religious beliefs is not in and of itself equal to spirituality. That is, as already mentioned, a person may be religious, possessing intellectual knowledge, and yet not be spiritual. However, an individual cannot become more spiritual than his or her religious beliefs allows. The best one could achieve is equality between the two. For instance, a person who possesses little knowledge about his or her religion is limited in spiritual growth by that lack of knowledge. He or she may fully integrate what is known intellectually, but will grow no further if religious beliefs are not also increased. So, to grow or mature, a person must be gaining knowledge of his or her standard, and at the same time integrating that knowledge with one's spirituality. In this sense spiritual growth is a continual process, but may be stopped at any point a person stops pursuing it.

#### *Measurement of spiritual development*

The second obstacle in the study of spirituality relates to its measurement. Moberg (2002) notes that one problem is that current measures are applicable only to those who espouse a Judeo-Christian belief. Additionally, Astin, Astin and Lindholm (2007) evaluated 125 methods of assessing spirituality and religion listed in Hill and Hood (1999) and concluded that although the measurements provide insightful and meaningful information, none are adequate for assessing spirituality generally. One source of confusion is that many of the measures use spirituality and religion

interchangeably, but in actuality only measure religiosity. Astin et al. suggest that a new set of measures aimed at assessing 12 different aspects of spirituality, including content specific information, need to be created.

Thus, the main purpose of this study is to create a measure of spirituality as a *partner* to religion. In order to do this in a way that addresses the shortcomings previously mentioned, this measure will need to a) provide content relevant to the specific religious standard espoused by the individual, and b) assess the extent to which the individual's religious beliefs have been integrated with his or her spirituality; in other words, the extent to which the person uses the beliefs to make sense of the world.

Since spirituality requires an individual to aspire to some standard, and because this standard will vary across people, providing content relevant to the individual's specific standard is imperative. For example, an individual who claims that he or she is a Buddhist has different goals and ideals than someone who claims to be a Christian. The Buddhist's goal is to reach Nirvana and the ideal is Buddha; while the Christian's goal is to reach Heaven and the ideal is Jesus. Therefore, to evaluate a Buddhist from content relevant to Christianity would be unproductive, and vice versa.

Secondly, the measure must be capable of assessing the extent of integration, which can be thought of as the range of events to which a person applies his or her religious beliefs. For example, picture individuals who use prayer as a way to become aware of, and connect to, an intangible reality. Those with a greater degree of integration will find prayer useful in more circumstances than those with a lesser degree of integration. The former may pray in many situations while the latter may only pray during a crisis.

Additionally, in assessing the extent of integration the measure must allow for a variety of expressions of spirituality. That is, people may hold to a similar religious belief, but display integration of that belief in different ways. Imagine two people who believe demonstrating love for others is a way to connect with an intangible reality. One may demonstrate this love by “being there for others” and the other may demonstrate this love by “respecting others just the way they are.” Both persons may have integrated their belief and apply it across a range of situations, yet express it in different ways.

#### *Brief overview of Personal Construct Theory*

Based on the purpose and requirements of this new measure as outlined previously, this study will rely on George Kelly’s Personal Construct Theory (1955) because of its unique ability to meet all of the specified conditions. Kelly’s theory provides a general structure for understanding the ways people integrate beliefs and experiences, while allowing for individuals’ unique perspectives as individual meaning makers.

Kelly begins with the supposition that all individuals behave in ways that make sense to them, and that what makes sense is determined through the construing of events. He views individuals as person-scientists who seek to “predict, and thus control, the course of events” (p. 9) in their lives. As person-scientists, individuals are constantly forming and testing hypotheses in a bid to make sense of the world more fully. Individuals will either adjust or discard the hypotheses they determine to be inaccurate or unhelpful. Kelly states that hypotheses are the result of a network of constructs that help the individual make sense of his or her world. Furthermore, he views constructs as the ways individuals classify the things they encounter, and that constructs are bipolar

dimensions of discrimination. For example, a person who believes in prayer would have encountered a situation in which he or she construed praying as more beneficial than its opposite, not praying. So, individuals who adhere to prayer do so because it is more beneficial to them than not praying. This suggests that individuals will retain those religious beliefs that are beneficial in making sense of the world, but will abandon those religious beliefs that are not beneficial. Kelly refers to the evaluative description as the emergent pole (in this example “praying”) and its opposite as the implicit pole (in this example “not praying”).

Kelly also proposes a *range of convenience* for each construct. By this he means that constructs have a limited scope of usefulness that is determined by the individual. In the example above, individuals who pray do so because it is more beneficial than not praying. However, the individual who prays in many situations demonstrates that the construct of praying has a greater range (i.e. useful in more contexts) than the individual who only prays during a crisis, though both retain the construct of praying. This would suggest that those whose religious beliefs have a broader *range of convenience* have greater integration than those with a narrower range; and if the religious beliefs are accurate and help the individual connect with an intangible reality as outlined previously, a broader range can be associated with greater spiritual maturity.

Kelly goes on to propose that since events in a person’s environment are processed and interpreted within the construct system of that person, each person responds in a way consistent with his or her unique interpretation. It is important to note here that Kelly does not suggest the individual creates the experience, but rather interprets that experience. So individuals may encounter similar events, but construe

them differently depending on the constructs used to interpret the events. Kelly notes that the constructs used may be as revealing as those not used in construing an event. For example, a spiritual person will interpret events through those beliefs that have been integrated, while a person who is not spiritual (i.e. has not integrated his or her religious beliefs) will fail to use religious beliefs to interpret an event. Therefore, a person who in the course of construing an event does not use religious constructs, reveals as much about his or her spirituality as the person who does use religious beliefs.

#### *Overview of research related to Repertory Grid techniques*

In order to assess what constructs are used by individuals, George Kelly developed the Repertory Grid technique (1955). In this technique Kelly makes a distinction between the factual parts of an event (e.g. people, things) which he terms elements, and the constructs. It is the interplay of these two aspects that make assessment possible. In the Repertory Grid technique individuals are asked to generate a list of elements, or people, commonly based on roles. For example, one might be asked to identify someone he or she respected. Typically, the person would also be asked to generate the names of several others based on various roles defined by the researcher. Then, the person would be asked to rate self, as well as the people identified earlier, on specific constructs. These constructs can be provided by the researcher or they can be generated by the individual. Additionally, these constructs can include the emergent and implicit poles, or just the emergent pole (the current study will use only the emergent pole). When rating the elements, the individual is focused on a particular construct and asked to apply the construct to each element. For example, suppose an individual generated the construct “there for others.” The individual would then rate on a scale,

perhaps ranging from -2 to 2, each of the elements as well as self on that construct. If the individual construed self as “there for others”, he or she might rate self as 2 on the scale. A person the individual feels is not there for others would be rated as -2. The individual would rate each element on each of the constructs. The end product would be an A x B grid, where A is the number of constructs and B is the number of elements. Figure 2 shows a completed grid example that includes only the emergent poles of constructs. From this grid, a researcher can create a two-dimensional, self-identity plot (see Figure 3) to examine the differences and similarities between people in the grid (Norris & Makhoul-Norris, 1976). In doing this, a researcher can determine how closely an individual sees himself or herself in relation to other people in the grid.

This technique has been useful in a wide variety of fields and settings, though no published studies of repertory grids could be found in the areas of faith or religion. Some of the settings in which repertory grids have been used include: clinical psychology, in which it is helpful to understand how persons with disorders view themselves in relation to others (Makhoul-Norris & Norris, 1972; Norris, Jones & Norris, 1970; Leedy, Jackson & Callahan, 2007); business settings in helping managers with performance reviews (Borman, 1987), recruiting (Kristof-Brown, 2000 ) and strategic planning (Wright, 2007); and medical settings in which it is important to understand patient perceptions (Frewer, Howard & Shepard, 1997; Rowe, et al., 2005; Lewith & Chan, 2002). Additionally, it has been noted that over the years there have been several thousands of studies using this type of technique to assess individual constructs and the relative position of self to others (Neimeyer, Baker, & Neimeyer, 1990). Furthermore,

this technique has been shown to have adequate psychometric properties despite its highly idiographic nature (Feixas et. al, 1992).

### *Current study*

The purpose of this study is to add to the body of work on spiritual development by creating a new measure that will assess spirituality as a *partner* to religion. More specifically, it will assess how individuals use religious beliefs to make sense of the world and connect to an intangible reality. As outlined previously, spirituality must contain “an adherence to some standard by a continual striving toward the ideal of that standard” and this will be the specific focus of the measurement in this study. It is also expected that this measurement would be applicable to multiple religious perspectives by allowing for the assessment of different religious beliefs, as the standard for each is different. However, this initial study will demonstrate this novel approach from the perspective of traditional Christianity.

Specifically, the religious beliefs which have as their foundation an abandonment of reliance on human effort to obtain salvation, and an understanding that such salvation can only come from a relationship with Jesus Christ will be assessed. The reasons for this focus is a) the general acceptance of such a position across all traditional Christian perspectives which speaks to the accuracy of religious beliefs, and b) the requirement that religious beliefs focus on becoming aware of, and connecting to, an intangible reality. It is important to note that a researcher needs to be careful in selecting the beliefs to assess, regardless of what religious tradition is being evaluated, as this determines the ability to ascertain whether or not one’s beliefs help to connect to an intangible reality. Only those beliefs that accurately represent the spiritual perspective being assessed should be used.

From this perspective then, how is spirituality recognized within Christianity, or rather, how does one demonstrate that they have connected with the intangible reality, in this case with Christ? Within the Bible, the answer is seen in Galatians 5:21-23. Scripture asserts that those who are spiritual, that is those who are connected to Christ, will produce “fruit” or evidence of that spirituality as a consequence of being connected to Christ (Wood, Wood & Marshall, 1996).

As a person grows spiritually, there should be changes in behavior that accompanies that growth and those behavioral changes should affect daily life. The Bible refers to the evidence of these changes as the “Fruit of the Spirit” and lists them in Galatians 5:22-23. According to this verse, individuals who have connected with Christ should display the *fruit of the Spirit*. In other words, those who are Christian should have constructs revealing the presence of the *fruit of the Spirit*, and those who are more mature spiritually should reveal a greater *range of convenience* of the fruit. In order to understand the Biblical meaning, the nine fruit listed in Galatians were studied and defined by examining the original Greek usage (see Table 1).

#### *Doctrines related to Jesus*

As discussed previously, connecting to an intangible reality requires accurate beliefs regarding one’s standard and ideal. Since this study is focused on the Christian perspective, it is important to assess whether or not each individual has an accurate representation of what the Bible says about Jesus. Consequently, eight specific doctrines relating to Jesus’ purpose, deity and life were chosen. The doctrine are as follows: a) Jesus is the incarnation of God, b) he was born to a virgin, c) he came to preach salvation, d) he died, e) his death was necessary for the forgiveness of sin, f) he was



resurrected, g) he is the only means of salvation, and h) he is God. These were selected as they are generally accepted across traditional Christian perspectives (Nichols, 1994; Evans, 1998; Ryrie, 1995).

### *Hypotheses*

This study attempted to create a repertory grid based measure of spirituality. The validity of this new measure will be demonstrated by distinguishing between: a) those who are more spiritually mature and those who are less spiritually mature within Christianity, and b) those who are Christian and those who are not.

## CHAPTER III

### METHODOLOGY

#### *Participants*

The current study included a convenience sample of 83 participants classified within three groups. The first group, non-Christians, was comprised of 29 undergraduate and graduate students (13 women, 16 men; 18 to 26 years of age,  $M = 20.31$ ,  $SD = 2.04$ ) who identified themselves as non-Christian. Of these, eight were recruited from a campus club for Atheists and the remaining 21 were recruited from psychology courses in which students received course credit for participation. Of the 29 participants in this group, 20 identified themselves as Caucasian, 2 as African American, 2 as Asian, 1 as Native American and 4 as “other.” The second group, Christian laity, was comprised of 30 undergraduate students (21 women, 9 men; 18 to 22 years of age,  $M = 18.97$ ,  $SD = 2.22$ ) who were also recruited from psychology courses in which they received course credit for participation. Of the 30 participants in this group, 27 identified themselves as Caucasian, 2 as African American and 1 as Asian. The final group, Christian ministers, was comprised of 24 credentialed ministers (20 men, 4 women; 24 to 65 years of age,  $M = 38.14$ ,  $SD = 10.99$ ) from Oklahoma and Missouri. Of those in this group, 23 identified themselves as Caucasian and 1 as “other.”

## *Materials*

A questionnaire was used to assess basic demographic information (age, ethnicity) and to measure aspects of a person's religious practices (e.g., how long you have been a Christian, age, how often you pray; see Appendix A).

Idiogrid (Version 2.4; Grice, 2007) computer software, designed specifically for use with repertory grids, was used to collect and analyze the repertory grids for this study. Grice, Burkley, Wright, and Slaby (2004) have shown self-ratings using this software to be internally consistent as well as highly correlated to other multidimensional measures of self-concept.

This study introduced the Spirituality Repertory Grid – Christian Version (SRG-CV). The measure contained two grids to be completed by each participant. The first grid was completed in three stages. In stage 1 participants generated a list of names (elements) that fit specific role titles (e.g. someone I respect, someone I do not respect) (see Appendix B). In the second stage, participants generated constructs from 30 open-ended statements (e.g. The most important thing I can do for others is \_\_\_\_). These statements were designed to provide participants with an opportunity to generate constructs (emergent poles only) related to Biblical principles outlined in Galatians 5:22-23, known collectively as the fruit of the spirit. There are nine types identified in Galatians and each type is represented by three questions on the SRG-CV with an additional three questions representing an overall view (see Appendix C). Participants completed each of the 30 statements. In the third stage, participants were asked to select how closely each response reflects what he or she would do on a regular basis (never -2 to always +2) as well as what would be done by each person listed in stage 1.

Additionally, they rated Jesus on the same constructs, resulting in a 30 x 7 (30 constructs; self, 5 people, and Jesus) repertory grid. A completed example grid can be seen in Figure 2, and the objective was to see how similar each participant rated himself or herself to the ideal standard (Jesus) as an indication of integration between religion and spirituality. For example, suppose a Christian woman generated the construct “I am here if you need me.” If the individual rated herself similar to Jesus (e.g. self and Jesus receive scores of 2), then it would indicate she was consistent within her beliefs regarding the Christian ideal for connecting to the spiritual world, namely Jesus. Conversely, suppose a Christian man generated the construct “Ignore the person” and then rated himself dissimilar to Jesus (e.g. self as a 2 and Jesus as a -2). In this case he was far from his ideal and was not using his religion to make sense of the world in a manner consistent with his spiritual guide.

The second grid contained descriptions of eight different doctrinal stances held by most traditional Christian denominations (see Appendix D). Included in this grid were statements reflecting an opposing view to each doctrine (e.g. Some scholars argue that there are numerous ways to gain entry to Heaven, in addition to Jesus Christ; Some scholars argue that there is only one way to gain entry to Heaven, and that is through Jesus Christ). Participants were asked to select how closely they agreed with the doctrinal position or its opposite and were also asked to select how the people generated in the first grid would respond. Participants were asked to place the people on a continuous bipolar scale ranging from -200 to 200. The higher the absolute value the more closely they agreed with the related description. For this grid, Jesus was added as an additional element during analysis and scores were assigned to reflect traditional

Christian agreement with each doctrine (i.e. each score was set at -200). This produced an 8 x 7 grid (see figure 4) that was analyzed to assess whether or not the participant has an accurate view of Jesus as taught by Orthodox Christian churches.

This study was interested in how similar one sees himself or herself to Jesus as a measure of integration of religion and spirituality in Grid 1, and accuracy of beliefs regarding one's ideal in Grid 2. Consequently, the distances between Jesus and self on Grid 1 and Grid 2 were converted to standardized Euclidian distances, which range from 0 to 1, between the two elements (Barrett, 2006), with 1 representing perfect agreement or similarity. According to the hypothesis, ministers should have higher standardized Euclidian distance scores than laity on the first grid (see figure 5) and both of these groups combined should have higher standardized Euclidian distance scores on the second grid than non-Christians (see figure 6). That is, ministers should be more spiritually mature (i.e. closer to Jesus) than laity, and both of these groups should have a more Biblically accurate view of Jesus than non-Christians.



## CHAPTER IV

### FINDINGS

Standardized Euclidian distance scores (Barrett, 2006) were calculated between self and Jesus on Grid 1 and Grid 2. The Grid 1 scores of ministers were compared to the Grid 1 scores of laity, and the Grid 2 scores of non-Christians were compared to the combined Grid 2 scores of ministers and laity. The scores on Grid 1 for ministers ranged from .42 to .81 and for laity ranged from .38 to .75. Both groups showed fairly normal distributions with slightly negative skews. The Grid 2 scores for non-Christians ranged from .00 to .69 and revealed a slightly positive skew. For the combined group of ministers and laity, the scores on Grid 2 ranged from .33 to .1 and revealed a moderate negative skew.

The standardized Euclidian scores were then analyzed using independent sample *t*-tests to determine if there were differences between the group population means. As predicted, ministers ( $M = .656, SD = .088$ ) had, on average, higher standardized Euclidian distance scores on Grid 1 than did laity ( $M = .590, SD = .107$ ),  $t(52) = 2.38, p = .021$ . However, the confidence interval ( $CI_{95} = .01, .12$ ) was fairly wide, considering the

standard deviations of the groups, and the effect size ( $\eta^2 = .10$ ) was medium according to Cohen's conventions (see figure 7).

Also as predicted, ministers and laity combined ( $M = .864$ ,  $SD = .194$ ) had higher standardized Euclidian distance scores on Grid 2, on average, than did non-Christians ( $M = .249$ ,  $SD = .209$ ),  $t(81) = 13.44$ ,  $p < .001$ . However, the confidence interval ( $CI_{95} = .52$ ,  $.71$ ) was also wide with a large effect size ( $\eta^2 = .69$ ) according to Cohen's conventions (see figure 8).

#### *Additional Analyses and Observations*

Part of the proposed theory states that individuals who score low on Grid 2 do not have an accurate view of Christ. After observing scores on Grid 2, and in keeping with the goal of the proposed measure, an arbitrary cut point of .70 on Grid 2 was set. Participants were then selected for analysis only if Grid 2 scores met or exceeded the cut point. The rationale for this breakdown was to examine the impact of these individuals on the analysis of Grid 1. Consequently, the standardized Euclidian distance scores on Grid 1 for ministers ( $M = .656$ ,  $SD = .088$ ) and laity ( $M = .576$ ,  $SD = .109$ ) were reanalyzed by conducting an independent samples  $t$ -test, and the results remained statistically significant,  $t(42) = 2.73$ ,  $p = .012$ . The confidence interval ( $CI_{95} = .02$ ,  $.14$ ) was wide and the effect size ( $\eta^2 = .15$ ) increased slightly, and was large according to Cohen's conventions.



Additionally, two multiple regression analyses were conducted to examine the relationships between the Christian demographic variables and the standardized Euclidian distance scores for ministers and laity combined. The analysis revealed that time spent in prayer ( $M = 5.00$ ,  $SD = 4.51$ ,  $\beta = .002$ ,  $p = .50$ ) and time spent reading the Bible ( $M = 3.14$ ,  $SD = 3.81$ ,  $\beta = .005$ ,  $p = .19$ ) were not significant predictors of standardized Euclidian distance scores on Grid 1,  $R^2 = .06$ ,  $F(52) = 1.49$ ,  $p = .235$ . The second multiple regression indicated that the length of time one has been Christian ( $M = 20.42$ ,  $SD = 11.50$ ) was not a significant predictor of standardized Euclidian distances on Grid 2 ( $\beta = .002$ ,  $p = .38$ ), but the number of services attended weekly ( $M = 1.98$ ,  $SD = 1.32$ ) was a significant predictor ( $\beta = .054$ ,  $p = .007$ ),  $R^2 = .22$ ,  $F(52) = 7.24$ ,  $p = .002$ .

The standardized Euclidian distance scores of ministers and laity on Grid 1 were also analyzed using the Observation Oriented Modeling (OOM) technique (Grice, In Press). As expected, results indicated that those in the laity group could be differentiated regarding Grid 1 scores from those in the minister group with 66.67% of the participants correctly classified ( $c = .09$ , 1000 randomization trials). However, the multi-gram revealed a less than clear pattern in the data (see figure 9). The same analysis was conducted again, only this time the Grid 2 cut point mentioned previously was used. Results again showed that the laity and ministers groups could be differentiated on Grid 1 scores with 68.18% of the participants correctly classified ( $c = .11$ , 1000 randomization trials). This time, the multi-gram showed a clearer pattern in the data, though many individuals remained incorrectly classified (see figure 10). A third OOM analysis was conducted comparing non-Christian standardized Euclidian distance scores on Grid 2 to those of the laity and ministers combined. As expected, results indicated that those in the

non-Christian group could be differentiated regarding Grid 2 scores from those in the minister group with 90.36% of the participants correctly classified ( $c = .00$ , 1000 randomization trials). The multi-gram revealed a fairly clear pattern in the data (see figure 11).

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSIONS

The study of spirituality apart from religion has so far led to widespread confusion regarding the terms and concepts. Rose (1999) concluded that scientific literature, as well as the public at large, thinks there is a difference between spirituality and religion, but is unable to clearly delineate the difference. Part of the problem is that research to date generally assumes the two are separable, even though some have suggested they be viewed as partners (Schneider, 2003). In order to further scientific understanding of spirituality, a model is needed that can demonstrate the relationship between spirituality and religion while being able to account for individuals who are religious and not spiritual. Thus, the current study presented a novel, integrated model and measure of spirituality and attempted to demonstrate the validity of the new measure by distinguishing between those who are Christian and those who are not, and between those who are more spiritually mature and those who are less spiritually mature within Christianity.

The results of comparing ministers and laity to non-Christians provided evidence of this novel measure's ability to discriminate between these groups. In line with Rose's (1999) findings, this suggests that Grid 2 containing basic doctrines of Christianity was adequate at assessing those who possessed the content (religion) necessary to achieve

Christian spirituality. This does not imply that those who agreed with the doctrines of Christianity were spiritual, but rather contained the elements necessary for spiritual growth. This was especially highlighted by the additional analyses and observations conducted. When individuals who scored below the cut point on Grid 2 were removed from the analysis on Grid 1, the mean difference between the ministers and laity increased. This suggests that content, or religion, does not necessarily translate into spirituality. These individuals all had a fairly accurate view of Christ (i.e. scored above the cut point) according to traditional doctrine, but appeared not to integrate this view equally into the way they made sense of the world. It seems apparent then that individuals can be religious, that is hold beliefs consistent with a particular religious tradition, and yet not be spiritual. However, these results should be viewed cautiously. The mean length of time laity had been Christian exceeded 10 years and it seems highly probable that the level of content of these individuals expanded over time. This is further delineated by the regression analysis of Grid 2. The results suggest that the number of times one attends religious services is related to Grid 2 scores. It is then possible that repeated exposure to, or training in, Christian teachings might account for these scores. Therefore, one cannot be certain the content of Grid 2 is present at the start of one's spiritual journey. While the original intent of this study was to obtain a sample of individuals who were at the beginning of their spiritual journey (i.e. were Christian for less than one year), the sample proved to be unobtainable for the current study. Consequently, the validity of this measure to differentiate between recent Christians and non-Christians remains suspect. Despite this, it still seems reasonable to think that those

who convert to Christianity do so within the framework of knowledge in Grid 2, but future studies will need to assess this.

The second objective in validating the novel measure, Spirituality Repertory Grid – Christian Version (SRG-CV), was to distinguish between laity and ministers on Grid 1. According to the results, the measure was able to accomplish this. This finding suggests that ministers were more likely than laity to view their own constructs as similar to the constructs Christ would use. In other words, it appears that ministers, more so than laity, think they are following the example of Christ, or rather, have integrated more Christian content into their systems for making sense of the world. Further support for the validity of this measure can be seen in the regression analyses. The results indicated that neither time spent in prayer nor time spent reading the Bible were significant predictors of Grid 1 scores. This suggests that individuals can pray and read the Bible and still not use them in making sense of the world, as the model proposed. This implies that merely asking whether or not one prays or reads the Bible is not a good indicator of whether or not such constructs are useful in navigating the world on a daily basis.

Thus, this measure appears well positioned to assess spirituality and not simply religiosity. However, these results should also be regarded cautiously. The data, while statistically significant, did not show as clear a pattern as was anticipated, especially in light of the Observation Oriented Modeling (Grice, In Press) analysis. Again this might have been due to the fact that most of the laity had been Christian for many years and the difference in level of spirituality would be expected to be small. In other words, as laity spend more time pursuing spirituality, it would be reasonable to expect the difference between ministers and laity to narrow. A second cause for concern is that the two groups

differed in age. While it could be argued that the difference in age should highlight the developmental nature of spirituality and accentuate the effect, one cannot rule out the notion that age alone, and not spirituality, accounted for the difference in scores.

Though it appears clear that the measure and model were supported in this study, there remains compelling evidence for a modification in the measure in order to more accurately assess spirituality. Through a cursory examination of the constructs of three ministers who scored below the average laity score on Grid 1, it was observed that one minister did not have a single explicit spiritual reference (e.g. prayer, trusting God), one had numerous references and the third had references in nearly every statement. This would suggest some individuals who use spiritual constructs to make sense of the world might simultaneously view themselves as far from Christ. It could be that for some, attempting to closely follow Christ may result in recognizing just how far they are from truly being like Christ. Furthermore, a similar cursory examination of the content of Grid 1 constructs was conducted on those individuals who did not meet the cut point on Grid 2. It appeared that these individuals had fewer explicit spiritual references than did those who met or exceeded the cut point. It seemed in these cases having an inaccurate view of Christ might have led to an overestimation of the similarity to Christ. Because the expression of spirituality can vary among individuals, it seems that understanding whether or not individuals use the constructs to deal with ultimate questions (i.e. connect with an intangible reality), along with the individual's assessment of proximity to Christ, might provide a richer way of assessing the level of spirituality. For instance, suppose two individuals respond to the statement "When I see a child hurting I usually \_\_\_\_\_." One individual might respond, "tell them everything will be okay" while the other

individual might respond, “pray with them.” Because simple observation could conclude that the former was not as spiritual as the latter, though this may or may not be accurate, asking if this response was intended as an expression of following the example of Christ could be meaningful. One way of approaching this would be to ask the individual “When you see a child hurting and you ‘tell them everything will be okay,’ are you attempting to follow the example of Christ?” In such a way, the number of constructs used to deal with ultimate questions could be measured. Combining this with the individual’s perception of proximity to Christ (i.e. Grid 1 score) would likely help further differentiate those who use spiritual constructs yet feel they are far from Christ from those who feel they are close to Christ yet use few spiritual constructs. Therefore, future studies of this method should have individuals indicate whether or not their constructs are intended to deal with ultimate questions.

Overall, the results and observations of the content of this study suggest that the proposed model and measure are moving in the right direction and that an integrated model of spirituality and religion is feasible. It would appear spirituality and religion are *partners* and that the assumption the two are separable has hindered the study of spirituality. While this study provides a significant step forward, it is far from complete. This study has proposed content is important in assessing spirituality and that the measure can be formatted for other religious traditions. Therefore, an important future step in validating this measure, in addition to the suggested changes mentioned above, would be to evaluate spirituality across various religious perspectives.

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## APPENDICES

Appendix A

Demographics

Participant ID: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Gender: \_\_\_\_\_ Male          \_\_\_\_\_ Female

Age: \_\_\_\_\_

*For the following, answer only if you consider yourself a Christian*

How long have you been a Christian? \_\_\_\_\_ year(s) and \_\_\_\_\_ month(s)

How many religious services do you attend during a typical week? \_\_\_\_\_

How many hours do you pray during a typical week? \_\_\_\_\_

How many hours do you read the Bible during a typical week? \_\_\_\_\_



## Appendix B

### Role Titles

Someone you would trust completely

Someone you would not trust

A parent or spouse

Someone you believe is a great role model

Someone you believe is a poor role model

\*Myself

\*Jesus

## Appendix C

### Incomplete Sentences by Associated Fruit of the Spirit

#### Love

10. Suppose you saw a person whom you do not like stealing from a department store. How would that make you feel? Complete the following sentence: "I would feel \_\_\_\_\_."
23. I would say the most important thing I can do for others is \_\_\_\_\_.
24. Many people engage in petty theft (for example, a person might steal food from a restaurant at which he/she works). Why do people steal? Complete the following sentence: "I think people steal because they \_\_\_\_\_."

#### Joy

7. Imagine you just lost your life savings. Complete the sentence, "I would feel \_\_\_\_\_."
22. Imagine you are feeling overwhelmed by a problem in life you can't handle. The most important thing to remind yourself is \_\_\_\_\_.
28. When things don't go my way I usually tell myself \_\_\_\_\_.

#### Peace

4. Take a moment to recall a specific time when you felt emotionally hurt as a child. Now that you are an adult, what words of comfort would you offer to yourself as a child during that time? Complete the following sentence: "I would say \_\_\_\_\_."
9. When a person is in the deepest state of despair imaginable, he or she should \_\_\_\_\_.
21. Whenever I feel anxious/nervous, the best thing for me to do is \_\_\_\_\_.

#### Patience

16. Many people drive recklessly. I usually respond to drivers who cut me off by \_\_\_\_\_.
17. There are times when other people will intentionally treat me badly. In such cases, I usually \_\_\_\_\_.
26. Suppose a friend of yours borrowed money from you and tells you he/she cannot pay it back as he/she does not have any money. You know for certain that your friend is lying. You react by \_\_\_\_\_.

#### Kindness

2. Imagine your best friend is hurting emotionally. One thing you might say to make him/her feel better is \_\_\_\_\_.
12. Many people do kind things for others. The main reason I do kind things is \_\_\_\_\_.
27. When I see a stranger who needs help I usually \_\_\_\_\_.

#### Goodness

6. To be successful in life, I think it is important to \_\_\_\_\_.
25. It is okay to lie when \_\_\_\_\_.
29. When I hear something negative about another person I generally \_\_\_\_\_.

#### Faithfulness

14. It is okay to break a promise when \_\_\_\_\_.
15. Divorce is a good solution when \_\_\_\_\_.
30. There are times when people can't keep a commitment. Whenever I can't keep a

commitment I usually feel \_\_\_\_\_.

Gentleness

5. When I want to get rid of negative thoughts I might have about others, I

\_\_\_\_\_.

13. If I have to be in close contact with a person I don't like, I generally

\_\_\_\_\_.

18. If I had to confront someone because of something he/she did wrong, I feel the most important thing to keep in mind would be \_\_\_\_\_.

Self-control

8. The most important thing about sex is that it is \_\_\_\_\_.

19. Whenever I want to have a good time I \_\_\_\_\_.

20. When I see something I want while shopping, I usually \_\_\_\_\_.

General

1. People have different mottos they live by, like 'keep your chin up', 'make love, not war', or 'never say die.' Take a moment to think about your personal motto and complete the following sentence: "At this point in my life, my personal motto is \_\_\_\_\_."

3. The main thing wrong with most people today is that they don't \_\_\_\_\_.

11. If I could pass on only one lesson to my child, it would be \_\_\_\_\_.

## Appendix D

### 1.

#### **Spiritual Guide**

When it comes to understanding the Jesus of history, some scholars argue that he was a deeply spiritual man who essentially taught other people how to live spiritual lives, but was not the Son of God.

#### **God Incarnate**

When it comes to understanding the Jesus of history, some scholars argue that he was the incarnation of the living God; that is, he was the Son of God, or a God-Man.

### 2.

#### **Humanitarian Mission**

When it comes to the Jesus of history, some scholars argue that his primary mission was to teach people that they first and foremost needed to be humanitarians.

#### **Salvation Mission**

When it comes to the Jesus of history, some scholars argue that his primary mission was to teach people that they needed salvation and to worship God.

### 3.

#### **Multiple Ways**

Some scholars argue that there are numerous ways to gain entry to Heaven, in addition to Jesus Christ.

#### **One Way**

Some scholars argue that there is only one way to gain entry to Heaven, and that is through Jesus Christ.

### 4.

#### **Symbolic Resurrection**

When it comes to the historical figure of Jesus, some scholars argue that he died, but that he did not rise from the dead.

#### **Bodily Resurrection**

When it comes to the historical figure Jesus, some scholars argue that he died and then rose from the dead after three days in the tomb.

### 5.

#### **Jesus not God**

Some scholars argue that Jesus did not exist in the beginning of time and as such is not God.

#### **Jesus is God**

Some scholars argue that Jesus was with God from the beginning of time and as such is God.

**6.**

**Death due to Message**

When it comes to the death of Jesus, some scholars argue that it was not necessary, nonetheless he was put to death by the Roman authorities because of his message and his activities.

**Death to Pay for Sins**

When it comes to the death of Jesus, some scholars argue that it was necessary so that people could have their sins forgiven.

**7.**

**Not Crucified**

When it comes to the death of Jesus, some historians argue that he was not crucified.

**Crucified**

When it comes to the death of Jesus, some historians argue that he was crucified.

**8.**

**Not Virgin Birth**

When it comes to the Jesus of history, some scholars say he was not born to a virgin.

**Virgin Birth**

When it comes to the Jesus of history, some scholars say he was born to a virgin.

Table 1

*Greek to English Definitions of the Fruit of the Spirit*

---

English	Greek	Definition
Love	Agape	affection, good-will, love, benevolence (of people toward people)
Joy	Chara	joy, gladness (in the face of adversity and suffering)
Peace	Eirene	Harmony; tranquility of the mind which leads to a life promoting harmony
Patience	Makrothymia	Forbearance, long-suffering, slowness in avenging wrongs
Kindness	Chrestotes	benignity, kindness (toward others as a result of God's Love overflowing the life of a believer); not harsh or rough
Goodness	Agathosyne	Uprightness of heart and life; a zeal for truth
Faithfulness	Pistis	fidelity, faithfulness (the character of one who can be relied on)
Gentleness	Prautes	Gentleness, mildness, meekness (as a disposition) in dealing with others
Self-control	Enkrateia	The virtue of one who has mastered his desires and passions, especially his sensual appetites

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Note: Adapted from "Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament" by Joseph Thayer, 1977.

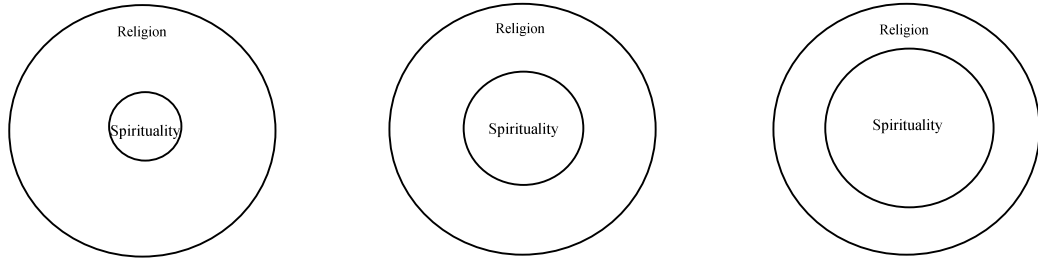


Figure 1: Model of the relationship between spirituality and religion

	Mom		Jane		Dad		Sally		Will		Myself		Jesus
it's got to get better	-1		1		1		-2		-2		1		-2
I'm here if you need me	2		-1		1		2		-1		2		2
care about others	1		1		1		1		-1		2		2
it's going to get better	1		-1		1		1		1		1		2
do something that releases energy and stress	0		-1		-1		-1		1		2		1
had a positive image	1		1		1		1		1		1		1
keep a positive attitude	1		1		1		1		1		1		2
give yourself to someone with great pleasure	1		-1		1		1		1		1		1
be with one they love	-1		-2		-1		-1		1		1		-2
I didn't like them more	-1		-1		-1		-1		-1		-1		-2

Figure 2: Sample Repertory Grid



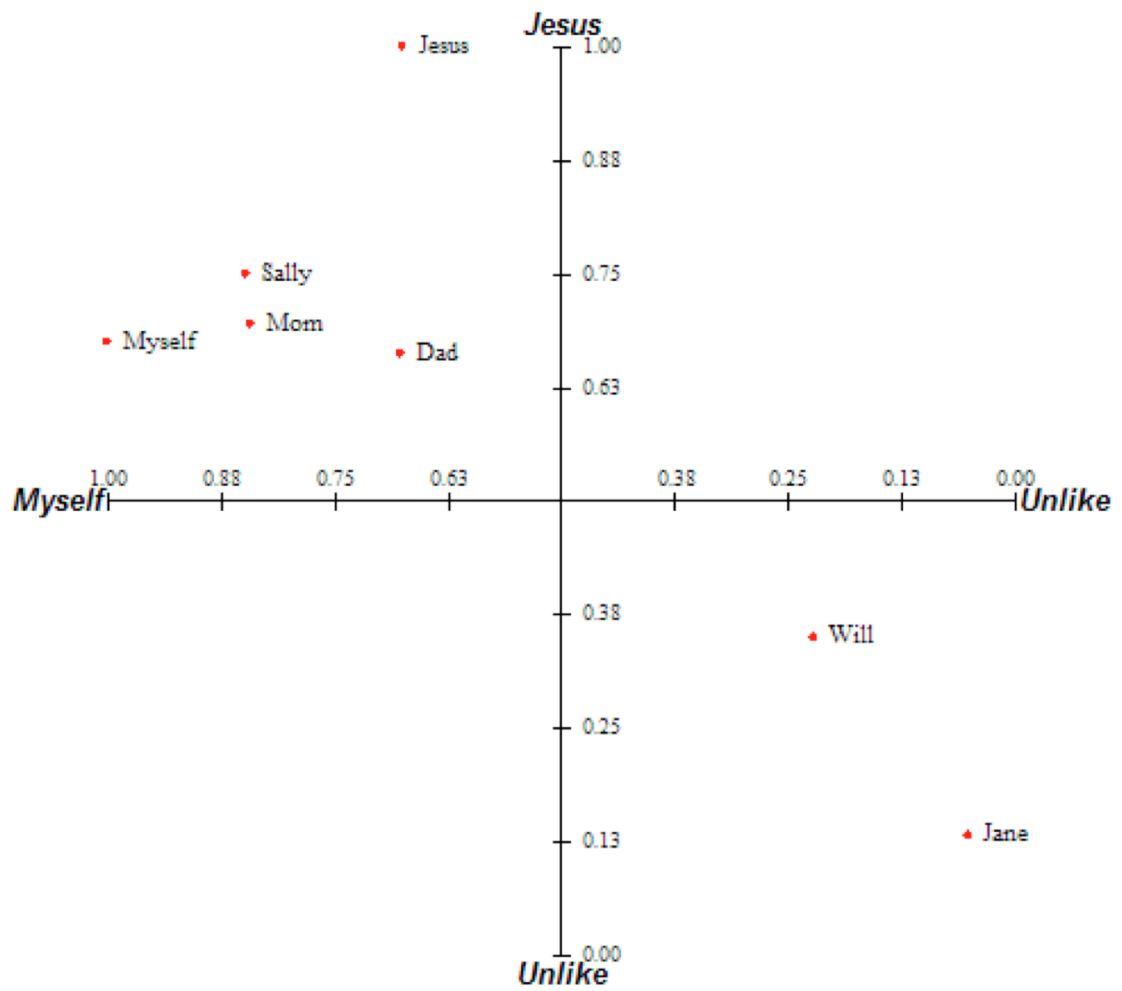


Figure 3: Sample Identity Plot

	Mom	Jane	Dad	Sally	Will	Myself	Jesus	
	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	
Spiritual Guide	-198	-85	-199	-197	-27	-197	-200	God Incarnate
Humanitarian Mission	-196	-86	-199	-199	-36	-200	-200	Repentance Mission
Multiple Ways	194	89	194	196	53	193	-200	One Way
Symbolic Resurrection	195	92	185	195	38	191	-200	Bodily Resurrection
Jesus not God	-197	-72	-196	-197	-41	-187	-200	Jesus is God
Death due to message	-198	-88	-199	-199	-34	-194	-200	Death to pay for sins
Not crucified	-196	-98	-198	-196	-59	-196	-200	Crucified
Not Virgin Birth	194	92	195	197	37	196	-200	Virgin Birth

Figure 4: Sample Repertory Grid of doctrinal positions

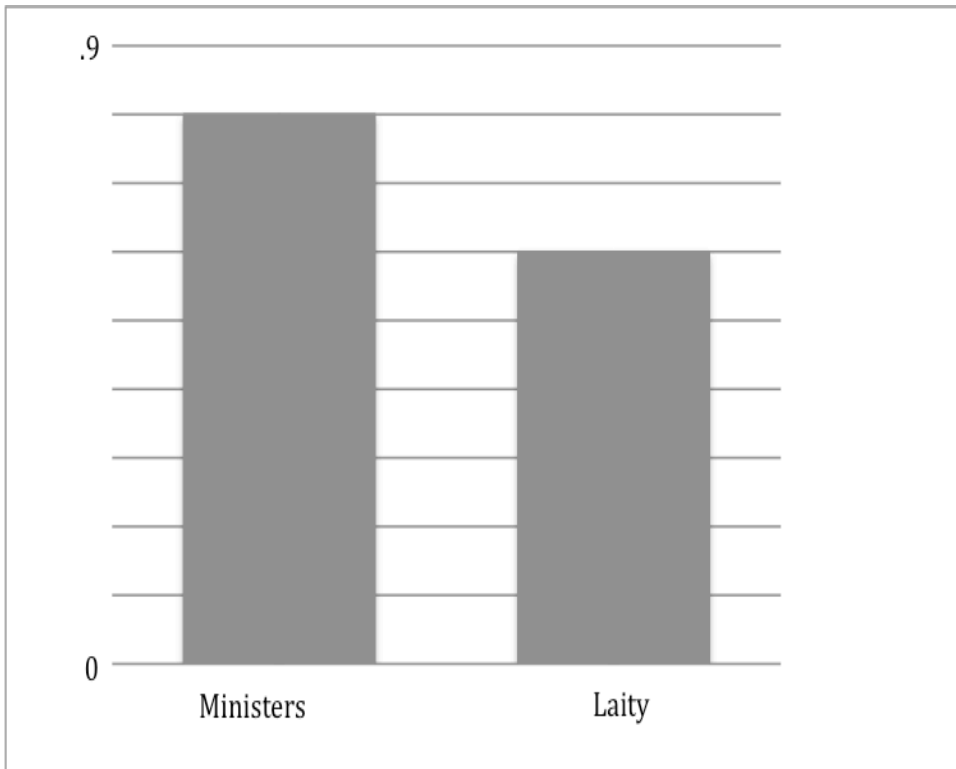


Figure 5: Pattern of expected means on Grid 1

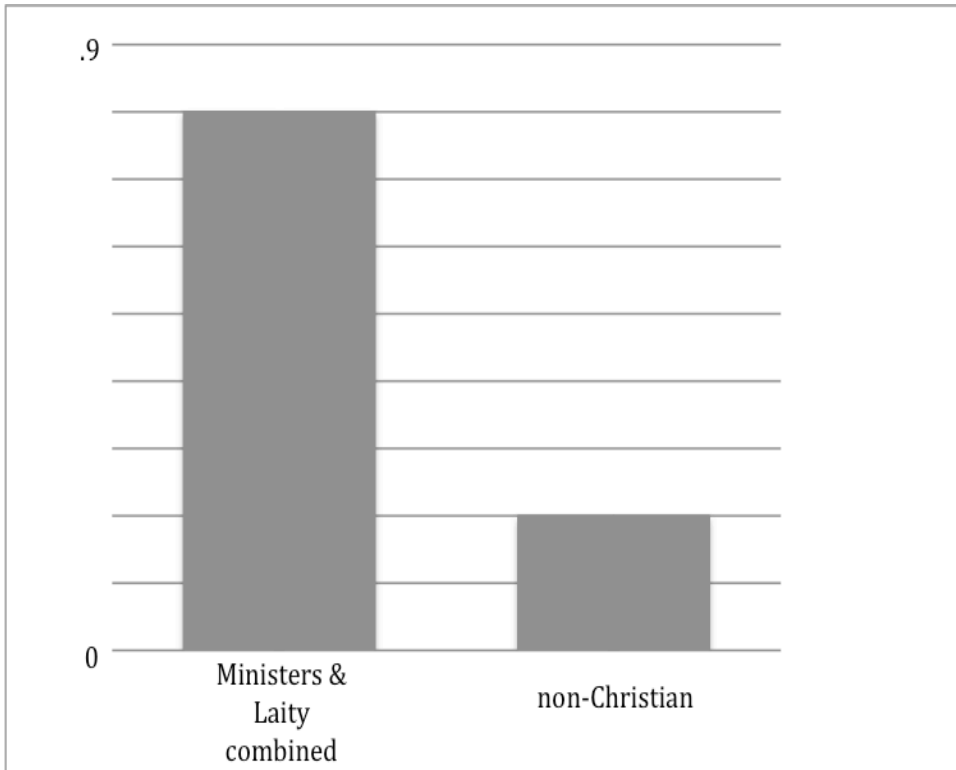


Figure 6: Pattern of expected means on Grid 2

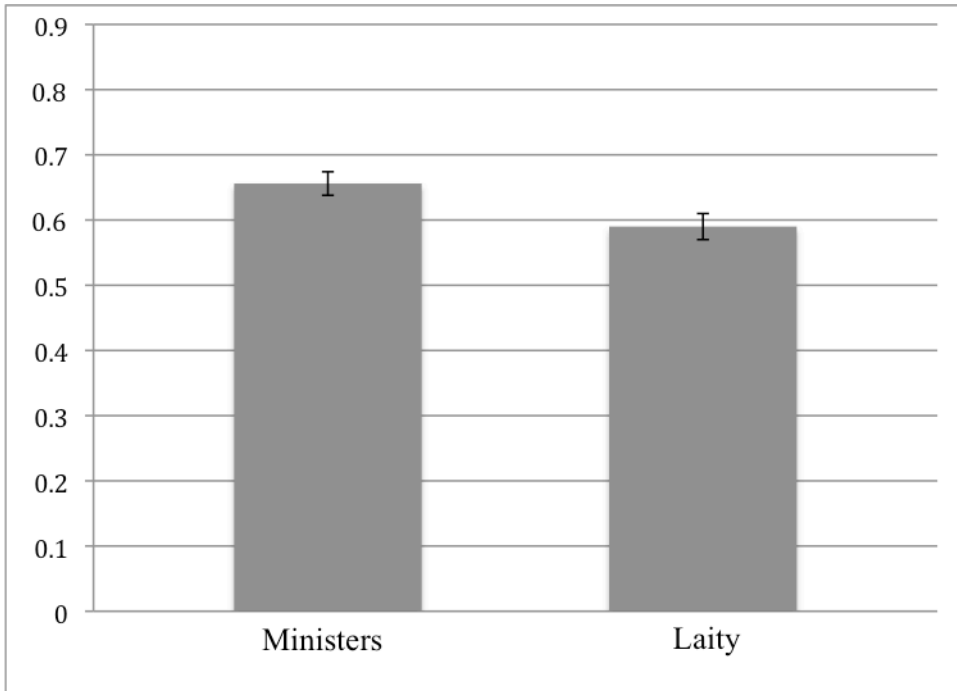


Figure 7: Observed means and standard errors on Grid 1

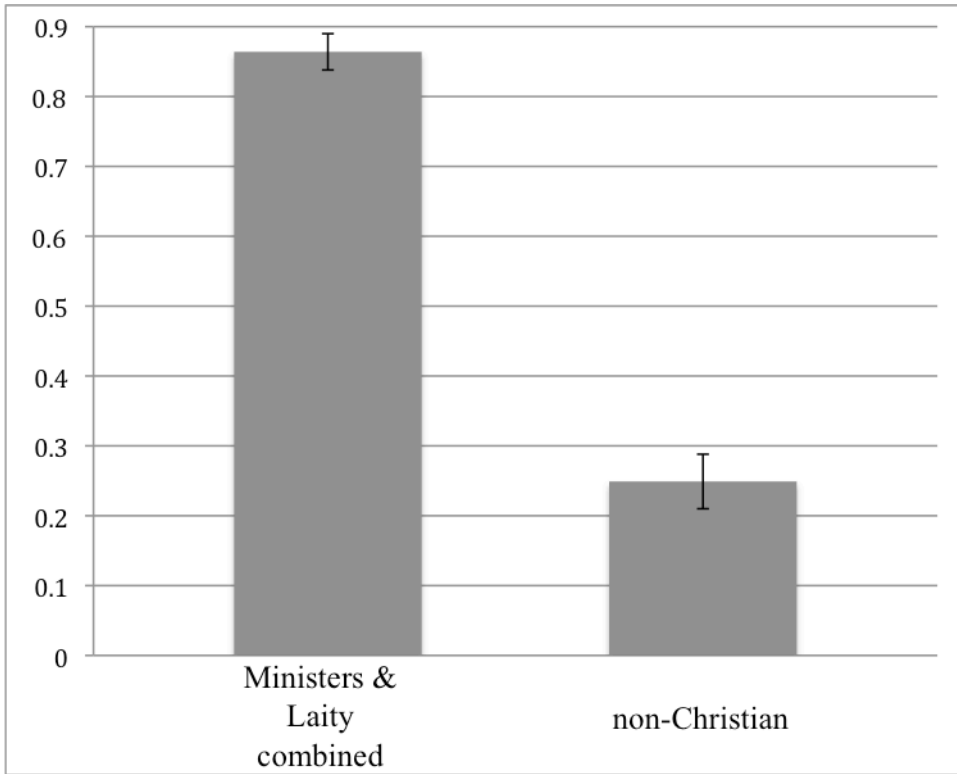


Figure 8: Observed means and standard errors on Grid 2

## Multi-level Frequency Histogram

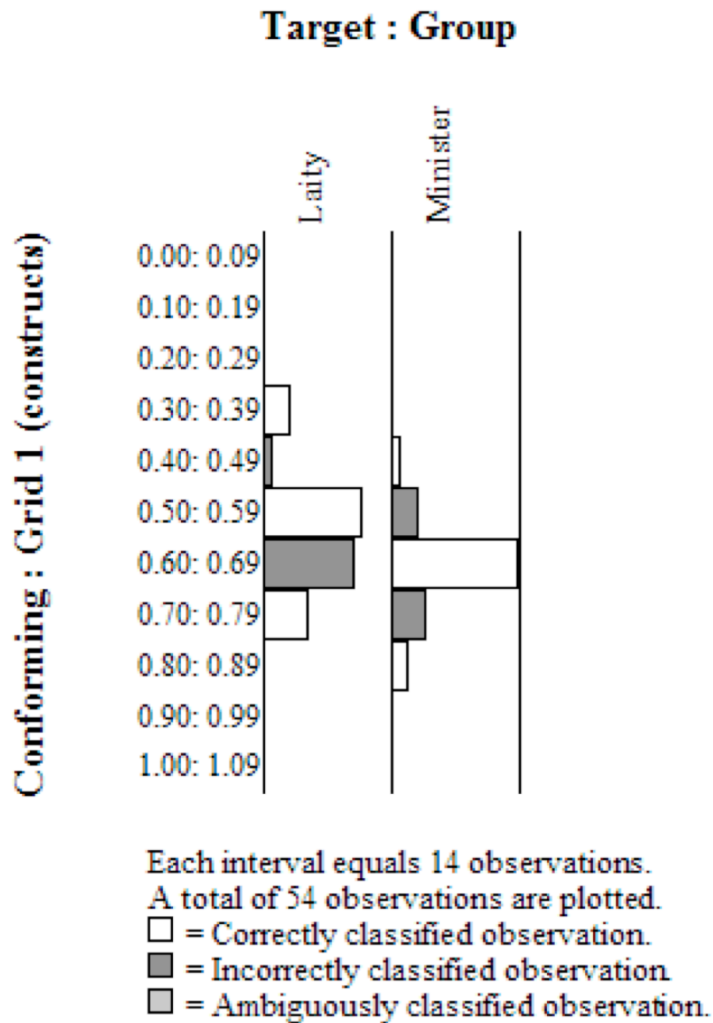


Figure 9. Multi-gram of Grid 1 analysis without cutoff

## *Multi-level Frequency Histogram*

**Target : Group**

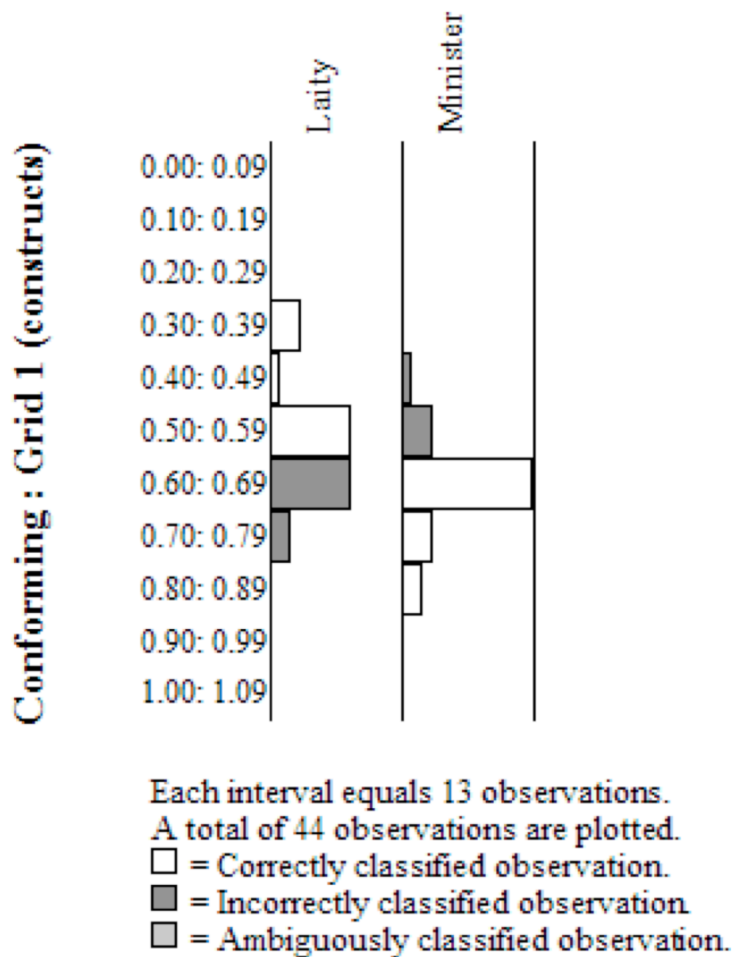


Figure 10. Multi-gram of Grid 1 analysis with cutoff



## Multi-level Frequency Histogram

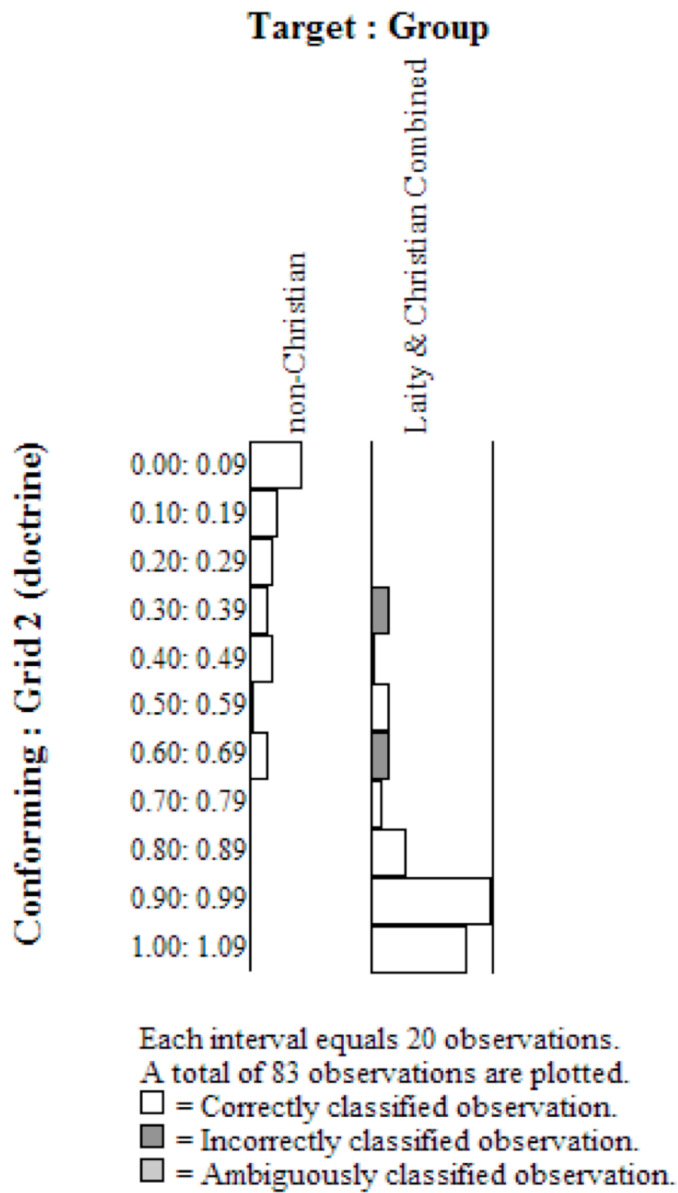


Figure 11. Multi-gram of Grid 2 analysis

## VITA

James A. Anderson

Candidate for the Degree of

Master of Science

Thesis: A NEW MODEL AND MEASUREMENT OF SPIRITUALITY

Major Field: Lifespan Developmental Psychology

Biographical:

Education:

Completed the requirements for the Master of Science in Lifespan Developmental Psychology at Oklahoma State University in December, 2010.

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Completed the requirements for the Bachelor of Business Administration in Management from Evangel University, Springfield, Missouri in July, 2003

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Served as an adjunct instructor for Research Methods at Assemblies of God Theological Seminary (2010). Taught Experimental Psychology (2010), Quantitative Methods Lab for graduate (2009-2010) and undergraduate students (2007-2008) and Introductory Psychology (2008-2009) at Oklahoma State University. Coordinated the subject pool for the psychology department at Oklahoma State University. Served in ministry as an ordained minister in the Church of God, Cleveland, Tennessee (1993-2010).

Professional Memberships:

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Oklahoma Psychological Society member  
International Association for Research in Personality member

Name: James A. Anderson

Date of Degree: December, 2010

Institution: Oklahoma State University

Location: Stillwater, Oklahoma

Title of Study: A NEW MODEL AND MEASUREMENT OF SPIRITUALITY

Pages in Study: 58

Candidate for the Degree of Master of Science

Major Field: Lifespan Developmental Psychology

Scope and Method of Study: The current study presented a novel, integrated model and measure of spirituality based on the notion that religion and spirituality should be construed as partners (Schneiders, 2003). The measure was developed within the structure of George Kelly's (1955) Personal Construct Theory and participants completed two repertory grids. In the first grid, participants generated constructs through a sentence completion task and then rated themselves and Jesus on each construct. In the second grid, participants rated how strongly they agreed with either eight doctrines of traditional Christianity related to Jesus or with views that reflected their opposite. Standardized Euclidian distances were then calculated to ascertain the distance between self and Jesus on both grids. These scores were then analyzed to attempt to discriminate between laity and ministers and Christians and non-Christians.

Findings and Conclusions: Analyses revealed Grid 1 was able to differentiate between ministers and laity, and Grid 2 was able to differentiate between Christians and non-Christians. The results suggest that those who are more spiritual show greater levels of integration between religion and spirituality than those who are less spiritual. This study provides support for the notion that religion and spirituality should be viewed as partners.

ADVISER'S APPROVAL: Dr. James W. Grice

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