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**THE VARIETIES OF SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE REVISITED:
INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT AND EXPRESSION OF SPIRITUAL IDENTITY
DURING THE TRANSITION TO ADULTHOOD**

A Dissertation in
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by
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ABSTRACT

For many individuals, the transition to adulthood in college contexts constitutes an important period for psychosocial identity formation. Issues of spiritual identity and spiritual experiences during this time, however, are often significant, yet overlooked, aspects of the identity formation process. The current project utilized a multi-method person-oriented research design to explore developmental experiences associated with spiritual identity formation during the transition to adulthood within the context of college and to better understand the role of spirituality in the everyday lives of young people during this time. In particular, we employed intensive interview methodology to examine individual accounts of spiritual identity formation experiences in the lives of several ($n=13$) college-aged individuals. Results of these analyses generated a rich body of information explicating the process, meaning, and implications of individuals' spiritual experiences during college. Additionally, we used person-specific quantitative techniques to explore systematic patterns of intraindividual variability across various dimensions of daily social experiences among both spiritual and non-spiritual college students ($n=14$). Findings from these analyses provided significant insight into individuals' inner experiences of daily social encounters and demonstrated differences and similarities among and between spiritual and non-spiritual individuals' response patterns. Collectively, results contribute to social scientific understanding of individuals' experiences of spiritual identity formation during the transition to adulthood and highlight a number of important directions for future research in this domain.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Despite substantial interest among early scholars within the field of psychology (e.g., Allport, 1967; Freud, 1989/1928; James, 1902; Jung, 1933; Starbuck, 1899), issues surrounding the roles of religion and spirituality in the lives of individuals have remained relatively under-examined topics of empirical inquiry for much of the 20th century. Such neglect, largely a consequence of the dominance of positivist traditions during that time, has resulted in a significant gap in scientific knowledge regarding the religious and spiritual experiences of individuals and the relevance of these domains as central contexts of human development and meaning-making (Paloutzian & Park, 2006; Pargament & Maton, 2000). In recent years, however, a renewed call for scholarship on these issues has emerged, prompting a resurgence of attention toward the need to better understand and document individuals' developmental experiences associated with religion and spirituality (King & Boyatzis, 2004; Benson & Roehlepartain, 2008).

In an effort to contribute to this discussion, the current project focused on a key area of spiritual development – spiritual identity formation experiences during the transition to adulthood. Broadly considered, spiritual development entails:

The process of growing the intrinsic human capacity for self-transcendence, in which the self is embedded in something greater than the self, including the sacred. It is the developmental “engine” that propels the search for connectedness, meaning, purpose and contribution...shaped both within and outside of religious traditions, beliefs and practices (Benson, Roehlkepartain, & Rude, 2003, p. 203).

Situated within this conceptual framework, the formation of spiritual identity, as a particular aspect of spiritual development, refers to an individual's formation of a spiritual sense of self. A spiritual sense of self may be part of religious identity for some individuals, but for other individuals may be created and expressed outside the context of formal religiosity (Templeton & Eccles, 2006).

Although spiritual identities are likely forged across an entire life span of developmental experiences, the transition to adulthood has been highlighted as an especially critical juncture for the negotiation of identity formation tasks and the establishment of long-term beliefs and values (Arnett, 2004; Erikson, 1968; Keniston, 1971; Jennings, 1989). For many individuals, this period involves increased opportunities for the exploration of social roles and examination of previously-socialized ideological commitments in the process of constructing a coherent adult worldview (Arnett & Jensen, 2002; Erikson, 1950). In seeking to articulate a more defined sense of self during this time, many young people therefore also consider issues of existential purpose, transcendence, and spiritual identity in their lives (Arnett & Jensen; Fowler, 1981).

In post-industrialized contexts (National Center for Education Statistics, 2002), a majority of young people participate in higher education. Experiences in the university setting may intensify the exploration of spiritual identity during this time. As suggested by Erikson (1968), the college setting may serve as a form of socially-sanctioned moratorium, instrumental in promoting developmental tasks associated with identity formation. While in college, individuals may have their first experiences with living away from home and making autonomous decisions apart from families of origin. In college settings, youth may also encounter initial exposure to diverse worldviews. These

experiences may ignite individuals' desires to make more intentional, self-defined identity choices about one's own beliefs and values (Arnett, 2004). Given such possibilities, the college context may thus be an especially salient milieu for attempting to understand developmental experiences and changes in spiritual identity during the transition to adulthood with significant implications for the formation of adult worldviews and values.

Early work by Feldman and Newcomb (1969) also offers support for a focus on college contexts, demonstrating that a majority of college students do report some amount of change in their religious orientation during the college years. When considered in the aggregate, their results showed a general decline in the importance of religious values relative to other values across this period. However, Feldman and Newcomb speculated that considerable heterogeneity in the amount and direction of change in religiosity was likely to exist at the individual-level, suggesting that despite aggregate trends, some individuals may decrease in aspects of religiosity during this time while others may report increases or stability. Unfortunately, the process of how such distinct patterns of within-person variation may actually unfold during the college years or whether such changes also extend to the domain of spiritual identity have not yet been explored.

Further, evidence suggests that for many college students, aspects of religious and spiritual identity may serve as important sources of identification and influence during this time. In a recent national study of college students (Higher Educational Research Institute, 2005), 81% of those surveyed reported that they had attended religious services during the past year, 80% reported that they had discussed religious

and spiritual topics with friends and family, 79% said they believed in some form of God, and 69% indicated that their religious and spiritual beliefs provided them with strength, support, and guidance in daily decisions.

In spite of the apparent salience of spiritual identity issues, however, few studies have examined the process of change that may occur in the formation of spiritual identities or the meanings that individuals attach to their spiritual experiences during the college period. In fact, to the best of our knowledge, there currently exists no clear theory or empirical precedent to adequately capture the breadth or depth of individual experiences surrounding the actual processes involved in the formation of spiritual identities or the implications of such identities for how individuals live in the world. To this end, we suggest that a dedicated effort is necessary to begin to illuminate the specific pathways and processes associated with spiritual identity formation and to elucidate the ways in which individuals construe the impact and significance of spiritual identities across various dimensions of their everyday lives during this time.

The current project therefore utilized intensive idiographic methodologies in an attempt to generate information regarding individuals' experiences of spiritual identity development during the college years and the implications of spiritual identity during this period. In doing so, we employed a multi-method design comprised of both qualitative and quantitative person-oriented techniques specifically chosen to provide descriptive information regarding individual developmental processes. We selected these particular idiographic techniques because of their explicit emphasis on individual-level experiences and intraindividual processes as the central units of analysis.

We begin in *Chapter 2* by first presenting an underlying rationale for the importance of studying spiritual identity development and trace the historical precedence offered by previous scholars within the field for this line of inquiry. We then discuss the relevance of spiritual identity to developmental experiences specific to our focus on the transition to adulthood within college contexts. Following these foundational considerations, we critically examine the current status of knowledge associated with identity formation in general and spiritual identity in particular and explore the ways in which scholarly understanding in this area may benefit from continued theoretical and methodological refinement. Finally, in response to these issues, we conclude *Chapter 2* by presenting the specific research questions addressed by this exploratory project that we hope will contribute to emerging understanding in this domain.

In *Chapter 3*, we detail the methodological strategies for data collection and data analysis that were employed by the study. Specifically, in the qualitative component, we utilized intensive interview methodology to examine individual accounts of spiritual identity formation experiences across the transition to adulthood in college contexts. In these interviews, we also explored the meaning and implications that individuals ascribed to their spiritual experiences in everyday living during this time. A grounded theory approach to data analysis was used to analyze the qualitative interview data (Charmaz, 2006; Glaser & Strauss, 1976; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). In the second phase of the project, we turned to the application of person-specific quantitative strategies. During this phase, we obtained multivariate, multi-occasioned observations of individuals and then used these data to examine systematic patterns of intraindividual variability in various

dimensions of daily social experiences among spiritual and non-spiritual individuals (Corneal & Nesselroade, 1991; Jones, 2007; Molenaar, 2004).

In *Chapter 4*, we present the results of the qualitative phase of the project, focusing on categories and themes that emerged from the qualitative analysis. In particular, three core categories are described in an effort to create a portrait of individuals' spiritual experiences during college: *Process, Meaning, and Implications*. Specific themes and subthemes are also explicated in order to elucidate the nature and nuances of individuals' experiences within each of these categories.

In *Chapter 5*, we present the results of the person-specific quantitative phase of the project. In this chapter, we outline the characteristics of response patterns observed within and among individuals with regard to various spirituality-related dimensions of daily social experiences. A detailed analysis of each individual's response pattern is also provided.

In *Chapter 6*, we conclude with an integrative discussion of insights and findings encountered in the study. In this discussion, we consider the ways in which results may support social scientific understanding and future research regarding developmental experiences associated with spiritual identity formation and its implications during the transition to adulthood.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

In this chapter, we provide an overview of scholarly literature relevant to our focus on the formation of spiritual identity during the transition to adulthood. We begin first by discussing the historical legacy established by earlier scholars regarding the important roles of religion and spirituality in individual development. We then identify the ways in which spiritual identity formation assumes particular salience for developmental experiences during the transition to adulthood. Subsequently, we offer a critical examination of existing theoretical and empirical knowledge of issues surrounding spiritual identity development and conclude with the specific research questions addressed by this investigation.

Historical Perspectives

Historically, interest in the scientific study of spirituality and spiritual development within psychology has its origins among some of the earliest proponents of the discipline itself. Influenced by 19th century philosophical traditions, both the 1899 publication of *The Psychology of Religion* by Starbuck and *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (1958/1902) by American pragmatist, William James, remain as classic examples of early scholarship on these issues. In these works, Starbuck and James present eloquent discussions highlighting the importance of religion and spirituality as central aspects of human experience.

For James, in particular, religious and spiritual experience, assumed “vital importance as a human faculty...[as] an essential organ of life, performing a function

which no other portion of nature can so successfully fulfill” (1958/1902, p.56).

Focusing on the connection between the self and whatever the individual considered sacred beyond the self, James described experiences of spiritual conversion and progressions in spiritual development as natural reorganizations of consciousness and self-transcendence. Using illustrations from his own case-study work and that of others, including observations provided by Starbuck (1899), James detailed the many diverse pathways that such spiritual developments could take in the lives of different individuals.

Sigmund Freud also dealt frequently with matters of religious and spiritual identity, devoting several works and lectures to these issues (e.g., 1989/1928, 1955/1939). Freud’s treatment of these subjects, in contrast, assumed a much different tone from James and Starbuck. In Freud’s conceptualizations, religious and spiritual concerns, although germane to developmental experiences, were merely “illusions” related to unresolved Oedipal issues that had resulted in “universal obsessional neuroses” (1989/1928, p. 43).

The Freudian derision of religion and spirituality as developmental psychopathology, however, was disputed by other writers in the field during that time. Carl Jung (1933), for example, considered the need to establish a spiritual identity to be an essential condition for the promotion of psychological well-being. Abraham Maslow (1962) likewise advocated positive perspectives on spirituality, suggesting that achieving a sense of spiritual identity provided individuals with a guiding philosophy of life, an aspect, in his view, that was as important to psychological and physical health as “sunlight, calcium, or love” (p. 206). Similarly, existentialist psychologists focused

on the adaptive resolution of spiritual identity issues in satisfying primary human needs for meaning-making (Elkins, Hedstrom, Hughes, Leaf, & Saunders, 1988).

Gordon Allport was also a significant contributor in advancing the case for the scientific study of religion and spirituality. In his book, *The Individual and His Religion*, Allport (1967) admonished the psychological sciences for neglecting a dimension of human experience that so many individuals considered important to their lives. In outlining his views on the importance of “religious sentiment,” Allport positioned spirituality as part of a unifying system capable of offering ultimate direction and meaning to life, touting the individual’s construction of spiritual identity as the “task of a lifetime” (p. 79).

Relevance to the Transition to Adulthood as a Developmental Period

Within developmental traditions, issues of religion and spirituality have been specifically recognized for their relevance during the periods of late adolescence and the transition to adulthood. As highlighted by G. Stanley Hall (1904) and others (Starbuck, 1899; James, 1902; Allport, 1967), such periods of development that immediately precede adulthood are an important time for normative changes in religious and spiritual development to occur.

In particular, during late adolescence, significant advancements in cognitive operations occur that equip youth with capacities for abstract thought and self-reflection (Inhelder & Piaget, 1958). Perry (1970) has suggested that during this time, a reorganization of cognitive structures develops such that individuals may move from more dualistic ways of thinking about issues toward more intrinsic commitments within increasing relativism. With such enhanced cognitive resources, young people become

increasingly able to engage in re-examinations of the concrete and inherited conceptualizations formed during earlier periods of the life span, allowing them to establish more complex constellations of beliefs and values.

Relatedly, Fowler (1981) has proposed that during the transition to adulthood many individuals tend to enter a phase of “individuated-reflective” faith. During this stage of development, a natural tension arises between the self and the institutions and ideologies of the external world. Fowler described this as a time of “demythologizing” during which:

All the inherited or familiar symbols, creeds, beliefs, traditions, and religious trappings are scrutinized, and those of other faiths and traditions evaluated for what they have to offer. In the end, the familiar and traditional may not be rejected or discarded, but if they are retained, then it is with new clarity and intentional choice (Fowler & Dell, 2004, p. 34).

Moreover, in his seminal theory of life span development, Erikson (1959; 1968) designated the period prior to adulthood as the critical stage of identity formation, when individuals must grapple with questions of self and self-in-relation to society. In Erikson’s view, the primary psychosocial task during this time is one of establishing a sense of coherence and purpose in the formation of a mature adult identity (Adams & Marshall, 1996; Berzonsky, 1990; Erikson, 1959; 1968). Specifically, Erikson envisioned adaptive identity formation as a process that resolves when youth establish ideological and interpersonal commitments in various dimensions, including worldviews and values. This includes for many individuals the formation of a mature

spiritual identity. In addition, Erikson believed that establishment of mature religious and spiritual belief systems were important sources for grounding youth in the legacies of enduring ideologies, which could help to cultivate a sense of fidelity to promote developmental success in the adult world.

The prolonged period of identity formation in post-industrialized contexts.

Although Erikson (1959) originally relegated the identity formation process almost exclusively to the adolescent years, he intentionally left open the possibility of a prolongation of the process in societies that could afford to provide their youth with extended periods of role experimentation before the assumption of adult responsibilities. Contemporary theorists (Arnett 2000; 2004; Keniston, 1971) have made similar observations, suggesting that the profound sociological and demographic transformations of the last several decades in post-industrialized contexts have revolutionized the sociocultural landscape in which the latter-day identity process occurs for current generations.

The result has been a more protracted process of identity development for youth in these settings, extending into a period of socially-sanctioned rolelessness and experimentation through the mid-twenties, now formally identified as the transition to adulthood. Work by Jennings (1989) further affirms that identity processes may be extending into this period, suggesting that it is not until the mid-to-late twenties that durable commitments are actually made in certain areas of identity, such as political orientation.

For young people in late-modern contexts who must frequently navigate such prolonged periods of identity moratoria on their own and who face the rapid changes

posed by increasing globalization, anchoring to established belief systems may therefore be an especially vital mechanism for preventing persistent role confusion and anomie (Côté, 2005; Keniston, 1971; Verma & Sta. Marie, 2006). Many youth in these contexts may look for guidance from the belief systems and value structures that are salient in their lives. For these individuals, religious and spiritual beliefs may serve as examples of ordering frameworks and philosophies of life that assist in “synthesiz[ing] values and information” (Fowler, 1981, p. 172). Amidst the flux of postmodern life, a sense of spiritual identity may thus provide youth with guidelines for thinking about their direction and goals in life. Moreover, connection to ideological legacies through religion and spirituality may help to facilitate loyalty and commitment to transcendent realities beyond the self, assisting youth in better developing a sense of place and purpose in the world during this time (Lerner, Alberts, Anderson, & Dowling, 2006; Yates & Youniss, 1998, Youniss, McClellan & Yates, 1999).

Theoretical and Empirical Overview of Existing Knowledge on Identity Formation

Existing knowledge regarding the formation of spiritual identity is primarily situated within the theoretical and empirical lineage of Eriksonian and Neo-Eriksonian traditions. In this section, we provide an overview of this important conceptual legacy, but note serious critiques of traditional approaches that underscore the need for new paradigms and perspectives that more appropriately attend to issues of process and context involved in the formation of individuals’ unique spiritual identity experiences.

Erikson’s conceptualization of identity formation. According to Erikson (1959; 1968), identity formation is the process whereby individuals develop a mature sense of self and self-in-relation to society. Through resolution of this critical stage in the life

span, individuals arrive at a sense of “continuity” and “self-sameness” (1959, p. 94) in self-definition. In essence, the fundamental questions of this process involve asking “Who am I?” and “What do I believe in?” (Kroger, 2007). At its core, identity formation entails developing *weltanschauung*, or “a way of life,” (Erikson, 1959, p. 169) that can offer a feeling of knowing who one is and what one believes. Although Erikson (1968) clearly viewed identity development as part of a life-long process, the peak of this crisis – between the establishment of mature identity versus becoming subsumed by role confusion – within his theoretical framework, is, as we have discussed, most appropriately negotiated in the time prior to the assumption of adult roles when young people are most free to explore a variety of life options and worldviews.

As at times both a conscious and unconscious process, Erikson (1968) considered identity formation to be “the work of the ego” with origins rooted in the early stages of infancy. During infancy, a sense of basic trust must be established in which the individual learns to rely on some entity greater than itself to meet its needs. Erikson pointed out that this early milestone is not only necessary for the adaptive negotiation of successive stages, but also has direct relevance for the development of spiritual identity. Such basic trust, in Erikson’s view, provides the primitive foundations for faith in the lives of individuals.

Through such early experiences, initial identifications and views about the self and others are formed. When the stage of identity formation reaches its ascendancy in late adolescence or the transition to adulthood, a reorganization and resynthesizing of these primary identifications occurs such that individuals begin to work toward

achieving a more coherent sense of self that is also validated by significant others in the adult community. This process involves making decisions in various dimensions of identity, including for many young people, those related to spiritual beliefs and values.

Erikson (1968) also specified that the identity formation process may be gradual or abrupt, but that in most cases, a significant period of exploration and role experimentation is required for optimal resolution of this stage. Ultimately, when the individual has made mature commitments in these domains and has articulated an integrated set of attitudes, beliefs and values, the identity crisis can be considered successfully negotiated. With specific relevance to the formation of spiritual identity, William James (1958/1902) likewise articulated a similar notion in his view of an individual becoming “twice-born” in which a period of self-examination precedes adherence to more defined religious or spiritual convictions.

The identity status paradigm. Although many speculations exist regarding the basic processes underlying Erikson’s original theory, the most influential operationalization has been the Marcia (1980) model. Building upon Erikson’s conceptualization, Marcia postulated that identity formation occurs through joint processes of *exploration* –active consideration of alternative identity elements – and *commitment* –decisions of fidelity to specific values and beliefs. Through these processes, the individual moves from a dystonic state of identity diffusion toward the syntonic state of identity achievement.

Based upon an individual’s engagement with these essential processes, Marcia (1980) proposed that specific identity resolution statuses may be derived. Individuals who have done intense exploration and have subsequently arrived at firm identity

commitments, can be classified as Identity Achievement; those who are still negotiating exploration, but have made no real commitments can be considered Identity Moratorium; those who have made unexplored commitments to identity elements may be characterized as Identity Foreclosed; and finally, those who have done no exploration and have made no commitments as Identity Diffused.

Critiques of traditional identity theories. Although identity development theories in the Eriksonian and Marcia traditions have been among the most generative and to this end, have been especially useful for encouraging a focus on identity development in the theoretical and empirical literature, it is important to acknowledge certain criticisms that have emerged surrounding the monolithic generalizability and developmental utility of these paradigms (Berzonsky & Adams, 1999; Schwartz, 2001).

One persistent critique regarding traditional identity theories, including the Marcia paradigm, is that they tend to emphasize primarily andocentric values, often leaving little room for consideration of distinct gender experiences (Archer, 1992; Côté & Levine, 1987). Deconstructionist perspectives suggest that women's developmental experiences may be much less self-focused and independently-defined than these theories permit, noting that individuation may not necessarily be the essential psychological marker for women's maturity (Goldhaber, 2000).

Moreover, as both Archer (1992) and Gilligan (1982) admonish, developmental models that specify a "normative" or "universally adaptive" course of maturity focused on Eurocentric ideals, such as individualism and autonomy, as desirable endpoints provide potentially narrow and marginalizing views of diversity in developmental process. Such critics warn that emphasizing "attainments" and "achievements" in

developmental tasks overly privileges a Western view of development, which may not only fail to take into account the possibility of fluidity in maturation, but may also overlook “multiple ways of knowing” in developmental experiences (Côté & Levine, 1987; Goldhaber, 2000; Schachter, 2005a; 2005b).

These are especially important concerns in relationship to issues of spiritual identity as “achievement” may not necessarily be a monolithically applicable way of conceptualizing the diversity of experiences that likely characterize the many pathways toward spiritual identity formation. Similarly, there is much empirical evidence confirming important differences in the ways that gender and cross-cultural circumstance may shape the nuances and contours of spiritual belief and practice (e.g., Benson, 2006; Donahue & Benson, 1995; Mattis, Ahluwalia, Cowie, & Kirkland-Harris, 2006).

Other major issues of contention focus on aspects of the Marcia identity status paradigm more specifically. In particular, questions have been raised as to whether the Marcia model represents an actual developmental progression of identity formation stages proceeding from diffusion to achievement or whether they may be better applied as characterological identity types. In this sense, it is possible that the statuses may not be describing developmental processes at all, but rather merely providing depictions of static identity styles (Côté & Levine, 1988; van Hoof, 1999). Much of the research on the Marcia model has also been largely cross-sectional, with the scant longitudinal work that exists offering only inconclusive support (see van Hoof, 1999; Côté, 2005 for reviews). Such concerns seriously limit our ability to understand the specific developmental pathways involved in identity construction under this model.

Further, Marcia differentiates between what he considers interpersonal and ideological domains of identity as being mutually exclusive, characterizing aspects such as marriage and parenting as interpersonal considerations and others, such as politics and religion, as primarily ideological. Some scholars have noted that these distinctions are overly-limiting, pointing out that for many individuals, issues in certain domains, such those involved in religious and spiritual identity formation, may reflect both ideological and interpersonal concerns (van Hoof, 1999).

Additionally, it is unclear to what extent the statuses should be considered relative positions of health or aberration (Archer, 1989; Josselson, 1994). As contextual circumstances may either promote or constrain identity experiences, they may also interact with individual-level factors to shape and control patterns of exploration and commitment. The identity formation experiences of youth of varying social circumstances may afford dramatically different levels of opportunity and choice in the process of self-construction and integration into adult society and determine what may or may not be permissible in terms of an adaptive identity resolution (Adams & Marshall, 1996; Grotevant & Cooper, 1998; Schachter, 2005a; Yoder, 2000).

Contextual issues. The previous issue alludes to a larger concern associated with much of the existing empirical literature on identity development as overly-emphasizing internal psychological aspects of this process, while neglecting the role of context (Côté & Levine, 1988; Schachter, 2005a; Yoder, 2000). As considered within sociological traditions, however, the construction of the self is intimately intertwined with social processes (Mead, 1934; Goffman, 1959). To this end, individuals use information from their environments and the cultural tools available to them in order to

construct views of themselves and their actions in the world (Vygotsky, 1978). For instance, with regard to forming a spiritual identity, individuals may employ symbolic language or participate in shared rituals as part of the process of constructing how they define and express a spiritual sense of self.

Erikson's theory (1959; 1968) did originally attend to these issues, specifying that identity development relies on the joint interplay of psychological and social factors and suggesting that issues of sociocultural context could not be divorced from the identity formation process. With some notable exceptions (e.g., Adams & Marshall, 1996; Schachter, 2005b; Yoder, 2000), very few authors have effectively addressed the contextual aspect of his conceptualization, however.

With regard to context, the interaction of individual and contextual factors may impact many facets of identity development, including the scope, timing, duration, and content of the identity process. For example, as Côté (2005) has pointed out, access to periods of identity exploration may be associated with psychological and material resources and whether or not individuals and their communities can afford the luxury of a period of identity exploration. In many post-industrialized contexts, the college setting has become a type of socially-sanctioned moratorium, exposing youth who are fortunate enough to take advantage of this resource to diverse worldviews and opportunities for role exploration (Waterman, 1999; Waterman & Archer, 1990). Young people who do not possess these resources or those who comprise the traditionally "Forgotten Half" not able to attend higher education, however, may have far more limited opportunities to engage in such intensive periods of self-focus or role experimentation (Côté, 2005; Osgood, Foster, Flanagan, & Ruth, 2005).

Moreover, in some contexts and cultures, aspects of identity may be assigned, rather than selected by the individual. In these cases, there may be a distinct set of identity-related expectations governing entrance into adult community, with little option for exploration available to the individual. Specific to religious and spiritual identity, there may also be special rites of passage or sacred rituals embedded within the fabric of such cultures that surround developmental experiences in this domain (Adams & Marshall, 1996; Berzonsky, 1990; Kroger, 2007; Mattis, et al., 2006). Further, even the meaning and nature of spirituality and spiritual identity themselves may take on distinct forms depending upon one's sociocultural location (Mattis, et al., 2006).

Identity-related socialization experiences may likewise vary dramatically by individual and contextual circumstance. Depending upon the nature of family, peer, and community socialization with regard to identity-related concerns, youth may encounter vastly different messages and experiences in both the process and content of identity development (Grotevant, 1987; Kroger, 2007; Markstrom-Adams, 1992). Specifically, parent-child communication about spiritual topics and parents' own religious and spiritual practices and beliefs provide an important source of religious and spiritual socialization for young people. Other family-related variables, such as mobility or emotional climate, may also impact religiosity and spirituality in the lives of youth (Boyatzis & Janicki, 2003; Hoge, Petrillo, & Smith, 1982).

Peer relationships may offer unique contexts for spiritual identity development, as well. Several studies have shown that friendship relationships among youth are not only associated with religious participation, but may explain additional variance in

religious and spiritual importance and commitment over and above parental influences (e.g., King, Furrow, & Roth, 2002; Schwartz, Bukowski, & Aoki, 2006). Similarly, the impact of significant relationships with non-parental adults encountered in religious or spiritual contexts, such as mentors, clergy, and other spiritual advisors, have also been identified as important ecological influences on the religious and spiritual experiences of youth (King & Furrow, 2004; Schwartz, et al., 2006).

In addition, for young people who participate in formal religious congregations, it is likely that socialization provided through these settings may further shape spiritual identity formation experiences in distinct ways (King, 2003; Roehlkepartain & Patel, 2006). Benson (2006) notes, for example, that differences in exposure to religious or spiritual norms, sacred texts, rituals and belief systems, have important implications for developmental outcomes in spiritual formation.

It is also important to situate spiritual identity development during the transition to adulthood within appropriate socio-historical and generational context. As work by Greenberg and colleagues (2006) indicates, there is significant variability in the ways in which spiritual identities are expressed and operate in the lives of young people in current generations. As a consequence of increasing individualization in post-modern societies, contemporary youth may be much more apt than those of previous generations to define and create their own forms of spiritual realities outside of institutional settings. Many individuals in post-modern societies may also choose to express multiple spiritual identities or to adopt more personalized forms of spiritual identity (Arnett & Jensen, 2002; Schachter, 2005a; 2005b; Mattis et al., 2006). Significant historical events that impact the identity formation contexts of youth of

particular generations, such as political upheavals, acts of religious extremism, disasters, and war should also be considered as experiences that may have profound influences on the ways in which young people interpret their world and organize their spiritual experiences in response to such events (Mattis et al., 2006).

Spiritual identity formation in college contexts. Many scholars have pointed to higher educational settings as another important context for shaping identity formation experiences (e.g., Astin, 1993; Erikson, 1968; Chickering, 1969; Davis, 1977; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). For youth who participate in higher education, the college experience may provide significant opportunities for self-exploration and new exposure to diverse values and worldviews, offering a context ripe for potential engagement in developmental tasks associated with spiritual identity. Evidence from previous cross-sectional work demonstrates distinct year-related differences in aspects of religious identity during this time, indicating decreases in institutionally-focused religious behaviors (e.g., service attendance), but stability or increases in intrinsic commitment and belief importance during college (Arnett & Jensen, 2002; Astin, 1993; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1995). Similar patterns associated with dimensions of religiosity have also been observed in the few longitudinal studies conducted in this area, as well (Lee, 2002; Stoppa & Lefkowitz, in press).

In a research study by Lefkowitz (2005), students were asked to retrospectively report on changes in their religious identity since attending college. Findings from this study indicate that students who were in college longer were more likely to report changes in religious beliefs, becoming more questioning, and changes in their views of other religions. Similarly, work by Boyatzis and McConnell (2006) showed that overall

Quest orientation, or sense of religious openness toward existential questioning, was higher among students who were in the latter years of college than among students who were in the early years of college or after graduation. Additionally, results from other work in this area demonstrate that many college students express increased desires to integrate spirituality into their lives and becoming more tolerant of alternative religious and spiritual worldviews during this time (Bryant et al., 2003; Cherry, De Berg, & Porterfield, 2001; Higher Educational Research Institute, 2005; Lefkowitz, 2005). In spite of such evidence, however, very little information currently exists documenting the actual processes that lead to such changes in spiritual identity within college contexts or how individuals themselves perceive their own experiences in this domain during this time.

Outcomes Associated with Aspects of Spiritual Identity

In recent years, a growing body of empirical work has emerged exploring the ways in which aspects of religious and spiritual identities may be manifested in the everyday lives of individuals through associations with important outcomes across several key areas of developmental functioning. In this section, we present a number of these associations, including consideration of the ways in which religious and spiritual influences may either promote or detract from development in these domains.

Preventive and promotive outcomes. Several studies in this area have demonstrated that one way in which religion and spirituality may impact the lives of individuals is through prevention of certain negative health outcomes. With regard to physiological health, extant research demonstrates that religious and spiritual factors may be associated with reduced incidences of hypertension, lower blood pressure, improved immune system functioning, and adoption of healthier eating, sleeping, and

exercise habits important for the prevention of other forms of physical illness (Larson, Swyers, & McCullough, 1998; Levin & Vanderpool, 1992; Wallace & Forman, 1998; Wyatt Nelms, Hutchins, Hutchins, & Pursley, 2007). Meta-analyses conducted by McCullough, Hoyt, Larson, Koenig, and Thoreson (2000) also show that in general, religiosity tends to be positively associated with greater longevity.

Dimensions of religion and spirituality have also demonstrated certain salutary effects in the domain of mental health, including associations related to improved psychological coping and decreased symptoms of depression and anxiety (Pearce, Little, & Perez, 2003; Davis, Kerr, & Kurpius, 2003; Pargament, 1997). Further, aspects of religiosity and spirituality may act as buffers in the prevention of certain health-risk behaviors among youth. Specifically, aggregate studies have found associations between religious and spiritual factors and decreased rates of substance use and abuse (Donahue & Benson, 1995; Kerestes, Youniss, & Metz, 2004; Smith, 2004), risky sexual behaviors (Rostosky, Wilcox, Wright, & Randall, 2004; Zaleski & Schiaffino, 2000), and juvenile delinquency (Smith, 2004).

Beyond prevention of negative outcomes, religion and spirituality may also serve important functions in the promotion of various positive outcomes related to youth development. Wagener, Furrow, King, Leffert, and Benson (2003) have found associations with religion and spirituality and the cultivation of positive developmental resources during adolescence. Further, there is evidence to suggest that among minority youth, religious and spiritual identities may be significant mechanisms for promoting racial socialization and de-stigmatization (Brega & Coleman, 1999; Brown & Gary, 1991).

In addition, studies by Regnerus (2000) and Muller and Ellison (2001) demonstrate that aspects of religion and spirituality may be positively predictive of

promoting academic success during secondary school. Regnerus has offered that one possible explanation for such associations may be that for youth who express their religious or spiritual identity within the context of participation in formal faith communities, these experiences may serve as forms of social integration that encourage motivation and self-discipline. Other research (Dixon & Walker, 2002) affirms similar associations between religious and spiritual involvement and academic performance during college.

Religious and spiritual experiences may likewise be significant crucibles for the promotion of civic attitudes and behaviors during this time (Donnelly, Matsuba, Hart, & Atkins, 2006). This may be an especially important function as civic habits established during this time have implications for patterns of civic engagement that persist during adulthood (e.g., Flanagan, 2004). Foremost, for many individuals, religious and spiritual identities, particularly when exercised in the context of participation in organized religious settings, offer opportunities for affiliation and collective identification with others (Baumeister, 2002). Through such affiliative experiences, youth learn what it means to exist as valued members of a community and to participate as active citizens in the life of the polity (Flanagan, 2003). Further, by situating youth in dense social networks and connecting them with others in their communities who share common worldviews, faith-based organizations may offer young people opportunities to develop relationships with positive moral mentors and citizen role models through mutual engagement in prosocial activities (Kerestes, Youniss, & Metz, 2004; Larson, Hansen, & Moneta, 2006; Youniss & Yates, 1999).

In the context of religious and spiritual ideology and practice, individuals may also internalize important messages about how they should relate to others in society, with often direct and indirect exposure to teachings and experiences related to issues of social trust, responsibility to others, inclusiveness, tolerance, and matters of political concerns (Bellah, Madsen, Sullivan, Swindler, & Tipton, 1996; Donnelly, et al., 2006; Flanagan, 2004; King & Furrow, 2004; Verba, Schlozman, & Brady, 1995). For instance, given the professed emphasis of many religious and spiritual traditions on compassion and service to others, these contexts may be primary settings for engaging individuals in community service and volunteer activities (Bellah, et. al, 1996; Verba, et al., 1995). To this end, research findings in this area consistently demonstrate that religious and spiritual youth tend to be more involved in community service and volunteerism activities than non-religious youth (Greenberg Quinlan Roslan Research Group, 2006; Serow & Dreyden, 1990; Youniss, McLellan, & Yates, 1999).

Negative outcomes. Nonetheless, experiences of religious and spiritual identification in the lives of youth may not always yield such positive developmental effects. Specifically, for some youth, strict adherence to religious and spiritual ideologies may preclude exploration and prompt foreclosure in other identity-related domains (Hunsberger, Pratt, & Prancer, 2001). In the case of youth who become engaged in religious or spiritual cults, adherence to specific religious and spiritual identities may even result in a complete loss of self and identity in other domains of one's existence (King, 2003; Parker, 1985; Richmond, 2004).

Moreover, to the extent that certain religious and spiritual identities encourage youth to view others outside of their ideological purview as threatening or inherently

sinful, they may sponsor formation of prejudicial or discriminatory attitudes and behaviors. In this regard, religious and spiritual ideologies that are more fundamentalist in nature – that is, those that promote their particular belief system as the essential and inerrant truth and which consider their members to enjoy a privileged relationship with its deity – may be significantly more likely to condone prejudice and intolerance toward marginalized others (Altemeyer & Hunsberger, 2005; Kirkpatrick, 1993). Such teachings may foster unquestioning obedience to authorities, adherence to rules even if such rules may be considered unjust, and overt or covert expressions of condemnation toward “outsiders” or “sinners” (Altemeyer & Hunsberger, 1992). Taken to the extreme, fundamentalist religious and spiritual identities may even further be used to justify and promote acts of destructive and violent aggression toward others, with damaging consequences for both individuals and their societies (Levenson, Aldwin, & D’Mello, 2006).

We offer an important caveat, however, in concluding this section on outcomes as much of the existing empirical work in this area has been largely cross-sectional in design and thus the exact mechanisms and directionality of such religious and spiritual influences, both positive and negative, are not yet well-understood. Clearly, an important task of future research will be to clarify such observed associations in order to ascertain more accurate causal portraits of how aspects of religious and spiritual identity actually predict effects within specific developmental domains.

Purpose of the Current Project and Specific Research Questions

Given that there currently exists no cogent theory regarding developmental experiences associated with spiritual identity formation processes during the transition to

adulthood and that the implications of spiritual identity in the everyday experiences of individuals during this time are not yet well-understood, the current project was designed as an exploratory endeavor intended to serve two important purposes: 1) To gather descriptive information regarding developmental processes and experiences related to spiritual identity formation as it occurs during the transition to adulthood and; 2) To explore the implications and meaning of spiritual identities as they are expressed in the everyday lives of individuals during this time.

To do so, we employed a multi-method research design comprised of both qualitative and quantitative techniques intended to focus on the explication of individual experiences and considered appropriate for exploratory investigations. As traditional aggregate methods may potentially distort or obscure individual patterns of variation in spiritual experiences, such idiographic methods are useful to assist in creating an accurate understand of the unique ways in which spiritual identities may unfold and operate in the lives of individuals.

The specific research questions addressed by each component of our multi-method approach are outlined as follows. First, using information derived from individual interviews and applying the techniques of grounded theory for data analysis, the qualitative component of this project sought to explore the following issues:

- 1) What is the experience of forming a spiritual identity among individuals during the transition to adulthood in college settings?
- 2) What meaning does spiritual identity hold for these individuals in terms of self? In addition, what meaning does spiritual identity hold for these individuals in terms of how they live in the world?

Secondly, in the quantitative component, we used information obtained from multivariate, multi-occasioned observations of individuals to examine systematic patterns of intraindividual variability across several dimensions of daily social experiences among spiritual and non-spiritual individuals. The specific research questions addressed by this component included:

- 3) To what extent does each individual experience particular aspects of spirituality in their daily social experiences?
- 4) What are differences and similarities across spiritual individuals' response patterns? In addition, what are the differences and similarities across non-spiritual individuals' response patterns?
- 5) Finally, what are the differences and similarities between spiritual and non-spiritual individuals' response patterns?

Chapter 3

Methodology

In this chapter, we outline the methodological approaches and procedures that were used in the study. We begin by establishing a theoretical rationale for our methodological selections and underscoring the ways in which each methodological component appropriately supported exploration of the research questions proposed by this project. We then address practical issues associated with data collection and data analysis and detail the specific procedures that were used to carry out these aims.

Theoretical Rationale

The current project utilized a multi-method research design consisting of both qualitative and quantitative components. We believe that a multi-method approach would allow us to most accurately depict the unique contours of individuals' spiritual lives and provide multiple vantage points from which to understand this phenomenon. In particular, designs that feature the interplay of qualitative and quantitative methods have been highlighted as particularly useful approaches to the process of conceptualization and instrument construction in exploratory areas of research (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Hammersley, 1996; Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

Although there is sometimes debate as to whether the different types of knowledge constructed by qualitative and quantitative methods can be considered compatible due to their basic epistemological differences (Brannen, 1992), many scholars contend that such cautiousness represents an unnecessarily restrictive position in light of the potential benefits that the combined use of these methods may offer (Firestone, 1987; Hammersley, 1996; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). We naturally agree with these observations,

noting that with regard to developing much-needed conceptual clarity in the study of individuals' spiritual experiences, such a complementary approach may be of especially useful and timely advantage.

Qualitative methods. Given the exploratory and theory-building intentions of this study, an integral feature of our multi-method strategy was the use of qualitative methods. In their most fundamental form, qualitative methods entail approaches to scientific inquiry that center upon understanding of the “lived experiences” and subjective meaning-making activities of individuals. Rooted in the sociological paradigm of symbolic interactionism, qualitative perspectives view the construction of meaning and experience to be inherently social in nature and primarily conveyed through shared linguistic symbols and interactive process (Ashworth, 2003; Mead, 1934; Taylor & Bogden, 1998).

To this end, qualitative methodologies place significant value upon the direct interaction of researchers and participants, highlighting the voices of individuals as authentic, first-hand accounts of meanings and intentions. The primary goals of qualitative inquiry are to produce rich description and to provide explanatory information in an effort to understand phenomena of interest from the perspectives of those closest to these experiences (Banister, Burman, Parker, Taylor, & Tindall, 1994; Charmaz, 2006; Morse & Field, 1995; Taylor & Bogden, 1998). For this reason, we chose to employ qualitative approaches in the current project because these methods permitted us to explore the meaning and significance that individuals attach to their spiritual identity experiences in explicit detail.

Additionally, by privileging the perspective of the individual, qualitative methods also assisted us to avoid making unwarranted or value-laden assumptions about individuals' developmental experiences associated with spirituality by permitting an individual to convey meaning by speaking directly for him- or herself (Ashworth, 2003; Firestone, 1987; Henwood, 1996). As meaning and experience lie at the very heart of spirituality and in construction of experiences related to the sacred (James, 1958/1902; Allport, 1967; Mattis, 2006; Paloutzian & Park, 2006; Zinnbauer & Pargament, 2006), such a focus on subjective meaning-making and interpretation are important assets for a study of spiritual identity.

Similarly, when little is known about a substantive topic or when further conceptual information is necessary, the descriptive, exploratory nature of qualitative methods provide a natural fit for examining research questions focused on cultivating deeper understanding of phenomena of interest. For domains of scientific inquiry that do not yet possess clear theoretical explication or that lack solid conceptual foundations, the inductive stance favored by qualitative approaches can be especially useful for igniting the process of theory-generation (Charmaz, 2006; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Morse & Field, 1995; Sandelowski, 1997). Further, qualitative techniques may be of significant benefit in the process of operationalizing important concepts and identifying relevant manifest variables to inform the construction of appropriate instrumentation for such developing areas of inquiry (Brannan, 1992).

At a time when the field of scientific study associated with spiritual development is ripe for such conceptual expansion (Benson, 2006), qualitative methods may thus provide important assistance in the theory-building activities necessary to move the field

forward. Similar to Perry's (1970) use of semi-structured interview techniques in the construction of his theoretical framework regarding the process of intellectual and ethical development during college and Kiesling, Sorell, Montgomery, and Colwell's (2006) study of spiritual identity experiences of adults, the current project hoped to derive information relevant to understanding spiritual identity experiences during college that can be validated in the evidence and preferred linguistic descriptions of young people themselves.

Moreover, qualitative approaches seek to highlight issues of context in both the process and products of scientific inquiry. Individual experiences, and even the research act itself, are seen as deeply embedded in sociocultural and historical location.

Qualitative researchers attempt to make contextual issues fully visible in order to foster an accurate understanding of "persons-in-context" (Marecek, 2003; Taylor & Bogden, 1998). As contextual factors are known to shape the development of spirituality in myriad ways (e.g., Mattis, et al., 2006; Verma & Ste. Marie, 2006), this emphasis on context is an important strength for the application of these methods in investigation of individuals' spiritual experiences

Finally, respect for human variability and acceptance of the potential for multiple pathways in human experiencing are implicit aspects of qualitative perspectives. As a number of scholars have pointed out, such provisions for diversity are becoming increasingly necessary in postulating appropriate developmental conceptualizations of identity-related experiences in the post-modern world (Mattis, et al., 2006; Schachter, 2005a; Schachter, 2005b). In recognition of the significant diversity that likely characterizes human spiritual experience (Allport, 1967; James, 1958/1902; Mattis, et al.,

2006), the provision for alternative developmental pathways and respect for multiple forms of truth entailed in qualitative approaches further supports our rationale for their application in the study of individuals' spiritual identity formation experiences.

Person-specific quantitative methods. In addition to qualitative methods, the multi-method strategy of this project also incorporated the use of person-specific quantitative techniques. Person-specific techniques are methods in the developmental sciences that focus on the repeated, multivariate assessment of change in the individual. These perspectives suggest that in order to understand the complex, dynamic nature of processes surrounding individual development, it is important to study the systematic patterns of change that occur within-persons across time. To do so, multivariate, multi-occasioned observations of single participants are obtained to facilitate in-depth examinations of intraindividual variability associated with particular developmental phenomena (Corneal & Nesselroade, 1991; Jones, 2007; Jones & Nesselroade, 1990; Nesselroade & Ford, 1985). As the research questions of this project are explicitly framed at the level of the individual with the intention of creating an understanding of developmental experiences associated with spirituality in the lives of individuals, we believe that person-specific methods are the most appropriate and complementary choice for the quantitative portion of this exploratory investigation.

In particular, a primary advantage provided by person-specific approaches as applied to questions concerning individual development is their focus on studying variability that occurs within individuals. In traditional psychological research, the emphasis is primarily upon analyzing between-persons, or interindividual, variability. Interindividual methods are most appropriate for generating information regarding

behavior in an aggregated sense or understanding interindividual variability for making inferences at the group-level. In such cases, aggregating information across persons may provide useful and valuable mechanisms for summarizing data and creating collective portrayals of specific phenomena to support understanding at the group-level (Hamaker, Dolan, & Molenaar, 2005; Jaccard & Dittus, 1990).

However, because aggregated methods are intended for summarizing information across persons, they may not be the appropriate starting place for generating valid characterizations of intraindividual experiences or depicting developmental experiences as they occur in the lives of individuals (Molenaar, 2004). For questions framed at the level of individuals or wherein the goals of the research endeavor are to understand specific within-person processes that may uniquely vary across time, conclusions based upon what may hold in the aggregate may misrepresent or provide inaccurate assessments of phenomena as they occur at this level. In this sense, it is necessary to acknowledge that aggregated methods are capable only of offering composite portraits constructed based upon what holds in the experiences of an “average” individual, who may or may not exist in reality (Lamiell & Weigert, 1996). The emphasis in person-specific designs, in contrast, is on creating an understanding of within-person variability rather than the comparison of differences between individuals at specific points in time. For the purposes of studying intraindividual variability, intensive observations of individuals across time may therefore be more effective (Jones & Nesselroade, 1990; Hamaker, et al., 2005; Molenaar, Huizenga, & Nesselroade, 2003).

With regard to studying issues of spiritual development, the vast majority of existing studies has concentrated on analyses of interindividual variability and has

employed measurement techniques that posit spirituality in undynamic, static terms. However, as Benson (2006) highlights, a truly comprehensive approach to understanding human spirituality must account for intraindividual variabilities that give rise to developmental experiences in this area.

Another way of conceptualizing how person-specific designs differ from traditional between-subjects approaches is to consider variations in terms of Cattell's (1966) conceptual depiction of the basic dimensions of empirical inquiry. This diagram, also referred to as Cattell's Data Box, represents empirical dimensions according to persons, variables, and times. Defined in this way, in traditional between-persons designs, the time dimension is considered fixed and patterns of covariation in a set of variables are estimated by aggregating across persons. In person-specific designs, however, it is the persons dimension that is considered fixed and patterns of covariation in a set of variables are estimated by aggregating across times. Patterns of covariation across time for the individual are thus permitted to remain intact, making person-specific designs particularly useful methods for understanding within-person variability (Molenaar, et al., 2003).

Borrowing from principles applied in the study of thermodynamic systems, Molenaar (2004) further underscores why conclusions based upon aggregated analyses of interindividual variability may not be appropriate for questions concerning intraindividual developmental processes. Specifically, the assumption of ergodicity in systems indicates that in order to generalize from conclusions based upon analyses of interindividual variation, the pattern of variation at the intraindividual level must also be identical. In most cases, this assumption will be violated in processes that are variable

across time or individual entities. Generally, developmental processes thus do not qualify to meet this assumption. According to Molenaar's thesis then, to most accurately depict patterns of intraindividual variability, it is necessary to examine patterns at the level of the individual explicitly (Molenaar et al., 2003).

Ultimately, these issues imply that in seeking to understand developmental realities at the level of individuals, such as those implied by the goals of this project, it is important to employ techniques that will permit developmental conceptualizations to be constructed upon inferences made from the "ground-up," rather than from the "top-down," and that can be more firmly rooted in the veritable experiences of individuals. To this end, a significant effort must be made to explicate understanding at the level of the individual before meaningful generalizations across persons can be made (Hamaker, et al., 2005; Lamiell, 1981; 1998; Molenaar, 2004; Nesselroade & Ford, 1985; Nesselroade, 2007).

However, this is not to say that once an appropriate understanding of patterns of intraindividual variability using person-specific techniques has been derived that methods for generalizing across persons cannot also be used. In fact, perhaps one of the greatest assets of such approaches is that they allow more accurate portraits of individual processes to be developed before any attempts to aggregate are made. In this way, when aggregation techniques are ultimately employed, researchers can use findings from person-specific analyses to summarize information only across persons with truly similar developmental experiences. This then ensures that the integrity of patterns of intraindividual variability is not compromised in the aggregate and permits appropriate

generalizations to be made across persons (Lamiell 1981; 1998; Molenaar, 2004; Nesselrode, 2007).

Methods of Data Collection

Qualitative procedures. The primary method for data collection in the qualitative component of this project was through personal interviews. The personal interviews focused on exploring the meaning, context, content, and process of individuals' spiritual identity formation experiences, with an explicit emphasis on understanding individuals' spiritual experiences during college from the "lived" perspectives of individuals closest to these phenomena.

More specifically, we recruited a sample of college-aged individuals ($N=13$) who self-identified as having established a spiritual identity to serve as the primary participants for the interview phase of the project. Prior to participation, informed consent was obtained from each participant (See Appendix C). Face-to-face, individual interviews were then conducted with each participant using a semi-structured interview protocol to explore individuals' perspectives on their own religious and spiritual identity development during college (See Appendix F). Each interview lasted approximately 1-2 hours in length. The format for the interview was informal, yet focused – drawing upon the prompts and themes outlined in the semi-structured interview protocol, but allowing sufficient flexibility for the interviewer and participant to explore other topics relevant to the discussion as they naturally arose in the course of conversation. To protect confidentiality and to promote participants' comfort in speaking openly about personal topics, each interview was conducted in a secured, private office.

With the explicit permission of each participant, each interview was audio-recorded and then transcribed by the interviewer. In order to further supplement and triangulate information obtained in this phase of the project, at the conclusion of the interview session, each participant was asked to complete a brief demographic/background questionnaire (See Appendix I). To protect confidentiality, participants were also assigned a fictitious pseudonym and all personally identifying information was expunged from the data.

Interview protocol. A semi-structured interview protocol was employed to assist in organizing data collection for the interview session. The major themes explored by the interview protocol focused upon participants' perspectives on religious and spiritual experiences in their lives, with an emphasis on their own retrospective accounts of spiritual identity formation experiences during college. The initial interview protocol was developed based upon a review of similar semi-structured interview procedures used in a recent study of religious and spiritual experiences during adolescence (Smith, 2004) and supplemented by the researcher's own content knowledge of religious and spiritual development. In addition, a focus group session with several college-aged informants was conducted prior to the interviews to pilot the proposed interview protocol and to refine potential questions and themes (See Appendix E). Informed consent was obtained from focus group members prior to their participation (See Appendix B).

Each interview began with a brief period of informal rapport-building with the participant. Although rapport-building continued throughout the entire course of the interview, this initial intentional phase of the interview was important to establish the tone for the session and to allow the participant to feel at ease and to begin building a

relational alliance with the interviewer to facilitate open communication (Charmaz, 2006; Glesne & Peshkin, 1992). Using the semi-structured interview protocol as a guide, the interviewer then proceeded to explore the major themes encompassed by the research questions. These themes included: understanding participants' subjective experiences of having a spiritual identity and the meanings they ascribed to these experiences; their spiritual development history with an explicit focus on spiritual identity formation experiences during college; participants' views on the impact and significance of religious and spiritual identities across various dimensions of everyday experiences; and their understanding of related issues. Questions in the interview protocol were employed as prompts to explore these themes, but remained open to amendment or omission as necessary based upon responses provided by participants during the course of the interviews.

We note that by asking individuals to reflect upon their experiences in college after such experiences have already occurred, the interview information that we collected was retrospective in nature. Although a retrospective design may expose individuals' narrative accounts to potential report biases, most forms of self-report assessments used in research, including traditional survey methods used in prospective research designs, may also be subject to similar report biases (Metts, Sprecher, & Cupach, 1991). Recent evidence, however, indicates that retrospective narrative accounts of developmental experiences provided by adults tend to be fairly accurate and consistent with results produced by other methods (Cohen, Kasen, Bifulco, Andrews, & Gordon, 2005). In addition, some scholars have suggested that retrospective designs may actually be of particular advantage in qualitative studies because they represent individuals'

“remembered selves” and provide insight into what individuals themselves consider most subjectively meaningful in reconstructing their experiences (Zinnbauer & Pargament, 1998; Metts, et al., 1991).

Background measures. At the conclusion of the interview, participants were asked to complete a brief pencil-and-paper demographic and background survey. Demographic information assessed on the survey included items related to basic personal information, family status, educational experiences, and current living arrangements. Additionally, several close-ended questions drawn from the Brief Multidimensional Measure of Religiousness/Spirituality (BMMRS; Fetzer, 1999) were also administered. Each item in the BMMRS section contained three to five response choices indicating degrees of frequency or agreement with several doctrinally-neutral statements regarding various aspects of religiosity and spirituality. A small selection of questions pertaining to civic beliefs and practices drawn from existing surveys of college students and adolescents (Flanagan, n.d.; Higher Educational Research Institute, 2005) were also included in the survey to provide additional information about participants’ worldviews and everyday identity-related experiences in their communities. Individual information from the background survey items was used to supplement information obtained in the interview and to further inform the researchers’ interpretation of participants’ narrative accounts. This same background information was also obtained from non-spiritual individuals who participated in the quantitative component of the study.

Quantitative procedures. For the quantitative component of the project, we utilized a multivariate, replicated, single-subject, repeated measures design (MRSRM). In an MRSRM design, person-specific data are collected on multiple individuals, thereby

producing multiple replications of single-subject observations. Patterns of intraindividual variability are then examined at the individual level and subsequent analyses can also be conducted to identify interindividual differences and similarities between these patterns (Corneal & Nesselroade, 1991; Nesselroade, 1991; Nesselroade & Ford, 1985). For comparative purposes in the current study, we sought to collect data from both the original interview participants who identified as having a spiritual identity, as well as additional individuals recruited for this phase who identified as not having a religious or spiritual identity. All but one of the original interview participants agreed to participate in the quantitative phase. The one participant who did not participate elected not to do so due to time-related considerations. In spite of the researcher's efforts, it should be noted that some initial difficulty was encountered in the recruitment of additional non-spiritual participants, however. It is possible that this reluctance may likewise have been due to the time-intensive commitment required by the study or to the nature of the study's focus itself. Ultimately, two non-spiritual individuals were identified to participate in the quantitative portion of the study.

During this phase of the project, each participant was asked to keep a brief daily diary in which he or she recorded four to five social interactions or experiences with others that occurred during the day. These experiences included any discrete social interactions that the participant recalled occurring on a particular day. Each viable experience recorded then constituted an occasion of measurement for the individual. The self-administered daily recording of social experiences took approximately 5-10 minutes/day and was completed at participants' own convenience. A notebook with daily

templates used for recording these experiences was provided to each participant (See Appendix G).

Data collection in this phase continued until each participant reached a total of 80 entries (approximately 4-6 weeks). One to two times per week during this time, each participant met individually with the researcher to review the entries and to complete a brief series of questions describing how the participant felt during each of these social experiences (See Appendix H). Each review meeting lasted approximately 15-20 minutes in duration.

Prior to data collection, an initial meeting with the researcher was conducted to familiarize participants with the procedures for daily diary collection and to answer any questions or concerns participants may have had. At this time, informed consent (See Appendix D) and background information was also obtained from the non-spiritual participants.

During each regular weekly meeting, each participant was asked to bring his or her daily diary records of events occurring since the previous meeting. Participants were then given the opportunity to briefly describe to the researcher each event they recorded. Following each description, the participant was asked to rate how he or she felt during each event according to several potential qualities of daily experiences. Each quality was rated by the participant using a visual analogue rating scale format. A particular quality was presented to the participant followed by an unnumbered continuous 12-inch open line with analogue response poles. Participants were asked to place a mark on the line to indicate the degree to which they experienced the quality during each event. Responses were later scored by the researcher by measuring the distance in inches from the left-end

boundary of the line to the mark made by the respondent. During the initial meeting with the researcher, participants were given the opportunity to practice recording an event and then using the visual analogue rating scale with the assistance of the researcher. The visual analogue rating scale format was chosen in order to minimize potential response biases of repeated measurement and word anchor interpretation errors (Osgood, Suci, & Tannenbaum, 1957; Wewers & Lowe, 1990).

The qualities for the measurement instrument were drawn from two previous measures of daily religious or spiritual experiences that have demonstrated satisfactory measurement properties in extant work with adults (Fetzer, 1999; Piedmont, 1999). The items drawn from these measures were intended to focus on the following qualities: sense of wholeness/integration, sense of connectedness with others, sense of strength, comfort, gratitude, compassion, meaning, purpose, and joy. In order to broaden the range of potential qualities, a small number of supplemental items were created for this study based upon a review of existing literature. These items included: self-assurance, fulfillment, optimism, hope, fear, anxiety, guilt, shame, and anger (Albertsen, O'Connor, & Berry, 2006; Davis, Kerr, & Kurpius, 2003; Horak, 2006; Miller, 2008; Pargament & Mahoney, 2002; Salsman, Brown, Brechting, & Carlson, 2005; Saxena, 2006).

Sampling and Recruitment

Participants for each phase of the study were recruited using purposive sampling techniques as are customary in qualitative research and person-specific designs (Josselson, 1987; Kiesling et al., 2006; Corneal, 1990). Given the distinct approaches to generalizability and the interest in examining the individual experiences in both

qualitative and person-specific research designs, small, targeted samples are thus appropriate.

More specifically, because the emphasis in qualitative research focuses on the experiences of individuals with the expressed goals of generating descriptive information and developing specific explanatory theories based upon these accounts, the intention is not necessarily generalization to a larger statistical population. Therefore traditional concepts of representative sampling and generalizability may have limited utility in qualitative paradigms. Instead, qualitative researchers are often more concerned with issues of theoretical sampling and attempting to maximize the theoretical representativeness of conceptual categories by capturing their full dimensionality. Individual cases are not necessarily chosen randomly or in order to provide adequate statistical power, but rather for their ability to contribute to the conceptual density involved in developing substantive theories (Charmaz, 2006; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Hammersley, 1996; Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

The rationale for intentionally obtaining a small, purposive sample in person-specific designs is also important to consider. In contrast to traditional interindividual designs wherein generalizability claims hinge upon the use of representative sampling with the intention of generalizing results across a larger population of persons, generalizability as applied in person-specific techniques is more appropriately associated with sampling the dimension of time. The initial intention in this regard is not toward generalizing across persons, but instead toward generalizing across times. The population of times is therefore the most-heavily sampled domain (Corneal & Nesselroade, 1991; Jones, 2007; Nesselroade & Ford, 1985; Molenaar, et al., 2003). This does not

necessarily preclude the use of person-specific designs in attending to issues of generalizability across persons, but rather suggests that understanding developmental phenomena at the level of individuals may provide a more accurate starting place before interindividual generalizability claims may be made (Bath, Daly, & Nesselroade, 1976; Corneal & Nesselroade, 1991; Nesselroade & Ford, 1985; Zevon & Tellegen, 1982).

Recruitment procedures. Once IRB approval was obtained, recruitment procedures began. For the initial focus group, we recruited multiple participants ($n=4$) by making announcements in multiple upper-level Human Development courses at a large public university in the Mid-Atlantic region of the United States. Current undergraduate students meeting age criteria for the transition to adulthood (18-25 years) who volunteered were considered viable for participation. Focus group participants received nominal compensation for their time in the form of refreshments provided during the focus group session.

For the interview phase, we then recruited a sample of college-aged individuals from the same university who self-identified as having developed a sense of religious or spiritual identity. As the interviews were retrospective in nature asking individuals to reflect upon their spiritual experiences during college, only upper-level undergraduate students or first year graduate students who had recently completed undergraduate experiences and who met age criteria for the transition to adulthood (18-25 years) were invited to participate. These individuals were recruited through announcements made in several upper-level Human Development courses, on the Penn State Graduate Student list-serve, and through relevant clubs and campus organizations. Printed flyers were also distributed on campus to solicit additional volunteers. In total, approximately 13

participants volunteered for this phase of the study. Once initial contact was made with prospective volunteers and criteria for participation had been verified, a formal meeting to obtain informed consent and an individual interview session was scheduled. Upon completion of the interview session, participants received a small monetary honorarium (\$10) as compensation for their time.

Interview participants were also invited to participate in the daily diary component of the study. For this phase, a small number of new volunteers who met age and college status criteria, but who self-identified as being non-spiritual or having no spiritual identity, were recruited. Although it is possible that those individuals who self-identified as non-spiritual may actually have possessed a degree of spirituality, it was not the intention of the current study to explore this issue in-depth. In this study, for an individual to be included in the non-spiritual group, self-identification was considered sufficient.

Participants attended an individual explanatory meeting of the daily diary phase procedures. The researcher then conducted weekly review meetings with each participant until the participant had reached a total of 80 diary entries. Compensation for this phase of the study was offered in the form of weekly incentives (each valued at <\$1 per incentive) remitted at the close of each meeting with project staff. Additional compensation was provided in the form of lottery entries for a small cash prize. Specifically, for every five entries that a participant recorded, he or she was given one entry for inclusion in a lottery to win one of eight cash prizes (\$25 each).

Participants

Five upper-level (3rd, 4th year, or 5th year) female undergraduate students volunteered to participate in the focus group session. Group participants ranged in age from 20-21 years old. Four of the five participants identified as European American and one as African American. The participants reported living in diverse regions of the United States when not at college. All five focus group participants also self-identified as having some form of spiritual identity. In terms of religious identity, three of the five participants reported Unspecified Christianity as their affiliations, one reported Mainline Christianity, and one reported having no religious affiliation at all.

Thirteen participants volunteered for the interview phase of the study (See Tables 1-2). Of these, eleven were women and two were men. Interview participants ranged in age from 20 to 24 years old. Nine of the participants were current upper-level (3rd, 4th, or 5th year) undergraduate students. The remaining four participants were first-year graduate students who had each recently graduated from four-year undergraduate institutions.

In terms of ethnic background, ten of the participants identified as European American, one as African American, and two as Asian. Of the two participants who identified as Asian, one identified as Korean and the other as Indian. It should be noted that both of these individuals reported completing their undergraduate studies in their native international contexts. Although their experiences may naturally differ therefore in certain respects from participants whose college experiences occurred primarily in the United States, we believe their inclusion in the study offers a diverse and interesting perspective on college-related spiritual experiences during the transition to adulthood in non-Western contexts.

All participants in the interview phase self-identified as having some form of spiritual identity. With respect to religious affiliations, five of these participants identified as Unspecified Christians; two as Baptists; two as Methodists; one as Presbyterian; one as Roman Catholic; one as Jewish; and one as Muslim.

Regarding family religious context, four participants reported their fathers' religious affiliations to be Methodist; two as Baptist; two as Roman Catholic; and one each respectively as Unspecified Christian, United Church of Christ, Presbyterian, Muslim, and Atheist. The religious affiliation of participants' mothers included: two who were Methodist; two who were Baptist; two who were Presbyterian; two who were United Church of Christ; two who were Unspecified Christian; one who was Roman Catholic; one who was Jewish; and one who was Muslim.

All participants from the interview phase except for one ("Ahmed") consented to participate in the diary phase of the study. Two additional individuals who self-identified as not having a spiritual identity were also recruited for this phase (See Tables 1-2). Both of these participants were upper-level female undergraduate studies of European American backgrounds between the ages of 20-21 years old. In terms of religious beliefs, one non-spiritual participant self-identified as atheist and reported her parents to be of similar orientations. The other non-spiritual participant self-identified as agnostic and reported her parents' affiliations as Roman Catholic.

Data Analysis

Qualitative procedures. Interview data was analyzed using the techniques of grounded theory (Charmaz, 2006; Glaser & Strauss, 1976; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Qualitative researchers who use grounded theory methods work from inductive

perspectives, beginning first with observations and data collection, rather than the testing of *a priori* hypotheses or preconceived models. Theories and hypotheses are subsequently generated based upon patterns that the researcher sees reflected in the data (Brannen, 1992; Marecek, 2003). The intention of a grounded theory approach is thus to “ground” emergent theories and conclusions in the tangible observations of individual experiences and meanings conveyed to the researcher (Charmaz, 2006). Conclusions made regarding the data can then be based upon the foundations of information offered directly by individuals, rather than potentially biased conjectures. In this way, the inductive methods of grounded theory analyses assist researchers in more accurately “seeing” the conceptual categories and meaning structures relevant to operationalizing domains of interest and may help to inform the creation of more conceptually-sensitive theoretical frameworks surrounding particular phenomena (Banister, et al., 1994; Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

Grounded theory analyses are centered upon the use of the constant comparative method with conceptual networks and theories derived from the researcher’s iterative movement between data collection and data analysis to construct and verify emerging insights and associations within the data. Such “grounded” insights are used to contribute to the conceptual density involved in developing substantive theories. Data collection and analysis are considered complete then not when a prespecified number of interviews or analytic procedures have been conducted, but rather when the conceptual categories of the emergent theory are considered most fully articulated (Charmaz, 2006; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Hammersley, 1996; Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

Data analysis in grounded theory typically involves several integrative, but not necessarily linear, stages. Once the interview data have been transcribed, the researcher

begins by reading each individual transcript. This initial reading allows the researcher to become acquainted with the data and to consider, at a superficial level, the potential themes or patterns expressed in the data. The researcher may then conduct a second pass at reading the transcripts, this time taking more detailed notes of observations from the data and writing memos or summaries to assist in organizing the data into smaller, meaning-based units (Charmaz, 2006; Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

The second stage of data analysis in grounded theory methods is called initial coding. During this phase, the researcher engages in the process of open coding through which he or she begins to make conjectures about potential conceptual categories and themes expressed in the data. The researcher remains flexible and open about these initial codes, however, seeking to “stay close to the data” while searching for patterns in the interviews to validate and refine emerging insights. In this way, initial coding often involves conducting a line-by-line textual analysis with the researcher scrutinizing each unit of information in the data to assess potential processes and patterns expressed. Based upon this closer reading, the researcher then constructs provisional categories and themes which he or she attempts to clarify and validate by comparing “data with data” both within and across interviews to discern the meaningfulness of the emerging coding scheme. This stage proceeds with an additional phase of more focused coding in which the researcher’s efforts then become more directive as he or she seeks to synthesize and reduce the information and to test the conceptual adequacy of the provisional coding scheme (Charmaz, 2006; Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

Following the establishment of provisional categories, the process of axial coding may begin. During the axial coding stage, the researcher outlines and further defines the

conceptual properties of specific categories and attempts to understand relationships with other categories. Once categories have been adequately defined and are considered conceptually saturated or dense, a set of core categories are explicated. Core categories are considered the most basic overarching conceptual units or parsimonious thematic units identifiable to provide the maximum amount of explanatory power to the emerging conceptual framework (Charmaz, 2006; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Finally, the researcher attempts to “weave the fractured story back together” (Glaser, 1978, p. 72) by considering how core categories and any subcategories that may have been identified within them may fit together into a meaningful, integrated explanatory theory.

The final stage of data analysis in the grounded theory process then entails seeking further verification of the conceptual framework in the data. This involves testing the adequacy of the new theory by examining any potential negative cases in the data that do not fit the theory and considering alternative explanations for the conclusions (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

Procedures to strengthen analytic interpretations. Traditional criticisms of qualitative methodologies have generally centered upon arguments surrounding potential disadvantages associated with issues of empirical evaluation. Specifically, such questions concern whether reliability and validity can be effectively established in qualitative investigations (Merrick, 1999).

As defined within conventional parameters, reliability is generally associated with notions of repeatability or consistency of measurement, whereas validity associated with notions of “truthfulness” or accuracy of conclusions (Shadish, Cook, & Campbell, 2002). The inherent subjectivity and the role of interpretation involved in qualitative studies may

thus pose serious challenges to establishing reliability and validity if evaluated in this way. Many scholars have suggested, however, that because qualitative perspectives rest on different scientific assumptions than those typically employed in positivistic traditions, a reconsideration of the boundaries of reliability and validity may be necessary for their more appropriate application in qualitative milieus (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

For example, a more appropriate assessment of reliability in qualitative studies has been proposed focusing on establishing the broader criterion of dependability. Dependability concerns the soundness of the research process and its conclusions. In practical terms, dependability audits may be conducted in qualitative investigations to ensure the quality of both the researcher's interpretative process and conclusions (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merrick, 1999). To support dependability in the current project, we sought the counsel of an outside investigator to conduct a dependability audit to examine the soundness of the research process and to assess the quality of all procedural aspects of the interview and interpretative process.

Further, it has been recommended that validity in qualitative studies may be more appropriately evaluated by the criterion of establishing credibility or trustworthiness of findings. To support the credibility of findings, qualitative researchers devote significant effort to making the process of their research efforts transparent for others to assess, with investigators often presenting accounts of their own potential biases and positionalities in relationship to particular phenomena (Banister, et al., 1994; Charmaz, 2006; Merrick, 1996; Morse & Field, 1995). In addition, the credibility of findings can also be

strengthened by the analytic process itself as the researcher seeks to make explicit linkages between the data and conclusions and must rely on constant verification methods. In the current project, we attempted to strengthen claims of credibility through the application of triangulation and peer validation methods that involved examining the chain of evidence connecting data and associated conclusions. At times, this entailed checking with the participants themselves to ensure that our interpretations fit with their experiences and having an outside investigator assess the linkages we made between the data and conclusions by ensuring the plausibility of our findings from another vantage point.

Quantitative procedures. Data from the diary and survey instruments were analyzed using statistical analytic procedures in SPSS and LISREL. Specifically, once the data were collected, we examined the distribution of each participant's scores to assess their suitability for factor analysis. Items that demonstrated inadequate variability ($<.2$) across time were eliminated from subsequent statistical analyses. Additionally, items that demonstrated significant multicollinearity or violated other assumptions of factor analysis as outlined by Tabachnick and Fidell (2007) were also omitted from individual analyses. However, eliminated items are still reported and considered as potentially illuminating components of individuals' reporting of daily social experiences.

Exploratory factor analyses (EFA) using maximum likelihood estimation procedures were performed on each participant's data to assess the unique patterns of covariation of items across occasions for each individual. Several criteria were used to determine the initial number of factors for extraction, including the Kaiser-Guttman criterion, inspection of the scree plot, and the conceptual clarity of the proposed solution.

Oblimin rotation procedures were employed to assist in the process of interpretation. Rotated solutions were then examined to assess intraindividual response patterns.

A subsequent series of confirmatory factor analyses (CFA) were conducted to assess the fit of each hypothesized model using LISREL. Model fit was determined in accordance with procedures outlined by Molenaar (2006). In addition to the chi-square goodness-of-fit index, several alternative fit indices were used as criteria in holistically determining the adequacy of model fit, including the comparative fit index (CFI), the non-normed fit index (NNFI) and the standardized root mean square residual index (SRMR). The CFI and NNFI both have ranges of 0 to 1, with values larger than .9 considered satisfactory and values larger than .95 considered good in terms of model fit for each index. The SRMR index likewise ranges from 0 to 1, with values less than .08 considered adequate and values less than .05 considered good in terms of model fit (Hu & Bentler, 1999).

In this way, a unique factor pattern for each individual was specified and confirmed, providing the researcher with insight into each individual's experiences of daily social interactions with respect to various dimensions of spirituality. Interindividual similarities and differences in response patterns were then subsequently considered.

Chapter 4

Qualitative Results

In this chapter, we outline and describe the findings of the qualitative portion of the study. Using a grounded theory approach, we attempt to characterize college students' lived experiences of spirituality and spiritual identity formation as they journey through the transition to adulthood. Based upon the interview data, three interrelated categories emerged depicting the *Process*, *Meaning*, and *Implications* of individuals' spiritual experiences during college (See Table 3). These categories represent the complex ways in which individuals in this study experienced their own spiritual identities and spiritual development during this period, seeking to capture both the common patterns and unique variations within these experiences. Where applicable throughout, we highlight specific examples from individuals' experiences that embody and depict the essence of each theme and its associated sub-themes.

Category I: Process

The first category, *Process*, centers upon individuals' experiences of construction and on-going reconstruction of a sense of spiritual self and self-in-relation to others across time. In particular, *Process* describes the developmental course entailed in "becoming" a spiritual person and represents the active, dynamic, and often iterative movement that individuals expressed through which spiritual identity is created and refined in their lives. The notion of the person-in-context is likewise implicit to this core aspect of individuals' spiritual experiences as the interaction of the person and his or her environment comprises a central force in shaping the direction and contours of this movement. *Process* is further explicated by specific themes around which these

experiences may be organized: the *developmental foundations* of individuals' spiritual identities begun in childhood and adolescence prior to college; experiences of *acclimation, evaluation, and integration* encountered during college; and *expectations of continued development* beyond college (See Table 4). We note in advance of describing individuals' process-related experiences, however, that such themes are not necessarily to be considered as linear stages in individuals' lives and that the unique nature of each individual's experiences with respect to specific themes should also be kept in mind.

Theme 1. Developmental foundations of childhood and adolescence. In preface to discussing their spiritual experiences during college, nearly all participants indicated that the process of forming their spiritual identities began at some point during childhood or adolescence. In various ways, experiences and relationships with significant others encountered during these earlier periods helped to lay the foundations of the spiritual self and to provide initial entrée into religious and spiritual life. Several sub-themes were identified that highlight the ways in which this preliminary phase of process occurred.

Family. For the majority of participants, experiences with families-of-origin constituted a primary context for early religious and spiritual identity socialization. As one 21-year old student succinctly explained in discussing childhood influences on her spiritual experiences, "*I think from the beginning, it was my family*" (Erin). In fact, many participants pointed to experiences within the family and relationships with specific family members as how they became "*introduced*" to religion and spirituality. Louise, a 22-year student, observed: "*Yeah, I think my family has had a big part in my spirituality. Just because when I was like young, that's how I was introduced to Christianity.*" Susan, another 22-year student, recalled:

I was born into the church, so I don't remember being baptized, but I was baptized I think at my grandparents' church so they could be there... I've always gone to church, every Sunday for as long as I can remember with my parents.

Other students noted similar experiences in commenting on the instrumental role of families-of-origin in shaping their early religious and spiritual development:

I was raised in a Christian household. My parents were really involved in the church and I feel like so many of my early memories from childhood were in the church. I remember sitting with my mom and making, cutting up communion bread in the back room of our church. Learning Sunday School lessons and singing songs is another huge thing that I remember. (Anne, age 21)

My father played a big role in us going to church. He like went out and searched for one when I was like 3 years old. He went out to find a church home for us, and as soon as we got there, he got us joined to the church. And like automatically, we were like, this is new. And so like at first, I really didn't understand. I was like in this class studying about God and I didn't grasp it at first, but he actually took time to set me down, read the Bible, prayed together...and he taught Sunday School at home with us. (Toni, age 21)

Definitely, my family...I grew up going to church every Sunday. And I hated it when I was younger, but like I was there. (Michael, age 21)

For several participants, family members also served as formative models of

identification for religious or spiritual development. For Susan and Allison, for example, such modeling occurred primarily through parents:

[My parents] have been a big influence for me because they lived it [spirituality] in their everyday lives and so growing up in that family, I saw spirituality and God; I'd see it through them. And so that really helped me because they are my role models and so...if I ever have questions on religion or on faith, I can go to them. So they're my models, I guess in that. (Susan)

I think specifically, the way [my parents] treat other people, their, I guess it goes maybe more into religion, the influence of seeing my parents go to church and going to church with them growing up. (Allison, age, 21)

For others, siblings fulfilled this role:

My sister was like really involved with [the church youth group], so I think that influenced me. (Jacquelyn, age 20)

My sister has always been like a role model for me...She's had an influence on my life because she's, you know, a very religious person." (Louise)

Michael also described his sister's influence as important: "*[His sister's] like what got [him] really involved and that kind of stuff.*"

Although for many participants, encounters in the family-of-origin helped to establish the foundations of spiritual identity development through socialization into specific religious or spiritual contexts, for some, such as Hazel (age 22), experiences in

the family set the course for the direction of spiritual development in a much different, more open-ended, way:

I mean, like I said, my parents were not religious when I was growing up. Like my dad sort of had the Catholic school experience and then like got over it, you know, and was just like “Well, we’re not going to raise you like that.” And like my mom never really had a real religious upbringing, so they were just like you know, “We want you to have a religious thing, but we don’t know how to really help you with that.”

Peers. Although participants consistently described experiences in the family as primary vehicles of socialization during childhood, in discussing adolescence, the influence of peers and individuals outside of the family also became apparent. Anne recalled: *“I would say before probably the middle of high school, it was very much my family’s influence and going to church every week, but I think after that point...it really became my peers.”* Charlotte (age 20) and Ahmed (age 22) also pointed to the role of peers as salient in promoting their religious and spiritual development during adolescence:

So when I was in middle school, I started going to church with a friend of mine whose family went every week and I really enjoyed it. I loved it. (Charlotte)

As I said, I come from a family background that is religious, so that probably had a large effect in my childhood. But I’ve always been the kind of person to question everything [especially during adolescence] and every time I’ve questioned any

aspect of my religion, I've always received very, very satisfactory answers, not just from my family, but also from my peers. (Ahmed)

Organized peer group experiences, in the form of religious youth groups, were also important socializers during this time for many participants. As Erin described:

I was part of the youth group. That's when like my faith grew and I became strong in it and confident in it...so in high school, my friends and I went to the same youth group...that's when my strongest experiences were.

Michael had similar experiences with his peers in a religious youth group:

Then as I got older, like 6th or 7th grade, there was a youth group that started at my church and I don't know whether I would have gone or not, but I had to. So I went to that. And within like the first two years, a bunch of my friends from outside of church...began going to the same youth group or whatever. And so that did become something that you know, we kind of, we were a big influence on each other in that sense because that's a place where we hung out a lot and things like that. And then throughout high school, with the same friends, we'd go to youth events together...So I like made a ton of friends doing that stuff and it was a big influence on me.

For some participants, such as Jacquelyn, attending or working at religious summer camps, often associated with youth groups, was similarly a “*really big deal*” during adolescence and another mode of opportunity to grow spiritually through interactions with peers.

Adult mentors. For a number of participants, peer youth groups and involvement in religious activities also provided exposure to adult mentors who played influential

roles in establishing foundations for spiritual identity. For Elaine, such an adult mentor was her “pastor” who she described as “a very spiritual person.” For Mary (age 22), it was the adult leader of her youth group who had an important impact in her life:

In high school, when my parents got divorced, I didn't go to church I don't think at all....But my youth minister actually, she was the one who really wanted me to stay in youth group...and the reason why I stayed in the Catholic church...Like I went through a lot in high school and she always was like the one person, like you know when my mom was working full-time and stuff, she was the one who would pick me up and take me to youth group and stuff. She definitely was like a positive influence on my faith and keeping me there. I also did a lot of mission trips with her and with the youth group.

For individuals who had relationships with such adults, these mentors offered a valuable source of spiritual role modeling and guidance outside of family members or peers. For example, as both Toni and Allison described:

[When] I went to high school, that's when I really started like okay, I need some type of pillar or some type of knowledge that would help me get through those times, you know, when I was stressed or overwhelmed by work and stuff like that. So I really got into the Bible and reading scriptures, which my Sunday School teacher told me to read a scripture a day and it will help you get through it and that really did help. (Toni)

Getting into high school, we ended up getting a new minister...which was a big change for me. I actually started listening to sermons and actually started

understanding things and being able to connect a passage that we would read from the Bible to my own life, you know.”(Allison)

Schools. Some participants discussed the influence of attending religious schools during childhood and adolescence. Each participant who attended religious schools described their experiences in various ways. For Mary, experiences in Catholic school allowed her to take her religious and spiritual identity “*for granted*” until she came into contact with peers outside of her religious tradition later on:

So I went to Catholic school and everything and I took that kind of for granted, you know, because you just thought it was just the norm. You know, for everybody...like all my friends went to Catholic school, so I never had to like preach or anything...I think when I went to public school in 8th grade, that was kind of when I realized that not everybody goes to church on Sunday and not everybody, you know, did the same things that my friends and family did from Catholic school. (Mary)

For Louise, attending a religious school that was of a different religion than her own faith tradition helped her to begin thinking about the defining features of her own beliefs and identity:

I went to Catholic school, but I’m not like Catholic...which was like really weird for me like because I’m not Catholic and so I think that was like very defining and so 95% of the school was Catholic and like everyone knows that you were like not Catholic you know...I just remember this one day we were like in class and Sister Helen...said something and I was like...’Where does it say that in the Bible?’... and she gave me this lecture on how it wasn’t in the Bible, but that Catholicism is

based on tradition and... so I think experiences like that made me have to like stand up for what I believe in, and I kind of realized some of the differences between my beliefs and Catholic beliefs, for example. (Louise)

For Hazel, however, attending a religious school in which she felt inadequate in her knowledge initiated her movement toward disconnection from organized religion in creating a spiritual self. She recalled:

So [my parents] sent me to Hebrew school and I did not connect there well, because they kind of like assumed ...that like your family was Jewish and like you know what Jewish people do and what the holidays are. And like I didn't, you know, and I just felt really like not connected. (Hazel)

“It was just kind of what I did...” Although most participants pointed to experiences in childhood or adolescence as foundational in catalyzing the process of spiritual identity formation in their lives, many participants described the nature of their religious and spiritual selves during these periods as being somewhat primitive and more extrinsically-motivated than at later points in their development. As Allison observed:

I grew up going to church every single week with my parents and my brother and sister, going to Sunday School, going to church on a regular basis. It was just a routine to me....church to me was “Yeah. This is something that I do every Sunday morning. My parents make me get up and I can't wait till I'm old enough to stay home and not have to go to church and my parent won't make me go,” you know...And [later on] I started to realize that my church experience growing up was...a more social thing, and not necessarily a spiritual thing.

Other participants depicted similar externalized motivations to their religious and spiritual involvement during childhood and adolescence:

I mean, in high school and as an adolescent, I went to church, but it was just kind of what I did and I believed in God, but I wasn't growing a lot in that. It was just...it was just what I did. (Susan)

It was something that was just there, but it wasn't so much a part of who I was. It was more like oh, you go to church on Sunday but then the rest of the week was for whatever...I was very much in the mode of "I need to know God, but mainly just on Sundays" ...so I was pretty much living my life mainly like however I wanted to. (Charlotte, age 20)

Faith when I was younger was just like going to [youth group] and going to church. Like I knew what it all meant, but I wasn't like living for that. (Jacquelyn)

I think for me it was just always kind of a given, but choosing to really make a connection with God and having that change decisions I was making really didn't start happening for me until [later]. (Anne)

Relatedly, in spite of her regular attendance at Catholic services and involvement in religious youth groups during this time, Mary explained that she really “*didn't see [herself] as a spiritual person until [she] went to college.*”

This pattern of externalization in description was almost wholly consistent across participants in discussing experiences during childhood and adolescence, with two

notable exceptions. In particular, these exceptions were expressed by students who had grown up in international settings and who had experienced the majority of their religious and spiritual development in non-Western contexts. Thus, it is possible that specific contextual circumstances or other individual variabilities may have affected the process of their spiritual development in ways that differed significantly from other participants in the study. As Ahmed who grew up in the Middle East recalled, adolescence was really the most intensive period of spiritual identity formation for him since this was the period when he was first cognitively able and culturally-expected to function with a more adult sensibility. In discussing his spiritual development during this time, he noted:

As I became more and more aware of my surroundings, my ability to think for myself, that has enhanced me spiritually more and more. So as I gained independent thought ...As I got older and older, my questions became more and more complicated and I started to find answers with more and more learned sources and getting deeper and deeper into theology...I'd say adolescence was the time where I would have probably been most influenced then.

Elaine, who grew up in South Korea, recounted having a significant spiritual conversion experience of a supernatural nature during adolescence. She therefore pointed to this conversion moment as most formative in the process of her spiritual identity, as opposed to the college period, in her opinion, when people “*usually...have those thoughts.*”

In spite of having such transformative experiences during adolescence, both Ahmed and Elaine reported that they continued to develop certain aspects of their spiritual identities during college. Although the processes of Ahmed and Elaine’s

spiritual identity formation therefore differed in some respects from other individuals in the study, we continue to include discussion of their experiences during college as relevant throughout subsequent themes.

Theme 2. College: Acclimation. As described by the majority of students in this study, the transition from adolescence to college life was a salient milestone in the process of their spiritual identity development. Consequently, it should be noted that this transition likewise coincides with the beginning of the transition to adulthood for most individuals in post-industrialized contexts. For many students, the college transition entailed a second theme relevant to their *process* experiences depicted as a period of adjustment or *acclimation* of the self to the college context. During this time, students described initial reconsiderations of religious and spiritual identity elements formed during childhood and adolescence in an attempt to locate the self amidst the new demands and opportunities afforded by the college environment. For some individuals, such acclimation involved “*stepping back*” whereas for others, this aspect of the process was negotiated by “*holding on.*”

“*Stepping back.*” Several students described acclimation periods during the initial semesters of college as a time in which they decided to “*step back*” from aspects of the religious and spiritual identities they had assumed during childhood and adolescence as a means of adjusting to the new relationships, priorities, and autonomy encountered in their adjustment to college. In discussing her spiritual identity during the transition to college, Erin explained her experiences in this way:

I kind of took a step back from it...to look at other people...because I had never been with other people of other religions as much...It was just a different

population up here, so I just kind of like took a step back and tried to learn more about other people.

For Louise, acclimating to college also involved a period of “stepping back”

I guess it was kind of like more patchy than in the past. And part of that was like because it was hard to find friends who like had similar beliefs as me. And then also because I had a really hard time finding a church there. So I think that when I first started college...I would say my spirituality wasn't as strong. And I didn't focus on it as much...I didn't really like have a big importance on it then... Like I didn't even realize that I was kind of missing that...it wasn't necessarily my top priority, you know...because I had just started college and all. (Louise)

Louise's explanation echoed Charlotte's expectations during the early semesters that college was to be:

...a time for doing other things, just having fun or whatever...and I was also convinced that I wasn't gonna find friends who had like any interest in pursuing spirituality at all... but I think that in this point in our lives, it's really, really easy to get caught up in everything that's going on a college campus.

Anne and Toni depicted their initial experiences in related terms:

So my freshman year...my spirituality kind of took a back seat...For me, at that point, it was really hard to stay connected...so that first semester was really a time of me kind of rebelling and saying, I don't want to do this. I don't want to try to be this perfect person. So it was a lot of drinking and just kind of going and making my own choices. (Anne)

When I came to college, you know, I kind of slacked off and kind of did my own thing...freshman year I was completely lost...I was all over and I had like friends in the beginning who were not spiritual and did not have religion like I had like when I was back home. You know, we went to parties and did things you know, you shouldn't do underage...So yeah, and I had totally like stopped reading my Bible, stopped going to church...you know, I really lost contact with faith. (Toni)

Similarly, for Mary, this transitional period was a time when she remembered participating in religious services only “*twice or three*” times due to her focus on other priorities involved in adjusting to college. For this reason, she identified herself as a “*C&E – Christmas and Easter – Catholic*,” attending religious services and involving herself in religious or spiritual activities only upon returning home for breaks during her first semesters.

“*Holding on.*” For some students, however, acclimation to college and the process of spiritual identity formation during this time assumed a much different form. As opposed to “*stepping back*” from previously-socialized elements of their religious and spiritual identities, other students described experiences of “*holding on*” as a means of dealing with their adjustment to college. For these individuals, “*holding on*” to beliefs and practices that were familiar and known helped to cultivate a sense of identity-related stability amidst a time of relative flux. Allison recalled:

Coming to college, because I was so involved in church in high school, I knew that I wanted to get involved with a campus ministry and with a church at school...So um, first semester, the first few weeks of school, I went to a large group meeting [of a campus ministry].

Jacquelyn also recounted her desire to remain connected to her faith by joining a familiar religious organization upon entry to college:

Well, coming to college, I knew that I wanted to get involved with a Christian ministry...and my friend at home...her sister went [here] and she was involved with [a campus ministry]...and I just decided that I was going to go there. Like I didn't really even look into like any of the other ministries.

For Michael, whose sister was in her senior year and involved in religious activities at the same university, the transition to college was simply a matter of “*holding on*” to the religious and spiritual identity that he had established within the context of his family-of-origin by immediately “*plugging into*” the same activities that his sister was already involved with when he arrived. In this regard, he recalled that he “*didn't know what [he] would have done without her*” during this time.

Theme 3. College: Evaluation. In addition to their discussions of *acclimation*, many students described a third *process*-relevant theme depicting experiences of *evaluation* during college. For these students, once the self had been oriented within the context of university life, a period of “*taking stock*” and making choices regarding the self’s direction often followed. Such identity-related assessments, although highly individualized in content and duration, were frequently initiated and influenced by encounters with the self and others experienced specifically within the college milieu. Two sub-themes, “*moving forward*” and “*wrestling with*” further detail the nature of these evaluation experiences.

“*Moving forward.*” For some students, *evaluation* involved reflecting upon identity-related issues and making more intentionally self-defined choices as part of a growing impetus to “*figure things out*” and to “*get [their] stuff together*” as they began approaching adulthood. Evaluation processes for these individuals took the form of unfolding awarenesses or experiences that engendered a sense of “*moving forward.*” In discussing how she began to focus more intentionally on her spiritual identity formation, Toni described:

So then after awhile...second year came, I knew I had to get serious because after that semester I had to choose which major I had to get into. So I was like okay, I had to do something.

Relatedly, Louise and Erin recounted similar experiences in the process of evaluating their spiritual identities following a period of “*stepping back*” during the transition to college:

Sometime around sophomore or junior year, I was like, I kind of need to get my stuff together here, because I was feeling like, not connected with God. (Louise)

...Just as I'm maturing and getting older I know that that's something that I really wanted to have be a part of my life...so it kind of went back at first, but now it's growing again...I mean, just a lot of thinking about life and just about what I want to do in life and so I think that has really shaped me and my spirituality, of how I want to intertwine the two and do what God calls me to do. (Erin)

For Mary, “*moving forward*” entailed evaluating elements of her spiritual identity during college and choosing an identity that helped her to define who she was “*as a person:*”

I just started to identify myself more as being Catholic and valuing more the Catholic traditions and I think for me that was really meaningful and helped me to identify who I was as a person. Because I feel like college is really a time when you really figure out who you are and what's important to you. So I think that was kind of a moment for me that I don't know, just kind of happened.

As Elaine and Michael explained, considering “*spiritual things*” and making choices in their own, more self-defined ways were also important aspects of this process:

During that time, I don't know...I had lots of questions in my mind, kind of spiritual things. And then I tried to figure out, you know, what the Bible says and what my parents say and what the other religious persons say...and I tried to figure out the reasons why. (Elaine)

It was always something that I didn't really have a choice up until you know, I could really start thinking for myself...and then at that time...I think that really helped for me to make the decision that I believed in it. (Michael)

Louise pointed to her growing autonomy as an integral force in catalyzing this movement:

I think a big part of it for me was leaving my family...if I had just like stayed living in my parents' house then I don't think it would have happened, you know...I think I would still be just doing a routine, just like go to church and not necessarily have evaluated it...yeah, because when you like go college, you have the choice. You can like go to church or you can drink every night. You can do whatever. And all those things are decisions that you have to consciously evaluate

at some point. So I think getting out of the routine made me you know, like really think about it...it was more like I just had to decide what I was gonna do.

In commenting on this aspect of the spiritual identity formation process, Michael further noted:

It's been like a lot of me just figuring out what I want...I don't have anybody making me do anything. So I'm finally getting make decisions on my own ...and I'm excited about that. It's like...I want to just be able to make those decisions because I want to make the decisions that I'm making...but I feel like it's been a good thing, like it's something that I need to go through...like to see myself trying to do these things on my own.

In addition to increased autonomy, other aspects of the college environment also contributed to fostering a sense of “*moving forward*” in the process of individuals’ spiritual identity construction.

Peers. For a number of individuals, relationships with others were a key source of initiation and influence in the process of “*moving forward*” during college. As one participant contributed in describing this aspect of her spiritual identity formation experiences: “*Probably the overlying theme is people...*” (Charlotte). In particular, experiences with peers encountered in the college environment appeared to be an especially important context for promoting spiritual growth for some students. Charlotte discussed the unique nature of peer relationships in the college context and their impact on her spiritual experiences:

This is a time unlike any other time, where I'm just surrounded by my friends at every moment of every day and they live within walking distances and it's just like

an amazing support system...I don't think it [her spiritual identity formation] could have been like what it's been here, as strong.

Specifically, for some students, relationships with peers in college provided a form of spiritual “community” which helped support the process of spiritual growth:

...It was nice to like have that community that I could like find somebody that I knew had the same basic beliefs as me because that's something really important to find. (Michael)

By that time, I kind of had also found friends with like more similar beliefs to me...and you know, I don't care if anyone's religious or not religious, but sometimes when you have friends who aren't religious at all, then they just don't have the same like general beliefs as you and stuff, I guess...I was just more like what I wanted to be in my spirituality and having friends who felt more of the same as me. (Louise)

It was just really good to have a small, intimate tight-knit community of people and have time to um, just be and just work these questions through together.

(Anne)

Several students emphasized the importance of talking with peers and engaging in discussions with one another about issues of beliefs and values as a salient forum for evaluating aspects of spiritual identity and “moving forward:”

My roommate senior year was very religious and so I think talking to her sometimes would make me want be...like have a stronger faith because she did...

(Louise)

...The conversation of beliefs...I would say that would play the most effective part in my spirituality...because I love having discussions on that...more than anything else, this would be something...that would influence my beliefs. (Ahmed)

I think through examination and through talking to people, my peers, to kind of say... "What are your thoughts on this situation?"...So I would have conversations and try to learn from people. (Anne)

I did mission work this summer...and I traveled to a different city each week with a team of 10 other college-age and late-like 20's people...And for me, a lot of it was um, like we'd do like faith-sharing talks together...And I actually found that this summer was when I realized that I wanted to change my life, you know.

(Mary)

[In describing a conversation with a college peer about spirituality]...we talked for awhile about how the transition from high school to college was really difficult, how to keep your faith in college and everything. And we had a really long, long talk about the whole situation, which really helped me like really sort

out my thoughts and feelings about keeping my religion and how I had like let it go at first. And she tried to help me work back through that. (Toni)

Peers also provided an important source of support and influence for spiritual development:

In college, I found a really close friend...and we'd talk about faith and struggles that we were going through in college because it's a hard time...and so she was really a lot of encouragement for me through that. (Susan)

If I wasn't surrounded with like that community, I would have been lost. I might have still been going to church on Sundays, but I wouldn't have had the support that has helped me so much...I have just really learned how important it is to be surrounded by people who are there to encourage me along the way and not let me um, just slide back. (Charlotte)

Like I never knew that there was all this stuff, like there was so much more to like what I was supposed to be doing...well, not necessarily what I was supposed to be doing, but things that I should want to be doing, I guess...and like at that point, I was hanging out with these people like consistently and not going out and partying and hooking up with random girls and stuff like that. I started trying to live in a way that was...I guess, in way that was glorifying to God. (Michael)

Relatedly, peer relationships within the context of romantic partnerships were also experienced as a mechanism for growth for some individuals. As Michael described, for example, his partner has been a significant influence in his spiritual identity development

because “*she’s probably helped [him] as much as anyone in [his] relationship with God.*” Likewise, Charlotte reported that her relationship with her partner has “*had a huge impact on [her] walk with God.*”

In addition to informal peer encounters and relationships, participation in more formal religious and spiritual peer organizations and related activities within the context of college also helped to shape individuals’ spiritual identity formation:

[In describing an activity sponsored by a religious/spiritual peer organization]...
They had these breakout sessions about how to be effective in your faith in college and within your major and how to bring God and your faith into your major...that really built...like strengthened my finding my way back to God and how to get back on the right track. (Toni)

...And I reconnected to a [religious/spiritual peer organization]...I really kind of threw myself into that and into being a community with other Christians who were involved with [the organization]. So that was a huge strength for me. And I met a couple of people who would really influence kind of how I thought about stuff.
 (Anne)

[In describing his involvement in a religious/spiritual peer organization]...*That was one of the things that like got me like really into my spirituality...And um, where I like met my friends...Like that was huge and that was like where a lot of those changes really took place for me. Like it was then that I knew, like this is what I want to be doing.* (Michael)

But I started growing a lot more when I got involved in [a religious/spiritual peer organization], because um, I had just never met other people my age who were just so passionate about their faith...and that just had such an impact on me...it's just contagious being around something like that. So that definitely was when I really started to grow. (Charlotte)

However, as some students noted, encounters within the context of peer relationships and involvement in religious/spiritual peer organizations sometimes entailed a certain amount of “*pressure*” and expectation and were not always considered positive experiences in the process of spiritual identity formation:

There was just like a lot of pressure from [friends], like whether I needed to be doing things or not...like it's just an unspoken pressure...and I felt like “I really appreciate everything that you've done for me, but just like let me kind of do this on my own.” Not that I wanted to do it all on my own, but like I didn't want to do something because I felt like I had to or like I was doing it for someone else. (Michael)

Sometimes it just feels like there are people telling me that I need to do these things and then it starts to feel like I'm doing it just because of that...and it feels like I need to do it because they're telling me and because everyone else around me is doing it. (Charlotte)

It's just like "You can't do this" and "You can't do this" and everyone getting on you, like you're doing something wrong all the time... they put like so much pressure on you to like get involved and like go to all these things and they like give you such a guilt trip if you don't like read your Bible everyday and like stuff like that. (Jacquelyn).

Adult mentors. Similar to experiences encountered during adolescence, adult mentors also continued to play an important role in spiritual identity development for some individuals throughout college. Michael explained:

The [campus minister], he like asked if he could like meet with me and just talk or whatever like about anything. And so I met with him and like I have a really good relationship with him; it's just like he's like one of my friends or whatever. And we were talking about things...just like things that were like kind of making my spiritual life suffer.

Mary described the importance of adult mentors in her life in this way:

A lot of people have like spiritual advisors and like people in the Church that you talk to...like I'll talk to Father M. [the Catholic campus chaplain]...like Father M. is like the bomb...and I talk to him a lot. And like my youth minister at home, we're still really close. And I guess, like seeking that help from other people that are more educated, I guess.

As with peer relationships, however, not all individuals described their interactions with adult mentors during college as exclusively positive experiences:

Like [the campus minister], I don't know. I have like mixed feelings about him. Just like because of things that he's like said to me and in general, I don't know.

So whenever he speaks, I'm like "Ugh! I'm not going to listen to what he's saying..." And it sucks because he's such like a wise person and you can like learn a lot from him, but there's other people that I can learn from, too.

(Jacquelyn)

Classes. Engagement with course-related material and participation in the classroom were also other important factors in the “*moving forward*” process for some students. As Anne pointed out:

I think college is this place, at least for me, that I've chosen to take classes about topics that I know a little bit in, but I need to know more. But I've had amazing professors who have kind of challenged the way I think, but also the way other students think in the class. And those aren't necessarily religious classes, but I think that it's very interesting when you challenge the way someone thinks and they have to get down to the point of "Oh, I don't know why I believe what I believe. I just believe it..." So I don't think it would have happened this way if I hadn't been here.

Ahmed likewise considered his educational learning as a student to be intimately associated with his spiritual growth during college:

As an engineering student, when I study a lot of stuff...and I look at all these things from a science background, from that background it made sense with what I believed in again. So, the technical side of my life has corroborated with the spiritual side and that has further positively influenced me.

Similarly, Toni and Susan recalled experiences in the classroom that led to further spiritual development during this time:

I think when I've taken like science classes and you know, how they push evolution. I never thought that I would be really affected by that...and I hear talk about how other fellow Christians be so upset about how we are supposed to believe in creation, there's no proof of evolution. So really like that whole evolution and creation thing like really pushed me to take it to the Bible and see what can be really true for myself. (Toni)

My junior year...[I took a course] where you learn about Guatemala... but it's also about spiritual development in that class. Um, and then you go on a mission trip for Spring Break and then you still have the class when you come back and it's like wrapping up the experience and everything. But that was one of the most life-changing experiences ...because well, not only did I get to know the other people in the class so well and it was awesome to have spiritual development to be a part of academics...but that trip was just incredible because we went there to like help out these people in Guatemala who had gone through civil war and are in incredible poverty...and even though they have nothing, and they've gone through so much, the first thing they want to talk about with you is their faith in God...those experiences were just really incredible and it made me look at my religion and my faith completely differently. (Susan)

Exposure. In discussing “*moving forward*” experiences, a number of students, such as Erin and Mary, highlighted the unique role of the college environment as a context for increasing opportunities for “*exposure*” and providing contact with new ideas and people:

Since I was at a high level of spirituality [living at home during adolescence], I think I probably would have remained that way...but I don't know if that would have been the most healthy way...just that I came and that I got to see more about like the world and other people. I mean...seeing more diversity and seeing how people think. Just hearing people's opinions and not just hearing the same from like your area... (Erin)

I've definitely just become more aware...you know, if I'd have just stayed in my home town, I think it would have been, like I never would have realized that there's anything different...I never realized that people were different, you know. And I feel like college gave me like the exposure.... I think that college really did make me realize you know, that I'm different. And people aren't always going to agree with like what you believe in and that's fine, you know – all to their own. (Mary)

For Ahmed and Hazel, who had opportunities to experience cross-cultural encounters during college, increased exposure in these settings enhanced the development of their spiritual identities, as well:

...That was one of the most important transitions, since I grew up in the Middle East, I was always surrounded by Muslims and Islamic culture. But when I moved to India [to attend college], Islam was not as predominant in the culture as it was before. And I personally experienced people from other cultures and other religious backgrounds. So in that sense, I got to have a lot of interactions with

others and compared their beliefs with my beliefs...and in that sense, it further enhanced me, enhanced my spirituality. (Ahmed)

[In describing a study-abroad program in Israel that she would soon be attending]...*It's through this program called Birthright...and it's really like tailored toward Jewish people who don't know that much. Because there's a lot of us, like people who are Jewish but we don't really...like I don't know, like I had a Bat Mitzvah and I've never went back into a synagogue since then, you know...but I do think that there are interesting things about it that I would like to know and I think it definitely will affect me... Because right now, my spirituality is all just from things that I've experienced or things that I've discovered on my own, but I think that that will help me have some sort of progression. (Hazel).*

Other experiences. Since each individual experienced processes associated with spiritual identity formation differently and had different opportunities for spiritual development both within and outside of the college context, it is important to note that students also referred to a broad range of other experiences that affected their spiritual growth during this time, as well. Such experiences included the loss of loved ones, summer jobs and internships with religious and spiritual organizations, and reading particular books concerning the topic of religion and spirituality.

“Wrestling with.” Beyond *“moving forward,”* some individuals described *evaluation* experiences embodying a sense of *“wrestling with.”* For these individuals, *evaluation* during college entailed active experiences of questioning or attempting to reconcile conflicts within the spiritual self associated with behaviors, beliefs, or

presentation of self to others. With respect to experiences of “*wrestling with*” behavioral aspects of her spiritual identity during college, Anne observed:

I think the big doubt for me, my freshman year was am I gonna choose to embrace this? Am I gonna choose to live my life in a way that is connected to God?

For some students, “*wrestling with*” took the form of struggling with desires to engage in behaviors that they felt may be inconsistent with their spiritual selves:

It's been very hard. There's a lot that goes on that's not like cohesive like with my religion. Um, so that's been like...that has been a challenge. And I know like a lot of my friends, they're wild and I still love them...and not that I don't like to go out and have fun, but... I don't ever take it to the extreme; sometimes they do maybe. But it's been hard. (Erin)

[In describing her decision about whether or not to participate in a student-led riot that took place near campus]... *Like the riot this weekend. I wanted so bad to run downtown, but I just kept myself composed and stayed in my room. (Toni)*

For others, “*wrestling with*” entailed having to choose between engaging in religious or spiritual behaviors or participating in other activities:

Things have just been coming up like every Sunday...like I could go to church and then go... but it's just like I always have like work to do or something. (Jacquelyn)

And going to school for engineering, you have to like study a lot and so I think that was one thing that was kind of most frustrating to me because I felt like it was

harder to maintain my faith...because I had to be studying and stuff, and then you know, if my faith is important to me, you're like well, then am I choosing to put my studying over my personal beliefs? But in the end, you just kind of have to suck it up and go to class...I think that was a real struggle for me with school...that was tough. (Louise)

As some individuals recounted, “wrestling with” also encompassed having doubts or questions about beliefs relevant to their spiritual identity:

My faith was challenged on a lot of levels in college that it wouldn't have been if I had just stayed where...my family and everybody around is religious....it's kind of a transitional time and so I think that the college experience was definitely hard on a lot of levels...I mean, if I hadn't had those experiences then I feel like it would have been easy to just glide through life, but I think that if you're never challenged in what you believe then you don't really grow. (Susan)

I do respect what other people say and think and it was scary to...like consider the possibility that maybe what I believed wasn't real. But I think that the way that I resolved that was that I kept myself surrounded by solid people who could just encourage me and would just be there for me when I needed somebody to listen...and also just even though I was having doubts to just read my Bible and continue to pray and just do those things to help me grow...and just trying to see the truth in those things. (Charlotte)

There were a lot of times when I was like...you know, why do bad things happen to good people? And...there are a lot of questions, just like that concept, you know... (Mary)

For other individuals, this struggle involved reconciling beliefs constructed within their own spiritual identities with more formal systems of beliefs espoused within specific religious traditions:

...I think for me, I did have questions. And I think that's always something, you know, like as you're developing your spirituality, you're always going to question it...Like sometimes, I'm still uneasy about a few things with the Catholic Church. And I still question like "What's the difference between like what God says and what the Catholic Church says?" You know, like I sometimes see that as two different things, even though as a Catholic, you're supposed to see that as the same thing.... like sometimes I see the Catholic Church as like government, you know. And the government is not always right. (Mary)

I think a lot of my views on women's roles and homosexuality go very counter to what a lot of people [in the Christian community] feel. And I think it's kind of the opposite when you step outside of that community, kind of my views on women's roles and homosexuality, which I think for me, are very related to spirituality because it's all very much God's purpose for each of us...I don't think he excludes or limits it to what we can understand...But when you're outside of the Christian community, my views about women's roles or homosexuality are very along the lines of the norm, I guess. But my Christian views go counter. (Anne)

Michael and Jacquelyn related similar experiences:

And it's stuff like that that I do struggle a lot with in my faith, just things where it seems like there's just complete intolerance of other ways. Like in Christianity...like Jesus is the way to heaven and that's all...but then you have people like a very devout Muslim who doesn't believe that, but does everything basically the way they should be doing it in their faith and it's just so hard for me to like say "Oh, well, you're going to hell." ...Like there are a ton of people in this world who are much better people than I am...Like Ghandi, he's in hell? Are you serious?...And like so many people that I'm friends with now...I almost feel like they're kinda following that blindly...and they don't think about it. And I just have a really hard time with that. (Michael)

That's like something I'm still like trying to figure out because I mean, it makes sense. Like how...like there's just so many religions and who am I to like tell someone that you know "Well, you're wrong," you know? Like I just can't do that and I can't believe that. I don't know...I don't think I'm ever gonna figure that out really... And then my other thing that I struggle with a lot...is um, like gay people. Like I just can't believe that that's wrong... Oh, that drives me nuts and I hate that stigma of like Christians don't like gay people because it's a sin. I just think it's ridiculous...Like I don't think it's a choice and I don't get like how God who created us to be in relationship with people like how He would then ever be like, "Well, you can't just like love someone." I don't know. (Jacquelyn)

In addition to behaviors and beliefs, a few participants also “*wrestled with*” concerns about how aspects of their spiritual identities may be perceived by others. As these individuals explained, presentation of the self to others was another important area for consideration and evaluation:

Because I identify as Christian and the values that are associated with that can a lot of times be stereotyped and I think my values a lot of the time differ from that stereotype, but...I still think it is challenging to go out and portray what I want to portray as a Christian and not necessarily...be the stereotypical bible-beater and sit and align myself with [a particularly controversial campus minister] who just screams at students all day. (Anne)

Like I guess I get worried a lot because I don't want people who like aren't Christian to think I like look down on them or something because they aren't...like I don't want them to think that I'm a Christian who's judging them. (Jacquelyn)

Theme 4. College: Integration. For many individuals, spiritual identity formation during college culminated in a fourth *process*-related theme centered upon experiences of *integration*. Experiences of integration reflected a sense of “coming home” of the spiritual self, an emergence and “owning” of a more “*mature*” spiritual identity. As several students described, such experiences resulted in a spiritual identity that was more “*mature,*” and “*more a part of their lives:*”

I think I'm much more mature in my spirituality now than I was then...As I've grown in my faith...it just becomes more a part of who I am...it's been a process

of just like learning a lot, but I think what's even more important than the learning is just gradually letting the things that I learn sink in...my faith has just become way more a part of who I am than it was when I got here. (Charlotte)

I guess I value it more now...It's more a part of my life...it's like more a conscious thing now. (Louise)

I really just feel like it's just like part of me. It's just like how I view things...it's just part of me. (Hazel)

Likewise, as Toni explained, *integration* experiences entailed becoming “*more aware of [herself]*” and developing “*more knowledge of who [she was]*” in terms of her spiritual identity.

For some individuals, *integration* was expressed through specific changes in aspects of their spiritual identities that had emerged during college. Ahmed, for example, pointed out that his “*knowledge*” and “*ability to practice*” his spirituality had expanded throughout the college years and that this, in turn, had further “*strengthened his understanding.*” Elaine also reported changes in aspects of her spiritual identity during college, particularly following a year spent studying abroad in the United States where she was exposed to more diverse others. As a consequence of these experiences, Elaine considered herself as becoming “*less judgmental*” and “*less critical*” in her spiritual identity and indicated that she had become a “*more mature spiritual person*” in her relationship with others. Mary, Toni, and Anne described other changes relating to

integration and the “*maturing*” of their spiritual identities that had occurred during the college years:

I identify myself as Catholic and I'm outwardly open about my Catholicism now, I guess...and I practice more. (Mary)

Like I go to church now every Sunday, read my Bible at least one time a day. Even though in the past, I went to Sunday School and everything like that...that was high school, then college when I slacked off a bit at first, but then now I have started reading [the Bible] and going to church and praying more often and longer than I used to do...It's more a part of my life. (Toni)

I think I challenge the establishment more...I think just from experiences that I had, it's easier for me now to just go into a traditional church setting and me to say “No, that's not actually what that says.”...a lot of the things that the church says “No” or “That's wrong” about, I've been able to see the human side of now...And I think I not only challenge, but I question more. (Anne)

The experience of *integration* was a critical development in the process of forming a spiritual identity for many students. In detailing their integration experiences, a number of students discussed the significant changes they felt had occurred in the process of constructing more “*mature*” spiritual identities and making them more “*personal*” over time:

Up until college, I don't really think that I was very spiritual. Um, I was never really introduced to the concept at all....I really don't even think that I thought

about it or had any sorts of thoughts like that until I was in college. Or maybe I did, but I didn't recognize that that's what it was or acknowledge it, like I definitely can't remember a single thing from before college that I would equate with being spiritual. It was just like I had my religious upbringing and I didn't really feel that spirituality connected with it. But um, my sense of spirituality, I think that really developed in college. (Hazel)

It grew a lot...I mean, in high school and as an adolescent, I went to church, but it was just kind of what I did and I believed in God, but wasn't growing a lot in that...It was who I was, but at the same time, it was never really something that I realized that I needed to grow in a lot more ways. And in college, I realized that a lot." (Susan)

It's a lot more personal now...I guess just like coming to college and making the decision for myself that I'm going to go out and do this and this is how I'm going to live my life. Like I don't have my parents telling me what to do...it's more of a day-to-day decision of my own. (Jacquelyn)

Very, very different. I feel like as an adolescent...I was kind of not really thinking about it...even though I was involved with it...it wasn't a priority for me. And now it's more of a priority for me. It's something that I want to do, you know. When I was [younger], I didn't want to go to church. I didn't want to do anything

spiritual or religious and now I want to because I feel like it has meaning to me and meaning to my life and how I relate to others. (Allison)

Looking back on the process of constructing her spiritual identity, Hazel further articulated how her spiritual identity became more integrated within her life during college:

It's very different...I think as an adolescent, I was very confused...I really didn't see the big picture...my Dad says I still don't even see it now yet. He thinks I don't and maybe I don't. But I definitely see more of it now than I did then...I think that there's just a very dramatic difference between who I was then and who I am now. And I think that a lot of that has to do with just experiences that I've had and how I've grown...and how you like put weight with like certain things as more important than others.

As Hazel highlighted, integration experiences were often marked by a sense of recognition and “owning” of the “*dramatic difference*” between the spiritual self “*then*” and the spiritual self “*now*.” In addition, for Hazel, this process involved “*put[ting] weight with*” this aspect of her identity and as she further explained, “*get[ting]*” and “*making sense*” of who she was a spiritual person:

[In describing her spiritual identity]...Like before college, I didn't really get it and now I'm starting to... like things are just like making sense...

Theme 5. Beyond College: Expectations of Continuing Development. For many individuals, *process*-related experiences also encompassed a fifth theme expressing *expectations of continuing development* with respect to the process of spiritual identity development. In general, this theme reflected a sense of a spiritual self open to revision

and change in the years beyond college. In describing her expectations of continuing change in aspects of her spiritual identity later on, Allison observed:

I feel like they could change...I think they're always going to change...I definitely feel like I've come a long way in four years. I feel like I've changed a lot in four years...I feel like...my spirituality [in the future]....might not change completely, but maybe might evolve.

Relatedly, Louise and Mary explained:

I think there's always room for development and change. Sometimes just like where you are in life brings new ideas and makes you question things...so I could see it changing. (Louise)

I definitely think that it's always spiritual growth. Like I don't think that you ever will be like, "I know everything."...It's just a growing process...I think it's an ever growing thing. (Mary)

For some individuals, such expectations were attached to specific developmental changes and other life events after college:

I think they're [aspects of her spirituality identity] going to grow stronger, being out of the context of the party scene. I mean, just as I get more focused in life, become an adult...I want to have kids...and so I think through all that...it will only grow stronger. (Erin)

I don't think you are ever fully developed in any area of life...And I think for me and for older people who consider themselves spiritual as well, it's so much of the

events and the people that you've met and the situations...that you've encountered that kind of shape "Okay, I believe in this way..." And I think [there are] moments that can really shake what you believe, but also change the priority put on things, I guess. And so I think those events happen throughout your life. And I think getting married and having kids are two main things that happen that can change things, too, and really cement what you believe. (Anne)

Susan portrayed her expectations of spiritual identity formation as a process of life-long development entailing "constant growth:"

Oh, yeah. I mean, I think that it's constant growth and I don't ever think that there's like a stop. And I think that I've grown a lot but I have so much further to grow...I think that it will be an always changing, always developing thing.

For Charlotte, the expectation of continued growth in her spiritual identity was also significant:

I think [it] will definitely continue to develop. I think that if I've learned anything that it's that I'm never done learning and growing.

Category II: Meaning

A second category, *Meaning*, also emerged within the data. This category encompasses individuals' lived experiences of spirituality and spiritual identity and the intentional meaning individuals ascribed to such experiences. In particular, experiences within this category are directed toward capturing the essence of the spiritual self and the ways in which individuals interpreted and experienced the presence of spirituality in their lives. As individuals' reflections on the meaning of the spiritual self were often defined in relationship to other closely-related domains of identity, these aspects of experience are

also discussed within this category. Three themes therefore organize *meaning*-related experiences: *Experiences of spirituality*; *Experiences of religion*; and *Experiences of life directedness* (See Table 5). Specific subthemes related to each of these themes further explicate the nature of these experiences.

Theme 1. Experiences of spirituality. For many students, reflections on meaning entailed describing the specific contours and substance of their *experiences of spirituality*. Subthemes comprised by this theme serve to provide a portrait of individuals' felt experiences of the nature of spirituality and the significance of its expression within their lives.

"Believing in something greater." As several participants explained, one important aspect of *experiences of spirituality* involved the awareness of *"something greater"* and the recognition of transcendent forces extending beyond the self:

I guess spirituality to me is like believing in something greater than a human being...I guess to me, it's just believing in something more than yourself. (Louise)

I think to be a spiritual person, it means to kind of have a super-human experience...I think it means to me knowing that there's a being outside of just humanity. (Susan)

I think spirituality like in general is...it's kind of like a belief in something just more than what this world is... that there's something more than just what we can see....something much greater than what this, our concrete world or whatever is. (Michael)

For Hazel, this awareness of “*something greater*” involved experiences of “*connectedness*” to “*things not just earthly*” or “*material*:”

I think that spirituality is like...it's like your connection with things not just earthly, not just material things...Spirituality is just sort of like your connectedness with the on-goings of the universe, sort of.

For some participants, awareness of “*something greater*” also inspired a certain amount of “*comfort*” and confidence in “*knowing*” that there was a transcendent force to provide order and reason to their experiences:

Spirituality to me is just kind of knowing that there's a higher power and just kind of knowing that there is a purpose behind everyone's life...and a rhyme and a reason as to why good things happen and why there are also bad things...So spirituality to me is just kind of having comfort in knowing...I'm not out here alone in this world. (Anne)

I'm definitely in awe of just the greater plan that's bigger than me. So I feel a lot of being humbled in terms of you know, it's not all about me. There's a plan out there that's bigger than me...I mean, I feel a sense of peace...and happiness a lot through that because it's comforting to know that...I don't have to just rely on myself. (Susan)

Like when they say things like “Everything happens for a reason,” like that sort of is like a spiritual thing to me, like these things that maybe aren't that good are happening so that you can learn from them. It's like things just aren't happening,

you know, just like...like there's other factors at play...You know, why are there the planets? Why is there a solar system? Where did that come from?...Like I don't know....I think that those things are here for a reason, like something created them, you know. (Hazel)

“*Having a real relationship with God.*” Related to recognition of “*something greater,*” experiences of spirituality were also characterized by individuals’ encounters of the divine through beliefs in and relationships with higher powers. As Toni highlighted in describing her spiritual experiences, “*I just see myself as spiritual in the way of like knowing God.*” Similarly, Elaine pointed to having a “*real relationship with God*” as a focal element of her spiritual experiences. Belief in God also constituted a central component of spiritual experience for Ahmed:

To be spiritual to me is first and foremost to have a belief in God. And within Islam, the belief is mostly concentrated on monotheism. There is one God and He has no partner. And to believe in that is to unconditionally believe that there is a God based on what He has provided us.

Susan and Erin also focused on experiencing spirituality within the context of a relationship with the divine:

I think you're a spiritual person as long as you have a connection with some sort of maker, some sort of creator, some, I guess, God, and know that there's a presence outside of humanity, I think. (Susan)

I think the definition to me of spirituality would just be someone who feels that they have a purpose and reason on this earth and they are close with a Higher Being. (Erin)

Additionally, for Mary and Anne, having a relationship with the divine offered a sense of being “connected” and “known:”

Looking back on my life there have been moments when it’s been crystal clear and I really felt connected to this Higher Power and I’ve been able to truly understand the love that He has for me. (Anne)

I just feel this awe of this greater power...just thinking “You know, you’re one small person in this world” ...and I know that God knows me as a person better than I know myself. You know, to me, that’s amazing – that someone knows me better than I know myself. (Mary)

Experiences of spirituality through relationships with the divine focused on other forms of connection, as well:

I don’t think that I necessarily need to go to church to be a spiritual person or have a relationship with [her Higher Power]. I just talk to Him. It’s not like a forced thing. It’s a comfortable thing...I talk with Him and I feel connected. (Erin)

Well, for me, my spirituality is based on my relationship with [her Higher Power]. And it means developing my relationship with Him...and just continually trying to know [Him] better and find the path that He wants us to be on. (Charlotte)

I just try my best to live as much as God, you know, would live His life if He was here. So you know, just being a reflection of Him. (Toni)

“Acting a certain way.” Aspects of spiritual experience were likewise expressed by individuals as “acting a certain way.” In particular, several students pointed to experiences of spirituality within the context of “acting a certain way” in their relationships with others. As Allison observed:

For me, it’s my relationship with God...But also carrying that out into other relationships that I have and how I interact with my friends and family.

Spiritual dimensions of relationships with others were further elucidated by Anne and Toni in their descriptions:

I think it’s [spirituality] shown a lot in the way that I try to treat other people and kind of my response to other people. (Anne)

I believe spirituality is acting a certain way...like acting with kindness, grace, and understanding of other people, and not being like all mean to others. Like helping, too, like if you see somebody struggling don’t just sit there and watch but actually go out and try to help that person out. Or like if a person is feeling hurt and needs someone to talk to, you because of your spirituality, you should be able to talk to that person. So that’s what I feel spirituality is. (Toni)

Deriving a sense of the spiritual through relationships with others and encountering self-transcendence by actions of “helping” were also salient aspects of spiritual experience:

So I think sometimes spirituality to me is like giving things...sometimes it's like, you know, helping other people and stuff. (Louise)

And my spirituality is like...fulfilling what men are meant to do – to be kind to one another and help people....and just learn everything there is to know and use that for the betterment of society. (Hazel)

Particular times when I know that God is there is...like working in mission and doing things for other people...[this] is where I'm really aware that God is present and I feel spirituality the most. (Susan)

In a similar way, the meaning of spirituality was articulated by some individuals as living out a particular “way of life:”

[Spirituality] is not something that should be exclusive, but should be inclusive to all [other] aspects, too, and should be allowed to be influenced...it should corroborate with the other aspects of your life...the more and more I understand the world around me, the more and more it enhances my spirituality and strengthens the beliefs that I hold...Nothing remains independent. Everything is in some way or another dependent on everything else. (Ahmed)

It's just like how I live day-to-day, I guess. Like just everything...like how you relate to people, how you think about things, how you go about your daily activities. (Jacquelyn)

Further, within this “way of life,” individuals’ descriptions of spiritual experiences of “*acting a certain way*” also focused on the expression of specific behaviors or actions, such as praying, reading sacred Scriptures, or engaging in acts of worship:

As Muslims, we are instructed to pray five times a day. So every prayer is a spiritual experience for us where each prayer is similar to having a one-on-one conversation with God. (Ahmed)

For me...that is through prayer, through studying of the Bible. I feel like that’s me living out spirituality or experiencing it. (Allison)

I like to worship. I love to sing... and through prayer. (Erin)

“*It’s just a really powerful feeling.*” Beyond “*acting a certain way,*” experiences of spirituality for many students included emotional dimensions, as well. For instance, Erin described that she experienced spirituality as “*a beautiful feeling...a relaxed feeling...a very happy feeling.*” Relatedly, Toni and Charlotte discussed the emotional contours of their spiritual experiences:

I feel happy. Yeah, and encouraged and joyful. Like all of sudden, I get like so happy and full of joy that I’m like “Wow, look at this beautiful weather,” or “Look at this scenery” or I feel like running a mile or taking a walk, too. It’s really good. It’s like really good feelings that I have with spirituality. (Toni)

It's just a sense of fulfillment that I can't get anywhere else...there's like a lot of joy that comes along with it, too. (Charlotte)

Calmness, peace, and understanding were other emotional qualities that students associated with experiences of spirituality:

First and foremost, I think the most conspicuous feeling is the feeling of calmness. (Ahmed)

I get a sense of comfort, I think...understanding, too. (Allison)

...Just a really powerful feeling sort of...and really like connected and like at peace and comfortable and yeah, just a sense of that. (Hazel)

Nonetheless, some students suggested that their spiritual experiences also, at times, evinced a sense of “*struggle*” or “*confusion*.” As Charlotte explained, her experience of spirituality frequently involved “*struggle*” as she attempted to balance her own material desires with the more transcendent desires that she perceived were required by her spirituality.

Theme 2. Experiences of religion. For many individuals, contemplating the meaning of spiritual experiences likewise involved considering *experiences of religion*. Such considerations often focused on defining and clarifying the boundaries of each domain in relationship to one another. Specific subthemes elucidate the contours of these experiences.

“*Personal*” versus “*public*.” Within their descriptions, many participants described spirituality as “*personal*” or “*individual*” experiences, whereas religion was

described as relating to experiences that were more “*public*” or “*outward*” in nature. For example, spirituality was defined by some students in the following ways:

I think [spirituality] is different than religion. Religion is more organized and [spirituality] is a really personal thing. (Jacquelyn)

...An individual experience - that would constitute a spiritual experience.

(Ahmed)

Like spirituality to me is just more, just like your own personal beliefs. (Louise)

I think the spiritual self is very inside. (Elaine)

Religious experiences, however, were cast in terms that reflected more “*public*” or “*outward*” characteristics:

I see religious as being a person who like carries a Bible with them, reads it, quotes scriptures, like goes out door-to-door...to me, religious means praying for others to see and trying to get others to know about God. (Toni)

I think to me, like saying that you’re religious is kind of like saying that you’re affiliating yourself, almost with like how you would a political party or something. When you say that you’re religious, you’re saying that “I’m Christian” or Islamic or like whatever. (Louise)

For some individuals, experiences of religion also entailed following certain “*rules*” or performing specific “*actions*:”

I really don't like the term "religious," just because to me, religious sounds too much like a set of rules. And I can fall into that so easily that Christianity is just a list of do's and don'ts...it's kind of like the obligation thing...Religion just feels like obligations to me, whereas spirituality is a way of life. (Charlotte)

I guess I just...I have so many negative connotations of truly religious people who are very regimented and cemented in their ways...and these are the things that you have to do to be religious. And a lot of really religious people, that's how they are. (Anne)

Religion, I would say is more physical than spirituality. I feel like it's more of a routine or set of standards or something that you do religiously [laughs]...it's something that you do. It's standards that you might have. So maybe like for me, like going to church every Sunday would be a religious thing, like a religious standard...Religion is more something that can be physical...like it can be concrete and I'm actually performing an action. (Allison)

I think religion is...like praying and stuff, which a lot of people do, but I don't really do...and like I have Jewish friends that like keep kosher, and I don't do that. That's religious though because they're following what the Torah says. The Torah says don't do this and don't do this...But I think that's what religion is, like following the supposed Word of God. (Hazel)

“I’m religious, but that encompasses by spirituality.” In spite of these distinctions, a number of individuals indicated that they considered spiritual and religious experiences to be integrated and overlapping components of their identities. In addition to often using the words *“spirituality”* and *“religion”* interchangeably, these individuals offered further explanations describing the integrated nature of their experiences:

I would say I’m religious, but that encompasses my spirituality. (Susan)

I go to church every week, so part of that for me is that I get to talk to other people with the same beliefs as me. For me, kind of belonging to a religious community ... I think that makes your faith more personal, too...so in my case, for me, it is like both public and private. (Louise)

I do feel like I’m religious, because I do follow a religion...I’m definitely a spiritual person, but, obviously, I follow a religion (Erin).

I guess some of both really. I see myself as spiritual just because...there is that one-on-one part, and God can be anyone’s God, like he’s not just the Catholic God. But I do see myself as...like I was always a spiritual person, but I think now I’m more a religious person, too. (Mary)

“I’m spiritual, but not religious.” Reflecting variability and diversity in individuals’ experiences of spirituality and religion, however, other individuals viewed these domains as separate aspects of identity, depicting their experiences to be *“spiritual but not religious:”*

I'm a spiritual person, but not so much a religious person. (Anne)

If I had to choose one of them, I would say spiritual...usually with my family...we say we are not religious persons. You know, religious means that kind of, [people] have a belief in faith of something and they make up their own descriptions and they follow them and they have a ritual. But I feel like what I am doing is not a ritual...So if I had to choose, I would say, spiritual. (Elaine)

I mean, I've never really had that much of religious-spiritual feelings ever. I've never been like in a synagogue and been like "Oh, I feel so close to God." It's not really like that. (Hazel)

Consequently, in discussing the intersection and meaning of spiritual and religious experiences, a number of students explained that they felt that their own experiences were not the only way that individuals could "be" spiritual or religious. Acknowledging variability in other individuals' experiences, these students explained:

I just want to say that like that religion isn't for everybody, but I feel like that everyone has their own experiences, you know and their own purpose with religion, like I don't feel like just because I'm Catholic that everybody should be Catholic. (Mary)

I mean, I know there are definitely other ways to be spiritual...but for me [this] is what it means. (Charlotte)

The way I look at it, the way I think and how my thought process works for me, but perhaps other people... may think differently. Everyone is designed in a different manner. Everyone has a different thought process. (Ahmed)

Theme 3. Experiences of life directedness. A third theme expressed by participants in defining spirituality focused on experiences of life directedness. Two subthemes further describe this theme: “*centering life around God*” and “*being called to serve.*”

“*Centering life around God.*” For some individuals, spiritual experiences were intimately intertwined with feeling a sense of direction or purpose in life that involved “*centering life around God.*” In Charlotte’s experiences, for example, experiences of life directedness were specifically connected to her relationship with the divine:

I’ve been learning a lot recently...about how my meaning and value need to come from my relationship with God and not from other things... my purpose is to be the person that God wants me to be and to allow Him to use me wherever He wants to and continue to grow.

Other students also focused on this aspect of their spiritual experiences in feeling a sense of life directedness:

According to Facebook, God [is what provides a sense of purpose]...like I really try to center my life around God, you know, like everything I do. Like I really like in my decision-making, like everything I do, I center myself around God and just try to make my life, you know, around God. (Mary)

...My faith, serving people, serving Christ - knowing that's my purpose and knowing that's the meaning and the reason that I'm here. (Erin)

My family is the most important thing, but God as my Father is part of my family....I think that I'm here because there's a purpose for my life and so that's what ultimately, my meaning comes from. (Susan)

"Being called to serve." Spiritual experiences through feeling a sense of *"being called to serve"* were another source of meaning and life directedness for some individuals:

I'm here for a purpose and I think that it's that I'm called to serve others. But I haven't exactly figured out how that it is yet. I know missions is important to me. I learned that in college, for sure. But so do I think teaching and helping others are, too. And that's why I want to be a teacher...to help other people to grow and learn. So that's what I think I'm here for. (Susan)

I think I do have a purpose in life. I find myself...like giving out information or trying to help my fellow peers and I really enjoy that. I feel like I was put on the earth to do that...I really feel encouraged to do that. I think that's really a spiritual thing that is within me to give to others in that way. (Toni)

...Just the way we treat each other and care for one another...I feel like my faith is what kind of wraps that together...because that specifically gives meaning to

how I relate to people and how I interact with my family or my friends, you know.

(Allison)

Although experiences of life directedness in the form of “*centering life around God*” and feeling a sense of “*being called to serve*” were important facets of spiritual experiences for many students, it should be noted that discerning where such paths in life might lead was not yet entirely clear for all individuals at this stage in their development. For example, as Louise observed:

I don't know...maybe when I'm 90, I'll look back and say, "Oh, maybe that was my purpose...all those years spent doing that." But you know, I assume I'm here for a reason. You know, like God has a plan. But I wouldn't say that he's exactly told me like what that plan is yet though.

Category III: Implications

The third category elucidates the *implications* of spiritual identity in the lives of young people during the transition to adulthood. This category describes individuals' experiences of expressing or “living out” a sense of spiritual identity and illustrates the ways in which the spiritual self is made manifest in everyday life in the context of college. Three themes and their associated subthemes more specifically explicate the nature of these experiences: *Relating to others*, *Making decisions*, and *Preparing for adulthood* (See Table 6).

Theme 1. Relating to others. In describing the implications of spiritual identity, one theme highlighted by participants focused on *relating to others*. As a number of individuals explained, having a sense of spiritual identity compelled them toward reasoning about and acting in relationship to others in particular ways. Individuals'

experiences of expressing spiritual identity through *relating to others* encompassed the following sub-themes: “*Seeing others the way God sees them,*” “*Feeling connected*” and “*Doing good onto others.*”

“*Seeing others the way God sees them.*” For some individuals, the desire to express spirituality was a significant force in shaping perceptions of and interactions with others. As these students described, the presence of spiritual identity affected how they interacted with and aspired to “*treat*” other people within the context of social relationships to reflect a view of “*seeing others the way that God sees them.*” Charlotte explained:

[Spirituality] has definitely taught me the importance of putting other people before myself and how not to be selfish in relationships. And just how to treat others in the ways they deserve to be treated and also how to see them the way that God does.

Other students described expressing spirituality through their interactions with others in this way in similar terms:

I think social relationships would probably be the...main one in daily kind of influences...because I feel like relationships with friends and classmates are very different when I look around the room, just because I try to be respectful and all of those things that come from spirituality. But I think just everyday things, like when you go to the check-out, like I try to always be polite and like extra nice to whoever is checking me out, because I don't know how their day is going or whatever. (Anne)

I would say interacting with people definitely. I just try to love people for who they are and just try to accept people....I just try to be like loving towards everyone and just like serve people, you know, like just be helpful to...people... and having a positive attitude and stuff. (Jacquelyn)

The way I approach people...I try to reach out to others...whether that's people in classes that I may not really know or other friends on campus. (Allison).

Although not the experience of all individuals, for some participants the expression of spiritual identity by “*seeing others the way that God sees them*” entailed interacting with others in ways that likewise conveyed tolerance and compassion:

The part that shows is just like trying to be accepting of people, because you know, you meet a lot of different people and you don't necessarily agree with what they're saying, but...to me, it's like really important to figure out where someone's coming from and why they think that way...So even my friends in the past have said that I'm a very tolerance person and I think part of that is my faith. (Louise)

I'm just more accepting because...that's how we're taught as Christians to be...to love everyone, you know, because they're a creation of God so I treat everyone equally. That's like my main goal. (Erin)

I'm very compassionate and I think that definitely has something to do with my faith. Like I think that I'm a compassionate person...because of my faith.

(Jacquelyn)

Interestingly, a small number of participants also pointed to the importance of expressing their spirituality by “*seeing others how God sees them*” through conveying understanding and empathy toward individuals traditionally marginalized by society or particular religious communities, such as gay and lesbian people:

With my spirituality and stuff, I just believe that like everyone deserves to be like happy and healthy and loved and stuff. And with the elections and stuff and when some of the candidates were saying like, “We don't want gay people to be married” ...it's just really hard for me to think that way...I feel like but a person is a person and they deserve to be happy and loved. They should be able to be with whoever they want to be with. And I think that that's like a conflict with like...well, that's even like my spirituality versus someone else's spirituality. And their spirituality is very deontological...like rules or whatever. (Hazel)

Like a few people that I work with are gay...and there's just like a lot of diversity there...and it's just really nice. I just try to love them. (Jacquelyn)

Like it's funny because I don't see myself as like the typical Catholic....like I have like a lot of gay friends, and I'm fine with them.... I feel like a lot of people expect me because I do identify as Catholic to like condemn them and I'm like those are the people who need your prayers the most. (Mary)

“Feeling connected.” Another way that students described expressing their spiritual identities in *relating to others* was through experiences of *“feeling connected.”* For some individuals, experiences of connection focused on becoming *“involved with others”* or being a part of a *“community:”*

My faith gives me like a way to become more involved...to be an active member of my community. (Louise)

It’s like for me, like being Catholic isn’t just a religion to me, it’s also like community. (Mary)

As Ahmed explained, *“feeling connected”* also entailed expressing a sense of obligation and social responsibility to others:

I guess in everything that I do really, my religion does play a part in it because I believe that we all have a higher purpose. As representatives on this world, as caretakers of this world, so to speak, we have a responsibility, a moral obligation, an ethical obligation toward one another and toward society and toward the community and toward the world itself.

“Doing good onto others.” Service was another important dimension of *relating to others* articulated by students. In particular, a number of participants pointed to service as a tangible way of practicing spiritual principles associated with *“doing good onto others.”* Susan noted:

Community engagement and volunteering are important because I think that you know, spirituality and religion to me is doing onto others and just being of service to other people, so I think that’s integral with my spiritual beliefs.

Relatedly, Hazel described service as a way of living out her spiritual commitment to “do good things” in life and expressing her hopes to inspire others in doing the same:

I think that for good to perpetuate that you have to do good things...well, everyone has to do good things...like karma and stuff...I like to do good things for other people because I think like maybe they'll do good things for other people then, too...Like I wanted to volunteer at the AIDS Project because I just like want to do that....I want to help people...and it makes the whole good will thing go around.

For Erin, “doing good unto others” was also a means of “showing” her spirituality to others:

It's always been a passion of my heart...to show my service. I'm not someone who likes to cram religion down people's throats and I feel like I can almost witness to people by just doing things and serving them, helping others, and being accepting of them, and to show my [spirituality] in that way. But I don't serve out of my own desires to get rewarded. I just serve for Christ and I serve to help others.

Importantly, expressing spirituality through “doing good unto others” provided an underlying motivation for volunteering and community engagement for some students:

[Spirituality is related to]...just kind of a purpose of how am I daily going to serve? What kinds of activities or communities am I going to be involved in that would have an impact short-term and long-term?....It's not “Oh, I came here because it will look good on my resume in 5 years from now” ...it's more of a fact of why am I doing this?...Like how are we going to better this world today?

(Anne)

Community engagement and volunteering – we are to help our community in any way that we can. One of the ways is paying the obligated charity to help people who are less fortunate than us...As a Muslim, I am to be kind to my neighbors, to people in my community, to help them out, to live as a community basically...which is why if it is in my capacity, I would be more than willing to help anyone in the community, if possible. (Ahmed)

Although the types of community engagement and volunteering activities in which individuals were involved in “*doing good onto others*” were diverse, for Mary and several other students, participation in “*mission work*” during college reflected one specific form of such service:

...Like mission work and volunteering, it's like a huge thing in my life....Like my mission work this summer, people thought I was nuts...summer vacation before my senior year and it's like my last summer to have fun and stuff...but for me, like I loved it.

For some individuals, participation in “*mission work*” and other forms of community service were particularly motivated by a desire to enact social justice inspired by spirituality:

I feel like in things like that [community service] that God just reminds me how fortunate I am and how I'm called to serve other people who haven't necessarily been given the same blessings as I have. (Charlotte)

I think to me like, there's such a need in like a lot of areas that to me, it's just kind of like the Christian thing to do or the kind thing to do is to reach out to people. So like I worked in West Virginia doing home repairs for an impoverished area...and in Ghana. (Louise)

Like I don't think people really believe that there's poverty in the United States at all... like there are people that do not have running water in the United States and they could be your neighbor and like you don't realize that. You know, so, for me, doing that kind of work is just so rewarding...and I would rather like people make fun of me, but I would much rather go do volunteer work than go to a party. (Mary)

Theme 2. Making decisions. A second theme depicting the implications of spiritual identity in students' lives during college centered upon *making decisions*. As a number of students indicated, spirituality was an important source of motivation and guidance for making decisions within various domains of experience during this time. Elaine and Mary explained:

Everyday decision-making...[spirituality] really impacts. (Elaine)

In general decision-making...I try to make all of my decisions [based on spirituality]...and by what God would want me to do. (Mary)

Likewise, Louise discussed her experiences related to *making decisions* in this way:

I think it is kind of ingrained in me, so it [spirituality] does kind of affect my everyday choices...definitely when I make big choices. I think about you know, is

this the right thing for me to do? You know, I like pray about it. But that's not necessarily consciously everyday.

Two subthemes, “*counting on God to help out*” and “*doing the right thing*,” further detail individuals’ decision-making experiences.

“*Counting on God to help out.*” For some individuals, the presence of spirituality provided a certain amount of “*comfort*” and confidence that they could “*count on God to help out*” in making decisions:

I think that's kind of a comforting fact in the back of my mind... It's kind of defining myself by more...just allowing that knowledge of something bigger to sink in, I guess. So I mean, I'm not trying to careless in my daily decisions, like “Oh, whatever. I'll just do what I want,” but I think that helps me, especially like when I face trials. I know there's something bigger and I know there's always...someone ...walking with me through it. (Anne)

It's like every day-to-day tasks – you know, like if I was struggling, I could count on [God] to help. (Erin)

Ultimately, experiencing such confidence and being able to “*count on God to help out*” produced a sense of security for some individuals that aided in reducing feelings of anxiety in making important life-related decisions:

...Just know that things work out somehow, you know, and I have only so much control in my life and God has overall control in my life. I know that whether or not something I want to work out works out or not, something is going to work out in the end. And I feel like that's a big overall thing in my life. (Allison)

I mean, there's definitely times when I worry...but my spirituality allows me to trust that things are going to work out, like my life has a purpose...and I trust that my life is just going to work out well. (Hazel)

“*Doing the right thing.*” Relatedly, the impact of spirituality on decision-making was experienced by students both as a motivation for making particular behavioral decisions within various life domains, but also as an impetus for restraint. In both cases, the emphasis in making such decisions was expressed in terms of “*doing the right thing.*” For instance, spirituality was a factor in behavioral decisions made by Elaine and Ahmed about how to spend their time during college:

You know, I have to do something for my spiritual life – to go to church or take in some sermons or I have to pray. You know, those kinds of scheduled things are really hard for me. So I had to study hard because you know, I had to keep my high scores, the GPA...but I had to, you know, do two “jobs”...I tried hard to study, but then the rest of the time...I made time to pray. (Elaine)

Everyday decision-making, well, as a Muslim, I pray five times a day and so I have to try...and fit that in with my academic schedule. So in that aspect... I try to keep a 5 minute window between my work where I can go and pray and perform that aspect. (Ahmed)

In describing behavioral decisions related to the need to devote time to studying and the importance of doing well academically, Allison also described:

I definitely think [spirituality] affects my decisions...At [college], definitely, yes. Decision-making with...how I approach my classes and my classwork, you know, I want to do my best.

For Erin, the desire to live in accordance with her spiritual identity also functioned as a reason for exercising restraint in making certain behavioral decisions in an effort to “do the right thing,” however:

Maybe when I’m not doing the right thing, in a sense...like that I know that I shouldn’t be doing it.

Everyday decision-making, that’s always a hard one. I am 21, so I do like to go and drink, but I’ve learned not to be...I mean you don’t have to be wild and promiscuous.

Allison and Mary described the role of restraint in seeking to “do the right thing” in their lives during college similarly:

I definitely think [spirituality] affects my decisions...I don’t condone underage drinking...You have to set examples and I feel like that’s a big one on a college campus. (Allison)

You know, I used to party. Like I never was a huge crazy partier, but I definitely went to parties and I drank, you know...And now I’ve really just mellowed out [because of her spirituality]...You know...that’s a lot of just respecting my body and respecting my mind...it’s just a big circular decision, you know. (Mary)

Moreover, students discussed the implications of spirituality across a number of different life domains with respect to their desires to “*do the right thing*” through their decision-making and behavioral choices. For instance, several individuals highlighted the impact of spirituality in making decisions regarding romantic relationships and sexuality.

To Jacquelyn, spirituality was an important factor in choosing a romantic partner:

“Definitely. I mean, I wouldn’t be dating [her current romantic partner] if he wasn’t a Christian.” For Ahmed and Mary, spirituality was likewise a part of making decisions about romantic relationships and sexuality:

Being a spiritual person and believing in what the religion asks me to believe in and basically what it instructs me to do, I am not allowed to have any relationships....with females. The concepts of premarital sex is not allowed in Islam. So anything that would lead to it is best left not pursued. So you try to be avoidant to anything that would lead to it. So in that sense, I would not get too friendly with girls to prevent myself from getting involved in anything further than that...I have no problem being just friends with them. I just wouldn’t take it to the next level. (Ahmed)

Like having a boyfriend who also believes in the same things I do, like we’re not having sex till we’re married. You know, and I’m not on birth control. (Mary)

Michael recounted that he and his partner had decided to “*stop doing physical things*” with one another during college because they felt that these behaviors were inconsistent with their religious and spiritual views on sexuality and were “*not right.*”

Additionally, spirituality played a role in the economic choices that some students made. As Charlotte observed:

[Spirituality] helps me to not be as selfish with my money and not just spend it on random things that I don't need and to you know, really think about what I'm doing with it and whether I'm tithing and whether I'm giving it to people who need it more than I do or buying all kinds of things that I don't really need.

Spirituality compelled Susan, Mary, and Ahmed to make particular economic decisions in their lives, as well:

Well, I guess one economic choice that I've made recently...is that I started tithing. So 10% is important to me now and that doesn't have to be just in church. I think supporting missions and that sort of thing, too. (Susan)

I try to give money to Church, you know, because I give a dollar, you know, and it's like if I give that dollar, I can't have coffee later. So it is a decision, but like...I know what great peace that the Church [on campus] has brought to me so by my donation...I know that my contribution means something to some future student. You know, even if it's one person, you know? (Mary)

Economic choices, well...one of the Pillars of Islam is to pay the obligated charity, so that's basically 2.5% of what I have of stationary, static wealth over one year, so that is something that I have to do...also Islam does not permit one to give a loan with interest or take a loan on interest which is why I avoid taking a loan. If there is something that...I couldn't afford and would have to take a loan,

then I prefer not to take a loan...Of course, in some cases, it's compulsory, so that conflicts with my religion. There are many Islamic banks though that circumnavigate around that...A lot of Muslims prefer dealing with those banks.

(Ahmed)

Further, spirituality was associated with decisions regarding “*doing the right thing*” with respect to choices regarding well-being and health. As Susan and Ahmed explained:

I think health and well-being to me is important to my spirituality...because in order for me to be of service in the best possible way for God, you need to first make sure that you're taking care of yourself because if you're not taking care of yourself, how are you supposed to take care of others? (Susan)

As a spiritual person, as a person who believes in Islam, we are not supposed to drink alcohol or consume drugs....the primary reason for that is for our health and for our well-being these things are banned. So that's not something that I would pursue. I would not drink alcohol for two reasons...one is basically because my religion forbids it. Secondly, because I understand why my religion forbids it and that reason is for my well-being and my own health. (Ahmed)

Theme 3. Preparing for adulthood. A final theme evident within students' experiences focused on the importance of spirituality in *preparing for adulthood*. For a number of students, spirituality appeared to offer a unifying perspective for looking ahead and approaching the developmental tasks of adulthood. To this end, students described the implications of their spiritual identities in terms of three specific subthemes

associated with preparing for adulthood: *“Finding someone who shares the same focus in life,” “Doing what I’m supposed to be doing,” and Spirituality “defines everything:”* *Creating a life perspective.*

“Finding someone who shares the same focus in life.” With respect to choosing a partner, several individuals pointed to spirituality as an important source of influence in their searches to *“find someone who shares the same focus in life.”* As Mary discussed, for example, her sense of spirituality has not only helped to *“narrow down”* potential partners, but also in her decision to consider the long-term commitment of marriage as a possible *“vocation”* in her life:

I do think that [her spiritual identity] has you know, helped me to narrow down who I want to you know, settle down with and everything...I guess you could say that I know that I want to have a family because you can say with vocations, you know, I want to be a wife and a mom someday. And I know that’s like what I want for my life. And I know that’s what God is leading me in the direction of. Because marriage is a vocation, you know?

For Erin and Susan, spiritual identity was likewise a deciding factor in the selection of future partners:

With my future partner, I would like to find a man who’s of Christian faith...I mean, that is very, very important to me. It is the focus of my life, so if he doesn’t have the same focus in life, then like it might create conflicts or how we raise our children might be a conflict – not that we couldn’t work through that, but it would be important to me for a partner to have that. (Erin)

I mean, definitely I guess, when I'm looking for a partner, it's a priority for me to find somebody who shares similar beliefs to me. But then, if not, that's something I'm not going to be comfortable with until they do because you know, it's such an important part of my life and I would want them to have the same experience. So I think [spirituality] is definitely important in that. (Susan)

Moreover, for some individuals, such as Anne, spirituality also helped in defining “expectations” of potential partners and forming views about how roles in future partnerships would ultimately be negotiated:

I have very high expectations of what my future husband will be... a large part of that is influenced by my spirituality, but I don't know if I will necessarily have to marry a man that's been a Christian for so long or has been a strong Christian. I think it's more important to me that people are open to kind of the possibility of something that's bigger than themselves...Also [spirituality] has shaped the way, I want to not only find a partner, but be involved with a partner...I'm definitely a feminist and my friends all laugh at me because a lot of my feminist values go against the traditional Christian values of what a Christian woman is “supposed to be,” but in my view and my reading of stuff...there are a lot of feminist themes in the Bible. There just are...so I think that view of what a relationship is, as a true partnership, has definitely impacted the way, I predict my marriage will be.

“Doing what I'm supposed to be doing.” Another aspect of preparing for adulthood that students discussed related to the influence of spiritual identity in finding a career or “doing what [one] is supposed to be doing” in life. For some students, the

process of discerning what he or she was “*supposed to be doing*” as his or her life’s work was deeply rooted in spirituality. Erin and Allison explained:

With my career, I just place it in God’s hand that I will love and be able to serve others and use my faith through service. And not that I’m not gonna work for it...but I mean, it’s nothing that I want to really worry or stress about...and that’s what’s nice – I don’t have the burdens, but just the feelings that I can relax and just go into it and do it. (Erin)

In the decision-making...things are gonna work out. Like God has a purpose for my life and why I’m here and what I’m gonna be doing and I feel like I don’t need to be successful. Like I don’t need to be an engineer or an accounting major...you know, to do that. (Allison)

Additionally, Louise reported that identifying what she was “*supposed to be doing*” was “*definitely something that [she] pray[ed] about.*” Ahmed likewise cited the importance of spiritual considerations in the process of making career-related decisions:

Well, when it comes to vocational choices, it would suffice to say that whatever I am pursuing academically or career-wise....if it entails something that would go against my belief, then that would definitely interfere and I would give my beliefs priority overall because what I do here is based on the material life as opposed to the spiritual life, which I hold on a higher level.

Many students described the relevance of spirituality in electing to pursue careers within specific fields:

I think my spirituality... [has] definitely influenced the kind of career I want. I don't want to be in a cubicle all day. I want to be interacting with people and being in a service type industry, so I think that defines the type of career. (Anne)

Like going back to that I like want to be a doctor in like Third World nations type thing, so like my spirituality and things is like I want to, like I feel like I want to go to Africa and India and be a doctor there. Like I'm not going to make any money doing that and I'm totally fine with that. Like I would be fine living in a hut, as long as I have food and can help people... that's what I feel that I want to be doing and stuff. (Hazel)

My faith definitely influences how I want to spend my working life because I mentioned that I changed my major because I wanted to pursue a career in youth ministry...but I know that no matter where I end up, first of all, I know that it's where I'm supposed to be and second of all, if it's not like ministry, I want to be able to be someone in the workplace who is able to show others how good God is and what He can do for them. (Charlotte)

Relatedly, Toni and Elaine highlighted practical concerns associated with spirituality in making decisions about potential career paths:

Choices that I make for a career...like I'd like to work at a Christian organization, but I don't place it wholly on that. I don't want to be in like certain organizations that I feel I won't be comfortable working in...because of my own...beliefs or feelings about certain issues. (Toni)

When I decide what I was going to do, it really depended on my [spirituality]... because for example, I don't want a job if I can't attend a church on Sundays, but some careers are required to work on Sundays. (Elaine)

Spirituality "defines everything:" Creating a life perspective. For many students, preparing for adulthood further entailed defining adult worldviews and creating coherent life perspectives that were consistent with their emerging sense of spiritual identity. As several individuals indicated, spirituality therefore played an integral role in "defining" other aspects of their lives and in assessing and articulating beliefs across other domains of identity, as well. In particular, one domain in which this influence was evident was with respect to issues associated with students' political beliefs and values. As Ahmed noted:

Political choices, beliefs – as a spiritual person, as a person who believes in right and wrong, anything political, I tend to go with...for example, any decision that is unethical or immoral...that would wrong a person or a community...then my political choices would be influenced by that.

Erin and Susan also described the importance of establishing consistent political ideologies and making decisions in this domain in accordance with their spiritual identities:

Definitely...political choices and beliefs...I've always been a Republican, but I looked at both sides and I took other factors into my thoughts now...so like as I learned more about them, I definitely have become more secure in my political

beliefs...being here... my religion...has definitely influenced my political thoughts, but I've become more accepting. (Erin)

I don't think you have to be Republican or you have to be liberal to be spiritual...I think you want to vote for a candidate who is going to encourage and do things that are similar with your beliefs. (Susan)

For other students, reasoning about and working out beliefs and worldviews related to particular controversial political issues was also influenced by spirituality.

Allison explained:

Political choices, yes – [spirituality] definitely affects that. I feel like, Christians have a tendency to be more conservative and so on issues like abortion and things like that, you know, I'm definitely going to be more conservative on that.

Mary and Michael likewise outlined the impact of spirituality in formulating their views on controversial political beliefs and issues, but with perspectives that were different from Allison:

Like with politics, you know, a lot of people were like, "I can't believe you voted for Obama!" It's funny because...[everyone] was like mad at me for voting for Obama because they are like staunch Catholics and do not realize that one issue – pro-life or pro-choice – is not going to make me vote in a certain way...like I do see the greater picture other than just one topic, where a lot of [other people], I feel like they don't understand that...You know, I think that it's a lot of what you see outside, like your experiences in the world and how you relate your [spirituality] to it. (Mary)

Like with political choices and beliefs...I think Christians in general are like "Pro-Life! Pro-Life!"...and that's like one area of my faith that you know, like a lot of people that I'm like friends with here are like, "Well, it's this way. You can't do anything about it because the Bible says this and this." And I'm like, well, I'm Pro-Women...And that doesn't mean that I'm Pro-Choice necessarily...it's you know, whatever the person who's dealing with it, they want to do...that's like an area of my faith where I kind of stray from...what other people say. (Michael)

As the experiences of these students highlight, spiritual identity appeared to play an important role in shaping individuals' worldviews and informing the construction of an emerging, overall adult identity for many individuals. Situating her spiritual identity within this broader context, Louise noted, for example: *"It's just part of who I am."* In describing his experiences of spiritual identity, Ahmed explained:

It is not a subset of my life, but something that influences my whole life...there are many sides...so it's something that influences me as a whole...it should be a way of life.

Moreover, Susan described the implications of spiritual identity in her life during this time as overarching and encompassing. In this way, Susan articulated the notion that *"spirituality defines everything"* in her life and that spirituality comprises a significant aspect of her experiences of creating a life coherent life perspective as she moves forward into adulthood. Poignantly, Susan explained:

Definitely. I mean, it's my whole perspective. It's my whole life. It's who I am. So I think it defines everything about my transition to adulthood.

Chapter 5

Person-Specific Quantitative Results

In this chapter, we present the results of the person-specific quantitative analyses. The intention of the quantitative analyses was to explore systematic patterns of intraindividual variability across various dimensions of spirituality in social experiences among spiritual and non-spiritual individuals. In doing so, we examined: 1) the extent to which each individual experienced particular aspects of spirituality in their daily social experiences; and 2) patterns of differences and similarities both among and between spiritual and non-spiritual individuals' response patterns.

As applicable, we describe results for each individual with respect to three key aspects: descriptive characteristics of the individual's responses; exploratory factor analysis; and confirmatory factor analysis. In addition, we describe interindividual differences and similarities, as relevant, throughout.

Descriptive Characteristics

Each individual's data were first assessed in terms of their descriptive characteristics (See Tables 7-20). Measures of central tendency, dispersion, frequency distributions, and correlation coefficients provided information about the suitability of particular items for inclusion in p-technique analyses. For example, in order to be included in p-technique factor analyses, items must display adequate intraindividual variability over time. The nature of items' relationships to other variables must also be considered. Items that demonstrated low variability or violated other assumptions of factor analysis, such as extreme multicollinearity, singularity, or non-normality, were eliminated from subsequent analyses (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). In total, 17 items were

retained in three individuals' analyses; 16 items in five analyses; 15 in two analyses; 14 in two analyses; and 13 in one analysis. The average number of items retained for analyses was 16.

Beyond determining factorability, descriptive characteristics of individuals' responses also offer potentially interesting information regarding the contours of individuals' daily social experiences. For example, an item with low variability and a low mean and range, may indicate that an individual rarely reported changes in or experiences of a particular quality within their daily social interactions over time. Conversely, an item demonstrating greater variability with a high mean and wide range, may suggest that the individual reported more frequent changes in or experiences of a particular quality in their interactions.

Exploratory Factor Analysis

Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) is a statistical procedure for exploring patterns of covariation among variables. In p-technique data, such patterns of covariation are examined as they occur across time. The patterns that emerge from the analysis assist the researcher in identifying potential underlying dimensions, or factors, on which the variables load. The procedure is considered "exploratory" because hypothesized patterns are not necessarily posited in advance and variables are free to form patterns without constraints (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007).

In this study, estimation of the initial number of factors to extract was based upon consideration of several criteria, including the Kaiser-Guttman criterion, inspection of the scree plot, and the ultimate conceptual clarity of the proposed solution. In cases for which these criteria suggested different numbers of factors for extraction, multiple solutions

were attempted and the solution that appeared most conceptually clear was retained. Table 21 provides an overview of the number of factors retained for each individual's data and the respective criteria upon which such decisions were based.

To assist in the interpretation process, initial factor solutions were then rotated using oblimin rotation procedures. Rotated factor solutions for each individual are presented in Tables 23-35. A summary table providing an overview of all factors generated across individuals is presented in Table 22. A detailed description of each individual's solution is provided in subsequent sections of this chapter.

Nine factors were needed to describe all spiritual participants' response patterns. One spiritual participant's solution required six factors, three spiritual participants' solutions required five factors, five spiritual participants' solutions required four factors, and two spiritual participants' solutions required three factors. One spiritual participant's data ("Susan"), however, did not converge into an interpretable solution and was excluded from further analysis. Seven factors were needed to describe non-spiritual participants' response patterns. Both non-spiritual participants' solutions required five factors.

The majority of spiritual participants' response patterns contained the factors of Anxiety, Life Direction, Life Outlook, Approach to Life, and Security. Both non-spiritual participants' response patterns contained Anxiety and Life Direction factors, but only one participant's response patterns contained Life Outlook or Approach to Life factors. Neither non-spiritual participants' patterns contained Security factors, however.

Less common factors among spiritual participants were Anger (four spiritual participants), Guilt/Shame (two participants), Fulfillment (one participant), and Peace

(three participants). A Fulfillment factor was present among non-spiritual participants, but only one non-spiritual participant's patterns contained Anger or Life Outlook factors. A Guilt/Shame factor was not found in either non-spiritual participants' patterns.

Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) is a statistical procedure for testing hypothesized relationships among variables and factors. In CFA, a particular factor structure is specified in advance and the fit of the hypothesized model to the original data is then estimated (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007).

Based upon the solutions retained for each individual in the exploratory factor analyses, a hypothesized model was constructed for each individual. The fit of each hypothesized model with respect to its consistency with the original covariance structure of the data was then estimated using CFA procedures in LISREL. Criteria for assessing the fit of each model were based upon the various fit indices outlined in Chapter 3. Evaluations of these criteria indicated that all hypothesized models were within the ranges of either satisfactory or good fits.

Individual Results

Louise. Louise's data was characterized by a three-factor solution. The three factors were labeled Anxiety, Approach to Life, and Life Direction. Two items, guilt and shame, were omitted from the model due to violations of factor analytic assumptions.

The factor labeled as Anxiety was comprised of fear and anxiety. The covariation of fear and anxiety was a somewhat common pattern among individuals whose experiences included Anxiety as a factor. In Louise's experiences, however, the mean

levels for both of these items were low. Variability in her experiences of fear was also low, but moderate in terms of anxiety.

The factor labeled as Approach to Life was comprised of several items with moderate to high positive loadings, including peace, connection, strength, comfort, assurance, gratitude, fulfillment, joy, hope, and optimism. Anger had a salient negative loading on this factor. With the exceptions of connection and anger, the majority of these items demonstrated moderate means and moderate variabilities, with dispersed ranges. The mean for connection was somewhat higher (10.0) than other items, with low variability. Louise did not rate any of her social experiences less than 4.6 in terms of connection. In contrast, the mean and variability for anger was low. Louise did not rate any of her social experiences more than 6.4 in terms of anger.

The factor labeled as Life Direction was comprised of three items with salient loadings for compassion, meaning, and purpose. The means and variabilities for each of these items were moderate and the ranges were dispersed.

The intercorrelations between factor one and other factors were generally low. The intercorrelation between the second and third factor, however, revealed a sizeable positive association. A confirmatory factor analysis indicated that the specified solution was of satisfactory fit.

Charlotte. Charlotte's data yielded a five-factor solution, with the factors labeled as Approach to Life, Life Outlook, Anxiety, Anger, and Life Direction. One item, meaning, was found to be significantly multicollinear with another item, purpose, and was omitted from the model.

The factor labeled as Approach to Life was characterized by the covariation of the following items: peace, connection, strength, comfort, assurance, gratitude, fulfillment, and joy. The means and variabilities for each of these items were generally moderate, but the ranges of Charlotte's experiences of gratitude and fulfillment were somewhat more variable than her experiences of other qualities comprising this factor, however.

The second factor was labeled Life Outlook. For Charlotte, Life Outlook was characterized by moderate loadings for hope and optimism. Although several individuals' solutions included a Life Outlook factor, Charlotte was the only individual to experience Life Outlook in this particular way. The means and variabilities for both of these items were moderate with dispersed ranges.

The third factor was labeled Anxiety. This factor was comprised of fear and anxiety, a pattern of covariation similar to some other individuals' experiences of Anxiety. The mean level of Charlotte's fear was low, whereas the mean level of her anxiety was moderate. Variabilities for both items were high and the ranges dispersed.

The fourth factor, Anger, was characterized by moderate to high loadings for guilt, shame, and anger. Each of these items demonstrated low means and dispersed ranges. Charlotte's experiences of anger were considerably more variable than her experiences of guilt and shame.

The fifth factor was labeled Life Direction. This factor was characterized by high loadings for compassion and purpose. The mean levels and variabilities of Charlotte's senses of purpose and compassion with respect to her social experiences were generally moderate, but with wide ranges.

The intercorrelations between factor one and factors two and five were moderate and positive. The intercorrelation between factor one and factors three and four were low to moderate and negative. The intercorrelations between factor two with factors three and four were low to moderate and negative. The intercorrelation of factor two with factor five, however, was moderate and positive. Intercorrelations between factors three and four other factors were generally low to moderate. Confirmatory factor analysis indicated that the fit of the hypothesized model was satisfactory.

Toni. Five factors emerged from Toni's data. The five factors were labeled Anxiety, Security, Anger, Life Direction, and Peace. One item, optimism, was excluded from the analysis based upon violation of factor analytic assumptions.

Similar to other individuals, the factor labeled as Anxiety in Toni's solution was comprised of fear and anxiety. For Toni, the mean levels and variabilities for both of these items were moderate. Toni used the range of the scale in depicting her experiences of these qualities.

The second factor was labeled as Security and included strength, comfort, and assurance. Means for these items were moderate with little variability and with dispersed ranges.

The third factor in Toni's solution was labeled as Anger. Toni's experience of this factor was characterized by the covariation of guilt, shame, and anger. Each of these items displayed relatively low mean levels with moderate variability over time. The ranges for these items were somewhat dispersed.

The fourth factor, Life Direction, was comprised of fulfillment, meaning, purpose, and hope. This pattern is somewhat more complex than other individuals' experiences

that included Life Direction factors, as for Toni, this factor incorporated both hope and fulfillment along with meaning and purpose. The means for each of these items were relatively high with low variability and somewhat dispersed ranges. Toni did not rate any of her social interactions as below the middle range in terms of the meaning, purpose, or fulfillment that she felt during these experiences, however.

The fifth factor was labeled as Peace. This factor included moderate loadings for peace, connection, gratitude, compassion, and joy. This combination indicated that Toni's experience of Peace was different from other individuals' experiences that included Peace factors. The means for these items were relatively high with little variability. Moreover, Toni never rated any of her interactions as below the middle range in terms of connectedness, gratitude, or compassion.

The intercorrelations between factors were generally low. Moderate correlations were found between the first factor and factors three and five, however. Results of a confirmatory factor analysis indicated that the fit of the model was satisfactory.

Erin. Erin's data was characterized by a five-factor solution. The five factors were labeled as Peace, Guilt/Shame, Life Outlook, Anxiety, and Approach to Life. Two items, meaning and purpose, were omitted from the model because of infactorability.

The first factor was labeled Peace and was comprised of peace and strength. This pattern of covariation for Peace was idiosyncratic to Erin. Both items demonstrated high means with low variabilities over time. Erin rated all of her experiences at or above the middle range for both of these qualities.

The second factor, Guilt/Shame, included high positive loadings for the items of guilt and shame. Mean levels and variabilities for these items were low with ranges of 0 to 6.

The third factor was labeled as Life Outlook. This factor included moderate to high positive loadings for compassion, joy, hope, and optimism and a moderate negative loading for anger. Anger was a unique aspect of Erin's experience of Life Outlook that differed from other individuals' experience that included Life Outlook factors. The means for the first four variables were high with moderate variability over time. Erin rated all of her social interactions above 5.1 in terms of these qualities. Erin experienced anger much less often than other qualities in her interactions, but with a moderate amount of variability.

The fourth factor was labeled as Anxiety. Erin's pattern for Anxiety encompassed high negative loadings for fear and anxiety and a moderate positive loading for joy. The covariation of fear, anxiety, and joy was also a pattern unique to Erin among individuals who experienced Anxiety factors. Mean levels for each of these variables were low with moderate variability and dispersed ranges.

The fifth factor was labeled as Approach to Life. This factor included moderate to high positive loadings for connection, comfort, assurance, gratitude, and fulfillment. A moderate negative loading for anger was also associated with this factor. In contrast to anger, mean levels for the first five variables were high with low variabilities. Erin did not rate her interactions below the middle range for any of the first five qualities.

The intercorrelations between most factors were generally low. The intercorrelations between factor five and factors one and three were moderate, however.

Confirmatory factor analysis demonstrated that the fit of the hypothesized model was satisfactory.

Elaine. Three factors emerged from Elaine's data. The three factors were labeled as Security, Anger, and Approach to Life. Four variables - peace, connection, hope, and meaning - were eliminated from the model due to their multicollinearity with other variables.

The factor labeled as Security included moderate positive loadings for comfort and assurance and moderate to high negative loadings for fear, anxiety, guilt, and shame. This pattern for Security was idiosyncratic to Elaine. Comfort and assurance were characterized by high means with moderate variabilities and relatively dispersed ranges. In contrast, the mean levels for fear, anxiety, guilt, and shame were low, with moderate to high variabilities and dispersed ranges.

The second factor was labeled as Anger. In Elaine's experiences, anger was exclusive to this factor, a pattern that was likewise idiosyncratic relative to other individuals' experiences of Anger. The mean level for anger was low, but highly variable and dispersed in range.

The third factor in Elaine's solution was labeled as Approach to Life. This factor included strength, gratitude, fulfillment, compassion, purpose, joy, and optimism. The means for these items were high. Variabilities ranged from moderate to high and the ranges were dispersed.

Intercorrelations between the three factors were all moderate. Results of a confirmatory factor analysis indicated that the fit of the proposed model was satisfactory.

Susan. Susan's data did not converge into a meaningful factor solution. Examination of the descriptive characteristics of her responses revealed significant multicollinearity and non-normality among the variables. More specifically, mean levels for variables that were positive in tone, such as peace and connectedness, were all greater than 11.13. Variabilities for these items were low and with somewhat restricted ranges. Mean levels for variables that were negative in tone, such as guilt or shame, were all below 0.16. Variabilities for these items were also low with restricted ranges. Although such descriptive characteristics do reveal interesting information about Susan's construal of her daily social experiences, her data was determined to be unsuitable for factor analytic procedures.

Anne. Anne's data yielded a four-factor solution. The factors were labeled as Anxiety, Life Direction, Life Outlook, and Approach to Life. Two items, anger and guilt, were excluded from the model based upon violations of factor analytic assumptions.

The first factor, Anxiety, was comprised of fear, anxiety, and shame. Anne was the only individual to experience shame in conjunction with anxiety and fear. The means for these items were relatively low, but with high variability and dispersed ranges.

The second factor, Life Direction, included compassion, meaning, and purpose. Mean levels and variabilities for these items were each moderate and with dispersed ranges.

The third factor was labeled as Life Outlook and was characterized by moderate to high loadings for joy, hope, and optimism. This pattern of covariation was relatively common among individuals whose data included a Life Outlook factor. Mean levels for

the variables associated with this factor were moderate. Variabilities were high and the ranges dispersed.

The fourth factor in Anne's solution was labeled as Approach to Life. This factor included positive loadings for peace, connection, strength, comfort, assurance, gratitude, and fulfillment. The means for these items were moderate and with moderate to high variabilities. The ranges were dispersed.

The intercorrelations between factor one and other factors were low to moderate and negative. The intercorrelations between all other factors were moderate and positive. Confirmatory factor analysis indicated that the fit of the hypothesized model was satisfactory.

Michael. Michael's data was characterized by a four-factor solution. The four factors were labeled Security, Life Outlook, Guilt/Shame, and Approach to Life. Two items, meaning and hope, were omitted from the model due to multicollinearity with other items.

The factor labeled as Security was comprised of peace, strength, assurance, fulfillment, purpose. This pattern of covariation was unique to Michael relative to other individuals' whose experiences included Security factors. Mean levels and variabilities for these items were moderate with dispersed ranges.

The factor labeled as Life Outlook included negative loadings for joy and optimism and a positive loading for anger. This pattern was also idiosyncratic to Michael. Mean levels and variabilities for joy and optimism were moderate. The mean for anger, however, was low, but with moderate variability. Ranges for all three items were dispersed.

The third factor was labeled as Guilt/Shame. This factor included guilt and shame. The means for both items were low with moderate variabilities and dispersed ranges.

The factor labeled as Approach to Life was comprised of five items with salient positive loadings: peace, connection, comfort, gratitude, and compassion. Negative loadings for fear and anxiety were also salient. The covariation of fear and anxiety with the first five items rendered this factor as another pattern unique to Michael. Means and variabilities for the first five items were all moderate. Means for fear and anxiety, however, were low. Variability for anxiety was high, but moderate for anxiety. Ranges for all items that loaded on this factor were dispersed.

The intercorrelations between factors ranged from low to moderate in size. Intercorrelations between factors one and two, factors one and three, and factors three and four were each negative. Intercorrelations between all other factors were positive. A confirmatory factor analysis indicated that the specified solution was of satisfactory fit.

Jacquelyn. Jacquelyn's data yielded a four-factor solution, with the factors labeled as Approach to Life, Life Direction, Anxiety, and Life Outlook. Two items, shame and anger, were excluded from the model based upon violations of factor analytic assumptions.

The factor labeled as Approach to Life was characterized by the covariation of the following items: peace, connection, strength, comfort, assurance, fulfillment, compassion, and joy. The means for these items were somewhat high and the variabilities were moderate. Ranges were dispersed.

The second factor was labeled as Life Direction. For Charlotte, Life Outlook included salient loadings for meaning, purpose, compassion, and connection. Although

several other individuals' solutions included a Life Outlook factor, Jacquelyn's pattern of covariation for Life Outlook included connection. Mean levels of these items were high. Variabilities were moderate and the ranges were dispersed.

The third factor was labeled as Anxiety. This factor was comprised of fear and anxiety, a pattern of covariation that was present among some other individuals' experiences of Anxiety. The mean levels of Jacquelyn's fear and anxiety were low. Variabilities in her experiences of anxiety here high, but moderate in terms of fear. Ranges were dispersed.

The fourth factor, Life Outlook, was characterized by moderate to high loadings for guilt, shame, and anger. Each of these items demonstrated low means and dispersed ranges.

The fifth factor was labeled Life Direction. This factor was characterized by high positive loadings for joy, hope, optimism and gratitude. A salient negative loading for guilt was also present. The covariation of guilt in this pattern was an aspect that was unique to Jacquelyn's experience among other individuals' experiences that included Life Direction factors. Mean levels for the first four variables were somewhat high, but with moderate variabilities and dispersed ranges. The mean and variability for guilt were both low. Additionally, Jacquelyn did not rate any of her social interactions above 8.2 in terms of guilt.

The intercorrelations between factor one and factors two and four were high and positive. The intercorrelation between factors two and four was similar. Moderate to low negative correlations were present among all other factors. Confirmatory factor analysis indicated that the fit of the hypothesized model for Jacquelyn's solution was satisfactory.

Allison. Four factors emerged from Allison's data. The four factors were labeled as Security, Anxiety, Life Outlook, and Approach to Life. The following items were eliminated from the model based upon violations of factor analytic assumptions: fear, shame, anger, guilt, and purpose.

The factor labeled as Security included moderate to high positive loadings for peace, strength, comfort, assurance, and optimism. This pattern for Security was idiosyncratic to Allison. Mean levels and variabilities in Allison's experiences of these qualities were moderate with somewhat dispersed ranges.

The second factor was labeled as Anxiety. In Allison's experiences, the factor of Anxiety involved the inverse covariation of anxiety and joy. The mean level for anger was low with moderate variability over time. Allison rated all of her social interactions as below 9.4 in terms of the anger she experienced. The mean and variability of joy were moderate with a dispersed range.

The third factor in Allison's solution was labeled as Life Outlook. This factor included the pattern observed among some other individuals of positive loadings for joy, hope, and optimism. The mean levels of Allison's experiences of these qualities were moderate. Variabilities for joy and optimism were also moderate, but low for hope. Allison did not rate any of her interaction below 5.0 with respect to hope.

The fourth factor was labeled as Approach to Life. This factor was characterized by salient loadings for connection, gratitude, fulfillment, compassion, and meaning. This pattern of covariation was also unique to Allison. Mean levels of these items were high with low variability. Allison generally did not rate any of her experiences below the middle range with regard to these qualities.

Intercorrelations between the four factors were generally low to moderate. A sizeable positive correlation between factors one and four was also found. Results of a confirmatory factor analysis indicated that the fit of the proposed model was satisfactory.

Mary. Four factors characterized Mary's data. The four factors were labeled as Security, Life Direction, Approach to Life, and Life Outlook. The following items were eliminated from the model due to violations of factor analytic assumptions: shame, guilt, fear, and anger.

The factor labeled as Security included salient loadings for strength, assurance, gratitude, and fulfillment. The mean levels and variabilities for these items were moderate. Mary did not rate any of her experiences as below 2.9 in terms of these qualities.

The second factor was labeled as Life Direction. This factor included high loadings for meaning and purpose, a pattern that was similar to some other individuals' pattern with respect to Life Direction. Means and variabilities for these items were both moderate with dispersed ranges.

The third factor in Mary's solution was labeled as Approach to Life. This factor included high positive loadings for peace, connection, comfort, compassion, and joy and a moderate negative loading for anxiety. The means and variabilities for all items with the exception of anxiety were moderate. The mean level and variability of Mary's anxiety were low, however. Ranges for items associated with this factor were dispersed.

The fourth factor was labeled as Life Outlook and was comprised of positive loadings for joy, hope, and optimism. This pattern of covariation was a somewhat

common pattern among individuals whose experiences included Life Outlook as a factor. Means and variabilities for these items were moderate with dispersed ranges.

Intercorrelations between factors were generally moderate and positive. Confirmatory factor analysis indicated that the fit of the hypothesized model was satisfactory.

Hazel. Hazel's data yielded a six-factor solution. The six factors were labeled as Peace, Life Outlook, Fulfillment, Security, Life Direction, and Anger. Fear was omitted from the model due to infactorability.

The first factor was labeled as Peace and was comprised of peace and connection. This pattern of covariation for Peace was idiosyncratic to Hazel. Both items demonstrated moderate means and variabilities over time. Ranges for these items were dispersed.

The second factor, Life Outlook, included salient loadings for the items of joy, hope, and optimism, a pattern of covariation similarly observed among some other individuals whose experiences included Life Outlook factors. Mean levels and variabilities for the items were moderate. Variabilities for hope and optimism were moderate and high for joy. Hazel used the full range of the scales for these items to describe her experiences.

The third factor was labeled as Fulfillment. This factor included loadings for gratitude and fulfillment. The means for the first four variables were moderate. Variabilities were high and ranges were dispersed.

The fourth factor was labeled as Security. Hazel's pattern for Security was comprised of strength, comfort, and assurance. Mean levels and variabilities for each of these items were moderate with dispersed ranges.

The fifth factor was labeled as Life Direction. In Hazel's experiences, this factor entailed the covariation of compassion, meaning, and purpose. Means and variabilities for all three items were moderate. Ranges were dispersed.

The sixth factor in Hazel's solution was labeled as Anger. This factor included moderate to high loadings for anxiety, guilt, shame, and anger. Means for these variables were low, but with the exception of anger, also highly variable. Variability for anger was moderate. Ranges for all items were dispersed.

The intercorrelations between most factors were generally moderate. Confirmatory factor analysis indicated that the specified model was of satisfactory fit.

Christina. Christina's data was characterized by a five-factor solution. The five factors were labeled as Life Direction, Life Outlook, Anxiety, Fulfillment, and Peace. Three items, shame, fear, and assurance, were omitted from the model due to violations of factor analytic assumptions.

The factor labeled as Life Direction was comprised of meaning and purpose. The covariation of meaning and purpose was a relatively common pattern among individuals whose experiences included Life Direction as a factor. Means and variabilities for both items were moderate and ranges were dispersed.

The factor labeled as Life Outlook included several items with moderate to high positive loadings, including connection, strength, comfort, joy, hope, and optimism. Anger also had a salient negative loading on this factor. With the exception of anger, the majority of items loading on this factor demonstrated moderate means. The mean for anger was low (0.82). Variabilities for connection, strength, and anger were moderate.

Christina indicated greater variability in her experiences of comfort, joy, hope, and optimism over time, however. Ranges for all items were dispersed.

The third factor was labeled as Anxiety. This factor included a moderate negative loading for peace and moderate to high positive loadings for anxiety and guilt. This pattern of inverse covariation with peace in conjunction with anxiety and guilt was unique to Christina. The mean level of Christina's experiences of peace was moderate with high variability and a dispersed range. Mean levels for anxiety and guilt were low with moderate variability and dispersed ranges.

The fourth factor was labeled as Fulfillment. This factor was composed of strength, fulfillment, and purpose. This pattern was also idiosyncratic to Christina. Means and variabilities for these items were moderate and ranges were dispersed.

The fifth factor in Christina's solution was labeled as Peace. This factor included salient loadings for peace, connection, gratitude, and compassion. Means for these variables were moderate. Variabilities for peace, gratitude, and compassion were high, but moderate for connection. Ranges were also dispersed.

The intercorrelations between all factors were generally low to moderate. Results of a confirmatory factor analysis indicated that the hypothesized solution was of satisfactory fit.

Emily. Five factors emerged from Emily's data. The five factors were labeled as Fulfillment, Approach to Life, Anxiety, Anger, and Life Direction. The following items were eliminated from the model based upon violations of factor analytic assumptions: optimism, hope, and strength.

The factor labeled as Fulfillment included gratitude and fulfillment. Mean levels in Emily's experiences of these qualities were moderate but highly variable and with dispersed ranges.

The second factor was labeled as Approach to Life. This factor included moderate to high positive loadings for the following items: peace, connection, comfort, assurance, compassion, meaning, and joy. Means and variabilities for peace, connection, assurance, compassion, and joy were moderate. The mean level of Emily's sense of comfort over time was also moderate, but highly variable. The mean level for her sense of meaning was low with moderate variability. Ranges for all items were dispersed

The third factor in Emily's solution was labeled as Anxiety. This factor included the covariation of fear and anxiety, a pattern that was also observed among some other individuals. The mean levels of Emily's experiences of these qualities were low, but highly variable. Allison did not rate any of her interaction above 9.0 in terms of these qualities.

The fourth factor was labeled as Anger. This factor was characterized by salient positive loadings for anxiety, guilt, shame, and anger. Mean levels of these items were low. Variabilities for guilt, shame, and anger were moderate, but high for anxiety. Ranges were dispersed.

The fifth factor, Life Direction, included positive loadings for meaning and purpose. This pattern of covariation was similar to patterns associated with Life Direction factors observed in some other individuals. Mean levels for Emily's experiences of these qualities were low with moderate variability. Ranges were dispersed.

Intercorrelations between the five factors were low to moderate. A confirmatory factor analysis indicated that the fit of the proposed model was satisfactory.

Chapter 6

Discussion

The intention of this study was to explore developmental experiences associated with spiritual identity formation during the transition to adulthood within the context of college and to better understand the role of spirituality in the everyday lives of young people during this time. Findings provide significant descriptive information and insight into the ways in which individuals construe the process of spiritual identity formation, as well as the meanings and implications that they attach to their spiritual experiences throughout this important developmental period. As a multi-method study, results contribute to understanding individuals' experiences from multiple vantage points and offer a unique perspective for augmenting on-going theory-building work in this domain.

Qualitative Results

From the qualitative data, three interrelated categories emerged depicting individuals' experiences of the *process*, *meaning*, and *implications* of spiritual identity formation during the transition to adulthood. Although each individual's experiences associated with these categories were unique in various ways and should be considered as illuminating in their own right, certain common elements of these findings warrant particular consideration for enhancing knowledge of spiritual identity development at this exploratory phase of inquiry.

Process. With respect to the category of process, students' descriptions yielded five themes and related subthemes that together served to create an in-depth portrait of individuals' personal journeys of constructing and integrating a sense of spiritual identity in their lives over time. As illustrated through the first theme, nearly all students pointed

to experiences during childhood or adolescence as significant to varying degrees in laying the developmental foundations for the formation of spiritual identity. In particular, relationships with significant others, such as family members and peers, and interactions with other contextual entities, such as schools and religious congregations, appeared to be instrumental in shaping the early stages of spiritual development and occupying key roles in the developmental systems through which initial spiritual identity formation began to emerge.

Such findings affirm recent efforts (e.g., King & Boyatzis, 2004; Benson & Roehlepartain, 2008) highlighting the importance of understanding spiritual experiences during childhood and adolescence and emphasize the need to continue to apply developmental-contextualist approaches to investigations in this area. In addition, practical implications indicated by this theme suggest that it is important for families and other socializing agents salient in the lives of children and adolescents to be cognizant of and intentional in their roles in cultivating positive spiritual development during these periods. In this respect, publically-accessible, practical resources, such as those disseminated through the Center for Spiritual Development in Childhood and Adolescence of the Search Institute (Search Institute, 2009), offer a promising forum for assisting parents and other youth-serving entities in these endeavors.

Consistent with contemporary theories postulating prolonged identity formation processes among youth in post-industrialized contexts (Arnett 2000; 2004; Keniston, 1971), however, the majority of students in this study described spiritual identity as remaining largely external to the sense of self during such earlier periods of development. With the exception of two students whose pre-college experiences occurred in other

contexts, results of this study indicated for many students, the most intensive periods of spiritual identity negotiation did not occur until the transition to adulthood in the context of college.

Moreover, as subsequent themes elucidated, for many individuals, the development of spiritual identity appeared to be more of a gradual, rather than an immediate process or discrete milestone achieved during college. Specifically, we found that during the initial semesters of college, many students described experiences of acclimation that were marked by periods of “*stepping back*” or “*holding on.*” Previous research has shown similar trends in aspects of religious identity examined at the aggregate-level during the early semesters of college. Lefkowitz (2005) found that changes in religious beliefs and increases in religious questioning may be more likely to occur as students are at university longer. Similarly, Boyatzis and McConnell (2006) demonstrated that openness toward religious or existential questioning may be higher among students in the latter years of college compared to those in earlier semesters or following graduation.

In the current study, students provided a great deal of insight into potential reasons surrounding acclimation experiences that indicate why active spiritual identity work may not be a “*top priority*” in their lives during this time. For instance, students cited adjustment to demands of the college context, desires to focus on “*other things*” such as new relationships and ideas, exploration of other aspects of identity, as well as academic and time-related concerns.

For many students, however, movement beyond experiences of acclimation in the process of spiritual identity formation appeared to occur through experiences of

evaluation during college. Characterized by the subthemes of “*moving forward*” and “*wrestling with,*” experiences of evaluations were frequently highlighted by individuals as “*turning points*” in the process of spiritual identity construction.

In exploring students’ experiences within this theme, we found that an important catalyst for experiences of evaluation were students’ desires to make more intentional, self-defined identity-related choices and to exercise increasing autonomy afforded in moving toward adulthood. For example, Michael explained:

It’s been like a lot of me just figuring out what I want...I don’t have anybody making me do anything. So I’m finally getting to make decisions on my own ...and I’m excited about that. It’s like...I want to just be able to make those decisions because I want to make the decisions that I’m making.

This emphasis on individualism and autonomy are, in many ways, illustrative of observations made by other scholars in recent years pointing to the increasingly personalized and self-defining nature of post-modern identity formation experiences within current generations (Arnett & Jensen, 2002; Côté & Levine, 1987; Goldhaber, 2000; Schachter, 2005a; 2005b). Consistent with these perspectives, we believe that this aspect of students’ evaluation experiences support a view of spiritual identity formation that recognizes the active role of individuals within this process and that adequately provides for the “multiple ways of knowing” that such personalization may entail (Archer, 1992; Gilligan, 1982; Schachter, 2005a; 2005b).

Nonetheless, findings based upon this theme also demonstrate that students’ experiences of evaluation were not exclusively “self-focused” in nature but also socially- and contextually-mediated in various ways. Specifically, the relational encounters and

contextual influences described by students that were often instrumental to their experiences of “*moving forward*” and “*wrestling with*” – including conversations with peers, informal and formal organizational activities, classroom discussions, and exposure to heterogeneous others within the college context -- likewise demonstrate the critical role that relationships and context may play within the spiritual identity formation process (Archer, 1992; Côté & Levine, 1988; King, Furrow, & Roth, 2002; Mattis et al., 2006; Schachter, 2005a; Schwartz, Bukowski, & Aoki, 2006; Yoder, 2000).

We note, however, that for some students, experiences of evaluation included certain negative encounters with the self or others, such as unwanted pressure from peers or adults, significant intra- or interpersonal conflicts, concerns about presentation of the self, and disconcerting feelings of doubt, guilt, or uncertainty in “*wrestling with*” particular aspects of spiritual identity. These findings suggest that it may be beneficial for college student personnel and others who work with young people during this time to be aware of the propensity for such difficulties and to ensure that positive resources are made available (e.g., access to counseling, self-discovery workshops, or open classroom forums) that may assist individuals in resolving spiritual identity issues in adaptive ways.

In addition to acclimation and evaluation, this study found that experiences of integration were another important theme within the process of spiritual identity formation during the transition to adulthood. Embodied by experiences of “*owning*” and internalizing a sense of the spiritual self, integration appeared to be a significant and defining marker in the process of spiritual identity construction for many individuals during this time. In particular, students described integration-related experiences as coming to a place in the process of spiritual development in which they felt “*more*

mature” within their spiritual identities and that spiritual identity had become “*more a part of*” the self.

Importantly, we emphasize, that the course of spiritual identity formation en route to individuals’ experiences of integration were comprised of a variety of unique experiences and that the pathways involved in such processes were not, in fact, linear for all individuals. In this respect, results of this study affirm the need to continue to understand and investigate spiritual identity formation processes at the level of individuals within future research in this area.

Relatedly, as the final theme in this category revealed, the majority of students in this study described expectations for continued development in their spiritual identities beyond college. In contrast to dominant identity formation paradigms (e.g., Marcia, 1980), the current study found that many individuals did not tend to report feeling a sense of completion or “achievement” in the process of spiritual identity construction as they approached entry into the adult world. Instead, students in this study expressed beliefs that the process of spiritual identity formation would be on-going in their lives and anticipated continued development in this domain over time. In light of this finding, we recommend that subsequent research also seek to explore the ways in which individuals’ spiritual identities may change during latter stages of the life-span beyond the transition to adulthood, as well.

Meaning. The second category revealed by students’ experiences focused on meaning. This category described individuals’ lived experiences of the spiritual self and the ways in which individuals interpreted and experienced the presence of spirituality in their lives during college. Interestingly, students’ experiences of meaning also

incorporated descriptions of spirituality in relationship to their experiences of other domains, such as religion and life directedness. Several insights derived from findings in this category are particularly illuminating for current conceptualization efforts and subsequent research.

First, transcendence of the self and connectedness were central aspects of themes and subthemes described within this category. Lerner and colleagues (2006) have highlighted transcendence of the self and connectedness to ideologies and forces outside of the self as the “essence of spirituality” (p. 60). Specifically, Lerner et al. have suggested that experiences of transcendence and connectedness are crucial for promoting development of a self that is able to see beyond its own needs and that recognizes its embeddedness in the larger social order. To this end, experiences of transcendence and connection may be important for assisting young people in developing a sense of commitment and encouraging their desires to contribute within the greater social system.

Additionally, spirituality appeared to function as an ordering framework for many individuals in making sense of and motivating particular aspects of behavioral and emotional experience. By offering guidelines for “*acting in certain ways*” and comprising “*powerful*” dimensions of emotional experience, spirituality may provide a sense of coherence in life that helps individuals to organize and give meaning to their everyday experiences (Park, 2006). Furthermore, for some individuals in this study, spirituality was also experienced as a “way of life.” As Erikson has highlighted, the construction of *weltanschauung*, or “a way of life” (1959, p. 169) may be a particularly important aspect of developing a consistent and congruent sense of self and self-in-relation to others during this period.

The relationship between experiences of spirituality and religion was also an important theme articulated within students' experiences in this category. Consistent with results of previous research with adults (Marler & Hadaway, 2002; Zinnbauer & Pargament, 2006), college students in this study described religion as a more "public" or "outward" field of experiences but spirituality as experiences of a more "private" or "personal" nature. In spite of such distinctions, several individuals described their identities as comprised of "*some of both*" and considered these experiences to be overlapping domains of identity. However, other individuals chose to define themselves as "*spiritual, but not religious*" and reported that these domains were not associated in their lives. Evidence derived from this theme helps to elucidate individuals' unique construals of these domains and accentuates the importance of constructing theories and measurement techniques that are sensitive to the nuances of such distinctions and potential variability surrounding individuals' experiences in this area.

For many students in this study, experiences of spirituality were also associated with experiences of life directedness during this time. As Allport (1937) has described the development of a sense of life directedness or purpose as an important component for attaining psychological well-being and maturity in adulthood, we find this aspect of students' experiences of spirituality to be particularly compelling for future research concerned with promoting positive development during this period. Further, individuals' experiences of life directedness associated with spirituality may also be an especially fruitful avenue for exploration within post-industrialized cultures as young people in these settings are increasingly exposed to prolonged transitions to adulthood

with declining guidance from traditional institutional structures (Côté, 2005; Keniston, 1971; Verma & Sta. Marie, 2006).

Implications. The third category that emerged from the qualitative analyses described students' experiences of the implications of spirituality during the transition to adulthood. Specifically, experiences in this category centered upon individuals' experiences of expressing or "living out" a sense of the spiritual self in everyday life during this time. Experiences comprised within this category therefore complement and extend many of the themes and subthemes expressed within other categories, providing concrete expression to individuals' experiences of actually living as a spiritual person. Themes revealed within this category highlighted the role of spirituality in three important areas of individuals' lives during college: relating to others, making decisions, and preparing for adulthood. We likewise discuss particular aspects of each these themes as relevant to the exploratory, theory-building intentions of this study.

First, this study found that an important way in which college students expressed a sense of spiritual identity in their lives was in the context of their relationships with others. Within their experiences of relating to others, students described a variety of ways that spirituality was manifested both in how they perceived and sought to act in response to known and unknown others in their lives. Specifically, for some individuals, expressing spirituality involved relating to others by attempting to "*see others how God sees them.*" By adopting this spiritually-oriented lens within their relationships, individuals were motivated to perceive a sense of the sacred in others and were inspired to interact with others in ways that that they felt most honored this sacredness. For such individuals, the perception of sacredness in others provided an

impetus to act in relationship to others with greater respect, empathy, compassion, and in some cases, with increased tolerance toward traditionally marginalized others.

Similarly, a number of individuals in this study described expressing spirituality by “*feeling connected*” to and seeking to “*do good*” in their relationships with others. For these individuals, experiences of relating to others included feeling a sense of solidarity and desiring to engage in acts of service toward others.

We believe that such forms of spiritual expression represent important areas for future research exploration that may hold significant consequences for understanding and promoting aspects of individuals’ social and civic development during this time. For example, as other authors have proposed (e.g, Lerner et al., 2006; King & Furrow, 2004), students’ experiences in this study highlight the possibility that for some young people, spirituality may be a factor that underscores prosocial orientations and that may help to inspire feelings of social trust and responsibility toward others. Additionally, feeling connected to others and engaging in acts of service toward others within the context of spiritual worldviews and meaning may motivate young people to think about the needs of others and to consider the social and moral dimensions of social equity and obligation (Donnelly et al., 2006; Yates & Youniss, 1996; Youniss, McLellan, & Yates, 1999). Engaging in acts of service that focus on redressing social injustices, such as several experiences described by students in this study, may also help to promote civic development by allowing young people to see themselves as effective agents of social change who are capable of enacting justice in society (Donnelly et al., 2006; Metz, McLellan, & Youniss, 2003; Youniss & Yates, 1999; Youniss, McLellan, & Yates, 1999).

Further, within this category, students described the implications of spirituality as a source of motivation and guidance for their decision-making across a variety of important life domains during college. In particular, for some individuals the presence of spirituality provided a sense of comfort and security in making decisions in life because such individuals believed that they could “*count on God to help out.*” Spirituality also appeared to provide an impetus for individuals to “*do the right thing*” by making particular decisions that they felt were most congruent with their sense of spiritual identity. Results within this theme revealed that such forms of spiritual expression were salient across a range of areas in students’ lives during college and thus offer a number of fruitful avenues for subsequent research consideration, including individuals’ decision-making with regard to romantic relationships, sexual attitudes and behaviors, economic and vocational choices, and health-related issues.

Relatedly, students in this study reported expressing spirituality within the context of their negotiation of a number of key developmental tasks significant to the transition to adulthood. In this respect, spiritual identity was an important aspect in many individuals’ descriptions of selecting potential life partners, pursuing particular vocational paths, and informing individuals’ efforts to construct holistic life perspectives in moving forward into adulthood. As students’ experiences associated with this theme represent compelling, yet to date virtually unexplored issues within extant literature, we believe that future research would also benefit from directing empirical inquiry to this area.

Person-Specific Quantitative Results

In addition to qualitative methods, this study employed person-specific quantitative techniques to explore systematic patterns of intraindividual variability across various dimensions of spirituality in the daily social experiences of spiritual and non-spiritual college students. Results of these analyses provided significant insight into individuals' inner experiences of daily social encounters and demonstrated important differences and similarities among and between spiritual and non-spiritual individuals' response patterns.

In particular, examination of individuals' response patterns revealed that each individual had unique experiences of various spirituality-related dimensions within the context of their daily social encounters. Although it is beyond the scope of the current endeavor as a preliminary investigation to offer in-depth discussion based upon all individuals' results, throughout this section, we highlight particular aspects of individuals' response patterns for the purposes of making general conclusions and providing additional directions for future research exploration.

First, individuals' response patterns varied in the extent and ways in which each individual experienced particular dimensions of spirituality in their everyday social experiences. Within some individuals' response patterns, greater numbers of qualities were necessary for retention than in other individuals' patterns. Additionally, mean levels and variability in individuals' day-to-day experiences of particular qualities were also highly personalized.

For example, Charlotte's response pattern was characterized by a 5-factor solution in which 17 qualities were retained. Mean levels and variability in Charlotte's

experiences of most qualities were generally moderate, with a few exceptions. The mean levels of Charlotte's experience of fear, guilt, shame, and anger indicated that she tended to report feeling lower amounts of these qualities relative to other qualities within her social experiences. Similarly, her experiences of gratitude, fulfillment, fear, anxiety, and anger tended to be more variable from day-to-day than her experiences of other qualities.

Charlotte's experiences of these qualities also co-varied in a unique way within the context of her daily experiences. As Charlotte experienced particular qualities such as connection and comfort, she also experienced peace, strength, assurance, gratitude, fulfillment, and to a lesser extent, joy. Her experiences of hope and optimism also co-varied together, as well as her experiences of fear and anxiety with one another. In addition, as Charlotte experienced increased feelings of guilt and shame, she also, to a certain extent, tended to experience feelings of anger. Her experiences of compassion and purpose also tended to co-vary with one another.

In contrast to Charlotte's pattern, however, Elaine's data yielded a 3-factor solution for which only 14 qualities were retained. Mean levels for Elaine's experiences of certain qualities such as comfort, self-assurance, strength, gratitude, fulfillment, compassion, purpose, joy, and optimism were generally high. However, mean levels of Elaine's experiences of other qualities, such as fear, anxiety, guilt, shame, and anger tended to be low. Elaine's day-to-day experiences of many qualities ranged from moderate to highly variable.

Elaine's experiences of qualities also co-varied in their own idiosyncratic way. As Elaine's feelings of fear, anxiety, guilt, and shame increased during her social encounters, her experiences of comfort and self-assurance decreased. When Elaine experienced

anger, however, her experiences tended to focus exclusively on the quality of anger. Elaine experiences of strength, gratitude, fulfillment, compassion, purpose, joy, and optimism also tended to co-vary with one another.

Also noteworthy, the number of factors yielded by individuals' response patterns ranged from three to six, pointing to various experiences of and degrees of complexity in individuals' daily social experiences. Among spiritual individuals, the most common factors to emerge included Approach to Life, Life Outlook, Life Direction, Anxiety, and Security. Less common factors among spiritual individuals were Anger, Peace, Guilt/Shame, and Fulfillment.

Importantly, many of the factors evidenced within spiritual individuals' solutions echo significant aspects of findings from the qualitative results. Taken together, these results tell us much about the ways in which specific dimensions of spirituality are manifested in the everyday experiences of college-aged individuals, particularly within the context of their social relationships. For instance, Mary's response pattern yielded a 4-factor solution that included factors labeled as Life Direction, Life Outlook, Approach to Life, and Security. Mary's experiences surrounding various themes and subthemes within the qualitative categories reveal important connections with her experiences associated with these factors. In articulating the meaning of spirituality in her life during the qualitative interview, Mary described experiences of life directedness that spoke to the sense of purpose in her life that she felt by "*centering [her] life around God.*" A salient dimension of Mary's experiences in her daily social experiences was also the factor of Life Direction, encompassed by high loadings for the qualities of meaning and purpose. In describing feelings that she had with respect to her experiences of spirituality,

Mary indicated that she felt a great deal of “*joy*” engaging in spiritual activities and that she enjoyed living the life that she felt that God had given her “*to the fullest.*” In a similar way, Mary’s experiences demonstrated a factor labeled as Life Outlook characterized by the covariation of optimism, joy, and hope. Additionally, Mary described feeling a sense of “*peace*” in doing service work motivated by her spirituality and that feeling connected to others through spiritual community was an important aspect of her experiences of relating to others. Not surprisingly, Mary’s daily experiences with others thus revealed a factor described as Approach to Life that was comprised of high positive loadings for peace, connection, comfort, compassion, and joy, which were negatively associated with feelings of anxiety in her life. Finally, Mary described her experiences of spirituality in having a relationship with God as providing a feeling of being “*known*” that allowed her to feel a sense of safety and security in her life. Relatedly, Mary’s experiences with others also included a factor labeled as Security that was comprised of positive loadings for self-assurance, strength, fulfillment, and gratitude. Although illustrations based upon Mary’s case represent just one example, we believe that examining individuals’ experiences in this way is instructive for future theory-building efforts.

Findings based upon non-spiritual individuals’ response patterns demonstrated that both non-spiritual individuals’ experienced Life Direction, Fulfillment, and Anxiety factors within the context of their daily social experiences. In addition, at least one non-spiritual individual’s patterns included Approach to Life, Life Outlook, Peace, and Anger factors within their solutions. We likewise found these results to be interesting because they suggest that there may be similar dimensions experienced by both spiritual and non-

spiritual individuals in relationships. Although we are limited in our ability to speculate about the reasons for these potential similarities particularly with regard to non-spiritual individuals' experiences, we believe that insights derived from qualitative findings in this study illustrate that important distinctions may surround the meaning and motivation of these experiences in the lives of spiritual individuals. For example, although spiritual and non-spiritual individuals may both feel a sense of Life Direction within the context of their social encounters, it is possible that for spiritual individuals that this dimension may be inspired by and expressed through specific experiences of spiritual meaning, such as "*centering life around God*" or "*being called to serve others,*" which non-spiritual individuals may not experience.

Moreover, particular factors emerged within spiritual individuals' response patterns that were not observed in either non-spiritual individuals' solutions. These factors included the dimensions of Guilt/Shame and Security. Experiences relevant to these factors in the lives of spiritual individuals also appear to be salient to experiences described within the qualitative results. For instance, as some individuals described, certain aspects of relational experiences associated with spiritual identity formation also included experiences of guilt and shame, such as interpersonal conflicts or experiences of "*struggle*" during college. Similarly, a significant component of individuals' descriptions of spiritual meaning-making in the qualitative results focused on experiences of security, such as "*believing in something greater*" or knowing that one could "*count on God to help out*" in making life's decisions. In this respect, additional research could be useful for illuminating the nuances of these and other potentially unique dimensions of spiritual individuals' experiences.

Limitations and Future Directions

Nonetheless, several caveats must be issued that may limit interpretation of findings drawn from this study. First, as is the intention of qualitative and person-specific research, findings from this study reflect the experiences and contextual circumstances of individuals who participated in this study. Therefore, it is possible that such experiences may not apply to other individuals or other contexts. In the same way, it is important to note that our own abilities and unique positionality may, in certain respects, influence the ways in which interpretations based upon this study must necessarily be viewed. For this reason, we recommend that continued research incorporating other individuals and other investigators also be undertaken to offer additional perspectives within this area. For example, future studies may consider focusing on the spiritual identity experiences of individuals situated in other cultural contexts or individuals who do not attend college during the transition to adulthood. In addition, although not the intention of the present study, we believe that further investigation is also warranted to more adequately understand developmental experiences among non-spiritual individuals during this time.

We note also that the measurement instruments used in the daily diary portion of this study, although developed based upon the researcher's knowledge of existing measurement techniques, was exploratory and may thus have been subject to various methodological concerns. For example, it is possible that there may be other qualities relevant to individuals' social experience that were not included in this preliminary use of the scale. Additionally, individuals may have interpreted the meaning of the qualities presented in the scale in unique ways and such interpretations may have affected their

ratings in particular ways. Future research is thus also warranted to examine these issues in greater depth.

Conclusion

The aim of the present study was to expand knowledge of individuals' spiritual experiences during the college years. In doing so, this investigation has generated a rich body of information that has provided candid insight into college students' experiences of spiritual identity formation, as well as the meanings and implications that they attach to these experiences. As one student cogently explained to us in framing her experiences during this developmental period, "*I feel like college is really a time when you really figure out who you are and what's important to you*" (Mary). Although an exploratory undertaking, it is our hope that findings generated by this study may prove useful in contributing to further theory-building and methodological refinement that will ultimately continue to elucidate young people's experiences of "*figuring out who [they] are and what's important [to them]*" within this important domain of human experience.

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Appendix A: Tables

Table 1
Demographic Background Characteristics of Participants

Spiritual Participants

Name	Gender	Age	Year	Ethnicity
Louise	Female	22	1 st yr. graduate	European American
Charlotte	Female	20	3 rd yr. undergraduate	European American
Toni	Female	21	4 th yr. undergraduate	African American
Erin	Female	21	4 th yr. undergraduate	European American
Elaine	Female	24	1 st yr. graduate	Korean
Susan	Female	22	1 st yr. graduate	European American
Anne	Female	21	4 th yr. undergraduate	European American
Michael	Male	21	3 rd yr. undergraduate	European American
Ahmed	Male	22	1 st yr. graduate	Indian
Jacquelyn	Female	20	3 rd yr. undergraduate	European American
Allison	Female	21	4 th yr. undergraduate	European American
Mary	Female	22	4 th yr. undergraduate	European American
Hazel	Female	22	5 th yr. undergraduate	European American

Non-Spiritual Participants

Name	Gender	Age	Year	Ethnicity
Christina	Female	20	3 rd yr. undergraduate	European American
Emily	Female	21	4 th yr. undergraduate	European American

Table 2
Religious Background Characteristics of Participants

Spiritual Participants

Name	Personal Religious Affiliation	Father's Religious Affiliation	Mother's Religious Affiliation
Louise	Unspecified Christian	Methodist	Unspecified Christian
Charlotte	Methodist	Methodist	Methodist
Toni	Baptist	Baptist	Baptist
Erin	Unspecified Christian	Unspecified Christian	Unspecified Christian
Elaine	Baptist	Baptist	Baptist
Susan	Methodist	Methodist	Methodist
Anne	Unspecified Christian	Methodist	Presbyterian
Michael	Unspecified Christian	United Church of Christ	United Church of Christ
Ahmed	Muslim	Muslim	Muslim
Jacquelyn	Unspecified Christian	Roman Catholic	United Church of Christ
Allison	Presbyterian	Presbyterian	Presbyterian
Mary	Roman Catholic	Atheist	Roman Catholic
Hazel	Jewish	Roman Catholic	Jewish

Non-Spiritual Participants

Name	Personal Religious Affiliation	Father's Religious Affiliation	Mother's Religious Affiliation
Christina	Atheist	Atheist	Atheist
Emily	Agnostic	Roman Catholic	Roman Catholic

Table 3
Qualitative Analyses: Core Categories and Themes

Core Categories/Themes	Description
<p>Category I: Process</p> <p><i>Themes</i> Development Foundations of Childhood and Adolescence College: Acclimation College: Evaluation College: Integration Beyond College: Continuing Development</p>	<p>Individuals' lived experiences of construction and on-going reconstruction of a sense of spiritual self and self-in-relation to others across time; Represents the active, dynamic, and often iterative movement that individuals expressed through which spiritual identity is created and refined in their lives.</p>
<p>Category II: Meaning</p> <p><i>Themes</i> Experiences of Spirituality Experiences of Religion Experiences of Life Directedness</p>	<p>Individuals' lived experiences of spirituality and spiritual identity and the intentional meaning ascribed to such experiences. Describes the ways in which individuals interpreted and experienced the presence of spirituality and other closely-related domains of identity in their lives.</p>
<p>Category III: Implications</p> <p><i>Themes</i> Relating to Others Making Decisions Preparing for Adulthood</p>	<p>Individuals' experiences of expressing or "living out" a sense of spiritual identity; Demonstrates the ways in which the spiritual self is made manifest in everyday life in the context of college</p>

Table 4
Qualitative Analyses: Category I: Process – Themes and Subthemes

Themes/Subthemes	Description
Theme 1. Developmental Foundations of Childhood and Adolescence	Individuals' experiences and relationships encountered during childhood and adolescence that helped to lay the foundations of the spiritual self and to provide initial entrée into religious and spiritual life
<i>Subthemes</i> Family Peers Adult Mentors Schools "It Was Just Kind of What I Did"	
Theme 2. College: Acclimation	Individuals' experiences of adjustment or <i>acclimation</i> of the self to the college context; Initial reconsiderations of religious and spiritual identity elements formed during childhood and adolescence in an attempt to locate the self amidst the new demands and opportunities afforded by the college environment
<i>Subthemes</i> "Stepping Back" "Holding On"	
Theme 3. College: Evaluation	Individuals' experiences of "taking stock" and making choices regarding the self's direction during college
<i>Subthemes</i> "Moving Forward" "Wrestling With"	
Theme 4. College: Integration	Individuals' experiences of a sense of "coming home" of the spiritual self; Emergence and "owning" of a more "mature" spiritual identity
Theme 5. Beyond College: Expectations of Continuing Development	Individuals' expectations of a spiritual self open to revision and change in the years beyond college

Table 5
Qualitative Analyses: Category II: Meaning – Themes and Subthemes

Themes/Subthemes	Description
<p>Theme 1. Experiences of Spirituality</p> <p><i>Subthemes</i> “Believing in Something Greater” “Having a Real Relationship with God” “Acting a Certain Way” “It’s Just a Really Powerful Feeling”</p>	<p>Individuals’ experiences of the nature of spirituality and the significance of its expression within their lives; Although experiences of spirituality were diverse, experiences of “believing in something greater,” “having a real relationship with God,” feeling compelled to “act a certain way,” and experiencing “really powerful feelings” were significant aspects characterizing this theme.</p>
<p>Theme 2. Experiences of Religion</p> <p><i>Subthemes</i> “Personal” versus “Public” “I’m Religious, but That Encompasses My Spirituality” “I’m Spiritual, but Not Religious”</p>	<p>Individuals’ experiences of the nature of religion as “public” or “outward” and its relationship to spirituality as “private” or “personal” experiences in their lives; This theme also reflects individuals’ perspectives on how they define their identities in terms of being “religious” and/or “spiritual.”</p>
<p>Theme 3. Experiences of Life Directedness</p> <p>“Centering Life around God” “Being Called to Serve”</p>	<p>Individuals’ experiences of feeling a sense of life direction or purpose in terms of desiring to “center one’s life around God” or feeling a “call to serve” others in life as motivated by a sense of spirituality</p>

Table 6
Qualitative Analyses: Category III: Implications – Themes and Subthemes

Themes/Subthemes	Description
Theme 1. Relating to Others	Individuals' experiences of expressing spiritual identity through reasoning about and acting in relationship to others in particular ways. Specifically, spirituality was expressed in relating to others through individuals' experiences of desiring to "see others as God sees them," "feeling connected," and seeking to "do good onto others."
<i>Subthemes</i> "Seeing Others as God Sees Them" "Feeling Connected" "Doing Good onto Others"	
Theme 2. Making Decisions	Individuals' experiences of spiritual identity as a source of motivation and guidance for making decisions in various life domains. In particular, the influence of spirituality in making decisions focused on the belief that one could "count on God to help out" in decision-making and that decisions in a spiritual person's life should be motivated by a desire to "do the right thing" in order to live in accordance with one's spiritual identity.
<i>Subthemes</i> "Counting on God to Help Out" "Doing the Right Thing"	
Theme 3. Preparing for Adulthood	Individuals' experiences of spirituality as a unifying perspective for looking ahead and approaching the developmental tasks of adulthood. In particular, spirituality appeared to be a motivating force behind helping individuals as they looked forward to establishing long-term romantic partnerships, identifying vocations and pursuing their life's work, and creating a holistic life perspective that integrates spiritual identity with other domains of identity.
<i>Subthemes</i> "Finding Someone who Shares the Same Focus in Life" "Doing What I'm Supposed to Be Doing" Spirituality "Defines Everything:" Creating a Life Perspective	

Table 7
Louise - Response Variabilities, Means, and Range

Dimension	Variability	Mean (SD)	Range
Peace	3.46	8.03 (1.86)	2.8-11.2
Connectedness	1.79	10.00 (1.33)	4.6-12.0
Strength	2.64	9.14 (1.63)	3.7-11.2
Comfort	4.64	9.33 (2.15)	0.4-11.9
Self-Assurance	3.05	9.20 (1.75)	3.5-11.5
Gratitude	4.44	9.26 (2.11)	0.8-12.0
Fulfillment	4.25	7.98 (2.06)	2.5-11.4
Compassion	4.41	7.36 (2.10)	2.7-10.8
Meaning	4.39	7.63 (2.09)	2.8-11.1
Purpose	3.75	8.45 (1.94)	3.1-11.4
Joy	6.85	8.82 (2.62)	0.2-12.0
Hope	4.79	9.15 (2.19)	1.8-12.0
Optimism	4.35	9.72 (2.09)	3.3-12.0
Fear	1.26	0.22 (1.12)	0.0-9.3
Anxiety	4.79	0.92 (2.19)	0.0-9.4
Guilt	0.46	0.17 (0.68)	0.0-4.2
Shame	0.00	0.02 (0.04)	0.0-0.1
Anger	1.02	0.24 (1.01)	0.0-6.4

Table 8
Charlotte - Response Variabilities, Means, and Range

Dimension	Variability	Mean (SD)	Range
Peace	8.42	6.83 (2.90)	0.3-11.5
Connectedness	8.02	8.69 (2.83)	0.4-11.9
Strength	7.84	7.67 (2.80)	0.4-11.6
Comfort	9.66	7.79 (3.11)	0.4-11.7
Self-Assurance	7.99	8.22 (2.83)	0.0-11.5
Gratitude	11.75	8.05 (3.43)	0.0-11.9
Fulfillment	11.67	7.53 (3.42)	0.1-11.6
Compassion	5.93	9.33 (2.43)	1.8-12.0
Meaning	8.06	8.32 (2.84)	1.6-11.6
Purpose	8.29	8.34 (2.88)	1.8-11.6
Joy	7.65	7.79 (2.77)	0.7-11.6
Hope	7.21	8.27 (2.68)	1.5-11.7
Optimism	9.27	7.80 (3.05)	0.5-11.8
Fear	12.23	2.72 (3.50)	0.0-11.3
Anxiety	13.98	5.39 (3.74)	0.2-11.8
Guilt	8.02	2.27 (2.83)	0.0-10.2
Shame	7.85	2.58 (2.80)	0.0-10.6
Anger	11.16	2.15 (3.34)	0.0-12.0

Table 9
Toni - Response Variabilities, Means, and Range

Dimension	Variability	Mean (SD)	Range
Peace	2.49	9.49 (1.58)	3.4-11.3
Connectedness	1.34	9.53 (1.16)	6.2-11.2
Strength	1.99	8.79 (1.41)	4.7-11.0
Comfort	2.33	8.93 (1.53)	3.4-11.6
Self-Assurance	1.79	9.17 (1.34)	4.9-11.4
Gratitude	1.76	9.55 (1.32)	4.9-11.5
Fulfillment	2.22	9.19 (1.49)	4.7-11.5
Compassion	1.01	9.88 (1.00)	5.7-11.3
Meaning	1.09	9.39 (1.04)	5.6-11.1
Purpose	1.09	9.30 (1.04)	5.5-11.3
Joy	3.13	8.92 (1.77)	2.0-11.5
Hope	2.39	8.82 (1.55)	2.9-10.9
Optimism	1.80	9.31 (1.34)	1.4-11.0
Fear	8.62	5.96 (2.94)	0.6-10.5
Anxiety	9.37	5.96 (3.06)	0.8-10.8
Guilt	6.78	3.30 (2.60)	0.6-10.1
Shame	5.54	2.52 (2.35)	0.1-9.1
Anger	4.73	1.71 (2.18)	0.2-9.9

Table 10
Erin - Response Variabilities, Means, and Range

Dimension	Variability	Mean (SD)	Range
Peace	3.05	9.92 (1.75)	4.4-12.0
Connectedness	2.65	10.47 (1.63)	4.4-12.0
Strength	2.58	10.29 (1.61)	5.9-12.0
Comfort	3.23	10.53 (1.80)	4.2-12.0
Self-Assurance	3.78	9.85 (1.94)	4.6-12.0
Gratitude	2.36	10.66 (1.53)	4.3-12.0
Fulfillment	3.99	9.74 (2.00)	4.5-12.0
Compassion	3.07	10.09 (1.75)	5.1-12.0
Meaning	3.72	10.14 (1.93)	3.4-12.0
Purpose	3.40	10.20 (1.84)	4.5-12.0
Joy	5.55	10.21 (2.35)	2.3-12.0
Hope	3.91	9.83 (1.98)	2.5-12.0
Optimism	4.19	9.84 (2.05)	2.5-12.0
Fear	4.49	1.62 (2.12)	0.0-9.2
Anxiety	5.52	2.10 (2.35)	0.0-10.2
Guilt	2.14	0.87 (1.46)	0.0-6.0
Shame	1.90	0.72 (1.38)	0.0-6.0
Anger	4.27	1.10 (2.07)	0.0-9.6

Table 11
Elaine - Response Variabilities, Means, and Range

Dimension	Variability	Mean (SD)	Range
Peace	6.28	9.82 (2.51)	0.2-11.9
Connectedness	6.84	9.74 (2.61)	0.4-11.9
Strength	5.24	9.68 (2.29)	1.8-11.9
Comfort	8.60	9.06 (2.93)	0.2-11.9
Self-Assurance	4.30	9.58 (2.07)	2.3-11.7
Gratitude	8.42	9.60 (2.90)	0.2-12.0
Fulfillment	9.18	9.56 (3.03)	0.5-12.0
Compassion	7.40	9.84 (2.72)	2.1-12.0
Meaning	6.00	9.58 (2.45)	2.6-12.0
Purpose	6.51	9.76 (2.55)	2.6-12.0
Joy	11.35	8.81 (3.37)	0.2-12.0
Hope	11.38	8.83 (3.37)	0.3-12.0
Optimism	11.73	8.95 (3.42)	0.4-12.0
Fear	9.49	2.41 (3.08)	0.0-11.5
Anxiety	10.29	2.50 (3.21)	0.0-11.5
Guilt	5.68	1.59 (2.38)	0.0-10.6
Shame	10.93	2.25 (3.31)	0.0-11.7
Anger	9.27	1.95 (3.04)	0.0-11.8

Table 12

Susan - Response Variabilities, Means, and Range

Dimension	Variability	Mean (SD)	Range
Peace	1.50	11.18 (1.22)	6.0-12.0
Connectedness	0.57	11.51 (0.75)	8.4-12.0
Strength	0.98	11.33 (0.99)	6.8-12.0
Comfort	1.30	11.39 (1.14)	6.4-12.0
Self-Assurance	0.57	11.41 (0.75)	8.4-12.0
Gratitude	0.77	11.49 (0.88)	7.4-12.0
Fulfillment	1.97	11.30 (1.40)	5.4-12.0
Compassion	2.02	11.06 (1.42)	6.1-12.0
Meaning	1.91	11.13 (1.38)	5.9-12.0
Purpose	1.93	11.14 (1.39)	5.7-12.0
Joy	1.62	11.21 (1.27)	4.9-12.0
Hope	1.61	11.30 (1.27)	4.6-12.0
Optimism	2.18	11.23 (1.48)	4.5-12.0
Fear	0.12	0.10 (0.34)	0.0-3.0
Anxiety	0.07	0.11 (0.26)	0.0-1.3
Guilt	0.09	0.10 (0.29)	0.0-1.8
Shame	0.48	0.11 (0.70)	0.0-6.2
Anger	0.33	0.16 (0.58)	0.0-4.6

Table 13
Anne - Response Variabilities, Means, and Range

Dimension	Variability	Mean (SD)	Range
Peace	4.76	8.84 (2.18)	0.1-12.0
Connectedness	10.46	8.83 (3.23)	0.4-12.0
Strength	6.71	8.93 (2.59)	0.9-11.8
Comfort	10.91	7.85 (3.30)	0.0-11.9
Self-Assurance	7.76	8.67 (2.79)	0.7-11.9
Gratitude	12.45	7.36 (3.53)	0.0-12.0
Fulfillment	13.36	6.84 (3.66)	0.0-12.0
Compassion	8.99	6.90 (3.00)	0.0-12.0
Meaning	8.96	6.61 (2.99)	0.0-11.4
Purpose	8.56	6.68 (2.93)	0.0-11.0
Joy	14.29	7.67 (3.78)	0.0-12.0
Hope	8.89	7.23 (2.98)	1.0-11.7
Optimism	10.13	7.19 (3.18)	0.2-11.5
Fear	9.75	2.04 (3.12)	0.0-12.0
Anxiety	11.65	3.12 (3.41)	0.0-11.8
Guilt	9.17	1.68 (3.03)	0.0-12.0
Shame	10.36	1.95 (3.22)	0.0-11.8
Anger	10.03	2.03 (3.17)	0.0-11.9

Table 14
Michael - Response Variabilities, Means, and Range

Dimension	Variability	Mean (SD)	Range
Peace	6.01	9.22 (2.45)	2.9-12.0
Connectedness	5.74	9.69 (2.40)	2.9-12.0
Strength	6.58	9.06 (2.56)	2.0-12.0
Comfort	8.17	9.03 (2.86)	1.6-12.0
Self-Assurance	6.41	9.36 (2.53)	1.9-12.0
Gratitude	6.47	9.36 (2.54)	1.6-12.0
Fulfillment	7.64	9.29 (2.76)	2.1-12.0
Compassion	8.94	9.37 (2.99)	1.4-12.0
Meaning	8.72	9.17 (2.95)	2.0-12.0
Purpose	8.08	9.22 (2.84)	2.1-12.0
Joy	9.85	9.01 (3.14)	0.9-12.0
Hope	7.77	9.35 (2.79)	1.8-12.0
Optimism	8.52	9.28 (2.92)	1.2-12.0
Fear	6.74	1.48 (2.60)	0.0-9.4
Anxiety	10.68	2.98 (3.27)	0.0-11.2
Guilt	6.47	1.92 (2.54)	0.0-10.1
Shame	8.53	2.18 (2.92)	0.0-10.6
Anger	9.90	2.46 (3.15)	0.0-11.2

Table 15
Jacquelyn - Response Variabilities, Means, and Range

Dimension	Variability	Mean (SD)	Range
Peace	5.63	10.04 (2.37)	1.2-11.9
Connectedness	5.82	9.89 (2.41)	1.3-11.9
Strength	5.62	9.89 (2.37)	1.2-11.9
Comfort	6.83	9.60 (2.61)	1.0-11.9
Self-Assurance	5.47	9.76 (2.34)	0.7-11.9
Gratitude	5.10	10.11 (2.26)	0.7-11.9
Fulfillment	7.74	9.46 (2.78)	0.7-11.9
Compassion	3.39	10.55 (1.84)	0.9-11.9
Meaning	5.67	9.91 (2.38)	0.9-11.9
Purpose	5.96	9.75 (2.44)	0.8-11.9
Joy	7.35	9.50 (2.71)	0.8-11.8
Hope	6.67	9.49 (2.58)	0.8-11.8
Optimism	4.24	9.93 (2.06)	1.0-11.8
Fear	7.41	2.25 (2.72)	0.3-11.0
Anxiety	10.10	3.03 (3.17)	0.3-11.2
Guilt	3.19	1.57 (1.79)	0.1-8.2
Shame	1.51	1.05 (1.23)	0.1-7.3
Anger	4.50	1.40 (2.12)	0.2-11.3

Table 16
Allison - Response Variabilities, Means, and Range

Dimension	Variability	Mean (SD)	Range
Peace	4.25	9.72 (2.06)	2.5-11.9
Connectedness	1.89	10.63 (1.37)	6.7-11.9
Strength	3.68	9.75 (1.92)	2.8-11.9
Comfort	4.00	9.75 (2.00)	2.7-11.9
Self-Assurance	4.01	9.64 (2.00)	2.6-11.8
Gratitude	2.06	10.29 (1.43)	6.4-11.8
Fulfillment	3.70	9.64 (1.92)	3.5-11.8
Compassion	1.97	10.52 (1.40)	6.7-11.9
Meaning	2.45	10.10 (1.57)	6.7-11.8
Purpose	2.67	9.97 (1.63)	6.6-11.8
Joy	5.41	9.26 (2.33)	0.8-11.8
Hope	2.99	9.56 (1.73)	5.0-11.8
Optimism	4.22	9.43 (2.06)	2.1-11.9
Fear	0.20	0.39 (0.44)	0.0-2.3
Anxiety	3.75	1.77 (1.94)	0.0-9.4
Guilt	0.37	0.42 (0.61)	0.0-4.8
Shame	0.03	0.28 (0.17)	0.0-1.0
Anger	0.24	0.36 (0.49)	0.0-3.1

Table 17
Mary - Response Variabilities, Means, and Range

Dimension	Variability	Mean (SD)	Range
Peace	3.93	9.17 (1.98)	3.0-11.6
Connectedness	2.39	9.56 (1.54)	4.5-11.7
Strength	3.66	8.69 (1.91)	2.9-11.7
Comfort	4.18	9.37 (2.04)	4.3-11.8
Self-Assurance	3.61	8.47 (1.90)	4.0-11.5
Gratitude	3.28	9.33 (1.81)	4.2-11.9
Fulfillment	3.86	9.10 (1.96)	3.1-11.8
Compassion	4.45	9.73 (2.11)	2.5-11.7
Meaning	6.12	9.00 (2.47)	0.4-11.7
Purpose	5.70	8.98 (2.39)	0.8-11.7
Joy	4.68	9.16 (2.16)	1.9-11.6
Hope	4.41	9.06 (2.10)	3.4-11.6
Optimism	5.12	9.09 (2.26)	2.2-11.8
Fear	1.43	0.77 (1.20)	0.0-6.3
Anxiety	3.12	1.33 (1.77)	0.0-10.5
Guilt	0.46	0.22 (0.68)	0.0-6.1
Shame	0.03	0.17 (0.16)	0.0-1.0
Anger	1.44	0.49 (1.20)	0.0-8.0

Table 18
Hazel - Response Variabilities, Means, and Range

Dimension	Variability	Mean (SD)	Range
Peace	7.41	6.82 (2.72)	0.4-10.9
Connectedness	9.63	7.74 (3.10)	0.5-11.7
Strength	6.85	8.01 (2.62)	1.4-11.4
Comfort	9.38	8.27 (3.06)	1.0-11.7
Self-Assurance	7.36	8.57 (2.71)	0.0-11.7
Gratitude	10.73	7.80 (3.27)	0.1-11.7
Fulfillment	10.33	7.80 (3.21)	0.5-11.7
Compassion	5.60	7.84 (2.37)	1.4-11.5
Meaning	5.91	8.26 (2.43)	1.4-11.6
Purpose	5.44	8.57 (2.33)	1.8-11.6
Joy	10.51	7.41 (3.24)	0.3-11.1
Hope	7.94	7.81 (2.82)	0.3-11.1
Optimism	7.66	7.90 (2.77)	0.4-11.1
Fear	5.32	2.70 (2.31)	0.4-10.0
Anxiety	13.10	4.20 (3.62)	0.3-11.4
Guilt	10.46	2.72 (3.23)	0.0-11.9
Shame	9.03	2.41 (3.01)	0.1-10.2
Anger	5.71	1.73 (2.39)	0.1-10.6

Table 19
Christina - Response Variabilities, Means, and Range

Dimension	Variability	Mean (SD)	Range
Peace	10.58	7.38 (3.25)	0.5-12.0
Connectedness	8.89	9.50 (2.98)	1.2-12.0
Strength	7.32	7.13 (2.70)	0.0-12.0
Comfort	12.58	8.78 (3.55)	0.0-12.0
Self-Assurance	8.60	7.88 (2.93)	0.0-12.0
Gratitude	13.81	7.00 (3.72)	0.0-12.0
Fulfillment	9.80	5.42 (3.13)	0.0-11.8
Compassion	14.07	8.72 (3.75)	0.3-12.0
Meaning	9.88	6.06 (3.14)	0.0-12.0
Purpose	9.95	6.36 (3.15)	0.0-12.0
Joy	16.59	8.69 (4.07)	0.0-12.0
Hope	14.09	7.35 (3.75)	0.0-12.0
Optimism	13.43	8.57 (3.66)	0.0-12.0
Fear	5.08	0.81 (2.25)	0.0-11.9
Anxiety	8.49	1.78 (2.91)	0.0-11.8
Guilt	8.07	1.07 (2.84)	0.0-12.0
Shame	2.08	0.25 (1.44)	0.0-10.0
Anger	4.41	0.82 (2.10)	0.0-10.7

Table 20
Emily - Response Variabilities, Means, and Range

Dimension	Variability	Mean (SD)	Range
Peace	9.78	4.34 (3.13)	0.3-10.8
Connectedness	7.43	6.35 (2.73)	0.7-10.7
Strength	5.37	3.53 (2.32)	0.7-9.8
Comfort	11.82	5.92 (3.44)	0.7-11.6
Self-Assurance	8.71	4.46 (2.95)	0.7-11.3
Gratitude	10.55	4.95 (3.25)	0.1-11.4
Fulfillment	10.11	5.26 (3.18)	0.2-11.0
Compassion	9.70	4.58 (3.11)	0.7-11.0
Meaning	7.71	3.60 (2.78)	0.4-10.9
Purpose	8.44	4.45 (2.91)	0.6-11.0
Joy	9.66	6.56 (3.11)	0.6-11.5
Hope	5.96	2.29 (2.44)	0.4-11.2
Optimism	9.83	2.88 (3.14)	0.3-11.4
Fear	6.33	2.22 (2.52)	0.4-9.0
Anxiety	10.58	3.68 (3.25)	0.2-11.1
Guilt	5.56	2.16 (2.36)	0.3-9.3
Shame	4.85	1.83 (2.20)	0.3-9.5
Anger	6.78	1.86 (2.60)	0.2-10.7

Table 21
Criteria for Determining Initial Factor Extractions

Spiritual Participants

	<u>Number of</u>	<u>Suggested</u>	<u>Factors</u>	<u>Factors</u>	<u>Extracted</u>	
Participant	Number of Items	Kaiser-Guttman	Scree Test	Conceptual Clarity	Number	% Variance Extracted
Louise	16	3	2-3	3	3	71.53
Charlotte	17	3	3-5	5	5	82.62
Toni	17	5	5-6	5	5	60.85
Erin	16	4	4-5	5	5	69.93
Elaine	14	2	2-3	3	3	83.04
Anne	16	3	3-4	4	4	77.12
Michael	16	2	2-4	4	4	79.66
Jacquelyn	16	2	2-4	4	4	84.25
Allison	13	2	2-4	4	4	91.07
Mary	14	2	2-4	4	4	83.93
Hazel	17	3	3-6	6	6	83.78

Non-Spiritual Participants

	<u>Number of</u>	<u>Suggested</u>	<u>Factors</u>	<u>Factors</u>	<u>Extracted</u>	
Participant	Number of Items	Kaiser-Guttman	Scree Test	Conceptual Clarity	Number	% Variance Extracted
Christina	15	3	3-5	5	5	72.86
Emily	15	4	4-6	4	5	65.66

Table 22
Summary of all Factors Present across Individuals

Spiritual Participants

Participant	Anxiety	Anger	Guilt/ Shame	Fulfillment	Peace	Life Direction	Life Outlook	Approach to Life	Security
Louise	X					X		X	
Charlotte	X	X				X	X	X	
Toni	X	X			X	X			X
Erin	X		X		X		X	X	
Elaine		X						X	X
Anne	X					X	X	X	
Michael			X				X	X	X
Jacquelyn	X					X	X	X	
Allison	X						X	X	X
Mary						X	X	X	X
Hazel		X		X	X	X	X		X

Non-Spiritual Participants

Participant	Anxiety	Anger	Guilt/ Shame	Fulfillment	Peace	Life Direction	Life Outlook	Approach to Life	Security
Christina	X			X	X	X	X		
Emily	X	X		X		X		X	

Table 23
Louise – Factor Pattern and Factor Correlation Matrix

Variable	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3
Peace		0.72	
Connection		0.66	
Strength		0.85	
Comfort		0.83	
Assurance		0.86	
Gratitude		0.69	
Fulfillment		0.55	
Compassion			0.80
Meaning			1.02
Purpose			0.65
Joy		0.73	
Hope		0.70	
Optimism		0.86	
Fear	0.97		
Anxiety	0.57		
Anger		-0.75	

	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3
Factor 1	1.00		
Factor 2	-0.18	1.00	
Factor 3	-0.30	0.71	1.00

EFA: $X^2(76)=113.33, p<.01$ [NNFI=.95, CFI=.98, SRMR=.03]

CFA: $X^2(102)=178.45, p<.001$ [NNFI=.92, CFI=.93, SRMR=.06]

Table 24
Charlotte – Factor Pattern and Factor Correlation Matrix

Variable	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4	Factor 5
Peace	0.78				
Connection	0.94				
Strength	0.85				
Comfort	0.91				
Assurance	0.77				
Gratitude	0.68				
Fulfillment	0.76				
Compassion					1.02
Purpose					0.76
Joy	0.45				
Hope		0.53			
Optimism		0.54			
Fear			0.73		
Anxiety			0.61		
Guilt				0.78	
Shame				0.82	
Anger				0.48	

	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4	Factor 5
Factor 1	1.00				
Factor 2	0.52	1.00			
Factor 3	-0.64	-0.31	1.00		
Factor 4	-0.27	-0.26	0.43	1.00	
Factor 5	0.53	0.30	-0.31	-0.16	1.00

EFA: $\chi^2(62)=73.84, p=.14$ [NNFI=.98, CFI=.99, SRMR=.014]

CFA: $\chi^2(110)=249.33, p<.001$ [NNFI=.89, CFI=.91, SRMR=.07]

Table 25
Toni – Factor Pattern and Factor Correlation Matrix

Variable	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4	Factor 5
Peace					0.52
Connection					0.70
Strength		0.78			
Comfort		0.66			
Assurance		0.78			
Gratitude					0.46
Fulfillment				0.47	
Compassion					0.47
Meaning				0.64	
Purpose				0.80	
Joy					0.32
Hope				0.46	
Fear	0.69				
Anxiety	0.98				
Guilt			0.69		
Shame			0.95		
Anger			0.72		

	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4	Factor 5
Factor 1	1.00				
Factor 2	-0.29	1.00			
Factor 3	0.39	-0.27	1.00		
Factor 4	-0.05	0.27	-0.19	1.00	
Factor 5	-0.32	0.48	-0.24	0.34	1.00

EFA: $X^2(62)=75.7, p=.11$ [NNFI=.95, CFI=.98, SRMR=0.034]

CFA: $X^2(109)=137.65, p<.05$ [NNFI=.94, CFI=.95, SRMR=.07]

Table 26
Erin – Factor Pattern and Factor Correlation Matrix

Variable	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4	Factor 5
Peace	0.90				
Connection					0.69
Strength	0.48				
Comfort					0.87
Assurance					0.55
Gratitude					0.79
Fulfillment					0.41
Compassion			0.60		
Joy			0.69	0.38	
Hope			0.95		
Optimism			0.84		
Fear				-0.74	
Anxiety				-0.84	
Guilt		0.76			
Shame		0.99			
Anger			-0.38		-0.43

	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4	Factor 5
Factor 1	1.00				
Factor 2	-0.17	1.00			
Factor 3	0.34	-0.08	1.00		
Factor 4	0.36	-0.11	0.22	1.00	
Factor 5	0.47	-0.16	0.47	0.39	1.00

EFA: $\chi^2(51)=63.28, p=.12$ [NNFI=.96, CFI=.98, SRMR=-0.03]

CFA: $\chi^2(94)=164.49, p<.001$ [NNFI=.89, CFI=.91, SRMR=.08]

Table 27
Elaine – Factor Pattern and Factor Correlation Matrix

Variable	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3
Strength			0.50
Comfort	0.48		
Assurance	0.62		
Gratitude			0.85
Fulfillment			0.77
Compassion			0.61
Purpose			0.95
Joy			0.55
Optimism			0.68
Fear	-1.01		
Anxiety	-0.96		
Guilt	-0.53		
Shame	-0.68		
Anger		0.86	

	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3
Factor 1	1.00		
Factor 2	-0.69	1.00	
Factor 3	0.66	-0.57	1.00

EFA: $X^2(52)=91.66$, $p<.01$ [NNFI=.95, CFI=.97, SRMR=.02]

CFA: $X^2(74)=213.12$, $p<.001$ [NNFI=.89, CFI=.90, SRMR=.07]

Table 28
Anne – Factor Pattern and Factor Correlation Matrix

Variable	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4
Peace				0.61
Connection				0.76
Strength				0.80
Comfort				0.79
Assurance				0.66
Gratitude				0.80
Fulfillment				0.67
Compassion		0.67		
Meaning		0.86		
Purpose		0.92		
Joy			0.54	
Hope			0.92	
Optimism			0.87	
Fear	0.79			
Anxiety	0.97			
Shame	0.58			

	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4
Factor 1	1.00			
Factor 2	-0.22	1.00		
Factor 3	-0.08	0.55	1.00	
Factor 4	-0.43	0.61	0.54	1.00

EFA: $X^2(62)=108.33, p<.01$ [NNFI=.93, CFI=.96, SRMR=0.03]

CFA: $X^2(99)=202.55, p<.001$ [NNFI=.90, CFI=.92, SRMR=.08]

Table 29
Michael– Factor Pattern and Factor Correlation Matrix

Variable	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4
Peace	0.42			0.57
Connection				0.77
Strength	0.52			
Comfort				0.90
Assurance	0.61			
Gratitude				0.70
Fulfillment	0.61			
Compassion				0.72
Purpose	0.54			
Joy		-0.33		
Optimism		-0.92		
Fear				-0.63
Anxiety				-0.38
Guilt			0.90	
Shame			0.85	
Anger		0.41		

	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4
Factor 1	1.00			
Factor 2	-0.51	1.00		
Factor 3	-0.28	0.44	1.00	
Factor 4	0.49	0.67	-0.51	1.00

EFA: $X^2(63)=153.28, p<.001$ [NNFI=.90, CFI=.94, SRMR=0.03]

CFA: $X^2(98)=268.29, p<.001$ [NNFI=.87, CFI=.90, SRMR=.06]

Table 30
Jacquelyn– Factor Pattern and Factor Correlation Matrix

Variable	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4
Peace	0.73			
Connection	0.49	0.49		
Strength	0.84			
Comfort	0.70			
Assurance	0.76			
Gratitude				0.50
Fulfillment	0.54			
Compassion	0.46	0.46		
Meaning		0.97		
Purpose		0.79		
Joy	0.39			0.53
Hope				0.91
Optimism				0.81
Fear			0.85	
Anxiety			0.70	
Guilt				-0.33

	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4
Factor 1	1.00			
Factor 2	0.75	1.00		
Factor 3	-0.46	-0.28	1.00	
Factor 4	0.73	0.85	-0.30	1.00

EFA: $X^2(62)=164.25, p<.001$ [NNFI=.92, CFI=.95, SRMR=.025]

CFA: $X^2(95)=282.19, p<.001$ [NNFI=.89, CFI=.91, SRMR=.05]

Table 31
Allison– Factor Pattern and Factor Correlation Matrix

Variable	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4
Peace	0.96			
Connection				0.86
Strength	0.96			
Comfort	0.75			
Assurance	0.74			
Gratitude				0.84
Fulfillment				0.63
Compassion				1.04
Meaning				0.64
Joy		-0.54	0.38	
Hope			0.50	
Optimism	0.61		0.40	
Anxiety		0.94		

	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4
Factor 1	1.00			
Factor 2	-0.61	1.00		
Factor 3	0.48	-0.39	1.00	
Factor 4	0.75	-0.22	0.42	1.00

EFA: $X^2(32)=54.9, p<.01$ [NNFI=.97, CFI=.99, SRMR=.01]

CFA: $X^2(58)=227.18, p<.001$ [NNFI=.88, CFI=.90, SRMR=.07]

Table 32
Mary– Factor Pattern and Factor Correlation Matrix

Variable	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4
Peace			0.72	
Connection			0.91	
Strength	0.52			
Comfort			0.69	
Assurance	0.95			
Gratitude	0.50			
Fulfillment	0.52			
Compassion			0.72	
Meaning		0.74		
Purpose		0.75		
Joy			0.46	0.41
Hope				0.59
Optimism				0.65
Anxiety			-0.51	

	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4
Factor 1	1.00			
Factor 2	0.49	1.00		
Factor 3	0.63	0.59	1.00	
Factor 4	0.58	0.45	0.56	1.00

EFA: $X^2(41)=70.79, p<.01$ [NNFI=.95, CFI=.98, SRMR=0.02]

CFA: $X^2(70)=196.89, p<.001$ [NNFI=.89, CFI=.91, SRMR=.05]

Table 33
Hazel– Factor Pattern and Factor Correlation Matrix

Variable	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4	Factor 5	Factor 6
Peace	0.58					
Connection	0.74					
Strength				0.40		
Comfort				0.67		
Assurance				0.97		
Gratitude			0.67			
Fulfillment			0.90			
Compassion					0.83	
Meaning					0.87	
Purpose					0.89	
Joy		0.48				
Hope		0.94				
Optimism		0.73				
Anxiety						0.47
Guilt						0.84
Shame						0.72
Anger						0.57

	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4	Factor 5	Factor 6
Factor 1	1.00					
Factor 2	0.48	1.00				
Factor 3	0.54	0.49	1.00			
Factor 4	0.63	0.54	0.69	1.00		
Factor 5	0.44	0.57	0.46	0.53	1.00	
Factor 6	0.44	-0.45	-0.40	-0.51	-0.32	1.00

EFA: $X^2(49)=82.47, p<.01$ [NNFI=.94, CFI=.98, SRMR=0.02]

CFA: $X^2(104)=240.25, p<.001$ [NNFI=.89, CFI=.91, SRMR=.05]

Table 34
Christina– Factor Pattern and Factor Correlation Matrix

Variable	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4	Factor 5
Peace			-0.44		0.54
Connection		0.47			0.34
Strength		0.47		0.38	
Comfort		0.46			
Gratitude					0.72
Fulfillment				0.58	
Compassion					0.72
Meaning	0.95				
Purpose	0.75			0.31	
Joy		0.77			
Hope		0.67			
Optimism		0.95			
Anxiety			0.92		
Guilt			0.68		
Anger		-0.57			

	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4	Factor 5
Factor 1	1.00				
Factor 2	0.41	1.00			
Factor 3	-0.22	-0.49	1.00		
Factor 4	0.33	0.09	-0.14	1.00	
Factor 5	0.27	0.50	0.04	-0.03	1.00

EFA: $X^2(41)=59.8, p<.05$ [NNFI=.94, CFI=.98, SRMR=0.02]

CFA: $X^2(76)=152.05, p<.001$ [NNFI=.89, CFI=.91, SRMR=.07]

Table 35
Emily– Factor Pattern and Factor Correlation Matrix

Variable	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4	Factor 5
Peace		0.80			
Connection		0.77			
Comfort		0.69			
Assurance		0.39			
Gratitude	1.04				
Fulfillment	0.49				
Compassion		0.66			
Meaning		0.53			0.45
Purpose					0.86
Joy		0.66			
Fear			0.93		
Anxiety			0.55	0.38	
Guilt				0.89	
Shame				0.70	
Anger				0.47	

	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4	Factor 5
Factor 1	1.00				
Factor 2	0.46	1.00			
Factor 3	-0.02	-0.25	1.00		
Factor 4	-0.17	-0.27	0.30	1.00	
Factor 5	0.23	0.32	0.05	-0.07	1.00

EFA: $X^2(41)=52.47, p=.11$ [NNFI=.94, CFI=.98, SRMR=0.03]

CFA: $X^2(79)=134.63, p<.001$ [NNFI=.87, CFI=.90, SRMR=.08]



Appendix B
Informed Consent Form for Social Science Research
 The Pennsylvania State University

Title of Project: Religious and Spiritual Identity Formation Project

Principal Investigator: Tara M. Stoppa, M.S., Doctoral Candidate
 S110 Henderson Building
 University Park, PA 16802
 (814) 863-8000
tms309@psu.edu

Co-Advisors:

<p>Dr. Michael Rovine S211 Henderson Building University Park, PA 16802 (814) 865-7094 mr7@psu.edu</p>	<p>Dr. Sherry Corneal S211 Henderson Building University Park, PA 16802 (814) 863-8000 ccc3@psu.edu</p>
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1. **Purpose of the Study:** This research study is part of the Principal Investigator's completion of doctoral study at the Pennsylvania State University. The purpose of this research study is to explore the religious and spiritual development of college students. Also of interest is how religion and spirituality may intersect with other aspects of college students' everyday lives and experiences.
2. **Procedures to be followed:** You will be asked to be a part of a one-time focus group discussion to assist the researchers in clarifying issues that will be helpful to them as they plan for an upcoming study about religion and spirituality in the lives of college students. The focus group discussion should last no longer than 1 hour. During this time, we will have an informal discussion and ask for your opinion on various issues related to the topic of religion and spirituality during college. With your permission, I will be tape-recording our conversation which will later be transcribed into text. During this session, you will also be asked to fill out a brief survey of basic information about yourself and your own religious and spiritual experiences

All aspects of our conversations and your survey responses will remain confidential and I will change your name and any other personal identifying information that would reveal your identity. Only the researcher will have access to recording documents and completed surveys, which will be kept in a locked filing cabinet in the researcher's office and will be retained for 3 years after completion of the study and then destroyed.

3. **Discomforts and Risks:** There are no risks in participating in this research beyond those experienced in everyday life. Some of the questions are personal and might cause mild discomfort, however. Your participation in this focus group is voluntary and therefore if you experience any discomfort during your participation, please notify the researcher as you have the right to immediately withdraw from the group. If you find that you experience discomfort after the group is over, please refer to the section on "who to contact" for assistance.
4. **Benefits:** The primary benefit of this study is that you may develop a better understanding of yourself through your participation. Your participation will also benefit the scientific community

by helping researchers to better understand experiences of religion and spirituality in the lives of college students.

5. **Duration/Time:** The focus group session will last approximately 1 hour in length.
6. **Statement of Confidentiality:** Your participation in this research is confidential. The data will be stored and secured at the researcher's office in a locked filing cabinet. Penn State's Office for Research Protections, the Social Science Institutional Review Board and the Office for Human Research Protections in the Department of Health and Human Services may review records related to this research study. In the event of a publication or presentation resulting from the research, no personally identifiable information will be shared.

Additionally, all group members are asked to respect the confidentiality of other members. If you speak about the contents of the focus group session outside of the group, it is expected that you will not tell others what individual participants discussed.

7. **Right to Ask Questions:** If you have any questions or concerns about this study, please contact Tara M. Stoppa at tms309@psu.edu or (814) 863-8000. If you experience any emotional discomfort during or after the group session please contact the researcher above or contact Counseling & Psychological Services (CAPS) at 863-0395, 501 Student Health Center Building. Questions about your rights as a research participant may be directed to Penn State University's Office for Research Protections at (814) 865-1775. You may also call this number if you feel this study has harmed you.
8. **Payment for participation:** For your participation in the focus group, you will be provided with refreshments. No other compensation will be given for your participation.
9. **Voluntary Participation:** Your decision to be in this research is voluntary. You can stop at any time. You do not have to answer any questions you do not want to answer. Refusal to take part in or withdrawing from this study will involve no penalty or loss of benefits you would receive otherwise.

You must be 18 years of age or older to consent to take part in this research study. If you agree to take part in this research study and the information outlined above, please sign your name and indicate the date below.

You will be given a copy of this consent form for your records.

Participant Signature

Date

Person Obtaining Consent

Date



Appendix C
Informed Consent Form for Social Science Research
 The Pennsylvania State University

Title of Project: Religious and Spiritual Identity Formation Project

Principal Investigator: Tara M. Stoppa, M.S., Doctoral Candidate
 S110 Henderson Building
 University Park, PA 16802
 (814) 863-8000
tms309@psu.edu

Co-Advisors:	Dr. Michael Rovine	Dr. Sherry Corneal
	S211 Henderson Building University Park, PA 16802 (814) 865-7094 mr7@psu.edu	S211 Henderson Building University Park, PA 16802 (814) 863-8000 ccc3@psu.edu

1. **Purpose of the Study:** This research study is part of the Principal Investigator's completion of doctoral study at the Pennsylvania State University. The purpose of this research study is to explore the religious and spiritual development of college students. Also of interest is how religion and spirituality may intersect with other aspects of college students' everyday lives and experiences.
2. **Procedures to be followed:** This study has two phases. In the first phase of the study, you will be asked to participate in an informal conversation about your religious and spiritual experiences during college. This conversation will last approximately 1 hour. With your permission, I will be tape-recording our conversation which will later be transcribed into text. During this session, you will also be asked to fill out a brief survey of basic information about yourself and your religious experiences. In the second phase of the study, you will be given a daily diary in which you will record important daily social experiences. The daily diary should take you no more than 5-10 minutes per day and you may record your entries at your convenience at the end of each day. It is very important, however, that you record your responses each day. This second phase of the study will last approximately 3-6 weeks. During this time, you will meet with a member of the project team once or twice a week. In this meeting (which should last approximately 20-30 minutes), you will briefly describe the daily experiences you recorded and then take a brief survey indicating how you felt during those experiences.

All aspects of our conversations and your survey responses will remain confidential and I will change your name and any other personal identifying information that would reveal your identity. Only the researcher will have access to recording, diary-related documents and completed surveys, which will be kept in a locked filing cabinet in the researcher's office and will be retained for 3 years after completion of the study and then destroyed.

3. **Discomforts and Risks:** There are no risks in participating in this research beyond those experienced in everyday life. Some of the questions are personal and might cause mild discomfort, however. Your participation in this study is voluntary and therefore if you experience any discomfort during your participation, please notify the researcher as you have the right to

immediately withdraw from the study. If you find that you experience discomfort after the study if over, please refer to the section on “who to contact” for assistance.

4. **Benefits:** The primary benefit of this study is that you may develop a better understanding of yourself through your participation. Your participation will also benefit the scientific community by helping researchers to better understand experiences of religion and spirituality in the lives of college students.
5. **Duration/Time:** The interview session will last approximately 1 hour in duration. The diary phase is self-administered and should last approximately 5-10 minutes a day for a period of 3-6 weeks. The weekly meetings during the diary phase will last approximately 20-30 minutes.
6. **Statement of Confidentiality:** Your participation in this research is confidential. The data will be stored and secured at the researcher’s office in a locked filing cabinet. Penn State’s Office for Research Protections, the Social Science Institutional Review Board and the Office for Human Research Protections in the Department of Health and Human Services may review records related to this research study. In the event of a publication or presentation resulting from the research, no personally identifiable information will be shared.
7. **Right to Ask Questions:** If you have any questions or concerns about this study, please contact Tara M. Stoppa at tms309@psu.edu or (814) 863-8000. If you experience any emotional discomfort during or after the group session please contact the researcher above or contact Counseling & Psychological Services (CAPS) at 863-0395, 501 Student Health Center Building. Questions about your rights as a research participant may be directed to Penn State University’s Office for Research Protections at (814) 865-1775. You may also call this number if you feel this study has harmed you.
8. **Payment for participation:** You will receive a one-time payment of \$10 for your participation in the interview phase. In addition, for each diary review meeting you participate in during the diary phase, you will earn 5 entries into a random lottery drawing in which study participants will have the possibility of winning one of eight cash prizes (\$25 each). No other compensation will be given for your participation.
9. **Consent for Follow-Up Contact:** Once the study is over, it is possible that the researcher may contact you to clarify or verify certain information that you previously provided (But we will not ask you to provide any new information, however). You understand that any contact information you provide for this purpose will only be utilized in the event that a follow-up contact is deemed necessary. You also understand that this contact information will remain confidential as indicated in the statement of confidentiality above.
10. **Voluntary Participation:** Your decision to be in this research is voluntary. You can stop at any time. You do not have to answer any questions you do not want to answer. Refusal to take part in or withdrawing from this study will involve no penalty or loss of benefits you would receive otherwise.

You must be 18 years of age or older to consent to take part in this research study. If you agree to take part in this research study and the information outlined above, please sign your name and indicate the date below.

You will be given a copy of this consent form for your records.

Participant Signature

Date

Person Obtaining Consent

Date

NAME (Please Print): _____

If follow-up communication is necessary, I prefer to be contacted by:

EMAIL:

Here is my email address: _____

PHONE:

Here is my phone number: _____

REGULAR MAIL:

Here is my mailing address: _____



Appendix D
Informed Consent Form for Social Science Research
 The Pennsylvania State University

Title of Project: Religious and Spiritual Identity Formation Project

Principal Investigator: Tara M. Stoppa, M.S., Doctoral Candidate
 S110 Henderson Building
 University Park, PA 16802
 (814) 863-8000
tms309@psu.edu

Co-Advisors:

<p>Dr. Michael Rovine S211 Henderson Building University Park, PA 16802 (814) 865-7094 mr7@psu.edu</p>	<p>Dr. Sherry Corneal S211 Henderson Building University Park, PA 16802 (814) 863-8000 ccc3@psu.edu</p>
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1. **Purpose of the Study:** This research study is part of the Principal Investigator's completion of doctoral study at the Pennsylvania State University. The purpose of this research study is to explore the religious and spiritual development of college students. Also of interest is how religion and spirituality may intersect with other aspects of college students' everyday lives and experiences.
2. **Procedures to be followed:** In this study, you will be given a daily diary in which you will record important daily social experiences. The daily diary should take you no more than 5-10 minutes per day and you may record your entries at your convenience at the end of each day. It is very important, however, that you record your responses each day. This phase of the study will last approximately 3-6 weeks. During this time, you will meet with a member of the project team once or twice a week. In this meeting (which should last approximately 20-30 minutes), you will briefly describe the daily experiences you recorded and then take a brief survey indicating how you felt during those experiences.

All aspects of our conversations and your survey responses will remain confidential and I will change your name and any other personal identifying information that would reveal your identity. Only the researcher will have access to diary-related documents and completed surveys, which will be kept in a locked filing cabinet in the researcher's office and will be retained for 3 years after completion of the study and then destroyed.

3. **Discomforts and Risks:** There are no risks in participating in this research beyond those experienced in everyday life. Some of the questions are personal and might cause mild discomfort, however. Your participation in this study is voluntary and therefore if you experience any discomfort during your participation, please notify the researcher as you have the right to immediately withdraw from the study. If you find that you experience discomfort after the study if over, please refer to the section on "who to contact" for assistance.
4. **Benefits:** The primary benefit of this study is that you may develop a better understanding of yourself through your participation. Your participation will also benefit the scientific community

by helping researchers to better understand experiences of religion and spirituality in the lives of college students.

5. **Duration/Time:** The diary phase is self-administered and should last approximately 5-10 minutes a day for a period of 3-6 weeks. The weekly meetings during the diary phase will last approximately 20-30 minutes.
6. **Statement of Confidentiality:** Your participation in this research is confidential. The data will be stored and secured at the researcher's office in a locked filing cabinet. Penn State's Office for Research Protections, the Social Science Institutional Review Board and the Office for Human Research Protections in the Department of Health and Human Services may review records related to this research study. In the event of a publication or presentation resulting from the research, no personally identifiable information will be shared.
7. **Right to Ask Questions:** If you have any questions or concerns about this study, please contact Tara M. Stoppa at tms309@psu.edu or (814) 863-8000. If you experience any emotional discomfort during or after the group session please contact the researcher above or contact Counseling & Psychological Services (CAPS) at 863-0395, 501 Student Health Center Building. Questions about your rights as a research participant may be directed to Penn State University's Office for Research Protections at (814) 865-1775. You may also call this number if you feel this study has harmed you.
8. **Payment for participation:** For each diary review meeting you participate in during the diary phase, you will earn 5 entries into a random lottery drawing in which study participants will have the possibility of winning one of eight cash prizes (\$25 each). No other compensation will be given for your participation.
9. **Consent for Follow-Up Contact:** Once the study is over, it is possible that the researcher may contact you to clarify or verify certain information that you previously provided (But we will not ask you to provide any new information, however). You understand that any contact information you provide for this purpose will only be utilized in the event that a follow-up contact is deemed necessary. You also understand that this contact information will remain confidential as indicated in the statement of confidentiality above.
10. **Voluntary Participation:** Your decision to be in this research is voluntary. You can stop at any time. You do not have to answer any questions you do not want to answer. Refusal to take part in or withdrawing from this study will involve no penalty or loss of benefits you would receive otherwise.

You must be 18 years of age or older to consent to take part in this research study. If you agree to take part in this research study and the information outlined above, please sign your name and indicate the date below.

You will be given a copy of this consent form for your records.

Participant Signature

Date

Person Obtaining Consent

Date

NAME (Please Print): _____

If follow-up communication is necessary, I prefer to be contacted by:

EMAIL:

Here is my email address: _____

PHONE:

Here is my phone number: _____

REGULAR MAIL:

Here is my mailing address: _____

Appendix E

Focus Group Protocol

We will soon be conducting a study on the spiritual lives of college students – specifically, spiritual identity development during college. We need help from you, however, to think through and decide upon the kinds of questions that we should ask. This will be very important for helping to develop our study. We are very grateful for your participation.

Before we begin would each of you mind sharing a bit about yourselves (your name, where you're from, anything you briefly want to tell us about your own spiritual experiences etc.).

If you wanted to know about college students' spiritual experiences, what would you ask?

What you say spirituality is? What kinds of experiences does it consist of?

What would you say religion is? What kinds of experiences does it consist of?

How are they alike or different? Do you they overlap? In what ways?

What do you think the spiritual life of typical college student is like? How would you describe your own spiritual life?

How do you think college influences people's spirituality? Do you think it changes during college or not? In what ways?

What influences such changes?

How do you think spirituality influences college students' everyday lives? (social relationships, economic decisions, school/work life, civic engagement etc.)

Do you think there are aspects of spirituality that fluctuate from day-to-day or that certain spiritual experiences may be different from one day to the next? If so, in what ways?

Anything else you think is important for us to know about college students and spirituality?

After showing participants pre-constructed questionnaires/protocols:

What do you think of these questions? Anything you would change or add? Anything we didn't ask but should?

Appendix F

Interview Protocol

Introductory Remarks

Thank you agreeing to do this interview and for taking the time to talk with me. During our time together, we will have a conversation about your life, your beliefs, and your experiences. Much of what we focus on will be your spiritual experiences, but feel free to add other relevant things that you think are important for helping me to understand your experiences. I really want you to just feel at ease to talk freely and honestly with me. Remember, everything you say is completely confidential (unless you tell me that you are planning to hurt yourself or someone else). There are no right or wrong answers; I just want to know whatever you honestly think or feel about the issues we discuss. Please know that you may also decline to answer any questions you don't want to talk about or to stop the interview at any time if you are uncomfortable. Do you have any questions before we begin?

Background information/Rapport-building

Tell me a bit about yourself (who you are, where you're from etc.)

Spirituality/Spiritual Identity

Let's assume that I am a person who knows nothing about spirituality and I want to know what spirituality is and what it's like to be a spiritual person. What could you tell me about what spirituality means to you? What is your experience of being a spiritual person?

What does being a spiritual person look like?

How does it feel?

What does it consist of for you (e.g., beliefs, practices etc.)?

What kinds of experiences does it entail for you?

In your view, what does it mean to be a spiritual person?

What/who influences your spiritual experiences?

(Other people? Family? Friends? Partner? Media?)

When are you most aware of your spirituality?

What do you think or feel about your spirituality?

Spiritual Development

If you were to give me a spiritual autobiography – where would it start? What is your earliest spiritual memory? What events or people have shaped your sense of spirituality? How has your sense of who you are as a spiritual person changed over time?

More specifically on the topic of change, I am interested in your experiences of spirituality during college. What can you tell me about your spiritual experiences during college?

What would a timeline of how your spirituality has developed/ changed during college look like? Walk me through this timeline.

Would you say that your sense of spirituality has changed or developed during your time in college? In what ways? How did this process occur? What were these changes/ developments like? What did they mean to you? How did you feel about them?

Can you think of a specific time during college that pushed you to think of who you are as a spiritual person? Tell me about this time. What happened? What was this experience like? How did this experience change (or not change) your sense of spirituality?

Have you had any specific significant spiritual experiences during college (things that stand out to you, have special meaning to you, mark important moments (or “turning points”) in your spiritual life during college)? If yes, what were they like? How did you feel about these experiences?

Would you say this spiritual journey would have happened whether or not you were in college?

How would you compare who you are as a spiritual person today with your spiritual identity as an adolescent?

Do you see your spirituality related in any way to helping you as you develop into an adult (e.g., finding a career, having a partner, finding direction in life etc.)?

Would other people who know you well say your spiritual life has changed during college? What, in your opinion, would make them respond this way?

Have you had any doubts or questions about your spirituality during college? If yes, tell me about them. Did you resolve them? How?

How hard or easy has it been to develop/maintain your spirituality or to be the kind of spiritual person you want to be during college?

What have been the most important influences on your spirituality during college?

In terms of your views and beliefs about spirituality, how different or similar do you feel from other people your age? Why?

How has your spirituality influenced aspects of your daily living during college? How much would you say that your spirituality is a part of your everyday life? Are you aware of your spirituality on a day-to-day basis?

In what ways has it potentially impacted specific areas of your life:

- Social Relationships
- Everyday decision-making
- Your economic choices
- Your vocational choices
- Your health and well-being
- Your political beliefs
- Your engagement in the community

At this point, how developed do you think your ideas on spirituality?
How do you think your spirituality might develop/change after college? Later in your life?

Spirituality and Religion

[If not yet obvious]: Would you describe yourself as being “religious,” “spiritual” or “some of both?”

If not religious, why not?

What does “religion” mean to you? What does “spirituality” mean to you? How are they alike or different in terms of who you feel that you are?

Has your “religious” self (if you have one) changed during college in any ways that are different or similar to your spiritual self? (e.g., Changes in religious affiliation, religious service attendance, beliefs? Congregations? Prayer? Other religious practices (reading scripture, attending religious meetings etc.)?)

Meaning/Purpose

What would you say are the most important things in your life? What gives you a sense of meaning?

Do you feel that you have a purpose or “mission” in life? If so, what is it? Has your spiritual identity impacted this sense of purpose in any way?

Closing

Are there any other questions that I didn’t ask or anything else you would like to add or feel would help me to understand your spiritual experiences better that we didn’t cover?

Thank you for your time.

Appendix G

Daily Diary Instructions and Template

ID# _____

Week #: _____

Thank you for participating in our study. This packet contains 7 questionnaires regarding your daily social experiences – one for each day of this upcoming week. At the end of each day, please record your responses for the day.

This study will last approximately 3-6 weeks. Once you have completed each week of daily entries, please gather your questionnaires for that week and bring them to your weekly meeting with the project team member. At the meeting, you will review your entries and fill out a brief questionnaire describing how you felt during each of these experiences.

Remember, you will only be identified in the study by a random ID number and all of your responses will remain completely confidential.

Please record your daily experiences truthfully. If you feel that you cannot provide an accurate response, please leave it blank instead. Remember, all of your responses will remain completely confidential.

If you have any questions while you are filling out your entries, please feel free to email us (tms309@psu.edu) and we will be glad to assist you.

Thank you again for your time. Your information is valuable to our study.

INSTRUCTIONS

For each day, please record 4-5 social experiences (interactions with other people) in which you were involved that you remember occurring on that day. These social experiences can be any interaction that you remember occurring during the day. Some examples might be: a conversation with a friend, taking a hike through the woods with your romantic partner, helping a family member, or an interaction with a stranger. These can include both short interactions (e.g., those that only lasted a few seconds) or long interactions (e.g., those that occurred over a longer duration). Please try to remember as many interactions that you can. You do not need to record the specific details of the experience, however, simply jot down a few notes that will help you to remember each of these experiences when we meet. For example, if you had a conflict with someone, it is not necessary for you to record what the conflict was about, but rather just that a conflict occurred. When we meet, you will gather your entries from each day and we will review the experiences you had between our meetings. We will then give you a brief questionnaire to rate how you felt during each experience.

ID# : _____ Date: _____ Day #: _____

Please record 4-5 social experiences (interactions with others) in which you were involved that you remember occurring today.

EXPERIENCE 1

EXPERIENCE 2

EXPERIENCE 3

EXPERIENCE 4

EXPERIENCE 5

[Note: If you have more than 5 experiences that you would like to share, please record them on the back of this sheet]

Appendix H

Diary Events Rating Scale

ID# : _____ **Date:** _____ **Day #** _____ **Event #:** _____

The following questions deal with possible feelings or qualities that you may or may not have had during each of your interactions. For each interaction you listed, I will read a different feeling and you will indicate with a slash (/) on the line under the word the extent to which you experienced that feeling during the specific interaction.

Remember, there are no “right” or “wrong” answers to these questions, so please feel free to answer in a way that most closely reflects your true experiences and feelings.

DURING THIS INTERACTION, TO WHAT EXTENT WOULD YOU SAY THAT YOU FELT:

A Sense of Inner Peace and Harmony

Not At All _____ Extremely

A Sense of Connectedness with Others

Not At All _____ Extremely

A Sense of Strength

Not At All _____ Extremely

A Sense of Comfort

Not At All _____ Extremely

A Sense of Self-Assurance

Not At All _____ Extremely

A Sense of Gratitude

Not At All _____ Extremely

A Sense of Fulfillment

Not At All _____ Extremely

A Sense of Compassion and Caring

Not At All _____ Extremely

A Sense of Meaning

Not At All _____ Extremely

A Sense of Purpose

Not At All _____ Extremely

A Sense of Joy

Not At All _____ Extremely

A Sense of Hope

Not At All _____ Extremely

A Sense of Optimism

Not At All _____ Extremely

A Sense of Fear

Not At All _____ Extremely

A Sense of Anxiety

Not At All _____ Extremely

A Sense of Guilt

Not At All _____ Extremely

A Sense of Shame

Not At All _____ Extremely

A Sense of Anger

Not At All _____ Extremely

Appendix I**Demographic/Background Questionnaire**

ID# _____

Date: _____

Thank you for participating in our study. This packet contains a number of questions about your attitudes and behaviors. Please answer these questions truthfully. If you feel that you cannot answer a question truthfully, please leave it blank instead. Remember, all of your responses will remain completely confidential.

You will notice that there are different scales for different questions. Some range from strongly disagree to strongly agree, some ask you to answer YES or NO, and others ask you different questions. Please pay attention to each question before writing or circling your response.

****Please answer the questions on both the front and the back of each page.****

If you have any questions while you are filling out this questionnaire, please feel free to ask and we will be glad to assist you.

Thank you again for your time. Your information is valuable for our study.

Please answer these questions by marking an "X" in the appropriate boxes or filling in the blanks, as necessary.

1. Your gender:

0	1
Male	Female

2. Your Date of Birth: _____/_____/_____
Month Day Year

3. Where do you live now (during the semester)?

0	1	2	3	4	5
Dorm with Roommate(s)	Dorm Alone	With Parent(s)	Off Campus With Roommates(s)	Off Campus Alone	Other

If you marked "Other" above (please specify): _____

4. Are you married?

0	1
No	Yes

5. What year are you in college?

0	1	2	3	4	5
3 rd Year Undergrad	4 th Year Undergrad	5 th Year Undergrad	Graduate Student	Other	

If you marked "Other" above (please specify): _____

6. When did/do you plan to graduate with your undergraduate degree? _____/_____
Month Year

7. What was/is your major? (Please write out, no abbreviations, please)

8. What job do you think you will have when you finish all of your schooling (after your bachelors and after any graduate or professional school)?

9. What is your mother's current marital status?

0	1	2	3	4	5
Married	Divorced/ Separated	Widowed	Never married	Not married, but living with a partner	Deceased

10. What is your father's current marital status?

0	1	2	3	4	5
Married	Divorced/ Separated	Widowed	Never married	Not married, but living with a partner	Deceased

11. To which ethnic/racial group you do you belong? (If you belong to more than one group, you can mark an "X" in more than one box or write in the blank below)

0	1	2	3	4	5
African American/Black	Asian American	Latino/Hispanic American	Arab American	European American/White	American Indian

If you belong to a group that is not listed, please write it here: _____

12. Religious preferences (Please mark one in each column):

	Your Current Preference	Your Father's	Your Mother's
Baptist			
Buddhist			
Church of Christ			
Eastern Orthodox			
Episcopalian			
Hindu			
Islamic			
Jewish			
LDS (Mormon)			
Lutheran			
Methodist			
Presbyterian			
Quaker			
Roman Catholic			
Seventh Day Adventist			
Unitarian/Universalist			
United Church of Christ			
Other Christian			
Other Religion			
Agnostic			
Atheist/None			

If you marked "Other" above (please specify): _____

The following questions deal with possible religious or spiritual experiences you may or may not have. There are no “right” or “wrong” answers, so please answer in a way most closely reflects your true experiences and feelings. In addition, several of items use the word ‘God.’ If this word is not a comfortable one, please substitute another idea that calls to mind the divine or holy for you.

To what extent can you say you experience the following (Please mark an “X” in the appropriate box):

1. I feel God’s presence.

0	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Never or almost Never</i>	<i>Once in a while</i>	<i>Some days</i>	<i>Most days</i>	<i>Every day</i>	<i>Many times a day</i>

2. I find strength and comfort in my religion/spirituality.

0	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Never or almost Never</i>	<i>Once in a while</i>	<i>Some days</i>	<i>Most days</i>	<i>Every day</i>	<i>Many times a day</i>

3. I feel deep inner peace or harmony.

0	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Never or almost Never</i>	<i>Once in a while</i>	<i>Some days</i>	<i>Most days</i>	<i>Every day</i>	<i>Many times a day</i>

4. During times when connecting with God, I feel intense joy which lifts me out of my daily concerns.

0	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Never or almost Never</i>	<i>Once in a while</i>	<i>Some days</i>	<i>Most days</i>	<i>Every day</i>	<i>Many times a day</i>

5. I feel thankful for my blessings.

0	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Never or almost Never</i>	<i>Once in a while</i>	<i>Some days</i>	<i>Most days</i>	<i>Every day</i>	<i>Many times a day</i>

6. I am spiritually touched by the beauty of creation.

0	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Never or almost Never</i>	<i>Once in a while</i>	<i>Some days</i>	<i>Most days</i>	<i>Every day</i>	<i>Many times a day</i>

7. I believe in a God who watches over me.

0	1	2	3
<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Strongly Agree</i>

8. I feel a deep sense of responsibility for reducing pain and suffering in the world.

0	1	2	3
<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Strongly Agree</i>

9. I try hard to carry my religious/spiritual beliefs into all my other dealings in life.

0	1	2	3
<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Strongly Agree</i>

10. The events in my life unfold according to a divine or greater plan.

0	1	2	3
<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Strongly Agree</i>

11. I have a sense of mission or calling in my own life.

0	1	2	3
<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Strongly Agree</i>

12. My religious/spiritual beliefs give meaning to my life's joys and sorrows.

0	1	2	3
<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Strongly Agree</i>

13. My religious/spiritual beliefs give my life a sense of purpose and significance.

0	1	2	3
<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Strongly Agree</i>

14. Knowing that I am a part of something greater than myself gives meaning to my life.

0	1	2	3
<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Strongly Agree</i>

15. My religion/spirituality helps define the goals I set for myself.

0	1	2	3
<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Strongly Agree</i>

16. How often do you pray or meditate?

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<i>Never</i>	<i>Less than once a month</i>	<i>Once a month</i>	<i>A few times a month</i>	<i>Once a week</i>	<i>A few times a week</i>	<i>Once a day</i>	<i>More than one a day</i>

17. How often do you watch or listen to religious/spiritual programs on TV or radio?

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<i>Never</i>	<i>Less than once a month</i>	<i>Once a month</i>	<i>A few times a month</i>	<i>Once a week</i>	<i>A few times a week</i>	<i>Once a day</i>	<i>More than one a day</i>

18. How often do you read the Bible/Scripture or other religious literature?

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<i>Never</i>	<i>Less than once a month</i>	<i>Once a month</i>	<i>A few times a month</i>	<i>Once a week</i>	<i>A few times a week</i>	<i>Once a day</i>	<i>More than one a day</i>

19. How often do you say prayers or grace before or after meals?

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<i>Never</i>	<i>Less than once a month</i>	<i>Once a month</i>	<i>A few times a month</i>	<i>Once a week</i>	<i>A few times a week</i>	<i>Once a day</i>	<i>More than one a day</i>

20. How often do you go to religious services?

0	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Never</i>	<i>Once or twice a year</i>	<i>Every month or so</i>	<i>Once or twice a month</i>	<i>Every week or more often</i>	<i>More than once a week</i>

21. Besides religious services, how often do you take part in other religious/spiritual activities with others (e.g., bible studies, religious/spiritual club meetings)?

0	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Never</i>	<i>Once or twice a year</i>	<i>Every month or so</i>	<i>Once or twice a month</i>	<i>Every week or more often</i>	<i>More than once a week</i>

22. In an average week, how many hours do you spend in activities that you do for religious or spiritual reasons?

_____ (# of hours/week)

23. To what extent is religion/spirituality involved in how you understand or deal with stressful situations?

0	1	2	3
<i>Not at all involved</i>	<i>A little</i>	<i>Somewhat involved</i>	<i>Very involved</i>

24. To what extent do you consider yourself a religious person?

0	1	2	3
<i>Not at all religious</i>	<i>Slightly religious</i>	<i>Moderately religious</i>	<i>Very religious</i>

25. To what extent do you consider yourself a spiritual person?

0	1	2	3
<i>Not at all spiritual</i>	<i>Slightly spiritual</i>	<i>Moderately spiritual</i>	<i>Very spiritual</i>

26. In what ways have the following experiences changed your religious/spiritual beliefs?

a) New ideas encountered in classes

0	1	2	3
<i>N/A</i>	<i>Weakened</i>	<i>No Change</i>	<i>Strengthened</i>

b) Romantic relationships

0	1	2	3
<i>N/A</i>	<i>Weakened</i>	<i>No Change</i>	<i>Strengthened</i>

c) Personal injury or illness

0	1	2	3
<i>N/A</i>	<i>Weakened</i>	<i>No Change</i>	<i>Strengthened</i>

d) Family problems

0	1	2	3
<i>N/A</i>	<i>Weakened</i>	<i>No Change</i>	<i>Strengthened</i>

e) Death of close friend or family member

0	1	2	3
<i>N/A</i>	<i>Weakened</i>	<i>No Change</i>	<i>Strengthened</i>

f) Natural disasters (e.g., Hurricane Katrina)

0	1	2	3
<i>N/A</i>	<i>Weakened</i>	<i>No Change</i>	<i>Strengthened</i>

g) The events of September 11th, 2001

0	1	2	3
<i>N/A</i>	<i>Weakened</i>	<i>No Change</i>	<i>Strengthened</i>

h) The war in Iraq

0	1	2	3
<i>N/A</i>	<i>Weakened</i>	<i>No Change</i>	<i>Strengthened</i>

27. My religious/spiritual beliefs:

a) Have helped me develop my identity.

0	1	2	3
<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Strongly Agree</i>

b) Are one of the most important things in my life.

0	1	2	3
<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Strongly Agree</i>

c) Lie behind my whole approach to life.

0	1	2	3
<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Strongly Agree</i>

d) Have been formed through much personal reflection and searching.

0	1	2	3
<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Strongly Agree</i>

28. Please indicate the extent to which each of the following describes you:

a) Having an interest in spirituality

0	1	2	3
<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Strongly Agree</i>

b) Believing in the sacredness of life

0	1	2	3
<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Strongly Agree</i>

c) Feeling unsettled about religious or spiritual matters

0	1	2	3
<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Strongly Agree</i>

d) Feeling good about the direction in which my life is headed

0	1	2	3
<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Strongly Agree</i>

e) Feeling a sense of connection with God/Higher Power that transcends my personal self.

0	1	2	3
<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Strongly Agree</i>

f) Feeling a strong connection to all humanity.

0	1	2	3
<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Strongly Agree</i>

g) Feeling disillusioned with my religious upbringing.

0	1	2	3
<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Strongly Agree</i>

h) Having an interest in learning more about different religious traditions.

0	1	2	3
<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Strongly Agree</i>

i) Believing in the goodness of all people.

0	1	2	3
<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Strongly Agree</i>

j) Being committed to introducing people to my faith.

0	1	2	3
<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Strongly Agree</i>

k) Seeing each day, good or bad as a gift.

0	1	2	3
<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Strongly Agree</i>

l) Believing in life after death.

0	1	2	3
<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Strongly Agree</i>

29. Since you entered college, how often have you:

a) Participated in community food or clothing drives

0	1	2
<i>Not at all</i>	<i>Occasionally</i>	<i>Frequently</i>

b) Donated money to charity

0	1	2
<i>Not at all</i>	<i>Occasionally</i>	<i>Frequently</i>

c) Performed volunteer work

0	1	2
<i>Not at all</i>	<i>Occasionally</i>	<i>Frequently</i>

d) Attended a political meeting or rally

0	1	2
<i>Not at all</i>	<i>Occasionally</i>	<i>Frequently</i>

e) Participated in an extracurricular or community club/organization

0	1	2
<i>Not at all</i>	<i>Occasionally</i>	<i>Frequently</i>

30. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements:

a) It makes me upset when I think about the conditions some people have to live in.

0	1	2	3
<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Strongly Agree</i>

b) When I think about the hard times some people are going through, I wonder what's wrong with this country.

0	1	2	3
<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Strongly Agree</i>

c) I get mad when I hear about people being treated unjustly.

0	1	2	3
<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Strongly Agree</i>

d) It is not right for there to be rich and poor in our society. There should be more equality.

0	1	2	3
<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Strongly Agree</i>

e) In terms of political beliefs, I consider myself to be:

0	1	2	3	4
<i>Other</i>	<i>Unaffiliated</i>	<i>Conservative</i>	<i>Moderate</i>	<i>Liberal</i>

If "Other," please specify: _____

35. When you think about your life and your future, how important is each of the following for you personally to achieve? (Please write the appropriate number in the space provided).

1	2	3	4	5
<i>Not at all Important</i>	<i>Not Important</i>	<i>Somewhat Important</i>	<i>Important</i>	<i>Very Important</i>

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>a. ____ Being close to my family</p> <p>b. ____ Helping to improve my community</p> <p>c. ____ Following the principles of my religion</p> <p>d. ____ Helping those who are less fortunate</p> <p>e. ____ Having an influence on other people</p> <p>f. ____ Having a position of authority</p> <p>g. ____ Doing something to stop pollution</p> <p>h. ____ Doing something worthwhile for society</p> <p>i. ____ Helping my country</p> <p>j. ____ Having a successful career</p> | <p>l. ____ Having close friends</p> <p>m. ____ Protecting animals</p> <p>n. ____ Earning a lot of money</p> <p>o. ____ Getting a good education</p> <p>p. ____ Having nice clothes</p> <p>q. ____ Having a nice home</p> <p>r. ____ Preserving the earth for future generations</p> <p>s. ____ Having a safe place to raise my kids</p> <p>t. ____ Being active in politics</p> <p>u. ____ Getting married</p> |
|---|--|

VITA

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SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

Stoppa, T. M., & Lefkowitz, E. S. (in press). Longitudinal changes in religiosity among emerging adult college students. To appear in the *Journal of Research on Adolescence*.

Lefkowitz, E. S. & Stoppa, T. M. (2006). Positive sexual communication and socialization in the parent-adolescent context. In L. Diamond (Ed.), *New Directions for Child and Adolescent Development*, 112, Rethinking positive adolescent female development (pp. 39-56). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.