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Epistemological Belief, Attachment Style To God, And Religious Commitment As Predictors Of Religious Maturity

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BEARD

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Epistemological Belief, Attachment Style to God, and Religious Commitment

as Predictors of Religious Maturity

BY

Andrew Beard

THESIS

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Epistemological Belief, Attachment Style to God, and Religious Commitment as Predictors of Religious Maturity

Thesis for a Master's Degree

in Clinical Psychology

Eastern Illinois University

Charleston, Illinois

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Abstract

The present study explored how three variables (epistemological belief, attachment style to God, and religious commitment) predicted religious maturity. The study specifically aimed at determining which variable (epistemological belief, attachment style to God, and religious commitment) was most predictive of each of the various dimensions of religious maturity: master-motive, complexity of beliefs, openness, heuristic quality as well as the integration of religious attitude components. Scales that measured these predictors and dimensions of religious maturity were administered to 246 students at Eastern Illinois University. Results indicated that the affective (attachment style to God) and behavioral (religious commitment) variables were most predictive of religious maturity. Unexpectedly, the cognitive variable (epistemological belief) was not associated with any facet of religious maturity and possible explanations were offered. In order to study religious maturity from a more comprehensive perspective, the study points future researchers towards a broader conceptualization of the construct.

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Introduction

Religion and its relevance to psychological growth have garnered considerable interest in recent history. Higher education programs are beginning to offer classes on the psychology of religion. Entire scholastic journals in psychology receive perseverant contributions from a growing field of researchers in the subject matter. Practicing therapists are pushing for assessments that include a thorough evaluation of the spiritual backgrounds of incoming clientèle. The emphasis is clear: religion is not an archaic topic. An abundant body of research now acknowledges religion as playing a central role in our personal lives.

The impact of religion on society has received much attention. Islam hopes to institute a moral order within society, Judaism recognizes a need for world repair (*tikkun olam*), and various fundamentalist movements advocate for the creation of a new person and new society (Silberman, Higgins, & Dweck, 2005). Religion as an active force has led to both positive and negative outcomes. One could easily cite many noteworthy accomplishments in the spirit of reform (e.g. Gandhi, Mother Teresa, and Martin Luther King). There have been, and certainly still are, individuals who advocate for the betterment of the human condition in the name of religion. Unfortunately, there is a similarly undeniable list of religiously motivated events that have generated negative consequences for the human condition (the Spanish Inquisition, the bombing of the World Trade Centers, and the Holy Wars).

Silberman (2005) outlines several processes by which religious meaning systems may potentially foster violent activism. First, religiosity breeds ideas and values which, when internalized, may facilitate prejudice, discrimination, and violence. This is exemplified by religious organizations that refuse to grant positions of leadership to women, state legislations that prohibit the union of same gender marriages, and demonstrations during the equal rights movement that clearly communicate a sense of superiority based on race and/or gender.

Religion also spawns violence when objects, actions, or beliefs, that are perceived to be sacred, are desecrated. Consider the conflict in the Middle East that has resulted in part from the desecration of Jewish and Muslim Holy sites, or even more recent affairs involving the attack on the World Trade Centers in New York. Furthermore, because religion is regarded as a unique meaning system by which individuals approach life, alternate systems infringe upon the validity by which one esteems his/her personal stance. Such diversions in faith are threatening to both individuals and groups alike and have resulted in religion-inspired-violence. Clearly then, the manifestations of religiosity within our societal and personal worlds communicate both positive and negative outcomes. Although this author's present effort is in no way intended to debate the moral implications involved in violence inspired by religiosity, the current study attempts to explore underlying processes that contribute to the beneficial versus destructive functions of religion.

Religiosity, however, is not static. Like other aspects of people's lives, it evolves. Much of this author's motivation for studying religion is rooted within a devoutly Christian familial upbringing. The opportunity to explore other denominational directions in Christianity, let alone alternative religions, did not present itself until early adulthood when this author attended a liberal Christian college which encouraged doubt and exploration as a means of rebuilding a personally relevant system of faith. It was around this time that a rather fundamental question surfaced: "Could truth exist beyond the walls of denominational familiarity?" This eventually evolved into a more challenging question: "Could truth exist beyond the familiar teachings of Christianity?" Although the latter question generated some discomfort, it is the question which has transformed this author's worldview of humanity, religiosity, and the interaction of the two. Hence, an individual can experience maturity or growth through several stages allowing him/her to alter or regard his/her religious sentiment differently.

How an individual regards religious belief has obvious implications for the way in which he/she interacts with the environment. Individuals convinced that their religious belief is ultimate and infallible may be more susceptible to contributing negatively towards the human condition as mentioned above. Conversely, those who regard their religious belief as valid, without having the need to impose that belief on others would seem to engage in less destructive acts. If researchers fail to determine which variables facilitate and/or hinder religious maturity, humanity will be unable to improve accordingly. Assuming that one's level of religious maturity is indicative of either beneficial or destructive effects on society and the individual, it is important, then, to determine which factors foster or impede an individual's ability to become religiously mature. The purpose of this study is to examine some factors which are expected to perform this function: epistemological belief, attachment style to God, and religious commitment.

Development of the Concept of Religious Maturity

The concept of religious maturity has been debated empirically for decades and theologically for even longer (Bidwell, 2001). In *The Individual and his Religion* (1950), Gordon Allport offers the most widely known theory of religious maturity. Allport defined the mature religious sentiment as "*disposition, built up through experience, to respond favorably, and in certain habitual ways, to conceptual objects and principles that the individual regards as of ultimate importance in his own life, and as having to do with what he regards as permanent or central in the nature of things*" (p. 64).

Upon further elaboration, Allport (1950) suggested that a mature religious sentiment would encompass six constituents: well differentiated, derivative yet dynamic, directive, comprehensive, integral in nature, and characteristically heuristic. A *well-differentiated* individual has a religious sentiment in which a once blindly accepted faith is now critically evaluated. As one's faith withstands critical evaluation, it is then allowed to evolve as the individual accumulates new experiences. A faith that is *derivative yet dynamic* encapsulates an individual whose faith transcends self-serving motives and becomes an ultimate force for living. Rather than subjecting oneself to a particular religion out of fear, such an individual allows his/her religious sentiment to become the directive influence in life. Faith is no longer sustained by one's trepidation about eternal consequences. Conversely, faith is maintained by the principle belief that life is experienced most optimally (in the present) through the religious creeds endorsed by the individual. An individual who begins to act according to the personal convictions that coincide with his/her personal religious sentiment marks the *directive* component of the mature religious sentiment. When the individual not only believes that human beings should take care of others in need but makes deliberate efforts to do so, this constituent of faith is exemplified. The *comprehensive* element of the mature religious sentiment is defined as the ability to recognize that one's own religious orientation may not contain the whole truth to the extent that one is able to incorporate others' sentiments into his/her own. Instead of being bound by the doctrines of one particular religion, the individual feels free to incorporate other religious truths as he/she deems appropriate. The *integral nature* of the mature religious sentiment reconciles pre-scientific values and worldviews with contemporary scientific revelations and breakthroughs. The last constituent of mature religion is the *heuristic character* of the individual which enables one to regard beliefs tentatively until they are confirmed or facilitate the discovery of a more valid understanding.

Allport and Ross (1967) developed the Religious Orientation scale in which they delineated two separate modes of religiosity: *extrinsic* and *intrinsic* orientation. The authors stated that individuals with an extrinsic orientation tend to regard religion as a tool by which they achieve some sense of personal gain. Religiosity is maintained only because it fulfills areas of life (e.g. security and/or sociability) considered important by the individual. To directly quote Allport and Ross (1967): "the extrinsic type turns to God, but without turning away from self" (p. 434). On the other hand, individuals with an intrinsic orientation tend to regard religion as a guide that directs and determines their life decisions. Religion becomes the master motive for the individual and all beliefs, thoughts, and behaviors are filtered through the lens of religion.

Although Allport and Gordon's (1967) Religious Orientation scale is regarded as a momentous contribution in the field of the psychology of religion, it has not been spared from criticism. Batson and Ventis (1982) contended that Allport's (1950) conceptualization of intrinsic religiosity neglects three essential components of his initial narrative on mature religious orientation. First, it is possible for individuals to personify intrinsic religious orientation while not possessing the integral component. If an individual's integral nature towards his/her religion is lacking, he/she is not able to face "complex problems like ethical responsibility and evil without reducing their complexity" (Batson, Schoenrade, & Ventis, 2003, p. 166). According to this line of thought, such an individual would not represent a religiously mature individual. Secondly, the mature religious sentiment was said to describe individuals who are willing to doubt and think critically. The intrinsic/extrinsic conceptualization failed to address this challenge. Finally, Allport concluded that a religious sentiment is regarded tentatively and that the search for truth is ongoing.

In an attempt to provide a more comprehensive conceptualization of religion that accounts for the neglected aspects of Allport's original conceptualization, Batson and Ventis (1992) offered a third dimension which they label *religion as quest*. Religion as quest operates under the assumption that religious doubt is beneficial and will eventually lead to a more mature religious faith. Such an individual likely recognizes that he/she may never obtain ultimate truth regarding religious matters, yet still continues to seek answers. This third dimension characterizes an approach to religion that honestly faces "existential questions in all their complexity, while resisting clear-cut, pat answers" (Batson & Ventis, 1982; pp. 150-151).

Though Batson and Ventis' (1993) quest dimension vastly improved the theoretical and empirical nature of the study of mature religion, it has been surrounded by much debate. Kojetin, McIntosh, Bridges, and Spilka (1987) were concerned with the integrity of Batson and Ventis' (1993) measurement of the dimension of quest. These authors suggested that the quest scale is equally likely to indicate an individual who is troubled by their faith while experiencing an overall level of distress as opposed to an individual who is undergoing a positive and constructive developmental stage marked by questioning. Meanwhile, Donahue (1985) argued that Batson's quest dimension is only loosely linked to religious tradition, misrepresents Allport's emphasis on religious doubting, and lends its items to endorsement by agnostics and those who "sophomorically and reflexively respond 'why' to every answer given" rather than those who are truly characterized by a mature religious sentiment. Whereas Batson and Ventis (1993) used the intrinsic/extrinsic orientations as a launching pad, Leak and Fish (1999) sought to develop an alternative means of measuring mature religiosity. In response to the inherent flaws of Allport's IR scale and the controversial nature of Batson's Quest scale, these authors developed a more comprehensive and acceptable measure by which to assess mature religion as it was originally defined by Allport (1950).

Leak and Fish (1999) specified four dimensions which they claim represented Allport's initial conceptualization. First, there is the *master-motive* dimension which accounts for Allport's dynamic and comprehensive nature of the mature religious sentiment. An individual who is high on the master-motive dimension is likely to subscribe to religion for its transcendent properties (rather than self-serving) and accept it as a force that affects many areas in his/her life. The second dimension is labeled *complexity of beliefs* and is defined by two themes: the differentiated religious sentiment and the comprehensive character of the sentiment. The complexity of beliefs dimension encompasses a sentiment with realistic beliefs that are informed by critical tendencies and that provide meaning and significance to one's life. The third dimension, *openness*, stresses an open, reflective orientation versus complacency with one's religious orientation. Finally, there is a fourth dimension called the *heuristic quality* which strongly reflects the heuristic element of the mature religious sentiment as described by Allport. An individual whose religiosity is characterized by a heuristic quality is able to act on his/her religion despite a tentative belief system. Because it measures the concept of religious maturity more broadly than Allport and Ross' IR and Batson's Quest scales, Leak and Fish's Religious Maturity Scale – Version 2 (RM-2) will be utilized for this study.

Kristensen, Pedersen, and Williams (2001) provided another means by which to assess mature religion as it was originally intended by Allport (1950). The authors characterized religious maturity as an attitude having three dimensions: (1) Affect – how one feels about an attitude object, (2) Cognition – how one thinks about an attitude object, and (3) Conation – behaviors and/or intentions toward the attitude object (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1980; Insko and Schopler, 1967). These authors introduced a new definitional understanding of mature religion that emphasizes its integral nature: "consistency or integration among the cognitive and affective components of one's attitude about religious beliefs and practices and one's personal intentions and actual religious behaviors" (p. 77). The authors' intent was to conceptualize religious maturity in a manner that was definitionally independent of the Quest orientation while enabling the researcher to observe profiles of the three religious orientations (Ends, Means, and Quest) on the three religious attitude components. The three religious attitude components are a three-dimensional approach to mature religiosity represented by an individual's feelings toward religion (affect), his/her thoughts toward religion (cognition), and his/her behavioral interactions with religion (conation). An individual who highly endorses each dimension is considered to have a more mature religious sentiment because he/she approaches religion in a very integrative manner. Kristensen et al's. (2001) conceptualization provides an alternative means by which to assess religious maturity and deviates from previous researchers' attempts. Therefore, the Religious Attitude Components Scale will be utilized in the present study as well.

Much of the research on religious maturity thus far has been dedicated to the development and validation of scales for measuring the concept (Allport & Ross, 1967; Batson et al., 1993; Dudley & Cruise, 1990; Kristensen et al., 2001; Leak & Fish, 1999). These measures have been found to be associated with other constructs or variables. Religious maturity has been associated with experiencing less prejudice against specific ethnic groups (Intrinsic Religiosity scale; Allport & Ross, 1967), and possessing greater capacity for dealing with complex existential concerns (Quest Scale; Batson & Raynor-Prince, 1983), while also obtaining higher levels of religious well-being, religious relativism, and acceptance of change in the church. Religiously mature individuals were also found to favor ecumenism and devotionalism, engage in more prayer, perceive that an individual's beliefs are derived from personal experience, and endorse higher self-actualizing tendencies, self-esteem, and private self-consciousness (Religious Maturity Scale – Version 2, *RM-2*; Leak & Fish, 1999, p. 98). The present study identifies variables that few empirical analyses have attempted to link to the mature religious sentiment and which appear to tap into various domains of being: cognitive, affective, and behavioral. It is in this author's interest to examine whether epistemological beliefs, attachment style to God, and religious commitment predict the mature religious sentiment. Furthermore, the present study will attempt to determine which among these chosen variables will best predict religious maturity.

Epistemological Belief

Epistemological belief refers to the manner in which an individual apprehends the nature of human knowledge. As noted in Kuhn and Weinstock (2002), three basic levels of epistemological belief have been delineated in past research (Hofer & Pintrich, 1997). An individual who thinks in absolutist terms believes that absolute truth can be attained and encapsulated in a single concrete answer. Absolutists are likely to accept information from authorities as fact without questioning. In basic terms, for an *absolutist,* the objective dimension of knowing is dominant to the extent that subjectivity is disregarded. On the other hand, for a *multiplist*, the subjective dimension of knowing becomes superior over objectivity to the extent that the latter is neglected. Here, the individual begins to recognize the value of perception and considers truth to exist separately for each individual. Multiplists are likely to question information obtained from authorities because they find it to disagree with their personal opinion. However, the multiplist will not attempt to persuade the other to believe in his/her opinion because each individual's perception is considered equally valid. Finally, the *evaluativist* manages to balance absolutist and multiplist perspectives in such a manner that neither overpowers the other. An individual who thinks in evaluativist terms believes in the ability to debate and research opposing positions until a most satisfying answer is revealed. Evaluativists are likely to tentatively accept information obtained from authorities until they are able to weigh such information against other available data as a means of discovering the best answer. Kuhn and Weinstock (2002) measured levels of epistemological belief by presenting the reader with contrasting opinions on various domains (judgments of personal taste, aesthetic judgments, value judgments, judgments of fact about the social world, and judgments of fact about the physical world) to which the reader is asked to determine whether only one opinion is right (an absolutist stance) or if both opinions are right (multiplist). If the reader indicates that both opinions have merit, he/she is then asked to determine whether one opinion might be superior (evaluativist).

Kuhn and Weinstock (2002) were interested in finding out if an evaluativist functions differently than an absolutist or a multiplist in important areas of daily living. Operating under the assumption that epistemological level of cognition affects an individual's functioning in real-world cognitive activities, the authors encouraged future researchers to undertake endeavors that would empirically determine which real-world cognitive activities may be included. In a subsequent study (Kuhn, Cheney, & Weinstock, 2000), the authors explored the impact that epistemological understanding exerts on various life domains. Although most participants operated on the same epistemological level across all judgment domains, a select few maintained absolutist levels despite advancing to evaluativist levels in other judgment areas. Epistemological advancements from absolutist to multiplist levels were found most likely to occur first in personal taste and aesthetic judgments and last in truth domains. However, epistemological advancements from a multiplist to an evaluativist level were found most likely to appear first in truth domains. For many, both transitions proved most difficult in the values domain (which was not predicted).

Research in epistemological belief has already linked the construct to several variables: students who believed less in the certainty of knowledge were found to write a less biased response to a text regarding contrasting views about HIV-AIDS (Kardash & Scholes, 1996), students who endorsed higher levels of epistemological belief preferred internet learning environments that included metacognitive features (Tsai & Chuang, 2005), and adults who believed less in the certainty of knowledge endorsed multiple perspectives, acknowledged the complicated nature, and took more time to process a controversial every day issue such as abortion (Schommer-Aikins & Hutter, 2002). It seems that an individual's belief about the nature of human knowledge should affect his/her religious disposition as well. For example, if one believes that all truth is subjective and one's opinion is never better or worse than another's, then he/she is likely to approach religion in the same way. However, if one believes that the essence of truth is contained in one absolute answer, then he/she is likely to spend much of his/her time and energy converting another's religiosity to his/her own.

The current study will explore whether epistemological understanding plays a role in religious maturity. It is anticipated that an absolutist is more likely to endorse a religious sentiment characterized by transcendent value, directive influence, and higher integration of the cognitive, affective, and behavioral components of religious maturity. A multiplist is also expected to endorse a religious sentiment characterized by transcendent value, directive influence, but is expected to exhibit an open and reflective thought process concerning his/her faith, while demonstrating some integration of the cognitive, affective, and behavioral components of religious maturity. An evaluativist, however, is expected to endorse a religious sentiment characterized by transcendent value, directive influence, critical tendencies, open and reflective thought processes, and possess a tentative, yet active belief system. Additionally, an evaluativist is expected to demonstrate the highest ability to integrate the cognitive, affective, and behavioral components of religious maturity. Since evaluativists value tentative conclusions and actively search for human knowledge, it makes sense that such individuals would be more likely to approach religion and personal faith in a similar fashion. It seems that evaluativists would be less likely than multiplists (and even less likely than absolutists) to consider their religion incontrovertible and would be more likely to process important religious themes and ideas which would facilitate religious maturity.

Attachment Style to God

In the context of child-parent relationships, attachment styles are described as a "system which guides an individual's thoughts, feelings, and behaviors in that relationship" (Kirkpatrick, 1999; p. 73). Attachment relationships have been classified into three distinct attachment styles: avoidant, secure, and anxious. Separation from the parent figure does not appear to be bothersome for individuals marked by an avoidant attachment style. The parent figure may even be ignored upon his/her return. However, such individuals are likely experiencing internal distress. Individuals with a secure attachment style may become somewhat distressed by the absence of their parent figure, but would be easily comforted upon his/her return. Anxious attachment styles characterize individuals who exhibit extreme distress when separated from the parent figure while remaining very hard to appease once he/she returns (Kirkpatrick, 1999). Although the concept of attachment style has been traditionally applied to human relationships, particularly that of the parent-child variety, Kirkpatrick (1999) argues that one's relationship with God (or other religious figure) serves an analogous function: just as a child's attachment toward his/her parental figure affects much of that individual's life domain, one's attachment style towards a religious figure is likely to dictate how that individual approaches, interacts with, and perceives his/her faith domain. This author expects to find that variations in individuals' attachment style to God will predict respective variations in one's degree of religious maturity.

Beck (2006) suggests that an individual who perceives God as a source of support and strength should be able to conjure up the confidence to face new challenges. However, risk taking and courage within the human sphere may not sufficiently capture what is meant by "exploration" within the spiritual domain. Therefore, explorations within the supernatural realm could be affected by the type of attachment bond one has towards his/her religious figure. For example, within the experiential and emotional sphere of religiosity, experiences may be sought after or explored in prayer, worship, or practice of spiritual disciplines. Beck (2006) asserts that if an individual's theological exploration occurs in the midst of a secure attachment to God, then the "quest" is relatively peaceful. However, "secure seekers" may experience periods of felt separation and alienation from God but do not consider their personal quest to result in separation from God nor do they believe that their personal quest induces anger from God. Beck (2006) found those with a more secure attachment style to God to be related to increased theological exploration, have higher tolerance for different Christian groups, and to experience less subjective anxiety.

Therefore, within the cognitive sphere of religiosity, an individual may explore theological beliefs and alternative ways of living without the subjective experience of shame, fear, or divine abandonment. According to such an assertion, an individual who is more secure in his/her attachment style to God (expects God to remain near despite his/her spiritual curiosity) is expected to endorse a religious sentiment characterized by transcendent value, directive influence, critical tendencies, open and reflective thought processes, and possessing a tentative, yet active belief system. Additionally, such an individual is expected to demonstrate the highest ability to integrate the cognitive, affective, and behavioral components of religious maturity. Given that an individual with a secure attachment style feels unconditionally connected to God, he/she should be more likely to question and challenge personal faith on the basis that said relationship with God remains in tact until a verdict is reached. Also, such an individual likely has a realistic understanding of his/her relationship with God and, as a result, regards it positively and participates in activities which reflect that relationship.

Religious Commitment

Religious commitment will serve as this study's third variable and is defined by Worthington et al. (2002) as "the degree to which a person adheres to his or her religious values, beliefs, and practices and uses them in daily living" (p. 85). Worthington (1988) assumed that a highly religious person is one who utilizes religious schemas to interpret the world and then integrates this perception into the rest of his/her life. Highly religious individuals use three primary value dimensions to interpret the world: the importance of authority figures' role, scriptures or doctrines, and norms of one's religious affiliation (Worthington, 1988). However, moderately and non-religious individuals tend not to utilize such value dimensions. Worthington (1996) advocated for the inclusion of religion when considering clients from a multicultural perspective. Therefore, highly committed religious individuals (those who score in the upper 10-15% of individuals on measures of religious commitment) require an equal amount of special understanding as clients who are in the racial minority. The construct affords counseling psychologists an opportunity to better assess clients who are highly committed to religious values.

Worthington's (1988) conceptualization includes two dimensions: Intrapersonal and Interpersonal Religious Commitment. Intrapersonal religious commitment refers to cognitive aspects of religious commitment such as considering it important to spend periods of time in private religious thought reflection and spending time trying to grow in understanding of faith. Interpersonal religious commitment refers to behavioral aspects of religious commitment such as enjoying working in the activities of one's religious organization, spending time with others who share one's religious affiliation, and making financial contributions to one's religious organization. Religious commitment has been found to be associated with forgiveness (Tsang, McCullough, & Hoyt, 2005), endorsement of covenantal marital values (Ripley, Worthington, Bromley, & Kemper, 2005), and active coping styles of youth confronted with community violence (Kliewer et al., 2006).

Individuals who are intrapersonally committed to their religion are expected to endorse a religious sentiment characterized by transcendent value, directive influence, and higher integration of the cognitive, affective, and behavioral components of religious maturity. Because intrapersonally committed individuals spend time and energy privately growing in faith and believe every day events are influenced by faith, they are more likely to subscribe to religion for its transcendent and directive properties. It also makes sense, then, that intrapersonally committed individuals regard religion positively and participate in activities which reflect personal faith. Individuals who are interpersonally committed to their religion are expected to endorse a religious sentiment characterized by transcendent value, directive influence, open and reflective thought process concerning his/her faith, and an integration of the cognitive, affective, and behavioral components of religious maturity. Of course, much of the same should be true for an individual who is interpersonally committed to religion. However, individuals whose religiosity is enhanced by interaction with other persons are more likely to encounter differing opinions and contrasts of approaches. As a result of the importance placed on interaction, such individuals should also spend more time thinking about how faith compares to that of others'.

Hypotheses

The present study attempts to answer the following questions: Are epistemological beliefs, attachment styles to God, and religious commitment predictive of religious maturity? If so, which is a better predictor?

This author expected that epistemological belief would predict religious maturity better than attachment style to God and religious commitment. This was partly based on a cognitive perspective which assumes that an individual's thinking processes primarily affect how he/she will respond to aspects of living. An individual who perceives human knowledge as debatable, yet achievable, is likely to approach personal religiosity in a similarly tentative manner. Furthermore, an individual's epistemological belief is likely to exert more influence upon the other variables involved. Consider an absolutist who swears by the infallibility of his/her beliefs versus a multiplist who considers his/her belief equally valid. Who would more likely possess a more secure attachment to God characterized by spiritual explorations: the individual who believes in ultimate "hand-me down" truth or the one who considers another's belief to be on par with his/her own? It makes sense, then, that one's disposition toward religion would be largely determined by his/her cognition. This is also a reasonable prediction considering the content of religious maturity measures which seem to emphasize the cognitive domain of religiosity across dimensions.

The extent to which one is secure about one's attachment to God was also expected to correlate positively with religious maturity. However, it may be that someone with a secure attachment toward God may never feel the need to challenge their faith which would diminish their ability to rate high on the measures of religious maturity employed in the present study. Finally, religious commitment was also expected to correlate positively with religious maturity. Although it may be necessary for a religiously mature individual to be committed to his/her religion, someone who is religiously committed would not necessarily be religiously mature. Such an individual may indicate that he/she attends church and interacts with those of similar belief but refrains from actively questioning or searching for a personally developed system of beliefs; instead, opting for an unquestioned, unchallenged faith largely based on information they have uncritically accepted from outside sources.

Method

Participants

The participants were undergraduate college students from Eastern Illinois University recruited through the undergraduate psychology pool. Although participation was voluntary, most students received extra credit from professors when they took part in this research. Participants were mostly freshmen and sophomores, slightly skewed towards the female gender, and predominantly Caucasian in race although some diversity was achieved.

Materials

Five scales were utilized in this study, including the Epistemological Thinking Assessment (Kuhn & Weinstock, 2004), the Attachment to God Inventory (Beck, 2006), the Religious Commitment Inventory (Worthington, 2002), the Religious Maturity Scale – Version 2 (RM-2; Leak & Fish, 1999), and the Religious Attitude Questionnaire (Kristensen, Pedersen, & Williams, 2001).

The Epistemological Thinking Assessment, developed by Kuhn, Cheney, and Weinstock (2000) is a 15-item measure of epistemological beliefs. Epistemological beliefs are assessed on five judgment domains: Personal Taste ("Robin says warm summer days are nicest" versus "Chris says cool autumn days are nicest"), Aesthetic Judgments ("Robin thinks the first piece of music they listen to is better" versus "Chris thinks the second piece of music they listen to is better"), Value Judgments ("Robin thinks people should take responsibility for themselves" versus "Chris thinks people should work together to take care of each other"), Fact About the Social World ("Robin has one view of why criminals keep going back to crime" versus "Chris has a different view of why criminals keep going back to crime"), and Fact About the Physical World ("Robin believes one book's explanation of what atoms are made up of" versus "Chris believes another book's explanation of what atoms are made up of").

There are three items for each of the five judgment domains. On each item, respondents are asked to indicate (by circling answer) whether only one opinion can be right or if both could have some rightness. If the respondent indicates that both views could be right, they are then asked to indicate (by circling answer) whether one opinion could be better or more right than the other. One point is attributed to participants who indicate that only one opinion can be right, two points are attributed to those who indicate that both opinions have some rightness, and three points are attributed to those who indicate that, although both opinions have merit, one is better than the other. Participants' general epistemological level of development is obtained by summing across all domains. Participants' profiles can range from 15 to 45 points with higher scores indicating a leaning towards an evaluativist epistemology and lower scores indicating a tendency towards an absolutist epistemology (Kuhn, Cheney, & Weinstock, 2000).

The Attachment to God Inventory (AGI), developed by Beck and McDonald (2004), is a 28-item measure of level of attachment to God with two subscales: Avoidance of Intimacy with God and Anxiety about Abandonment from God. Each item is rated on a 7-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (Disagree strongly) to 4 (Neutral/Mixed) to 7 (Agree strongly). Examples of the 14-item AGI-Avoidance subscale (Factor 1) include "I prefer not to depend too much on God" and "I am totally dependent on God for everything in my life" while examples of the 14-item AGI-Anxiety subscale (Factor 2) include "I worry a lot about my relationship with God" and "I often worry about whether God is pleased with me." On each subscale, scores can range from 14 to 98 with higher scores indicating a more anxious or avoidant attachment.

A participant whose profile is marked by low attachment avoidance and anxiety scores indicates secure attachment. Each subscale has been found to have strong internal consistency with alpha coefficients ranging from .84 to .88 in Avoidance items and .80 to .87 in Anxiety items as well as moderate convergent and discriminant validity (Beck & McDonald, 2004; Beck, 2006).

The Religious Commitment Inventory (RCI-10) developed by Worthington (2002), is a 10-item measure of religious commitment with two subscales: intrapersonal and interpersonal religious commitment. Each item is rated on a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (not at all true of me) to 5 (totally true of me). Higher scores indicate more religious commitment. Examples of the 6-item Intrapersonal Religious Commitment subscale (Factor 1) include "My religious beliefs lie behind my whole approach to life" and "I spend time trying to grow in understanding of my faith." Scores on this subscale can range from 6 to 30 with higher scores indicating more intrapersonal religious commitment. Examples of the 4-item Interpersonal Religious Commitment subscale (Factor 2) include "I enjoy working in the activities of my religious organization" and "I enjoy spending time with others of my religious affiliation." Scores on this subscale can range from 4 to 20 with higher scores indicating more interpersonal religious commitment. Worthington (2002) has found each subscale to have excellent internal consistency with alpha coefficients of .92 for Intrapersonal Religious Commitment, .87 for Interpersonal Religious Commitment, and .93 for the entire scale, as well as strong 3-week test-retest reliability, and adequate construct validity.

The Religious Maturity Scale – Version 2 (RM-2), developed by Leak (2002), is a 34-item measure of religious maturity with four subscales: Master-motive, Complexity, Openness, and Heuristic Quality. Each item is rated on a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). On all subscales, higher scores indicate more religious maturity. Sample items from each subscale follow: Master-motive (Factor 1): "religion as the main source for making sense of life" and "life's meaning comes from one's religion"; Complexity (Factor 2): "To me, it is more important to believe and follow the teachings of my church than to develop and follow my own personal view of God" and "I have developed, or am now developing, an independent religious conviction based on my experiences in living"; Openness (Factor 3): "I owe my present religious attitude in part to having experienced a deep doubt about the validity and value of my earlier religious beliefs" and "I don't feel much need to reflect on my religious orientation to life; my religious questions have already been answered to my satisfaction"; Heuristic Quality (Factor 4): "God exists, but I'm not sure of His precise nature" and "I realize my religious beliefs aren't 'The Truth', yet I still accept them as the best means available to arrive at the ultimate meaning of life and the universe."

Items one and two are not scored. Therefore, scores on each subscale can range from 8 to 32 with higher scores indicating more maturity within that subscale (master-motive, complexity, openness, and heuristic quality). Each factor has been found to have adequate to strong internal consistency with alpha coefficients of .91 (Master-motive), .78 (Complexity), .80 (Openness), and .71 (Heuristic quality), adequate convergent validity, as well as suggested inherent content validity demonstrated through the first version of this scale (Leak and Fish, 1999).

The Religious Attitude Questionnaire, developed by Kristensen, Pedersen, and Williams (2001) is a 24-item measure of the three components of religious attitude: Affect, Cognition, and Conation. Each item is rated on a 9-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (does not describe me very well) to 9 (describes me very well). Sample items from each attitude component scale follow: Affect: "I am always excited regarding religious things" and "I am happy when I talk about religious things"; Cognition: "I think religious truth is higher than any other kind of truth" and "I think there should be more religious discussion in public"; Conation: "I constantly read scripture, even when there is nobody to remind me" and "I always attend church weekly, even when there is nobody to remind me." Each attitude component is assessed by eight items. Across all 24 items, scores can range from 24 to 216 with a higher overall score indicating greater religious maturity. The alpha coefficients for internal consistency were .90 for Affect, .78 for Cognition, and .72 for Conation.

Procedure

Participants were recruited from the undergraduate psychology pool at Eastern Illinois University. Before data collection began, participants were given informed consent forms to sign. All five measures (Epistemological Thinking Assessment, Attachment to God Inventory, Religious Commitment Inventory, Religious Maturity Scale – Version 2, and Religious Attitude Questionnaire) were then administered and participants were required to complete the five measures in one session lasting approximately 35 minutes. Demographic variables such as gender, ethnicity, and age were collected. At the end of the data collecting session, participants were debriefed about the nature of the study.

Results

Scores for Religious Maturity, Integration of Religious Attitudes, Epistemological Belief, Attachment Style to God, and Religious Commitment in the Study Sample

There were 246 questionnaires completed by students at Eastern Illinois University. The dependent (predicted) factors were the four domains of religious maturity (master-motive, complexity of beliefs, openness, and heuristic quality) and the integration of the three components of religious attitudes (affect, cognition, and conation). The independent factors (predictors) included: the level of epistemological beliefs; attachment style to God; and level of religious commitment. To achieve a more specific understanding of the relationships between the predictors and the criterion variables, each predictor's subscales were utilized in the analyses. For epistemological belief, only two subscales ('values' and 'facts about the social world') were included in the regression analyses because they were deemed most relevant to the construct of religious maturity.

Table 1

Mean Religious Maturity (RM) and Integration of Religious Attitudes Scores

Predicted Variables	Mean and Standard Deviation	Possible Range of Scores
RM: Master-Motive	$M = 27.45$ $SD = 6.57$	8-32
RM: Complexity of Beliefs	$M = 25.55$ $SD = 4.67$	8-32

RM: Openness	$M = 24.02$ $SD = 4.31$	8-32
RM: Heuristic Quality	$M = 24.02$ $SD = 4.31$	8-32
Integration of Religious Attitudes	$M = 117.20$ $SD = 22.96$	9-216

Given the possible range of scores, participants scored highly on each dimension of religious maturity. The participants' religious sentiment is characterized by a guiding force that influences many areas of their lives rather than just a few (master-motive), with critical tendencies and comprehensiveness rather than unquestioned acceptance (complexity of beliefs), openness and reflective thought processes instead of complacency (openness), and with active, yet, tentatively held beliefs rather than dogmatism (heuristic quality).

Additionally, participants exhibited a mid-level ability to integrate the affective, cognitive, and behavioral attitude components of their religious lives. This means that the participants tend to emphasize one attitude component over the others. For example, an individual might not experience intense emotion when engaged in religious practices (affective) or spend much time thinking about religious issues (cognitive) but decide to attend religious services regularly (behavioral). See Table 1 above.

Table 2

Mean Epistemological Belief, Attachment to God, and Religious Commitment Scores

Predictors	Mean and Standard Deviation	Possible Range of Scores
Epistemological Belief: Values	*M* = 6.54 *SD* = 1.46	3-9
Epistemological Belief: Facts about the Social World	*M* = 6.79 *SD* = 1.27	3-9
Attachment to God: Avoidant	*M* = 58.29 *SD* = 6.17	14-98
Attachment to God: Anxious	*M* = 48.31 *SD* = 9.45	14-98
Religious Commitment: Intrapersonal	*M* = 17.51 *SD* = 5.44	6-30
Religious Commitment: Interpersonal	*M* = 11.40 *SD* = 4.01	4-20

Given the possible range of scores, participants scored on the middle range of the epistemological thinking continuum. This indicates that they believed in a multiplist approach that emphasizes subjective truth particularly on judgments concerning 'values' and 'facts about the world.' When presented with conflicting values, they judged each to be equally valid. Likewise, when confronted with differing opinions about social matters, each position was considered legitimate.

Participants also attained middle-range scores on measures of avoidant and anxious attachment styles to God. These suggest that the participants' relationship with God is somewhat characterized by a need for self-reliance and distrust (avoidant attachment style) and is indicative of fear of abandonment by God and occasional worrying about one's relationship with God (anxious attachment style).

For intrapersonal and interpersonal types of religious commitment, participants scored in the middle range. In other words, participants indicated that they invest a moderate amount of time thinking about religious issues (intrapersonal) and a moderate amount of time engaging in religious activities (interpersonal) such as attending church or making financial contributions to a religious organization. See Table 2 above.

Predicting the Master-Motive Dimension of Religious Maturity from Epistemological Belief, Attachment Style to God, and Religious Commitment

A multiple regression analysis was conducted to evaluate how well levels of epistemological belief, attachment style to God, and religious commitment predicted the master-motive dimension of religious maturity. The predictor variables were: 1) level of epistemological belief concerning 'values'; 2) level of epistemological belief on 'facts about the social world'; 3) attachment style to God marked by anxiety; 4) attachment style to God marked by avoidance; 5) level of intrapersonal religious commitment; and 6) level of interpersonal religious commitment. The linear combination of epistemological belief, attachment style to God, and religious commitment was significantly related to the master-motive dimension of religious maturity, $F(6, 236) = 69.52$, $p < .001$. The multiple correlation coefficient for this sample was .80, indicating that approximately 64% of the variance of the master-motive dimension of religious maturity in this sample can be accounted for by the linear combination of this group of predictors. Only three of the six predictors were significantly associated with the master-motive dimension of religious maturity: intrapersonal religious commitment, $\beta = .67, p < .01$; avoidant attachment style to God, $\beta = -.12, p < .01$; and interpersonal religious commitment, $\beta = .21, p < .05$. Intrapersonal religious commitment accounted for 21% of the variance in the master-motive dimension, while interpersonal religious commitment contributed 1%. An avoidant attachment style to God explained 1% of the variance. Participants who were highly committed cognitively and behaviorally and who tended to have a more secure relationship with God were more likely to ascribe to religion for its transcendent rather than self-serving properties. See Table 3 below.

Table 3

Summary of Multiple Regression Analysis for Epistemological Belief, Attachment Style to God, and Religious Commitment Predicting the Master-motive Dimension of Religious Maturity (N = 243)

Predictor	*B*	*SE B*	β
EB - Values	.03	.19	.01
EB – Facts About Social World	.19	.22	.04
AGI – Avoidance	-.12	.05	-.11**
AGI – Anxiety	-.04	.03	-.06

RC – Intrapersonal	.82	.07	.67***
RC – Interpersonal	.21	.09	.13*

Note. $R^2 = .64$ ($p < .001$).
* $p < .05$
** $p < .01$
*** $p < .001$

Predicting the Complexity of Beliefs Dimension of Religious Maturity from Epistemological Belief, Attachment Style to God, and Religious Commitment

A multiple regression analysis was conducted to evaluate how well levels of epistemological belief, attachment style to God, and religious commitment predicted the complexity of beliefs dimension of religious maturity. The predictor variables were: 1) level of epistemological belief concerning 'values'; 2) level of epistemological belief on 'facts about the social world'; 3) attachment style to God marked by anxiety; 4) attachment style to God marked by avoidance; 5) level of intrapersonal religious commitment; and 6) level of interpersonal religious commitment. The linear combination of epistemological belief, attachment style to God, and religious commitment was not significantly related to the complexity of beliefs dimension of religious maturity, $F(6, 236) = 1.96$, $p = .07$. The multiple correlation coefficient for this sample was .22, indicating that only 5% of the variance of the complexity of beliefs dimension of religious maturity in this sample can be accounted for by this group of predictors. There were no factors significantly associated with the complexity of beliefs dimension of religious maturity. See Table 4 below.

Table 4

Summary of Multiple Regression Analysis for Epistemological Belief, Attachment Style to God, and Religious Commitment Predicting the Complexity of Beliefs Dimension of Religious Maturity (N = 243)

Predictor	*B*	*SE B*	β
EB - Values	.06	.22	.02
EB – Facts About Social World	.24	.25	.07
AGI – Avoidance	.04	.05	.05
AGI – Anxiety	-.05	.03	-.11
RC – Intrapersonal	-.01	.08	-.01
RC – Interpersonal	-.17	.11	-.14

Note. $R^2 = .05$ ($p = .07$).
* $p < .05$
** $p < .01$
*** $p < .001$

Predicting the Openness Dimension of Religious Maturity from Epistemological Belief, Attachment Style to God, and Religious Commitment

A multiple regression analysis was conducted to evaluate how well levels of epistemological belief, attachment style to God, and religious commitment predicted the openness dimension of religious maturity. The predictor variables were: 1) level of epistemological belief concerning 'values'; 2) level of epistemological belief on 'facts about the social world'; 3) attachment style to God marked by anxiety; 4) attachment style to God marked by avoidance; 5) level of intrapersonal religious commitment; and 6) level of interpersonal religious commitment. The linear combination of epistemological belief, attachment style to God, and religious commitment was significantly related to the openness dimension of religious maturity, F (6, 236) = 5.46, $p < .001$. The multiple correlation coefficient for this sample was .35, indicating that approximately 12% of the variance of the openness dimension of religious maturity in this sample can be accounted for by the linear combination of this group of predictors. Only one factor was significantly associated with the openness dimension of religious maturity: anxious attachment style to God, $\beta = .35$, $p < .001$. Anxious attachment style to God accounted for 11% of the variance of the openness dimension of religious maturity. Participants who were more anxious in their relationship with God were more likely to approach religiosity with open, reflective thought processes.

Table 5

Summary of Multiple Regression Analysis for Epistemological Belief, Attachment Style to God, and Religious Commitment Predicting the Openness Dimension of Religious Maturity in EIU Students (N = 243)

Predictor	*B*	*SE B*	β
EB - Values	.04	.20	.01
EB – Facts About Social World	.31	.22	.09

AGI – Avoidance	.05	.05	.07
AGI – Anxiety	.16	.03	.35***
RC – Intrapersonal	.11	.07	.13
RC – Interpersonal	-.13	.10	-.12

Note. $R^2 = .12$ ($p < .001$).
* $p < .05$
** $p < .01$
*** $p < .001$

Predicting the Heuristic Quality Dimension of Religious Maturity from Epistemological Belief, Attachment Style to God, and Religious Commitment

A multiple regression analysis was conducted to evaluate how well levels of epistemological belief, attachment style to God, and religious commitment predicted the heuristic quality dimension of religious maturity in EIU students. The predictor variables were: 1) level of epistemological belief concerning 'values'; 2) level of epistemological belief on 'facts about the social world'; 3) attachment style to God marked by anxiety; 4) attachment style to God marked by avoidance; 5) level of intrapersonal religious commitment; and 6) level of interpersonal religious commitment. The linear combination of epistemological belief, attachment style to God, and religious commitment was significantly related to the heuristic quality dimension of religious maturity, $F\ (6, 236) = 2.34, p < .05$. The multiple correlation coefficient for this sample was .24, indicating that approximately 6% of the variance of the heuristic quality dimension of religious maturity in this sample can be accounted for by the linear combination of this group of predictors. Only one factor was significantly associated with the heuristic quality dimension of religious maturity: avoidant attachment style to God, $\beta = .19$, $p < .01$. Avoidant attachment style to God accounted for 3% of the variance of the heuristic quality dimension of religious maturity. Participants who were more avoidant in their relationship with God were more likely to act upon their religiosity despite tentatively held beliefs. See Table 6 below.

Table 6

Summary of Multiple Regression Analysis for Epistemological Belief, Attachment Style to God, and Religious Commitment Predicting the Heuristic Quality Dimension of Religious Maturity in EIU Students (N = 243)

Predictor	*B*	*SE B*	β
EB - Values	.35	.19	.13
EB – Facts About Social World	.07	.21	.02
AGI – Avoidance	.12	.04	.19**
AGI – Anxiety	.05	.03	.12
RC – Intrapersonal	.12	.07	.16
RC – Interpersonal	-.10	.09	-.10

Note. $R^2 = .06$ ($p < .05$)
* $p < .05$
** $p < .01$

*** $p < .001$

Predicting the Integration of Religious Attitude Components from Epistemological Belief, Attachment Style to God, and Religious Commitment

A multiple regression analysis was conducted to evaluate how well levels of epistemological belief, attachment style to God, and religious commitment predicted the integration of religious attitude components in EIU students. The predictor variables were: 1) level of epistemological belief concerning 'values'; 2) level of epistemological belief on 'facts about the social world'; 3) attachment style to God marked by anxiety; 4) attachment style to God marked by avoidance; 5) level of intrapersonal religious commitment; and 6) level of interpersonal religious commitment. The linear combination of epistemological belief, attachment style to God, and religious commitment was significantly related to the integration of religious attitude components, $F(6, 234) = 56.04, p < .001$. The multiple correlation coefficient for this sample was .77, indicating that approximately 59% of the variance of the integration of religious attitude components in this sample can be accounted for by the linear combination of this group of predictors. Two factors were significantly associated with the integration of religious attitude components: intrapersonal religious commitment, $\beta = .48, p < .001$; and interpersonal religious commitment, $\beta = .34, p < .001$. Intrapersonal religious commitment accounted for 11% of the variance of integration of religious attitude components while interpersonal religious commitment contributed an additional 6%. Participants who were highly committed behaviorally and cognitively were more likely to approach religiosity in a consistent and/or integrative manner. See Table 7 below.

Table 7

Summary of Multiple Regression Analysis for Epistemological Belief, Attachment Style to God, and Religious Commitment Predicting the Integration of Religious Attitude Components in EIU Students (N = 243)

Predictor	*B*	*SE B*	β
EB - Values	.33	.72	.02
EB – Facts About Social World	.20	.81	.01
AGI – Avoidance	-.13	.17	-.04
AGI – Anxiety	-.06	.11	.03
RC – Intrapersonal	2.03	.26	.48***
RC – Interpersonal	1.96	.35	.34***

Note. $R^2 = .59$ ($p < .001$).
* $p < .05$
** $p < .01$
*** $p < .001$

Discussion

The present study sought to explore how three concepts (epistemological belief, attachment style to God, and religious commitment) could predict religious maturity. Each concept had specific types or dimensions. For example, epistemological belief was represented by ‘judgments about values' and 'facts of the social world.' The other variables were treated in a similar fashion: attachment styles to God were studied as 'avoidant' and 'anxious' types; and religious commitment was further specified as 'interpersonal' and 'intrapersonal' types.

Religious maturity was represented by the four dimensions (master-motive, complexity of belief, openness, and heuristic quality) of the Religious Maturity Scale – Version 2 (Leak & Fish, 1999) and the integration of religious attitude components (Religious Attitude Components Scale; Kristensen et al., 2001). The study aimed at determining which variable (epistemological belief, attachment style to God, and religious commitment) was most predictive of each facet of religious maturity.

Predicting the Master-motive Dimension of Religious Maturity

Individuals who score high on the master-motive dimension are those who tend to engage in religion for its transcendent value and its directive influence in their lives. Among all the predictors examined in the study, intrapersonal religious commitment was the best predictor of this facet of religious maturity. When people spend more time developing private religiosity and understanding they are also more likely to recognize the transcendent value of religion and would allow life's decisions to be informed by faith concerns. Although interpersonal religious commitment and avoidant attachment style to God also contributed to the relationship, their impact was minimal.

Predicting the Complexity of Belief Dimension of Religious Maturity

None of the predictors were found to be associated with complexity of belief. This author predicted individuals' level of epistemological belief to be a major contributor towards increased complexity of religious belief. However, neither of the two types of epistemological beliefs ('judgments about values' and 'facts of the social world') were found to be associated with this dimension of religious maturity. In fact, epistemological belief was not predictive of any other dimension of religious maturity or the integration of religious attitude components. This is somewhat surprising considering the large role cognition plays in a couple of the dimensions of religious maturity. The complexity of beliefs dimension is largely defined by differentiation and comprehensiveness in religious sentiment. These elements imply the need for individuals to develop critical thinking abilities to determine which aspects of religiosity will be assimilated versus those that will not. Additionally, the comprehensiveness element suggests that individuals search for outside perspectives to incorporate into their own to continually modify and refine a religious sentiment that slowly gets closer and closer to personal satisfaction. It seems that individuals' progression to higher levels of epistemology would coincide with their inclination to regard religion in this way.

Barrett & Patock-Peckham (2005) demonstrated that cognitive and religious orientations influence one another. These authors found a positive correlation between the quest dimension of religious maturity (Batson et al., 1993) and those that engage in and enjoy effortful thinking and rely on personal standards when making decisions. Another article found correlations between three epistemological dimensions (dualism, relativism, and commitment) and religious-cognitive styles (Desimpelaere, Sulas, Duriez, & Hutsebaut, 1999). Because personal epistemology and religiosity have been linked in the past, it would seem that an individual's level of epistemological belief could influence one's level of religious maturity. However, this did not seem to be evident in the current study. At least one explanation is plausible; it could be that epistemological stance on religious issues was not adequately measured by the scale used in this study. It has been postulated that an individual can assume various levels of epistemological belief when confronted with different issues of judgment such as personal taste, aesthetics, values, facts about the social world, and facts about the physical world (Kuhn & Weinstock, 2002). These authors theorized that individuals tend to develop towards an evaluativist position one epistemological domain at a time. They believed that individuals would regard judgments of personal taste in an evaluativist manner before they did so with value judgments. Likewise, just because an individual demonstrates evaluativist thought processes in value judgments does not imply that he/she would think as an evaluativist when presented with religious issues. The questionnaire utilized in the present study failed to address epistemological thinking in the religious domain. This author believes that there would have been a positive correlation found between epistemological belief and religious maturity if the questionnaire used in this study directly assessed individuals' epistemological belief concerning religious issues. Future researchers should incorporate scales that more specifically assess epistemology of religion such as that utilized in Desimpelaere et al. (1999).

Predicting the Openness Dimension of Religious Maturity

Among the predictors, an anxious attachment style to God was the only significant predictor of openness. In the present sample, participants who were more likely to possess an anxious attachment style to God also indicated that they approach religiosity in an open, reflective manner. This finding is at odds with a recent article by Beck (2006) who found that anxiety in one's relationship with God was negatively correlated with two dimensions of quest religiosity: ecumenism (tolerance towards other Christian beliefs) and exploration (effort towards learning about other belief systems). These two characteristics of quest-type religiosity appear similar to the openness dimension of Leak and Fish's (1999) conceptualization of religious maturity which has been described as an open orientation to religiosity where the individual is willing to entertain other beliefs to assimilate into his/her own. It seems that an open and reflective search for religiosity would go hand in hand with ecumenism and exploration of other Christian belief systems. If so, then what accounts for the discrepancy in these findings? It is possible that some individuals experience anxiety because of their openness towards other belief systems. Perhaps, in their openness, such individuals forfeit the comfort and personal affirmation that others experience when they believe they have *the* answer rather than *an* answer. Overall, these conflicting results reflect an earlier disagreement referred to previously about the nature of the "quest characteristics" of religious maturity. Whereas Batson and Ventis (1993) believed that individuals benefited from questioning their faith, Kojetin et al. (1987) argued that individuals could fit the profile for quest religiosity but experience distress as a result of their questioning. This leads to the question: What leads "questing" individuals to have dynamically different religious experiences? Would an individual imbued by a sense of openness while remaining religiously committed experience less anxiety about his/her relationship with God? Obviously, more research is needed in this area.

Predicting the Heuristic Quality Dimension of Religious Maturity

An avoidant attachment style was the only significant predictor of the heuristic quality of religious maturity. Participants who were more avoidant in their relationship with God were more likely to act upon their religiosity despite tentatively held beliefs. This suggests that individuals who are avoidant do not necessarily subscribe to agnosticism or turn their back on all religious issues. Beck (2006) reported that avoidant attachment styles rejected orthodoxy for what appeared to be a lack of interest in religious concerns altogether. Someone with an avoidant attachment style could conceivably lose interest in religious matters because they elicit uncomfortable emotions in the individual. The current study's findings clearly oppose Beck's observations. It is difficult to explain how someone who avoids religious issues and the experience of God would continue to act upon their religiosity. Perhaps this describes those individuals who were raised in homes that stressed the importance of religiosity and have continued to participate in religious activities despite never having made a significant attachment to God. If this were a longitudinal study, perhaps this finding would change as the individual gradually abstained from religious activity. It is also possible that these individuals are in the process of exploring other religious belief systems outside of Christianity.

Predicting the Integration of Religious Attitude Components

Intrapersonal and interpersonal religious commitments were the two sole significant predictors of an integrated religious attitude. Participants who were highly committed behaviorally and cognitively (i.e., who scored highly on intrapersonal and interpersonal religious commitment) were more likely to approach religiosity in a consistent and/or integrative manner. This makes sense because a more integrated religious attitude would describe someone who possesses positive feelings about religion, thinks positive thoughts toward religion, and engages in religious activities. Likewise, religious commitment is marked by time spent by an individual thinking about religious issues and engaging in religious behaviors. Clearly, there is much overlap between these two constructs (religious commitment and integration of religious attitudes).

Evaluating the Overall Predictive Value of Epistemological Belief, Attachment Style to God, and Religious Commitment

Overall, attachment style to God was found to have a significant relationship with three of Leak and Fish's (1999) religious maturity dimensions (master-motive, openness, and the heuristic quality dimensions) while religious commitment was correlated with two (master-motive dimension and integration of religious attitudes). On the other hand, epistemological belief was not found to be associated with any of the dimensions. Religious commitment was the only variable that was associated with Kristensen et al's. (2001) integration of religious attitudes components notion of religious maturity.

Not one of the predictors was found to have a relationship with every facet of religious maturity, validating the notion that religious maturity is a very complex and multifaceted construct that is unlikely to be explained by any one variable. However, the results of this study indicated that the emotional and behavioral predictors (i.e., attachment style to God and religious commitment) may be more predictive of an individual's level of religious maturity than the cognitive one (epistemological belief). It appears that individuals do in fact develop distinct emotional attachments toward God and, as a result, differ in how they approach religiosity. Participants who approach religiosity with an open mind and who are more willing to entertain other belief systems while keeping their own in perspective are more likely to experience anxiety in their relationship with God. On the other hand, participants who actively avoid an intimate relationship with God were still more likely to engage in religious activity despite doubts about their religious beliefs. These findings differ from Beck's (2006) assertion that anxious attachment hinders individuals from exploring other religious ideas in fear of being abandoned by God while avoidant attachment leaves the individuals disinterested in religious concerns altogether. Perhaps the influence that attachment to God exerts upon individuals is not as clear as originally believed. Whereas some individuals allow their fear of God abandonment (anxious attachment) to restrict their outside influences, others may experience anxiety as a result of allowing themselves to explore beliefs and ideas outside of their own; avoidant attachment may result in apathy towards religious concerns for some while leading others to express and act out on their religiosity while resisting exposure to situations that might provoke emotionality.

Beck (2006) has recognized that attachment style to God may not account for all aspects of one's affective relationship with God. He proposed that other psychological theories traditionally utilized to typify human relationships (object-relations theory, triangular love perspective, as well as attachment style to God) may also shed light on individuals' God relationships. Future researchers should include these other psychological constructs to provide a more complete picture of the affective relationships that humans develop with God and, in turn, help to explain some of the inconsistencies mentioned between the present study and Beck (2006).

Another explanation might be found in Beck's (2006) acknowledgment that attachment style to God could be a dynamic condition that changes as an individual ages. This possibility is evidenced by Beck's (2004) finding that older individuals may be more likely to embody a secure attachment than undergraduate students. If individuals experience changes in their relationship with God, then it makes sense that two studies may produce different findings. Suppose an individual is in the midst of a transition to avoidant attachment. Is it not feasible to assume that behavioral habits (weekly church attendance, daily prayer, etc.) linger despite a shift in emotional attachment?

Religious commitment was also associated with religious maturity; especially those aspects dealing with life direction and integration of religious attitude components. It makes sense that as individuals engage in religious activities such as daily prayer (intrapersonal) or weekly church attendance (interpersonal), they would be propelled towards a maturing religious sentiment. Actions that represent religious beliefs have been emphasized by the Christian tradition for centuries as found in the Bible's New Testament book of James chapter two, verse twenty six, “For just as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is also dead.” Behavior is clearly an essential component of religiosity. Conceptualizing religion devoid of its behavioral elements is impossible. Could emotional experiences of religiosity exist without their behavioral counterparts? Would individuals obtain personal security without prayer or communal gathering; sense of awe without quiet contemplation; redemption without reading biblical accounts of the life of Christ; or experience the interconnectedness of humanity without serving the less fortunate? Religious behavior appears to function as a bridge that connects individuals to deeper emotions that remind them of their specific life perspective.

Although the present study indicated that the emotional and behavioral predictors were more associated with religious maturity than epistemological belief, this author believes that cognition remains a vital ingredient of the mature religious sentiment. It could be that the questionnaire utilized in the present study tested for a general level of epistemology instead of assessing specifically for individuals' level of epistemology concerning religious issues. However, the possibility remains that epistemology is not the sole cognitive component of religious maturity. This author recommends that future researchers aim to identify and explore this important aspect of religiosity.

Methodological and Conceptual Limitations

As with any study, there are several limitations to consider. First, counterbalancing was not utilized as a means of preventing fatigue from affecting the outcome. If this author were to redistribute the questionnaires used in this study, he would have alternated the order in which participants received them. Because counterbalancing was not utilized in the present study, it is unclear whether religious maturity was adequately and reliably measured because it was the last questionnaire for each participant to complete during the testing period. As a result, it could be that the accuracy of participants' self reports was compromised by fatigue or disinterest. This could have been resolved by changing the order of questionnaires in the packet that the participants received.

Next, because the current study only consisted of participants from Eastern Illinois University, the sample is not representative of the general population. Rather, the results observed and their implications only have meaning for students that attend this specific college. In order to obtain results that are more indicative of the general population, participants should have been chosen at random. Random sampling would have ensured that participants varied in SES, age, race, gender, geography, education level, and other important demographic variables.

Another limitation of the current study is that its design was correlational as opposed to experimental. A correlational design demonstrates existing relationships between two variables but does not have enough strength to imply causality because there is no direct manipulation of variables. Neither does it specify the direction of the relationships. It is unclear, for example, if openness on religious matters leads to an anxious relationship with God or that an anxious style of attachment to God leads to openness.

On a more conceptual level, this study is limited because of its focus on Westernized Christianity which emphasizes the establishment of personal relationships with God. Other types of religiosity, such as Zen Buddhism, do not place high value in the notion of God. Determining individuals' attachment style to God is irrelevant in these types of religiosity or spirituality and researchers who aspire to study religion from a broader perspective will have to consider other variables within the affective domain of religiosity.

It is this author's belief that the mature religious sentiment can exist among those who ascribe to religious beliefs other than Westernized Christianity. However, current research and available assessment instruments are limited in this way. The mature religious sentiment appears to be more concerned with the way in which an individual regards his/her belief system as opposed to the specific content involved. Mature religion is represented by the individual who acknowledges that ultimate truth transcends doctrine upheld within his/her particular faith community. Despite this recognition, the religiously mature individual continues to live as informed by his/her beliefs despite their tentative nature. This individual is open to beliefs outside of his/her own understanding; this is necessary so that the individual can make an informed decision against an outside understanding or assimilate said belief into his/her own world view.

According to the above understanding, religious maturity would not exclude belief systems outside of Westernized Christianity. Bidwell (2001) developed nine personal assumptions about the maturing religious sentiment that he believed to be common across all religious traditions. The author notes that these assumptions arise out of personal experience which includes studying Theravada Buddhism; teaching Hindu, Moslem, and Christian journalists; grew up near a university that stressed the importance of social justice; obtained education for ministry at an ecumenical seminary affiliated with the Christian Church; and is currently a pastoral caregiver who ascribes to Reformed Christianity. First, Bidwell (2001) argues that the mature religious sentiment must be teleological which "carries a sense of intention and consciousness in relation to the divine" (p. 285) in daily living. Next, he recognizes the differentiated aspect of religious maturity as initially described by Allport (1950) which enables individuals to not feel threatened when confronted with beliefs that do not coincide with their own. Additionally, such an individual would not feel the need to make an attempt to convert that individual to their own belief system. Third, mature religious belief should be chosen in that the individual should be able to consider it in an objective manner, wrestle with questions pertaining to it, and return to living within its parameters. There are three parts to the fourth assumption that include internal and external aspects (belief and action) and vertical and horizontal aspects (which account for both divine relationships which are eternal and human relationships which are immediate). Additionally, there should be an element that accounts for the integration of all aspects (putting together believing and doing with both divine and finite relationships in perspective). Fifth, mature religiosity enters a dialog with some sort of community and tradition that reflects a sense of belonging to a particular people or texts, affirms goodness of finite and eternal realities, and addresses the sense of obligation to others. Sixth, it provides security in the midst of anxiety from existential concerns. Seventh, the individual will begin to act according to his/her new found sense of ultimate reality. Eighth, the mature religious sentiment should allow an individual to be aware of the lens through which he/she is viewing the world. As a result, the individual is able to choose the lens that he/she looks through in a particular moment while keeping in perspective that ultimate truth transcends all faith traditions. Lastly, the mature religious sentiment exists when it is integrated to the extent that it affects all areas of one's life.

One of the major areas where religious maturity research lacks is its ability to offer instruments to assess individuals with beliefs other than mainstream Christianity. Bidwell (2001) offers a fresh perspective on this subject that provides a conceptualization that is relevant in a world where individuals are confronted with an increasingly diverse culture. Many participants were excluded from the present study because they possessed a belief system that was incompatible with the instruments derived from mainstream Christianity. Future research should focus on developing a questionnaire that assessed religious maturity as defined by Bidwell (2001) or a similar conceptualization that accounts for a more varied religious experience. Such an endeavor would allow researchers to study a sample much more representative of the world's religious diversity.

Studying the construct of religious maturity is important because of its implications for society. As stated in the introduction, religion has had both positive and negative outcomes for society. This author believes that some of these catastrophes may have been avoided (or future tragedies may be prevented) if the instigators for these events would have embodied a religious sentiment as delineated by Allport (1950) and his characterization of the mature religious sentiment. Additionally, increasing amounts of practicing therapists are including sections about religion on intake assessments for new clients. Because religious maturity has been associated with heightened levels of self-actualizing tendencies and self-esteem (Leak & Fish, 1999), specifying the relationship that other variables have with religious maturity could hint towards areas of personal growth that would enhance a client's well-being. Although elevating the overall prevalence of religious maturity in the general population might be considered overly ambitious or idealistic, the prospect of cultivating religious maturity in a one-on-one therapeutic relationship seems within reach.

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Appendix A

Epistemological Thinking Assessment

Read each set of statements and answer the subsequent questions by circling an answer.

1.) Robin says warm summer days are nicest.
Chris says cool autumn days are nicest.

Can only one of their views be right, or could both have some rightness? (Choose One)

Only one right Both could have some rightness

If both could be right:

Could one view be better or more right than the other? (Circle One)

Yes No

2.) Robin says the stew is spicy.
Chris says the stew is not spicy at all.

Can only one of their views be right, or could both have some rightness? (Circle One)

Only one right Both could have some rightness

If both could be right:

Could one view be better or more right than the other? (Circle One)

Yes No

3.) Robin thinks weddings should be held in the afternoon.
Chris thinks weddings should be held in the evening.

Can only one of their views be right, or could both have some rightness? (Circle One)

Only one right Both could have some rightness

If both could be right:

Could one view be better or more right than the other? (Circle One)

Yes No

4.) Robin thinks the first piece of music they listen to is better.
Chris thinks the second piece of music they listen to is better.

Can only one of their views be right, or could both have some rightness? (Circle One)

Only one right Both could have some rightness

If both could be right:

Could one view be better or more right than the other? (Circle One)

Yes No

5.) Robin thinks the first painting they look at is better.
Chris thinks the second painting they look at is better.
Can only one of their views be right, or could both have some rightness? (Circle One)

Only one right Both could have some rightness

If both could be right:

Could one view be better or more right than the other? (Circle One)

Yes No

6.) Robin thinks the first book they both read is better.
Chris thinks the second book they both read is better.

Can only one of their views be right, or could both have some rightness? (Circle One)

Only one right Both could have some rightness

If both could be right:

Could one view be better or more right than the other? (Circle One)

Yes No

7.) Robin thinks people should take responsibility for themselves.
Chris thinks people should work together to take care of each other.

Can only one of their views be right, or could both have some rightness? (Circle One)

Only one right Both could have some rightness

If both could be right:

Could one view be better or more right than the other? (Circle One)

Yes No

8.) Robin thinks lying is wrong.
Chris thinks lying is permissible in certain situations.

Can only one of their views be right, or could both have some rightness? (Circle One)

Only one right Both could have some rightness

If both could be right:

Could one view be better or more right than the other? (Circle One)

Yes No

9.) Robin thinks the government should limit the number of children families are allowed to have to keep the population from getting too big.
Chris thinks families should have as many children as they choose.

Can only one of their views be right, or could both have some rightness? (Circle One)

Only one right Both could have some rightness

If both could be right:

Could one view be better or more right than the other? (Circle One)

Yes No

10.) Robin has one view of why criminals keep going back to crime.
Chris has a different view of why criminals keep going back to crime.

Can only one of their views be right, or could both have some rightness? (Circle One)

Only one right Both could have some rightness

If both could be right:

Could one view be better or more right than the other? (Circle One)

Yes No

11.) Robin thinks one book's explanation of why the Crimean wars began is right.
Chris thinks another book's explanation of why the Crimean wars began is right.

Can only one of their views be right, or could both have some rightness? (Circle One)

Only one right Both could have some rightness

If both could be right:

Could one view be better or more right than the other? (Circle One)

Yes No

12.) Robin agrees with one book's explanation of how children learn language.
Chris agrees with another book's explanation of how children learn language.

Can only one of their views be right, or could both have some rightness? (Circle One)

Only one right Both could have some rightness

If both could be right:

Could one view be better or more right than the other? (Circle One)

Yes No

13.) Robin believes on book's explanation of what atoms are made up of.
Chris believes another book's explanation of what atoms are made up of.

Can only one of their views be right, or could both have some rightness? (Circle One)

Only one right Both could have some rightness

If both could be right:

Could one view be better or more right than the other? (Circle One)

Yes No

14.) Robin believes one book's explanation of how the brain works.
Chris believes another book's explanation of how the brain works.

Can only one of their views be right, or could both have some rightness? (Circle One)

Only one right Both could have some rightness

If both could be right:

Could one view be better or more right than the other? (Circle One)

Yes No

15.) Robin believes one mathematician's proof of the math formula is right.
Chris believes another mathematician's proof of the math formula is right.

Can only one of their views be right, or could both have some rightness? (Circle One)

Only one right Both could have some rightness

If both could be right:

Could one view be better or more right than the other? (Circle One)

Yes No

Appendix B

Attachment to God Inventory

The following statements concern how you feel about your relationship with God. We are interested in how you generally experience your relationship with God, not just in what is happening in that relationship currently. Respond to each statement by indicating how much you agree or disagree with it. Write the number in the space provided, using the following rating scale:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Disagree Strongly			Neutral/Mixed			Strongly Agree

1. I worry a lot about my relationship with God.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Disagree Strongly			Neutral/Mixed			Strongly Agree

2. I just don't feel a deep need to be close to God.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Disagree Strongly			Neutral/Mixed			Strongly Agree

3. If I can't see God working in my life, I get upset or angry.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Disagree Strongly			Neutral/Mixed			Strongly Agree

4. I am totally dependent upon God for everything in my life.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Disagree Strongly			Neutral/Mixed			Strongly Agree

5. I am jealous at how God seems to care more for others than for me.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Disagree Strongly			Neutral/Mixed			Strongly Agree

6. It is uncommon for me to cry when sharing with God.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Disagree Strongly			Neutral/Mixed			Strongly Agree

7. Sometimes I feel that God loves others more than me.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Disagree Strongly			Neutral/Mixed			Strongly Agree

8. My experiences with God are very intimate and emotional.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Disagree Strongly			Neutral/Mixed			Strongly Agree

9. I am jealous at how close some people are to God.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Disagree Strongly			Neutral/Mixed			Strongly Agree

10. I prefer not to depend too much on God.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Disagree Strongly			Neutral/Mixed			Strongly Agree

11. I often worry about whether God is pleased with me.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Disagree Strongly			Neutral/Mixed			Strongly Agree

12. I am uncomfortable being emotional in my communication with God.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Disagree Strongly			Neutral/Mixed			Strongly Agree

13. Even if I fail, I never question that God is pleased with me.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Disagree Strongly			Neutral/Mixed			Strongly Agree

14. My prayers to God are often matter-of-fact and not very personal.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Disagree Strongly			Neutral/Mixed			Strongly Agree

15. Almost daily I feel that my relationship with God goes back and forth from "hot" to "cold."

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Disagree Strongly			Neutral/Mixed			Strongly Agree

16. I am uncomfortable with emotional displays of affection to God.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Disagree Strongly — Neutral/Mixed — Strongly Agree

17. I fear God does not accept me when I do wrong.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Disagree Strongly — Neutral/Mixed — Strongly Agree

18. Without God I couldn't function at all.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Disagree Strongly — Neutral/Mixed — Strongly Agree

19. I often feel angry with God for not responding to me when I want.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Disagree Strongly — Neutral/Mixed — Strongly Agree

20. I believe people should not depend on God for things they should do for themselves.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Disagree Strongly — Neutral/Mixed — Strongly Agree

21. I crave reassurance from God that God loves me.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Disagree Strongly — Neutral/Mixed — Strongly Agree

22. Daily I discuss all of my problems and concerns with God.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Disagree Strongly — Neutral/Mixed — Strongly Agree

23. I am jealous when others feel God's presence when I cannot.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Disagree Strongly — Neutral/Mixed — Strongly Agree

24. I am uncomfortable allowing God to control every aspect of my life.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Disagree Strongly — Neutral/Mixed — Strongly Agree

25. I worry a lot about damaging my relationship with God.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Disagree Strongly			Neutral/Mixed			Strongly Agree

26. My prayers to God are very emotional.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Disagree Strongly			Neutral/Mixed			Strongly Agree

27. I get upset when I feel God helps others, but forgets about me.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Disagree Strongly			Neutral/Mixed			Strongly Agree

28. I let God make most of the decisions in my life.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Disagree Strongly			Neutral/Mixed			Strongly Agree

Appendix C

Religious Commitment Inventory

The following statements concern ways in which you incorporate religion and religious practices into your daily life. Indicate how much you agree or disagree with each statement by circling the appropriate number on the given scale (1 = Not at all true of me; 5 = Totally true of me).

1. I often read books and magazines about my faith.

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all true of me				Totally true of me

2. I make financial contributions to my religious organization.

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all true of me				Totally true of me

3. I spend time trying to grow in understanding of my faith.

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all true of me				Totally true of me

4. Religion is especially important to me because it answers many questions about the meaning of life.

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all true of me				Totally true of me

5. My religious beliefs lie behind my whole approach to life.

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all true of me				Totally true of me

6. I enjoy spending time with others of my religious affiliation.

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all true of me				Totally true of me

7. Religious beliefs influence all of my dealings in life.

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all true of me				Totally true of me

8. It is important to me to spend periods of time in private religious thought and reflection.

1 Not at all true of me	2	3	4	5 Totally true of me

9. I enjoy working in the activities of my religious organization.

1 Not at all true of me	2	3	4	5 Totally true of me

10. I keep well informed about my local religious group and have some influence in its decisions.

1 Not at all true of me	2	3	4	5 Totally true of me

Appendix D

Religious Maturity Scale – Version 2

This questionnaire is designed to assess your current religious attitudes on certain topics. People can be religious in various ways, and this questionnaire is designed to measure several of those religious dimensions and orientations.

It is important you answer each item as accurately as possible. That is, answer each statement as it describes you in reality --- today, and not how you would like it to be, or how you were at one time. Unlike most questionnaires which ask very direct and simple questions, the issues raised here are complex. So please read each statement carefully and respond thoughtfully. Even if some items appear redundant, they often do differ from each other, but in subtle ways. Finally, the term "religious orientation" is used frequently. It means your personal religious attitudes, feelings, and thoughts. In other words, your general or overall attitude toward deeply personal, faith-related issues, be they formal and "religious" or personal and "spiritual".

Rating Scale

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

1. Compared to most people I know, I have a wide range of interests.

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

2. My values have changed or evolved quite a bit in the past few years.

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

3. I perceive shortcomings in many traditional religious teachings, yet I still appreciate the value of religion in my life.

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

4. I owe my present religious attitude in part to having experienced a deep doubt about the validity and value of my earlier religious beliefs.

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

5. My religious orientations is useful in helping me understand and deal with many aspects of my life, not just the strictly "religious" ones.

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

6. I can't, "in theory", know with total certainty that my beliefs are correct, but I still act and live my life assuming they are true, even if I can't be totally sure.

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

7. I don't feel much need to reflect on my religious orientation to life; my religious questions have already been answered to my satisfaction.

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

8. My personal religious development has required me to struggle with certain issues in religion.

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

9. Religion is the major framework or perspective I use in ordering my life.

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

10. I hold my religious beliefs because they help me understand all existence, even though I realize their ultimate validity cannot be proven.

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

11. Like it or not, there are grounds and reasons for religious skepticism, but I am comfortable in acting on my beliefs nevertheless.

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

12. I have developed, or am now developing, an independent religious conviction based on my experiences in living.

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

13. To me, it more important to believe and follow the teachings of my church than to develop and follow my own personal view of God.

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

14. I am in general agreement with many of the teachings of my church; however, I am still able to be critical and questioning about some of the specific things my church tells me.

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

15. I consider myself religious, but I am still struggling with, and working through, certain religious issues.

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

16. Religion is the most important factor I use in deciding how to live my life on a daily basis.

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

17. I am quite satisfied with my current religious beliefs and values; I don't feel a need for any change in my religiousness.

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

18. I realize my religious beliefs aren't "The Truth", yet I still accept them as the best means available to arrive at the ultimate meaning of life and the universe.

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

19. Given my lack of complete knowledge of the deep complexities of religion, I feel it is not my place to question the teachings of my church.

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

20. I would not be able to live the good life I live now if not for the daily influence of my faith.

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

21. I would be opposed to attending a talk that I suspected was critical of my religious beliefs.

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

22. I feel the need to avoid people or situations (e.g., lectures, readings) that might challenge or criticize my beliefs.

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

23. My personality and sense of self (who and what I am) is strongly related to my religious orientation.

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

24. I am very satisfied with my current religious orientation. I don't expect it to change much for many years to come.

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

25. During the past few years, I have found myself fighting through or struggling with important personal religious issues.

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

26. My whole life is more significant and meaningful because of my religious orientation.

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

27. It would be wrong for me to admit doubts about the teachings I have received over the years.

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

28. My religious orientation influences how I see the world: how I react to the beauty in nature, the behavior of others, etc.

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

29. The religious orientation has given way to a reflective examination and questioning.

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

30. God exists, but I'm not sure of His precise nature.

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

31. I sometimes feel anger toward those who refuse to believe in God.

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

32. While it may sound corny or dramatic, I truly believe my faith is a way of life that affects many aspects of my existence.

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

33. My religious orientation could be summarized by the phrase: "Commitment to a religious orientation without certainty about that religious orientation".

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

34. It is important for me to maintain religious beliefs similar to those of my family.

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

Appendix E

Religious Attitudes Components Scale

The following statements concern various aspects of your attitude about religion. Indicate how much you agree or disagree with each statement by circling the appropriate number on the given scale:

(1 = Does not describe me very well; 9 = Describes me very well).

1. I am always excited regarding religious things.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

2. I feel upset when people speak to me regarding religious things.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

3. I am happy when I talk about religious things.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

4. I feel good when I read scripture.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

5. I feel respect for religious places.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

6. I feel great when I attend Church.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

7. I often feel close to or united with the divine.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

8. My religion brings me happiness.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

9. I often think of different religious groups and think of how their views might affect my own beliefs.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

10. I think religious truth is higher than any other kind of truth.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

11. I don't think going to Church is important.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

(1 = Does not describe me very well; 9 = Describes me very well).

12. I don't think reading scripture is important.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

13. I think there should be more religious discussion in public.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

14. I think that if my ideas about religion were different, my way of life would be different.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

15. I think that many of the world's problems come from the fact that so many people are misguided about religion.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

16. I don't think that it makes a difference whether religious beliefs are true or false.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

17. I constantly read scripture, even when there is nobody to remind me.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

18. I wear special clothing or jewelry as a symbol of my beliefs.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

19. I give regular service to charitable organizations.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

20. I set time aside, daily, for prayer or meditation.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

21. When I commit an offense to someone, I ask for his/her forgiveness.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

22. I always attend church weekly, even when there is nobody to remind me.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

23. I intend to join a volunteer organization, because my religion suggests that I should.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

24. I never go to Church.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9