A MULTIDIMENSIONAL ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPACT OF A SPIRITUAL GROWTH CAMPAIGN (40 DAYS OF PURPOSE) ON INDIVIDUAL SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

A MULTIDIMENSIONAL ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPACT OF A SPIRITUAL GROWTH CAMPAIGN (40 DAYS OF PURPOSE) ON INDIVIDUAL SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

by Debra K. Burton

This study evaluated the impact that the 40 Days of Purpose had on personal spiritual development of the participants. The experimental group was comprised of 163 volunteers recruited from three different churches participating in the 40 Days of Purpose. Two of the churches, a Baptist and an Assembly of God are located in a small town in East Texas, while the remaining Baptist church is located in a metropolitan city in North Carolina. The control group consisted of 46 recruited volunteers from a Baptist church that was not participating in the 40 Days of Purpose. Spiritual growth was measured using multiple self-report surveys that addressed the basic components of spiritual maturity that were proposed as a part of the study. This study hypothesized that the pretest-posttest difference for the experimental group would be greater than the pretest-posttest differences for the control group. There were no statistically significant differences found between the experimental and control groups across time. Concomitant factors are identified and discussed and recommendations are made to continue the investigation of the 40 Days of Purpose with better control for extraneous variables.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION ................................................................. 1
  Introduction to the Problem ............................................................ 1
  Purpose of the Study ....................................................................... 8
  Hypothesis and Research Questions .............................................. 11
  Definition of Terms ....................................................................... 12
  Significance of Study .................................................................... 14

CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF LITERATURE ............................................. 16
  Overview .......................................................................................... 16
  Christian Perspective on Spiritual Development ........................... 29
  Object Relations and Spiritual Maturity ......................................... 35
  Introduction to Attachment Theory ............................................... 39
  Adult Attachment Patterns ............................................................ 42
  Attachment Model of Religious Beliefs .......................................... 46
  A Christian Perspective of Attachment Theory ............................. 51
  Attachment to God and Spiritual Maturity .................................... 53
  Religious Problem-Solving and Spiritual Maturity ...................... 56
  Spiritual Experiences and Spiritual Maturity ............................... 63
  Mental Health and Spiritual Maturity .......................................... 68
  Spiritual Disciplines and Spiritual Maturity ................................. 69
  40 Days of Purpose ....................................................................... 76
  Statement of the Problem ............................................................. 79

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY .......................................................... 81
  Population and Sample ................................................................ 81
  Instruments Identified ................................................................... 82
  Treatment ....................................................................................... 93
  Pilot Study ...................................................................................... 94
  Procedure ....................................................................................... 95
  Design ............................................................................................ 98
  Data Analysis ................................................................................. 99
  Limitations/Delimitations ............................................................ 101

CHAPTER IV: RESULTS ................................................................. 105
  Descriptive Statistics ................................................................... 105
  Main Research Hypothesis ........................................................... 112
  Supplemental Research Questions .............................................. 113
  Unplanned Analysis ..................................................................... 117

CHAPTER V: DISCUSSION .............................................................. 122
  Overview of Findings .................................................................... 124
  Recommendations ....................................................................... 130
Conclusion..............................................................................................................................................132
APPENDIX A: SPIRITUAL ASSESSMENT INVENTORY .................................................................148
APPENDIX B: ATTACHMENT TO GOD ......................................................................................150
APPENDIX C: RELIGIOUS PROBLEM-SOLVING SCALES: SHORT FORM..................152
APPENDIX D: MYSTICISM SCALE, CHRIST VERSION .......................................................155
APPENDIX E: DAILY SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCES SCALE ......................................................160
APPENDIX F: 40 DAYS OF PURPOSE DATA SHEET ............................................................166
APPENDIX G: ATTENDANCE DATA SHEET ............................................................................167
APPENDIX H: PURPOSE DRIVEN HEALTH ASSESSMENT ..............................................168
APPENDIX I: INFORMED CONSENT AGREEMENT .............................................................171
APPENDIX J: SAMPLE INSTRUCTIONS TO PARTICIPANTS .............................................174
APPENDIX K: PERSONAL INFORMATION SHEET ..............................................................176
APPENDIX L: DEMOGRAPHIC BREAKDOWN BY CHURCH .............................................177
REFERENCES ........................................................................................................................................179
LIST OF TABLES

Table 1 Means, Standard Deviations, and Percentages of Participation Variables for the Experimental Group ................................................................. 140

Table 2 Means and Standard Deviations for Collaborative Subscale for the Experimental and Control Groups: Pretest, Posttest 1, and Posttest 2 ........................................... 142

Table 3 Means and Standard Deviations for the Awareness of God Subscale for Experimental and Control Groups: Pretest, Posttest 1, and Posttest 2 .................... 143

Table 4 Means and Standard Deviations for the Realistic Acceptance Subscale for Experimental and Control Groups: Pretest, Posttest 1, and Posttest 2 ............. 144

Table 5 Means and Standard Deviations for the Disappointment Subscale for Experimental and Control Groups: Pretest, Posttest 1, and Posttest 2 ............... 145

Table 6 Means and Standard Deviations for the Awareness of God Subscale for Each Church across Assessment Sessions ................................................................. 147

Table 7 Means and Standard Deviations for the Awareness of God Subscale for Each Denomination across Assessment Sessions ......................................................... 147
LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Mean scores of the Awareness of God subscale for the experimental and control groups: pretest, posttest1, and posttest2........................................135

Figure 2. Mean scores of the Realistic Acceptance subscale for the experimental and control groups: pretest, posttest1, and posttest2...............................137

Figure 3. Mean scores of the Disappointment subscale for the experimental and control groups: pretest, posttest1, and posttest2........................................139
CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Introduction to the Problem

Until the late 19th century, spirituality was primarily a Roman Catholic term that referred to “living according to the Spirit of Jesus in response to God” (Spohn, 1997, p. 110). Bernard McGinn, editor of Christian Spirituality: Origins of the Twelfth Century, proposed a working definition of Christian spirituality to serve as a basic guideline for understanding the term:

Christian spirituality is the lived experience of Christian belief in both its general and more specialized forms... It is possible to distinguish spirituality from doctrine in that it concentrates not on faith itself, but on the reaction that faith arouses in religious consciousness and practice (McGinn, Meyendorff, & Leclercq, 1985, p. xv).


Christian spirituality as a lived experience encompasses everything that constitutes Christian experience, “specifically the perception and pursuit of the highest ideal or goal of Christian life, e.g., an ever more intense union with God disclosed in Christ through life in the Spirit” (Downey, 1991, What Is Christianity, para. 1). Whereas, Christian spirituality as an academic discipline takes a broader scope and involves the actual study of the Christian experience for the purpose of identifying ways to promote spiritual growth and maturation (para. 1). Downey concedes that Christian spirituality, as an academic discipline,
is in the formative stages (Conclusion section, para. 1). It will take a concerted
effort on the part of researchers to construct a methodology that will make it
feasible to conceptualize and study Christian spirituality to facilitate its fuller
development and maturation (para. 1).

To date, there have been numerous attempts to define spirituality (Hill et
al., 2000; LaPierre, 1994; Slater, Hall, & Edwards, 2001; Willard, 2000; Zinnbauer,
et al., 1997). A review of the literature by Spilka led him to conclude that the
most contemporary views of spirituality fall into one of three categories: “(a) a
God-oriented spirituality where thought and practice are premised in theologies,
either broadly or narrowly conceived; (b) a world-oriented spirituality stressing
one’s relationship with ecology or nature; or (c) a humanistic (or people­
oriented) spirituality stressing human achievement or potential (as cited in Hill
et al., 2000, p. 57). In short, Spilka concluded that spirituality should be viewed
as “a multidimensional construct” (as cited in Hill et al., 2000, p. 57).

Currently, spirituality and religion have become more differentiated,
with the former becoming a broad-band construct and the later becoming a
narrow-band construct (Hill et al., 2000, p. 60). According to Spilka and
McIntosh, spirituality has become the favored term and is generally associated
with personal experiences of feeling close to the transcendent (as cited in Hill et
al., 2000, p. 58). Religion more frequently is identified with institutions that are
considered legalistic and often perceived to limit or hinder human potential
(Pargament, 1997). Religion, in today’s society is sometimes viewed as an
obstacle to spirituality (Turner, Lukoff, Barnhouse, & Lu, 1995).
This tendency to separate the concept of spirituality from religion is a recent development and is the consequence of expanding human knowledge and historical-cultural events that influence people’s perception of the divine (Sheldrake, 1992; Wulff, 1997). For example, the last half of the 20th century was characterized by the rise of secularism and an increasing disenchantment with religious institutions in Western society (Hill et al., 2000, p. 58; Saliers, 1989). Each generation may be required to redefine religion and spirituality for that particular period because of the impact that changing times has on way people view the divine (Hill et al., 2000, p. 58).

Religion is derived from the Latin root *religio*, which refers to a bond between humanity and some transcendent power (Hill et al., 2000, p. 56). Scholars have distinguished at least three historical classifications of the term religion: a) a supernatural power that is a source to which individuals are devoted or committed; b) the presence of a feeling within the individual who perceives this supernatural power; and c) the ritual acts performed out of respect of that power (Wulff, 1997). The word spirituality is derived from the Latin root *spiritus*, which means breath or life (Hill et al., 2000, p. 57). The term spirituality has historically been rooted in religion and experienced and expressed within a definable system of religion, such as denominations, theological traditions, and major world religions (Hill et al., 2000, p. 56).

Although a diversity of opinion about the definitions of religiousness and spirituality may broaden our understanding of these constructs, inconsistencies in the definitions can have negative implications for research in this area.
To conduct meaningful research in the area of religion and spirituality, it is essential to have a common understanding and clinical agreement about what is meant by these terms. Without clarity of meaning for religion and spirituality: (a) It would be difficult to know with any accuracy or reliability what researchers ascribe to the terms (b) it would impair the communication within the social scientific study of these constructs and across other disciplines and (c) it would be extremely difficult to draw general conclusions from different studies (Zinnbauer et al., 1997, p. 550).

An analysis of how religion and spirituality have been conceptualized and defined in the literature revealed that there is little systematic conceptualization of the relationship of the two constructs by social scientists (Hill et al., 2000, p. 52). Hill et al. examined religion and spirituality at a basic level by describing the fundamental characteristics of each concept and identifying conceptual overlap and distinctiveness (p. 52). To facilitate future systematic research, Hill et al. proposed a set of criteria to judge the value of existing operational definitions of religion and spirituality (p. 71). This set of criteria could serve as a benchmark to compare and assess the definition or measures being considered for a specific research study (p. 65). Hill et al. proposed the following criterion for spirituality and religion:

Criterion for spirituality: The feelings, thoughts, experiences, and behaviors that arise from the search for the sacred. The term “search” refers to attempts to identify, articulate, maintain, or transform. The term
"sacred" refers to a divine being, divine object, Ultimate Reality, or Ultimate Truth as perceived by the individual.

Criterion for religion: (A) The feelings, thoughts, experiences, and behaviors that arise from the search for the sacred. The term "search" refers to attempts to identify, articulate, maintain, or transform. The term "sacred" refers to a divine being, divine object, Ultimate Reality, or Ultimate Truth as perceived by the individual. AND/OR: (B) A search for non-sacred goals (such as identity, belongingness, meaning, health, or wellness) in a context that has as its primary goal the facilitation of (A); AND: (C) The means and methods (e.g., rituals or prescribed behaviors) of the search that receive validation and support from within an identifiable group of people (p. 67).

The sense of the sacred is central to the experience of both religion and spirituality, and it is this commonality that makes the study of religion and spirituality unique from other areas of research (Hill et al., 2000, p. 66).

Christian spirituality, as an academic discipline, should endeavor to develop a methodology to understand and study spirituality to facilitate its fuller development and maturation (Downey, 1991, Conclusion section, para. 1).

According to Downey, it may be helpful to identify seven focal points of investigation:

Christian spirituality is concerned with the work of the Holy Spirit in persons: (1) within a culture; (2) in relation to a tradition; (3) in light of contemporary events, hopes, suffering and promises; (4) in remembrance
of Jesus Christ; (5) in efforts to combine elements of action and contemplation; (6) with respect to charism and community; and (7) as expressed and authenticated in praxis (A method for understanding spirituality, para. 1).

Hill et al. (2000) determined that spirituality is a core function of religion and that religious beliefs and practices remain common and continue to be of central importance to a majority of people today (p. 53). Therefore, investigating spirituality within the confines of a religious system could provide researchers with the opportunity to develop a systematic methodology for future research in this area.

Zinnbauer et al. (1997) concluded “to accurately measure religiousness and spirituality it becomes necessary to consider the system of beliefs or worldviews of the individuals or groups studied” (p. 562). The findings of this study suggest that investigating the construct of spirituality from one particular worldview, such as a Christian worldview, is essential to the development of a more accurate understanding of spirituality. By explicitly operationalizing spiritual growth and development in terms that reflect a Christian worldview, systematic research involving religion and spirituality may be possible. A study designed to assess individual spiritual development that occurs within a church body could elucidate the nature of the relationship between spirituality and religion and identify possible factors that could promote spiritual growth and lead to spiritual maturity. Since spiritual growth refers to an increase in an individual’s level of spiritual maturity, it is essential to establish a clear
understanding of spiritual maturity before individual spiritual growth can be assessed.

Spiritual maturity is a construct that is multifaceted and difficult to operationally define without identifying some of the basic components. An examination of the various definitions of spiritual maturity identified the following characteristics associated with this construct: (a) cognitive, affective, and behavioral consonance, as well as a good adjustment to life (Kristensen, Pederson, & Williams, 2001, p. 77); (b) a sense of community, desire for service, compassion for others, a sense of purpose (Mahoney & Graci, 1999, p. 525); (c) an awareness of God's responsiveness, guidance, and presence, as well as a realistic acceptance of God (Hall, Brokaw, Edwards, & Pike, 1998, p. 306; Hall & Edwards, 1996, p. 238); (d) a secure attachment to God (Rowatt & Kirkpatrick, 2002), (e) an experience with transcendence (Hood, Morris, & Watson, 1993; Underwood & Teresi, 2002); (f) religious practices (Willard, 2000); and (g) interdependence on God in problem solving (Pargament et al., 1988). Hill and Hood (1999) noted that people often report spiritual growth through adulthood, which can include “new religious experiences, new understandings of already existing beliefs or experiences, a greater sense of purpose or meaning in life, or a greater perceived awareness of divine involvement in everyday life” (p. 159).

Since spiritual maturity is multidimensional, it is unlikely that one instrument could be used to accurately measure this concept. The futility of oversimplifying the measurement of a complex construct is illustrated by the fable of the blind men and the elephant. When only a small part is described
from a limited perspective, the description is a poor approximation of the much larger and more complex whole. Descriptions of spirituality that emphasize only one aspect of the spiritual experience and neglect other dimensions fail to capture the essence of this complex construct. To fully and accurately assess spiritual maturity, each component needs to be evaluated individually, and all elements need to be evaluated collectively within a multidimensional framework. Therefore, each component should be evaluated by specific instruments designed to assess the particular beliefs, characteristics, or behaviors that comprise that facet of spiritual maturity. Using multiple instruments to assess various elements of spiritual maturity would also help determine the contribution of each component to the overall concept. Thus, utilizing a multidimensional approach to assess the spiritual growth that occurs among individuals who are a part of a Christian community would enable researchers to conceptualize and study Christian spirituality to facilitate its fuller development and maturation (Downey, 1991, Conclusion section, para. 1).

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to evaluate the impact that a 6-week spiritual growth campaign has on the individual spiritual development of the participants. Rick Warren developed a spiritual growth campaign, known as the 40 Days of Purpose (Warren, 2002a, 2002b). On October 12, 2002 through November 24, 2002, over 1,500 churches in 50 states across America participated in the 40 Days of Purpose. Warren developed the spiritual growth campaign to answer one of life’s most important question: “What on earth am I here for?”
The campaign is designed to encourage participants to commit to habits of spiritual growth, memorize scripture, participate in a small group or Bible fellowship, serve in a ministry in their church, share their faith, and learn to live a lifestyle of worship to the glory of God (Warren, 2002b).

This spiritual growth campaign was structured to facilitate spiritual development by providing opportunities for the participants to: (a) develop a better understanding of God’s Word and underlying biblical principles through the reading and study of weekly devotionals and the meditation and memorization of Scriptures; (b) increase the participants sense of meaning and purpose in their lives as they are encouraged to discover their place of service within the body of Christ; and (c) experience an increased awareness of God’s presence in their lives through weekly small-group meetings, where they have opportunities to hear, as well as share personal testimonies of how God is working in their own lives and the lives of the other group members. The goals of this program are in accordance with the spiritual growth experiences that Hill and Hood (1999) reported can occur throughout adulthood: “new religious experiences, new understandings of already existing religious beliefs or experiences, a greater sense of purpose or meaning in life, or a greater perceived awareness of divine involvement in everyday life” (p. 159).

Volunteers were recruited from three different churches who participated in the 40 Days of Purpose. Two of the churches, a Southern Baptist (BET) and an Assembly of God (AG) are located in a small town in East Texas. The remaining church (that participated in the 40 Days of Purpose) is a Southern Baptist church
(BNC) located in a large metropolitan city in North Carolina. To serve as a control group, volunteers were recruited from an East Texas Southern Baptist church (BC) that did not participate in the 40 Days of Purpose. Each group of volunteers from the four churches was scheduled to participate in three assessment sessions.

The first session occurred approximately 1 week before the commencement of the 40 Days of Purpose; the second session occurred approximately 1 week after the conclusion of the program; and the third session occurred approximately 3 months following the end of the program. The spiritual growth of the individuals was assessed using the Spiritual Assessment Inventory (SAI) and the Religious Problem Solving Scale, Short Form (RPSS). These instruments were selected to assess several of the proposed components of spiritual maturity.

For this study, the components of spiritual maturity were limited to: (a) a quality of relationship with God, measured by the Realistic Acceptance subscale (RA) on the SAI (Hall & Edwards, 1996); (b) an awareness of God's responsiveness, guidance, and presence of God in the life of the believer, as measured by the Awareness of God subscale (A) on the SAI (Hall et al., 1998); and (c) an interdependence on God in problem-solving, as measured by the Collaborative subscale (C) on the RPSS (Fox, Blanton, & Morris, 1998; Pargament et al., 1988).

The primary purpose of this study is to determine the impact that a structured church program, geared to facilitate spiritual growth, has on the
individual spiritual development of the participants as measured by the selected instruments. This is accomplished using a multidimensional approach to the assessment of spiritual maturity. Three primary assumptions were made for the purpose of this study: (a) It was assumed that the 40 Days of Purpose could facilitate spiritual growth within the participants (b) it was assumed that the instruments used in this study would be able to assess changes in spiritual growth and (c) it was assumed that spiritual growth can be measured.

Hypothesis and Research Questions

It is hypothesized that individuals participating in the 40 Days of Purpose will experience greater spiritual growth, as measured by an improvement in their scores on the surveys assessing some of the basic components of spiritual maturity, than individuals in the control group.

Other supplemental research questions that this study addresses include:

1. Are there any observable denominational differences in the impact of the 40 Days of Purpose on the spiritual growth of the participants?

2. Are there any observable differences among the three churches in the experimental group in the impact of the 40 Days of Purpose on the spiritual growth of the participants?

3. Are there any observable differences in the degree of participation in the 40 Days of Purpose among the churches in the treatment group?

The specific hypothesis of the present study is:
**Research Hypothesis:** The pretest-posttest difference for the experimental group (consisting of churches participating in the 40 Days of Purpose program: AG, BET, and BNC) will be significantly greater than the pretest-posttest difference of the control group (consisting of a non-participating church: BC).

**Null Hypothesis:** The pretest-posttest difference for the experimental group will not be significantly different than the pretest-posttest difference for the control group.

**Definition of Terms**

For this research study, *spiritual growth* was defined as a measurable increase in scores on the Realistic Acceptance subscale (RA) on the Spiritual Assessment Inventory (SAI); the Awareness of God subscale (A) on the SAI; and the Collaborative subscale (C) on the Religious Problem-Solving scale, short form (RPSS). The term *spiritual maturity* was defined as the following central characteristics:

1. A quality of relationship with God that has reached the realistic acceptance stage, in which God is valued in His own right, not just for what he can do for the individual (Hall & Edwards, 1996, p. 238; Slater et al., 2001, p. 13).

3. A secure attachment to God (individual turns to God for a haven of safety and a secure base) (Rowatt & Kirkpatrick, 2002).

4. Interdependence in problem-solving (a collaborative problem-solving style, the individual is in partnership with God in coping) (Fox et al., 1998; Pargament et al., 1988)

5. Good adjustment to difficult life circumstances (Kristensen et al., 2001, p. 77)

6. A relationship with the transcendent (God, the divine), including ordinary daily experiences that contribute to a sense of deep peace and extraordinary experiences for the purpose of knowing God in a more direct manner (Hood et al., 1993; Underwood & Teresi, 2001)

7. A tendency to engage in spiritual disciplines for the purpose of becoming more Christ-like, to live a life as Jesus taught and modeled (Willard, 2000).

In this study the operational definition of spiritual growth will be limited to an increase in the scores associated with the following components of spiritual maturity:

1. A quality of relationship with God, as measured by the RA subscale on the SAI.

2. An awareness of God’s responsiveness, guidance, and presence of God in the life of the believer, as measured by the A subscale on the SAI.
3. An interdependence in problem-solving, as measured by the C subscale on the RPSS.

The operational definition of spiritual growth used in this research study is based on the assumption that spiritual growth is associated with an increase in scores on scales associated with spiritual maturity.

Significance of Study

This study attempts to provide a comprehensive appraisal of the effectiveness of the 40 Days of Purpose in promoting individual spiritual development in the participants. Particularly, it provides important information about the spiritual growth campaign’s continued influence on the participants’ spiritual growth 3 months after the conclusion of the campaign. The results of this study may provide pastors and other religious leaders in the evangelical Christian community a better understanding of effective interventions that can promote spiritual growth in their parishioners.

This study also applies a multidimensional approach to assessing spiritual growth. The definitions of spiritual growth and spiritual maturity adopted for this study are congruent with the overall criteria for spirituality that Hill et al. (2000) suggested be used for a benchmark for research studies (p. 65). Hill et al. proposed the following criteria for spirituality: “The feelings, thoughts, experiences, and behaviors that arise from the search for the sacred. The term “search” refers to attempts to identify, articulate, maintain, or transform. The term “sacred” refers to a divine being, divine object, Ultimate Reality, or Ultimate Truth as perceived by the individual” (p. 66). Since this research study
builds on the criteria set forth by Hill et al., it can enable researchers to better investigate and evaluate this experience (spiritual growth) so it can become more amenable to social scientific research (p. 72).

Since this research study involves the appraisal of individual spiritual growth in response to a particular intervention (the 40 Days of Purpose), the results of this study may be especially significant for the mental health profession. According to Benner (1990), “the human personality is such that the psychological and spiritual aspects of human functioning are inextricably interconnected” (p. 6). He believed that “all psychotherapy is in essence a psychospiritual process” (Benner, p. 6). Stanard, Sandu, & Painter (2000) suggested that spirituality is becoming the fifth force in counseling and psychology (analogous to the other four forces, i.e., psychodynamics, behaviorism, humanism, and multiculturalism) and deeply influencing the helping profession (p. 204).

According to Standard et al. (2000) the assessment of spirituality is a new and expanding area of concern for counselors (p. 204). The information gleaned from this study could facilitate the development of an effective model for assessing individual spiritual growth in response to treatment interventions. Standard et al. proposed that assessment of spirituality can “assist both the counselor and client in obtaining a better understanding of the role of spirituality in the issues that bring the client to counseling and in designing treatment interventions appropriate for resolution of those issues” (p. 204).
CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Overview

A number of researchers have proposed that spirituality is a multidimensional construct (LaPierre, 1994; Mahoney & Graci, 1999; Malony, 1985; Spilka, as cited in Hill et al., 2000; Zinnbauer et al., 1997). In an effort to formulate a conceptual basis for assessing an individual’s spiritual needs, LaPierre (1994) proposed a model for describing the spirituality of individual people (p. 160). His six-part model was offered as a starting point for developing qualitative, as well as possible quantitative, ways to describe spiritual development and growth (p. 160). The six factors or dimensions of spirituality suggested by LaPierre include: (a) a search for purpose and meaning in life; (b) an encounter with transcendence; (c) a sense of community, a connectedness with others; (d) a search for ultimate truth or highest value; (e) a respect and appreciation for the mystery of creation and (f) a personal transformation or spiritual growth, the continual process of becoming (pp. 154–160).

Malony (1985) focused on Christian spirituality and defined a mature Christian as follows:

Mature Christians are those who have identity, integrity, and inspiration. They “identify” in that their self-understanding is as children of God—created by Him and destined by Him to live according to a divine plan. They have “integrity” in that their daily life is lived in the awareness that they have been saved by God’s grace from the guilt of sin
and they can freely respond to God's will in the present. They have "inspiration" in that they live with the sense that God is available to sustain, comfort, encourage, and direct their lives on a daily basis. These dimensions of maturity relate to belief in God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. They pertain to the Christian doctrines of creation, redemption, and sanctification. They provide the foundation for practical daily living. (p. 28)

According to Malony, Christian maturity results in self-awareness, accurate perception, adequate expressiveness, and realistic interaction that enable an individual to adjust to life in an effective and acceptable manner (p. 29).

Malony (1985) provides an overview of eight dimensions of Christian spiritual maturity as follows: (a) awareness of God, referring to an expression of interdependence on God and a desire to commune with God through worship and prayer; (b) acceptance of God's grace and steadfast love, indicating an ability to find meaning in the trials and tribulations of life through trusting in God's goodness; (c) being repentant and responsible, meaning an ability to request and to accept forgiveness from others and to be forgiving of others; (d) knowing God's leadership and direction, meaning an ability to trust in God's leadership and to acknowledge that God is in control; (e) involvement in organized religion, referring to regular involvement with others in worship, prayer, study, and service; (f) experiencing fellowship, referring to experiencing a sense of community with other believers; (g) being ethical, referring to a religious faith that underlies and guides
ethical behavior; and (h) affirming openness in faith, referring to faith providing a directive for life and a willingness to share their faith with others (pp. 31–32).

In addition, numerous researchers have also defined spirituality by focusing on certain components (Kristensen et al., 2001; Mahoney & Graci, 1999). According to Kristensen et al. (2001), religious maturity can be viewed as “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). This definition suggests that cognitive, affective, and behavioral consonance is a component of spiritual maturity. The results of a study by Mahoney and Graci (1999) indicated that spirituality also includes the following components: a sense of community, desire for service, compassion for others, and a sense of purpose.

Viewing spiritual maturity from a multidimensional framework often reveals an interconnection with religiousness (Stanard et al., 2000). Many of the definitions of spiritual maturity have included religious beliefs and practices that lie at the core of many spiritual experiences. According to Hill et al. (2000), “scholars and researchers who advocate for spirituality (or religiousness) and against religiousness (or spirituality) ignore the reality that these phenomena are inherently intertwined” (p. 72). Social scientific research in the area of spirituality and religion is especially challenging, since both are complex phenomena, multifaceted and multidimensional in nature (Hill et al., 2000, p. 52). Religious and spiritual traditions are often identifying different characteristics of religious and spiritual change and growth (Hill & Pargament, 2003). Hill and
Pargament suggested that “research designs and measures are needed that better capture the dynamic qualities of religion and spirituality — the possibility of change, growth, deterioration, or stability in religious and spiritual life across time and situations” (p. 71).

A notable study conducted by Zinnbauer et al. (1997) compared religiousness and spirituality and found several points of convergence and divergence between the two constructs (p.549). The findings of their study suggested three main conclusions (p. 561). First, the terms religiousness and spirituality, in part, describe different concepts. They found that “spirituality was most often described in personal or experiential terms, such as belief in God or a higher power, or having a relationship with God or a higher power” (p. 561). The definitions of religiousness contained the aforementioned personal beliefs, as well as “organizational or institutional beliefs and practices such as, church membership, church attendance and commitment to the doctrine of a church or organized religion” (p. 561). According to Zinnbauer et al., “the various phenomena associated with spirituality are essential parts of religion; they lie at the core of religious life” (p. 563).

A second conclusion is that religion and spirituality were not fully dependent (Zinnbauer et al., 1997, p. 561). Both religion and spirituality were (a) related to church attendance, intrinsic religiosity, and religious orthodoxy; (b) associated with frequency of prayer; and (c) similar in the nature of the sacred, as they both incorporate traditional concepts of the sacred, such as references to God, Christ, and the Church (p. 561). A third conclusion is that “to accurately
measure religiousness and spirituality it becomes necessary to consider the system of beliefs or worldviews of the individuals or groups studied" (p. 562). The findings of this study suggest that to develop a more accurate understanding of spirituality or religiousness, it may be helpful to study the construct from one particular worldview, such as a Christian worldview. By explicitly operationalizing religiousness and spirituality in terms that reflect the perspectives of potential research subjects, generalizations can be made across groups and ideologies and findings can be cumulated across studies (p. 562). Designing a study that focuses on Christian spiritual maturity would allow the measures of spiritual change and growth to be tailored to fit the unique characteristics of the Christian faith (Hill & Pargament, 2003, p. 71).

Tony Evans (2003), president and founder of the Urban Alternative, views the church as the primary context in which Christian spiritual growth occurs. Evans believes that an individual needs fellowship with the family of God to experience spiritual growth, and he cited the following scripture as a support for his view:

It was He who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for the works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of fullness of Christ...speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ. From Him the whole body, joined and
held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work (Eph. 4:11-13, 14-16). (New International Version)

Spirituality can co-occur within the context of religion when people engage in spirituality that is adhered to by an identifiable group, and this group also supports and validates their spiritual paths and goals (Hill et al., 2000, p. 70).

Spirituality is a core and essential function of religion and therefore, spirituality and religion often take place together (Hill et al., 2000, p. 70). Members of religions such as Christianity discover that being in relationship with like-minded believers is crucial to their spirituality (LaPierre, 1994). Groeschel emphasized the value of community when he wrote: “Whatever the individual’s life, one must grow with others if one is to grow spiritually” (as cited in LaPierre, 1994, p. 156). Since this is the case, it would be prudential to study the construct of spirituality or a component of this construct within the confines of a religious system. However, before embarking on any specific study of spirituality or religion it is important to understand the difficulty of this type of study. William James (1902/1925), in his second lecture in The Varieties of Religious Experience, observed that although most books on the philosophy of religion endeavor to begin with an explicit definition of what its essence contains, “the very fact that they are so many and so different from one another is enough to prove that the word ‘religion’ cannot stand for any single principle or essence, but is rather a collective name” (James, 1902/1925, p. 26).
James (1902/1925) viewed the religious field as being partitioned into two sides; institutional religion and personal religion. According to James, the essentials of the institutional branch include “worship and sacrifice, procedures for working on the disposition of the divine, theology and ceremony and ecclesiastical organization” (p. 29). The personal branch of religion includes “the inner dispositions of man himself, which form the centre of interest, his conscience, his deserts, his helplessness, his incompleteness” (p. 29). This view of religion as personal recognizes that it is the individual alone who is primarily responsible for transacting the relationship with the divine and that institutional religion plays only a secondary role, “the relation goes direct from heart to heart, from soul to soul, between man and his maker” (p. 29). James, a pioneer in the field of psychology of religion, proposed that religion be defined as “the feelings, acts, and experiences of individual men in their solitude, so far as they apprehend themselves to stand in relation to whatever they may consider divine” (p. 31). Although James proffered this arbitrary definition for religion, it is strikingly similar to the criterion that Hill et al. (2000, p. 66) suggested to be used to define both spirituality and religion. Therefore, the area of commonality between religion and spirituality appears to be a relevant area of investigation for the psychology of religion.

Throughout its history, the psychology of religion has devoted both attention and time to the issue of the measurement of religion and spirituality. Probably the most influential paradigm for measuring religion has been Gordon Allport’s intrinsic-extrinsic distinction, which he first identified in 1959.
(Wulff, 1997, p. 232). *Intrinsics* are individuals whose motives are personal and internalized; their beliefs influence them beyond the boundaries of a formal church service; they have an awareness of God acting in their lives; they attend church frequently and read literature about their faith (Paloutzian, 1996, p. 201). The characteristics of intrinsics seem to reflect a true, mature commitment (p. 201). *Extrinsics* tend to use religion for gain, emphasize the personal benefits of religion, and their motives lie outside of religion itself (p. 202).

In recent years, the number of instruments for measuring religion and spirituality has grown. Hill and Hood (1999) edited a compendium describing 125 different measures. Slater et al. (2001) believe “the next step in the measurement of religion and spirituality is to explore the convergence among these various measures in order to begin to test broader conceptual frameworks” (p. 5). However, “the cornerstone of any valid and reliable assessment instrument is the definition of that which is to be measured” (Stanard et al., 2000, p. 209). Not only is it important to properly define whatever is being measured, but it is equally important to determine what needs to be measured to facilitate the understanding of religion and spirituality.

A study designed to assess Christian spiritual growth that occurs within a church setting could elucidate the nature of the relationship between spirituality and religion and identify possible factors that could promote spiritual growth and lead to spiritual maturity. The foundation of any valid and reliable assessment process is the definition of the construct that is being measured (Stanard et al., 2000). An explicit definition of both Christian spiritual maturity
and Christian spiritual growth is imperative to conduct meaningful and systematic research in the area of religion and spirituality.

Although spirituality has been viewed as a multifaceted construct (Stanard et al., 2000), many of the research studies designed to assess spiritual maturity have focused on specific aspects of the concept, to the neglect of others, and have, consequently, been somewhat limited in their perspective (Hall et al., 1998; Kristensen et al., 2001; Hood, 1975; Hood, Morris, & Watson, 1993; Pargament et al., 1988; Rowatt & Kirkpatrick, 2002). Numerous researchers have viewed spirituality from a relationally oriented psychospiritual maturity, as well as from a view that emphasizes attachment to God (Hill & Pargament, 2003; Rowatt & Kirkpatrick, 2002). Spiritual maturity has been defined from an object relations perspective, which has emphasized the quality of a person's relationship with God and a person's awareness of God operating in his or her life (Hall et al., 1998; Hall & Edwards, 1996; Hall & Edwards, 2002). A secure attachment to God has also been associated with spiritual maturity (Kirkpatrick & Shaver, 1990; Rowatt & Kirkpatrick, 2002). A study by Kirkpatrick and Shaver (1992) found that people sampled who reported a secure attachment to God also reported much greater life satisfaction and much less anxiety, depression, and physical illness than did people who reported an anxious attachment to God.

Spiritual maturity has also been associated with a person's perception of the transcendent (God, the divine) in daily life and his or her interaction or involvement of the transcendent in life, including ordinary day-to-day experiences and extraordinary mystical experiences (Hood, 1975, 1985; Hood et
Underwood and Teresi have focused on the inner experience of spiritual feelings (experience with transcendence and daily spiritual experiences) that involve an interface with God as a variable that can impact health and contribute to spirituality. Hood (1975) proposed extraordinary spiritual experiences (mystical experiences) as a facet of spirituality. William James (1902/1925) describes the mystical experience when he wrote, “In mystic states we both become one with the Absolute and we become aware of our oneness” (p. 419).

Religious problem-solving has also been a defining characteristic of spiritual maturity (Fox et al., 1998; Pargament et al., 1988). A collaborative problem-solving style, in which both the individual and God are active contributors working together to solve problems, has been viewed as a facet of spiritual maturity (Pargament et al., 1998, p. 92).

Another aspect of spiritual maturity that has been addressed in the literature is participation in spiritual disciplines (Foster, 1978; Willard, 2000). Spiritual disciplines have been utilized over the centuries as a means to help people of faith reorder their lives by reorienting how they think, behave, and relate to God and to their community (Eck, 2002, p. 271). Willard (1988) explains the value of the spiritual disciplines to spiritual growth when he writes:

The disciplines are activities of mind and body purposefully undertaken, to bring our personality and total being into effective cooperation with the divine order (p. 68). A discipline is an activity within our power—
something we can do—which brings us to a point where we can do what we at present cannot do by direct effort. (p. 106)

So, as people engage in the spiritual disciplines, they surrender more of their lives to Christ and therefore, to the intrinsic working of the Holy Spirit. The resulting inner transformation is revealed as their outward behavior becomes more like Christ. Spiritual maturity is the goal of Christian spiritual growth (Evans, 2003). Evans defined Christian spiritual growth as a “transformational process of increasingly expressing the reality of an individual’s relationship with the indwelling life of Jesus Christ that results in expanding the individual’s capacity to bring God greater glory and experience God’s greater good”.

Finally, an aspect of spiritual maturity that has been under recent investigation is the relationship of spirituality and religiousness and their effects on physical and mental health (Fetzer Institute/National Institute on Aging Working Group [Fetzer Institute], 1999; Hill & Pargament, 2003). With the recent development of the Multidimensional Measurement of Religiousness and Spirituality (MMRS), sponsored by the Fetzer Institute and the National Institute on Aging, the field of psychology of religion appears to be heading back in the direction of a more religiously based spirituality. Hill and Pargament (2003) reviewed some of the progress made in describing religious and spiritual concepts and measures that are functionally associated with physical and mental health (p. 64). Although religion and spirituality are linked to mental and physical health, the explanation for this connection is unknown. Continued
research may find that more spiritually mature individuals have less mental and physical problems (Hill & Pargament, 2003).

Spiritual growth or development can be defined as an increase in spiritual maturity. To understand the concept of spiritual growth, it is essential to define what is meant by spiritual maturity. Spiritual maturity is a construct that is multifaceted and difficult to operationally define without identifying some of the basic components. A review of the numerous definitions of spiritual maturity revealed several points of convergence. It may be reasonable to consider these points of convergence as representing some of the basic components of spiritual maturity. These components could provide a conceptual framework for the study of this concept that has been historically difficult to operationally define.

The components of spiritual maturity identified include: (a) a quality relationship with God (realistic acceptance), awareness of His presence, and secure attachment (Hall et al., 1998; Hall & Edwards, 1996, 2002; Rowatt & Kirkpatrick, 2002); (b) interdependence on God in problem-solving and an ability to effectively adjust to life circumstances (Pargament et al., 1988; Kristensen et al., 2001); (c) both ordinary spiritual experiences and extraordinary (mystical) experiences with God (the transcendent) (Hood, 1975, 1985; Hood et al., 1993; Underwood & Teresi, 2001); and (d) participation in religious practices, such as the spiritual disciplines (Foster, 1978; Willard, 2000). These proposed components of spiritual maturity can be used as the basis to formulate an explicit definition of Christian spiritual maturity and Christian spiritual growth that can be adopted for research purposes. By selecting multiple instruments to measure
each of the proposed components of spiritual maturity, a research study designed to investigate the impact of a spiritual intervention on spiritual maturity is feasible.

In conclusion, research designs and measures are needed that can capture the dynamic qualities of religion and spirituality, particularly the change and growth in response to spiritual interventions (Hill & Pargament, 2003). To develop a more definitive understanding of spirituality and religiousness, these constructs need to be studied from a particular system of beliefs or worldview (Zinnbauer et al., 1997). Therefore, designing a study that focuses on Christian spiritual maturity allows the measures of spiritual change and growth to be tailored to fit the unique characteristics of the Christian faith (Hill & Pargament, 2003, p. 71). Spirituality develops within religion when people engage in spirituality that is adhered to by an identifiable group that supports and validates their spiritual paths and goals, that is, the church can be the context for spiritual growth (Hill et al., 2000). A study that is designed to use a multidimensional approach to assess Christian spiritual growth that occurs within a church setting can elucidate the nature of the relationship between spirituality and religion and identify possible factors that promote spiritual growth and lead to spiritual maturity.

In this vein, the present study uses a multidimensional assessment approach to measure spiritual maturity to evaluate the impact that a spiritual growth campaign, the 40 Days of Purpose, has on the spiritual growth of the participants. The 40 Days of Purpose is a biblically based practical strategy to
help followers of Christ grow in their spiritual maturity. On October 12, 2002, over 1,500 churches participated in the national pilot of the 40 Days of Purpose spiritual growth campaign.

To provide a solid foundation for the underpinnings of this study, the theoretical basis for the proposed components of spiritual maturity are discussed and instruments used to measure them are identified. However, before discussing the components of spiritual maturity, it is important to understand the concept of spiritual development, the pathway that leads to spiritual maturity. To better conceptualize and study spiritual maturity, it is essential to understand how it develops.

Christian Perspective on Spiritual Development

Spiritual growth involves character development, the transformation of a person’s character to become more like Christ (Warren, 2002c, p. 173). This process of character change that results in the person’s moral and spiritual character becoming a closer reflection of the character of Christ is known as sanctification (Erickson, 1983/1998). The Holy Spirit works sanctification in the life of the believer (Erickson, 1983/1998, p. 890). However, for sanctification to occur in a person’s life, he or she must choose to act in obedience to God’s Word. The Apostle Paul used an analogy of physical growth to illustrate the changes that occur in spiritual growth:

Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation, now that you have tasted that the Lord is good (1 Peter 2:2). Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not
acquainted with the teachings about righteousness. But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil. Therefore let us leave the elementary teachings about Christ and go on to maturity. (Hebrews 5:13, 14; 6:1)

Spiritual maturity, becoming more like Christ, is a gradual progressive development (Warren, 2002c, p. 176). James Fowler (1981) presented a six-stage theory of faith development, which provides a useful framework to begin to conceptualize the process of spiritual development.

Fowler’s (1981) stages of faith include: (a) Intuitive-Projective faith, ages 3-7, which involves a fantasy-filled, imaginative phase where a child can be strongly and permanently influenced by examples, moods, actions, and stories of the observable faith of primary adults; (b) Mythic-Literal faith, ages 7-12, which involves the child beginning to internalize and own stories, beliefs, and observances that symbolize a sense of belonging to his or her community; (c) Synthetic-Conventional faith, where a person’s experiences of the world extend beyond family, and faith involves a synthesis of values and information that will be the basis for identity and a worldview; (d) Individuative-Reflective faith, which usually occurs in early adulthood and involves a relocation of authority within the self, as well as the capacity to critically reflect on one’s beliefs, attitudes, commitments, and emerging lifestyle; (e) Conjunctive faith, which involves a reworking of one’s past, the integration into self, and an adaptation to reality, where the symbolic power from the past is reunited with conceptual meanings (this stage can involve the development of a dynamic and trusting relationship
with God); and (f) *Universalizing faith*, which involves persons who are willing to dedicate their lives to the human community without consideration of personal cost (in this stage a person will often experience a feeling of being at one with God). Fowler’s description of the stages of faith include the development of a religious-based faith, as well as faith orientations of persons who can be described as secular or eclectic.

A Christian perspective on spiritual development refers to the spiritual development that occurs in the believer through the sanctification of the Holy Spirit (Erickson, 1983/1998). Thiessen (1949/2001) described sanctification when he wrote, “Broadly speaking, we can define sanctification as a separation to God, an imputation of Christ as our holiness, purification from moral evil, and conformation to the image of Christ” (p. 287). Sanctification can be viewed as both an act and a process (p. 289). The initial act of sanctification, or positional sanctification, refers the moment an individual believes in Christ, the believer is now complete in Christ (pp. 289–290). However, as a process, sanctification continues throughout the life of the believer (p. 290). Thiessen describes the process of sanctification when he wrote, “Then the Holy Spirit will put to death the deeds of the body (Rom. 8:13), work in him obedience to the Word (1 Pet. 1:22), produce the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22), and use him in God’s service” (p. 290).

According to Coe (2000), “a *developmental spirituality* provides an understanding of the various dynamics involved in the spiritual progress of the believer through the Holy Spirit across time” (p. 293). All individuals have
developmental history and travel down the path toward spiritual maturity accompanied by the Holy Spirit. One of the most explicit scriptural texts dealing with spiritual development was written by the Apostle John and is thought to have been a letter to the church at Ephesus, where he had been a pastor for a number of years (Coe, 2000, p. 294). The Scripture says:

I write you, dear children, because your sins have been forgiven on account of his name. I write to you fathers, because you have known him who is from the beginning. I write to you, young men, because you have overcome the evil one. I write to you, dear children, because you have known the Father. I write to you, fathers, because you have known him who is from the beginning. I write to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God lives in you, and you have overcome the evil one. (1 John 2:12-14)

John appears to be describing three stages of spiritual development: (a) *spiritual children*, characterized by a sense of forgiveness of sin and a freedom to know God personally; (b) *spiritual adolescence*, characterized by a sense of struggle and wrestling with the evil one and an abiding in the Word of God in order to overcome adversity; and (c) *spiritual fathers* (*mothers*), characterized by a sense of spiritual confidence that comes from a life of trials and tribulations and walking with God, with the knowledge that God’s will, not their own will, is the reality and has a purpose (Coe, 2000, p. 294).

St. John of the Cross presented a developmental theory on spirituality in his classic work, *The Dark Night of the Soul* (Coe, 2000). His three stages of
spiritual development refer to three types of love for God; the developmental process enables believers to grow and mature in their love for God. The first stage is *Purgation*, which is the love of God for pleasure's sake and refers to a time when the believer is forming an attachment to God that feels good and is a source of pleasure. The Apostle Peter described this stage when he wrote, "Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that you may grow up in your salvation now that you have tasted that the Lord is good" (1 Pet. 2:2-3). However, as babies need to be weaned from a bottle and given solid food, believers need to be weaned from a "feel good" spirituality based on their senses. God weans believers through the dark night of the senses; "a period of wrestling with the evil one, with their own internal evil, with the need to be in control, with the need to always feel good, to feel that close to God" (Coe, 2000, p. 300). God is moving believers away from a sensual Christianity and moving them toward a new obedience of faith and into a "deeper, more profound experience of themselves and his indwelling presence" (pp. 302–303).

The second stage is *Illumination*, in which the believer loves God for love's sake and the ministry and presence of the Holy Spirit will be experienced in the soul as an indwelling relationship. This stage is based upon a real relationship between two persons, much like the love between a child and parent (Coe, 2000, p. 295). This stage is comparable to Fowler's stage of faith development known as Conjunctive faith.

Finally, God moves the believer into the last stage, *Union*, through the dark night of the spirit, in which the soul learns to love God just for Himself—the
believer loves God for God's sake. It is during this stage that believers develop a servant's heart, serving God out of their love for Him. St. John of the Cross believed that the central goal of spiritual maturity is the pursuit of an intimate union with God (Howard, McMinn, Bissell, Faries, & VanMeter, 2000, p. 310). A believer would need to reach the Union stage of spiritual development to achieve the level of faith development that Fowler ascribes to the Universalizing of Faith stage.

After developing a basic understanding of spiritual development, the process to achieve spiritual maturity, some of the basic components of spiritual maturity are discussed and some of the instruments that have been developed to measure them are identified. Benner (1990) postulated that people relate to God through similar psychological processes and mechanisms that govern their relationships with other people. Spiritual maturity, from both a biblical and psychological perspective involves relationship with God and with others (Hall & Brokaw, 1995; Hall & Edwards, 1996). The concept of relationship is foundational to a theological perspective of spiritual maturity (Erickson, 1983/1988; Hall & Edwards, 1996).

According to the relational view of theology, human beings are created to experience relationship with God as well as relate to other humans (Hall & Edwards, 1996, p. 235). Hall and Edwards noted that "this relational position is further supported by its correspondence to the two great commandments - to love God and to love your neighbor (Mark 12:28-31) - which involve relationships with others (p. 235). Therefore, if the nature of human beings is
relational, then spiritual maturity should be viewed from this perspective (Hall & Brokaw, 1995; Hall & Edwards, 1996, p. 235). Object relations theory and attachment theory provide a cogent framework within which to express this facet of spirituality (Hall & Edwards, 1996).

Object Relations and Spiritual Maturity

Individuals’ religious beliefs, experiences, and practices reflect the dynamics active in their construing of experience and in the deep structure of their internalized relationships (Jones, 1991, p. 63). Jones suggested that there is a positive correlation between spiritual and psychological maturity and, as such, “there ought to be parallels between the transferential patterns occurring in many places in a person’s life, especially as it develops in therapy and that person’s affective bond with the sacred” (Jones, 1991, p. 68).

According to object relations theory, a component of spiritual maturity is a realistic acceptance of God (Hall & Edwards, 1996; Slater et al., 2001). Object relations theory is psychodynamically oriented and emphasizes understanding human behavior, development, and relationships (St. Clair, 1996, Klein, 1990). Originally, Freud used the term object to refer to anything an infant drives toward for satiation (St. Clair, 1996, p. 1). However, many theorists such as Klein, Fairbairn, Winnicott, Jacobson, Kernberg, and Kohut have moved, away from Freud’s view, toward a relational/structural model of the psyche in which an object is the focal point of relational needs in human development (Klee, 2000a, para. 5).
The modern proponents of object relations theory believe that humans have an innate drive to form and maintain relationships and that our interactions with significant others, from birth through adulthood, influences the formation of our identity. It is through our interaction with these significant people in our lives that we begin to internalize characteristics of these relationships and build our self-structure or personality.

According to current object relations theory, objects can be people, as well as things, and include transitional objects with which we form attachments, such as stuffed animals, security blanket, or pets (St. Clair, 1996, p. 76). These objects and the child’s developing relationship with them are internalized, and eventually, become the building blocks of the self-system (Klee, 2000a, p. 1). These early relationships with the objects (significant others and parts of significant others) form the blueprint of a self-structure, and the individual typically seeks out relationships with others that reaffirm this blueprint (Klee, 2000a, p. 2). It is as though in early childhood people draw up a floor plan of the types of relationships they think they need to build, and they spend their lives seeking out others to complete the project.

Object relations theory evolved out of a human development model (St. Clair, 1996; Klein, 1990). The core concept of this developmental perspective is reflected in Fairbairn’s belief that human development is a lifelong journey away from the dependent bonds of early childhood to the adult states of mutuality and exchange, characteristics associated with adult autonomy (Klee, 2000b, para. 7).
Object relations theory not only provides a framework for understanding how we develop an internal representation of our relationship with others, but it also helps us to illuminate how individuals develop a representation of God. In her book, *The Birth of the Living God*, Rizzuto (1979) proposed that an individual’s God representation is a blend of the internal representations of his or her primary objects. These internal representations can be changed and reshaped throughout development as the individual has different life experiences (Rizzuto, 1979). Therefore, it is reasonable to conclude that spiritual maturity would be expressed in the individual’s representation of God and in the dynamic quality of one’s actual relationship with God.

Hall et al. (1998) conducted a study investigating the relationship between the developmental maturity of one’s faith and relationship with God and the developmental maturity of one’s relationship with others (p. 303). Specifically, Hall, et al. proposed a positive relationship between spiritual maturity defined relationally and the level of object relations development (p. 304). Their study shifted the focus from a “static internal representation of God to the dynamic quality of one’s actual relationship with God” (p. 304). The results of their study revealed 19 out of 20 correlations in the predicted direction between both the measures of spiritual maturity (Quality of Relationship and Awareness subscales) and the measure of the level of object relations development (from the Bell Object Relations Inventory [BORI]). The study by Hall, et al. expanded on the research of Hall and Brokaw (1995) that initiated the investigation of spiritual maturity and object relations development.
The quality of relationship with God has three developmental levels based on object relations theory: Instability, Grandiosity, and Realistic Acceptance (Slater et al., 2001, p. 13). The three developmental levels consist of the following characteristics: (a) the Instability stage, in which people have difficulty integrating good and bad self-image and, therefore, have trouble trusting God and viewing Him as loving; (b) the Grandiosity stage, in which people are preoccupied with grandiose fantasies, crave attention, and attempt to present themselves as better than others and, therefore, tend to focus on God’s personal protection and provision of their needs; and (c) the Realistic Acceptance stage, in which people can acknowledge both positive and negative emotions that occur within an ongoing valued relationship and where God is valued for His own right, not just for what He can do for the individual (Slater et al., 2001, p. 13).

The realistic acceptance stage represents the level of spiritual maturity that believers desire to attain and closely corresponds to the union stage of spiritual development described by St. John of the Cross—the final stage, in which God is loved for God’s sake. At the realistic acceptance level, the individual attains what object relations theorists call mature or mutual dependence in one’s relationship with God, meaning the person is capable of both giving and receiving in the relationship (Slater et al., 2001, p. 13).

Hall and Edwards (1996) developed the first version of the Spiritual Assessment Inventory (SAI) to assess spiritual maturity from a perspective that combines object relations theory, awareness of God, and communication with God. The SAI is based on a model of psychospiritual development (Hall &
Edwards, 2002). Hall and Edwards believe that “relational maturity is an integral component of spiritual maturity because it is relevant to one’s relationship with God” (Slater et al., 2001, p. 13). Since the SAI measures the level of a person’s quality relationship with God and his or her awareness of God, it can be used to assess these relevant components of spiritual maturity.

Introduction to Attachment Theory

Another basic component of spiritual maturity is a secure attachment to God. Attachment theory conceptualizes the universal human need to form intimate affectional bonds (Griffin & Bartholomew, 1994, p. 430). Bowlby (1998) viewed attachment behavior as biologically adaptive in that its primary purpose is to maintain the proximity of the infant to its mother and, thereby, enhance the infant’s chances of survival (Stein, Jacobs, Ferguson, Allen, & Fonagy, 1998). However, he recognized that the basic mechanisms of the attachment system are active and influential throughout the lifespan (Kirkpatrick & Shaver, 1990, p. 316). Bowlby considered attachment to be monotropic, occurring with a single figure, typically the mother, and to have strong influence on psychological development and relationships with others from birth to death (Holmes, 1993, p.69). Monotropy includes one relationship and a hierarchy of relationships for the child with the primary caregiver on top. In short, from Bowlby’s perspective attachment is a universal, enduring affective bond between a given child and a given adult, the primary attachment figure (Stein, et al., 1998).

According to Bowlby, the human dilemma is that no attachment can be completely reliable because it must be shared and will eventually be lost
(Holmes, 1993, p. 70). The capacity to separate from attachment figures and form new ones is one of the biggest developmental challenges in the cycle of life. A secure attachment relationship includes three primary characteristics: (a) there is proximity seeking to a preferred figure; (b) the attachment figure serves as a secure base, which becomes a springboard for curiosity and exploration, as well as a safe haven when there is a perceived threat; and (c) there is an observed protest in response to separation (Kirkpatrick, 1997). A child will develop an internal working model based on repeated patterns of interactive experience and will use this model to predict and relate to the world (Holmes, 1993, p. 78). Our early attachment experiences can significantly impact our perception of self, others, and our interpersonal environment. Bowlby suggested that children’s early experiences with separation and attachment lead to a set of expectations (an internal working model) that in turn guide their perceptions about how close relationships operate and how they are used in daily life and stressful situations (Stein et al., 1998, Theoretical background, para. 1).

Ainsworth observed mother-child interactions within the context of a standardized lab paradigm referred to as the Strange Situation and initially identified three, and later four attachment patterns including: (a) secure attachment: these infants are distressed by separation initially but greet the parent upon return, receive comfort if needed, and then can return to play; (b) insecure-avoidant: these children do not show any overt signs of distress on separation, ignore their mothers on reunion, and remain watchful of her and inhibited in their play; (c) insecure-anxious/ambivalent: these children are
uncertain of their mother’s availability and responsiveness, and they tend to be anxious and clingy; and (d) insecure disorganized: these children display a diverse range of confused behaviors including “freezing” and stereotypical movements when they are reunited with their caregiver (Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters, & Wall, 1978; Holmes, 1993, p. 105).

In Ainsworth’s original middle-class Baltimore sample the proportions of infants identified as secure was 66%, avoidant 20% and ambivalent 12% (the disorganized category was not identified in her initial study; Ainsworth et al., 1978; Holmes, 1993, p. 105). These differences in response to separation and reunion appear to stem from various aspects of the maternal relationship. The mothers of the secure babies are consistently attentive, responsive, and physically affectionate to their babies; while the mothers of the anxious ambivalent babies tend to be unpredictable and inconsistent in responding to their babies’ social signals (Kirkpatrick & Shaver, 1990, p.317). Finally, mothers of the avoidant babies tend to avoid physical contact and to actually reject the infants’ attempts to solicit attention and nurturance.

According to Ainsworth’s view, attachment is an enduring affectional bond, in which the primary attachment figure provides comfort and security and is not easily replaced (Ainsworth, 1989; Stein et al., 1998). Ainsworth sees attachment as the desire to maintain and/or reestablish closeness over time, distance, and absence and she believes that the most crucial aspect of attachment is the experience of safety and comfort obtained from the relationship and the
ability to move off from this secure base to explore (Ainsworth, 1989; Stein et al., 1998).

Adult Attachment Patterns

There is evidence for the persistence of attachment patterns (Ainsworth, 1989; Davila, Burge, & Hammen, 1997; Feeney & Noller, 1990; Kirkpatrick & Shaver, 1990). Research has shown that classifications established as early as 12 months of age tend to persevere through childhood, adolescence, and into adulthood in the absence of major environmental change (Stein et al., 1998, para. 1). Motivated by Bowlby’s (1998) belief that attachment is a lifespan issue that impacts adult functioning, attachment researchers began to investigate attachment patterns in adult interpersonal relationships (Davila et al., 1997; Feeney & Noller, 1990; Griffin & Bartholomew, 1994; Lopez, Mauricio, Gormley, Simko, & Berger, 2001; Myers & Vetere, 2002). In 1985, Main and her coworkers developed The Adult Attachment Interview (AAI) for assessing inner working models of parents in regards to attachment (as cited in Holmes, 1993). This is a lengthy clinical-type interview that examines the individual’s relationship with each of his or her parents during childhood (Holmes, 1993, p. 113).

Through the use of the AAI, Main, Kaplan, and Cassidy were able to reliably assign interviewees into one of four categories including: (a) Autonomous-secure, in which parents gave accounts of secure childhoods where their attachments were valued; (b) Dismissing-detached, in which parents had few childhood memories but tended to idealize their past; (c) Preoccupied-entangled, in which parents gave inconsistent, rambling accounts of their childhood, and they
appeared to be over-involved and to be still struggling with past conflicts; and
(d) Unresolved-disorganized, a category that is rated separately and involves
specific traumatic events that took place in childhood and have not been resolved
emotionally (as cited in Holmes, 1993, p. 113). A number of studies have shown
consistent correlations between the attachment style of the infants in the Strange
Situation and the attachment classification of their mothers in the AAI; secure
infants had mothers who rated Secure-autonomous, avoidant infants had
mothers who rated Dismissing-detached, and ambivalent infants had mothers
who rated Preoccupied-entangled (Holmes, 1993, p. 114). These findings
substantiated Bowlby's (1998) belief that early attachment experiences influence
adult functioning and spawned research in the area of adult attachment.

Hazan and Shaver (1987) conducted a groundbreaking study in which
they developed a measure of individual differences in adult attachment styles
that corresponded to the three main attachment patterns observed by Ainsworth.
The instrument known as the Adult Attachment Questionnaire consists of three
descriptions of adult romantic relationships (the identifying labels are not
included):

1. I find it relatively easy to get close to others and am comfortable
   depending on them. I don't often worry about being abandoned or
   about someone getting too close to me. [Secure]

2. I am somewhat uncomfortable being close to others; I find it difficult to
   trust them completely, difficult to allow myself to depend on them. I
   am nervous when anyone gets too close, and often, love partners want
me to be more intimate than I feel comfortable being. [Avoidant]

(3) I find that others are reluctant to get as close as I would like. I often worry that my partner doesn’t really love me or won’t want to stay with me. I want to get very close to my partner, and this desire sometimes scares people away. [Anxious or anxious/ambivalent] (as cited in Kirkpatrick, 1997, p. 208)

In both a diverse adult sample of respondents to a newspaper survey and a college sample, Hazan and Shaver (1987) found that the relative frequencies of responses in the three categories closely paralleled the corresponding percentages reported in the research in infantile attachment. They showed that the three groups differed significantly on a wide variety of measures corresponding to their close relationships and their reported childhood history.

Hazan and Shaver’s findings have been replicated and extended in the rapidly expanding literature in social and personality psychology (Kirkpatrick, 1997). In general, the research findings reveal: (a) the relationships of secure individuals tend to be characterized by trust, friendship, positive emotions, and overall relationship satisfaction; (b) the relationships of anxious/ambivalent individuals tend to be characterized by obsessive love, jealousy, emotional highs and lows, fear of rejection or abandonment, falling in love frequently and easily, and a preoccupation with the romantic partner’s responsiveness and; (c) the relationships of avoidant individuals tend to be characterized by fear of intimacy, emotional highs and lows, jealousy, and a low level of commitment (Hazan & Shaver, 1987; Kirkpatrick, 1997, p. 208).
The results of a study by Feeney and Noller (1990) suggest that attachment styles may exert a very pervasive influence on the individual's relationships with others because it reflects general beliefs about the rewards and dangers of interpersonal relationships (p. 286). Research findings also indicate that adult romantic attachment is different and more complex than the mother-child relationship because it is reciprocal. Subsequent research is extending the attachment model of adult attachments through longitudinal studies (Davila et al., 1997). These research findings suggest that an interpersonal mediating process is responsible for the continuity of attachment throughout our psychological development (Stein et al., 1998, Theoretical background, para. 10).

A number of researchers are viewing adult attachment from a social cognition perspective. Hazan and Shaver (1987) perceive attachment in adulthood as the result of a process of alternating attachments that occur throughout our lifespan. The human infant is born in a great state of immaturity, and the human attachment system takes several months to develop. The infant, who initially is almost totally dependent on the attachment figure, gradually redirects attachment functions from parents to peers as childhood progresses (Stein et al., 1998).

In late childhood and early adolescence this shift is motivated by proximity-seeking as children tolerate increasing periods of separation from their parents. For adolescents, the parental home still remains an important anchor point in times of stress, but peers begin to seek support from each other and these relationships actually take on the function of a safe haven. After repeated
experiences of seeking and finding comfort, late adolescents/young adults begin to disengage from parental attachments, and their peer relationships take on the quality of a secure base. Eventually adult attachment expands to include proximity-seeking within the context of sexual mating. In short, researchers from the field of social cognition assume that adult attachment exists primarily within romantic intimate relationships (Stein et al., 1998).

Attachment Model of Religious Beliefs

Unfortunately, all human attachment figures are, even at their best, fallible and will inevitably be lost through either disappointment and/or eventual death. As such, the price we often pay for love and attachment is grief. Holmes (1993) recognized Bowlby’s perspective on grief when he wrote, “the inevitability of loss means that for Bowlby grief sometimes outshines attachment in importance” (p. 102). According to Bowlby (as cited in Sorenson, 1997, p. 534), the need for an available and responsive caregiver remains with us from “cradle to grave”; there must be an inborn desire to search for an attachment figure that could fulfill this deep-seated need.

In the process of trying to satisfy this need, many individuals will eventually discover a personal relationship with God, the ultimate attachment figure (Kirkpatrick & Shaver, 1990; Rowatt & Kirkpatrick, 2002), “God has said, ‘Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.’ So we say with confidence, ‘The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?’” (Heb. 13: 5, 6). This scripture clearly illustrates that God represents the ideal attachment
figure because He is totally reliable and a secure base that provides a safe haven for us even in the most difficult times.

Kaufman (1981), a theologian, was impressed by the similarities between Bowlby’s description of the attachment relationship and Christian theology, concluding that “the idea of God is the idea of an absolutely adequate attachment figure... God is thought of as a protective parent who is always reliable and always available to his children when they are in need” (as cited in Kirkpatrick & Shaver, 1990, p. 318). A passage in Romans illustrates Kaufman’s observation, “but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, ‘Abba, Father.’ The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children” (8: 15, 16). Kirkpatrick has been a strong proponent of attachment theory providing a powerful framework for the psychology of religion. He believes that diverse forms of religious experiences, such as images of God, sudden religious conversions, prayer, and glossolalia (speaking in unknown tongues), can be explained in terms of attachment dynamics (Kirkpatrick & Shaver, 1990).

Kirkpatrick and Shaver (1992) designed a study to examine the attachment model of religious belief and found that adult attachment styles were related cross-sectionally to a variety of religious variables. They found that: (a) secure participants described God more loving and less distant than insecure participants, which is consistent with their positive experience with human attachment figures; (b) avoidant participants were more likely to describe themselves as agnostic, which is consistent with their tendency to avoid intimacy and commitment in close relationships; and (c) anxious/ambivalent participants
were more likely to have spoken in tongues at least once in the past, which is consistent with their experience of strong emotions in intimate relationships. The cross-sectional findings indicate that individuals’ internal working model of attachment relationships can be reflected in their interpersonal relationships and perceived relationships with God (Kirkpatrick, 1997, p. 209). These findings support the correspondence hypothesis of childhood attachment and adult religiousness, which assumes that early relationships provide the foundation on which future relationships are established, including those with God (Granqvist, 1998, p. 352).

In another study, Kirkpatrick and Shaver (1990) examined the relationship between retrospective reports of childhood attachment relationships with parents and other religious variables including parents’ religiousness. They found that respondents reporting avoidant attachments with their mothers seemed to be more religious in certain ways than those respondents who reported secure or anxious childhood attachments. For example, the avoidant group reported 4 times the rate of sudden religious conversion than the other two groups. These findings support the compensation hypothesis, which assumes that persons with an insecure attachment history would be in greater need of a compensatory attachment figure and would be more motivated to seek out a relationship with God, who could serve as a substitute attachment figure (Granqvist, 1998, p. 352).

Pehr Granqvist (1998) conducted a study to clarify the connections between perceived childhood attachment with each parent and with aspects of
adult’s religiousness. His findings resulted in a revision in the correspondence hypothesis, in that the religiousness of securely attached individuals corresponds to the parental level of religiousness rather than to secure childhood attachment. According to Granqvist:

The religiousness of persons with an insecure attachment history may have more of an emotional ontogenesis, that is, religiousness may represent a compensation for insecure childhood relationships, whereas the religiousness of persons with a secure attachment history may be originating more from social circumstances and thereby correspond to parental level of religiousness. (p. 363)

Therefore, persons with different childhood attachment backgrounds probably develop different pathways to religiousness.

Rowatt and Kirkpatrick (2002) conducted a study designed to develop a multidimensional measure of attachment to God and to demonstrate that these dimensions are predictive of measures of personality and affect, after controlling for social desirability, as well as other dimensions of religiosity related to attachment to God (p. 637). The application of attachment theory to religion points to the central fact that for many people God may function psychologically as an attachment figure (Kirkpatrick & Shaver, 1992). God is perceived to be a safe haven as well as a secure base from which to operate on a day-to-day basis.

Kirkpatrick and Shaver (1992) had constructed a categorical Attachment to God Scale based on Hazan and Shaver’s (1987) Adult Attachment Scale.
Respondents were asked to select from one of the following three descriptions the one that best characterizes his or her beliefs about and relationship with God:

**Secure**: God is generally warm and responsive to me; He always seems to know when to be supportive and protective of me, and when to let me make my own mistakes. My relationship with God is always comfortable, and I am very happy and satisfied with it.

**Avoidant**: God is generally impersonal, distant, and often seems to have little or no interest in my personal affairs and problems. I frequently have the feeling that He doesn't care very much about me, or that He might not like me.

**Anxious-Ambivalent**: God seems to be inconsistent in His reactions to me; He sometimes seems very warm and responsive to my needs, but sometimes not. I'm sure that He loves me and cares about me, but sometimes He seems to show it in ways I don’t really understand. (Rowatt & Kirkpatrick, 2002, p. 639)

Although the Attachment to God Scale, (AGS) has led to some important research findings, Rowatt and Kirkpatrick have recognized some of its limitations. For example, a person could agree with some statements in a paragraph and disagree with others.

Rowatt and Kirkpatrick (2002) revised the Attachment to God Scale by converting each phrase from the three attachment paragraphs to a scale item and having participants rate each of the 22 items using a 7-point Likert scale (1 = not at all characteristic of me; 7 = very characteristic of me). This revised instrument
resulted in a two-dimensional model of attachment to God, consisting of Avoidance (vs. Security) and Anxious dimensions (Rowatt & Kirkpatrick, 2002, p. 642-643). They found that these dimensions were internally consistent and displayed differential patterns of empirical relationships with other variables in the study, including personality, religiosity, and psychological outcome variables.

Since the AGS involves two dimensions, Avoidance (vs. Security) and Anxiety, a secure attachment to God would be reflected in low scores in both dimensions, particularly in the Avoidance dimension. Therefore, the AGS can be used to assess the type of attachment an individual has to God and to serve as a measurement for this aspect of spiritual maturity. A Christian perspective of attachment theory can reveal the reason a secure attachment to God is an essential component of spiritual maturity.

A Christian Perspective of Attachment Theory

From the very beginning of creation God demonstrated our need for attachment, "The Lord said, 'It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him'" (Gen. 2: 6). God created mankind to have a relationship with him and with each other. Research findings have shown that adult attachment styles and attachment to God are strongly related when the respondents reported an insecure childhood attachment (Kirkpatrick & Shaver, 1992).
Through the life of Christ, God demonstrated His incredible love for mankind. Jesus’ main message clearly outlined the biblical attachment hierarchy:

Jesus replied: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind”. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: “Love your neighbor as yourself”. (Mt. 22:37-39)

Jesus through his own relationship with the Heavenly Father demonstrated the value of relying on God as a primary attachment figure. Hebrews 11 reveals a common denominator in the lives of the faith-filled servants who had to face great obstacles in their lives—their faith was rooted in a deep intimate relationship with the Lord. As such, they consistently turned to God in times of distress.

The idea that God may function psychologically as an attachment figure for many people is central to the application of attachment theory to religion (Kirkpatrick, 1999; Rowatt & Kirkpatrick, 2002). In Christianity, there is the belief in a personal God with whom one can interact and maintain a personal relationship (Kirkpatrick, 1997, p. 209). The Christian God is perceived as meeting all the defining criteria for a secure attachment figure (Kirkpatrick, 1994). According to Kaufman (1981), God represents an ideal attachment figure, while human attachment figures remain fallible.
During times of crisis, people perceive God as a safe haven (Collins & Feeney, 2000; Kirkpatrick, 1999) and as a secure base from which to explore their environment when there is no perceived threat (Ainsworth et al., 1978; Bowlby, 1988; Kirkpatrick, 1999). Various situations in life, such as illness, accidents, divorce, rejection, and other tragedies provide individuals with an opportunity to learn a heart lesson and to begin to experience God in the center of their lives—as a “safe haven, a refuge for the wounded soul” (Clinton & Sibcy, 2002, p. 152).

Attachment to God and Spiritual Maturity

The Christian perspective of attachment theory provides a key to spiritual maturity. The tendency to look to God for a haven of safety and a secure base, to maintain or establish a sense of security and peace, is an indication of spiritual maturity. Research in attachment theory helps us to better understand the parallels between interpersonal relationships and relationships with God. Unlike human attachment figures, God is omnipresent, which makes it possible for God to be continually available and responsive. Therefore, the nature of the closeness we can experience with God in times of need may differ from the closeness we experience with others (Rowatt & Kirkpatrick, 2002). Also, all human attachment figures are fallible and will eventually be lost through disappointment and/or death.

The obstacles in life, such as illness, accidents, divorce, and rejection, individuals must face often increases anxiety over death and a fear of separation
Yalom refers to these jolting experiences as boundary situations and he believes that they have the power to transform the way one lives in the world (Yalom, 1995). In their book Attachments, Clinton and Sibcy (2002) describe how our attachment style influences how we will respond to God in reaction to a boundary situation. Those with an avoidant attachment style tend to move away from God during times of distress and hold on to material possessions, success, or other addictions. They may also express their anger at God by engaging in sinful behaviors, in an attempt to get back at God for the bad thing that happened to them (Clinton & Sibcy, 2002). Those with an ambivalent attachment style are prone to fluctuations between feeling angry at God and blaming Him for their loss and being consumed by self-condemnation. They do not turn to God for comfort but tend to seek out a substitute attachment figure, and they may bounce from relationship to relationship (Clinton & Sibcy, 2002, p. 153).

Individuals with a disorganized attachment style perceive boundary situations as a continuation of their life saga, and they view God as malicious, like their early caregivers (Clinton & Sibcy, 2002, p. 153). These individuals may respond with a “mixed set of behaviors: addictions, self-protection, clinging, anger, and even fiery rage”; while, “at the same time, they may actually bury other feelings of resentment, anger, and even rage” (p. 153). Persons with disorganized attachment style tend to view God as punishing and their personal tragedy as something they probably deserve. Since they fear God’s punishment, they are afraid to express their feelings of anger and resentment, and these
feelings will typically resurface as generalized anxiety, worry, and pain (Clinton & Sibcy, 2002, p. 153).

Finally, those with secure attachment style may vacillate between anger and sadness and want to know answers to all the whys that arise when they are faced with a boundary situation (Clinton & Sibcy, 2002, p. 154). However, they will ultimately turn to God to be their secure base and find the strength to go on in the midst of uncertainty (Clinton & Sibcy, 2002). When God becomes their secure base they are able to work through the pain associated with challenging circumstances and to recover a sense of meaning and purpose in their lives.

An area of research that can also help shed some additional light on our attachment to God in times of stress is religion and coping (Pargament, 1997). Research has consistently shown that people with secure attachments tend to be physically and mentally healthier than people with insecure attachments (Fetzer Institute, 1999; Pargament, 1997; Pargament et al., 1990), but the exact influence of attachment on health is not fully understood. Since people with a secure attachment to God experience Him as near, warm, and responsive, they are more likely than people with insecure attachments to God to perceive that their resources outweigh the demands of a stressful situation. As such, a secure attachment to God may serve as a buffer against the negative effects of stress. This stress-buffering process is described by the Apostle Paul when he wrote:

The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, and with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.
And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. (Phil. 4:5-7)

Religious Problem-Solving and Spiritual Maturity

Secure attachment to God may lead to the development of another basic component of spiritual maturity—an interdependence on God in problem-solving and in coping with stress. The words of Paul capture this aspect of spiritual maturity, "I can do all things through Christ who gives me strength" (Phil. 4:13). The life of the Apostle Paul demonstrates how having a secure primary attachment relationship with God can enable people to cope with the challenges in life that they are likely to encounter. As such, attachment to God can have a significant influence on the ability to cope with stressful events. Kirkpatrick and Shaver (1992) found that people who reported a secure attachment to God reported less anxiety, depression, and physical illness than did individuals with an anxious attachment to God.

Paul's life actually exemplifies a magnificent response to suffering. Paul's secure attachment to Christ appeared to facilitate his ability to cope with the intense suffering that he endured throughout his ministry. Paul was sustained during his times of painful suffering because of his never wavering focus on Jesus. Paul demonstrated how his mature relationship with Christ allowed him to overcome adversity and how the adversity strengthened his relationship with Christ. Spiritual growth can occur through times of pain and suffering. The Apostle James illuminates God's revealed purpose of trials and tribulations. He writes,
Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. (James 1:2-4)

Through a growing dependence and reliance on God, we learn to seek his wisdom and He helps us to mature spiritually. A secure attachment to God is related to another component of spiritual maturity: interdependence on God in coping with difficult life circumstances.

Religion is relevant to the problem-solving process when it provides guidance for the selection of solutions to problems and provides emotional support (Fox et al., 1998; Pargament et al., 1990). Pargament (1997) defines religion as “a process, a search for significance in ways related to the sacred” (p. 32). He identifies the choice in religious coping as one of conservation or transformation. We either hold on to what we believe, or we attempt to let go and change. According to Pargament there are actually two mechanisms involved in conservation: (a) preservation, where the person tries to preserve the ends of significance, as well as the path to it, and (b) reconstruction, where the individual tries to conserve the ends of significance through a change of the means to achieve it.

The methods of preservation are marking boundaries, setting up clear divisions between one’s world and the forces outside of it; religious perseverance, holding on to one’s faith and beliefs; and religious support, including spiritual and interpersonal. The methods of reconstruction include: (a) religious switching,
turning to God as an ideal substitute attachment figure or switching religious groups; (b) *religious purification*, which reorients the individual to the sacred and could include, sacrifice, isolation, exorcism, apology, isolation, and repentance; and (c) *religious reframing*, where suffering can become “explainable, bearable, and even valuable” (Pargament, 1997, p. 213-222).

Religion may serve a valuable function in helping people cope with negative life events by providing them with direction, support, hope, and peace. Religion does two things for people: It defines where they should go (end) and how they should get there (means; Paloutzian, 1996, p. 228). As such, a spiritually mature person may be viewed as someone who has the capacity to strive toward a spiritual destination by means of a spiritual pathway (p. 229).

Pargament (1997) examines two types of religious transformation: (a) *re-evaluation*, which is the effort to change the destination of significance while preserving the pathway to significance and (b) *re-creation*, which involves a radical change of both the destination of significance and the pathways to reach it (p. 235). Re-evaluation can involve seeking a new sense of purpose and rites of passages. Re-creation can involve *conversion*, which is “a dramatic change of the self, a change in which the self becomes identified with the sacred” (p. 248). Our destination is changed as well as our old pathways of living. Conversion involves coming to the end of one’s self and recognizing that there is something far greater than self—the individual has gone from self-preoccupation to the identification with the sacred. Dying to self is at the very heart of Christianity, “We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that,
just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father; we too may live a new life” (Rom. 6:4).

Pargament (1997) observed that there are three classes of sacred objects that an individual can identify with: a spiritual force (spiritual conversion), a religious group (religious group conversion), or the whole of humanity (universal conversion; p. 254). Spiritual conversion revolves around a spiritual force; and it involves an intimate, loving relationship that is reciprocated. Religious group conversions involve a leader being the focal point of the conversion, while the universal conversion involves a “sense of connectedness to the larger natural and social world” (p. 256).

In his book, The Psychology of Religion and Coping, Pargament (1997) reaches a number of conclusions from his research in the area of religious coping: (a) specific measures of religious coping seem to serve as mediators or bridges between the general religious orientation of the individual and the outcome of negative events; (b) religious coping appears to be very helpful to more religious people; (c) religion can actually regulate or reduce the effects of life stress, or both; and (d) religious coping adds a unique dimension to the overall coping process (p. 312). Pargament et al. (1990) examined religious and nonreligious coping among members from 10 Midwestern churches, representing a range of denominations, to the most significant negative event the members had experienced in the past year. Findings showed that situation-specific religious coping efforts predicted the outcomes of these critical events more strongly than did the measures of religious orientation.
It appeared that the concrete, situationally tied appraisals, activities, and purposes of religion had much more significant implications for the well-being of an individual dealing with a critical life event (Pargament et al., 1990). In some areas of the United States about 90% of hospitalized patients report relying on religion for comfort and strength during times of serious illness, and many studies have shown significant relationships between religious activity (such as prayer, inspirational reading, and participation in a worship service) and better mental health, better physical health, and lower utilization of health services (Koenig, 2001, p. 1).

In a subsequent study, Pargament et al. (1992) examined how religious orientation related to distinctive means and ends of coping with specific life problems (p. 506). They defined religious orientation as “a generalized disposition to use particular means to attain particular ends in living” (p. 506). Multiple regression analyses determined the relationship among each of the religious orientations (intrinsic, extrinsic, and quest) and four sets of coping measures: religious and nonreligious appraisals of negative events, religious purposes in coping, religious coping activities, and nonreligious coping activities (p. 509). They found that each orientation was associated with distinctive means and ends of coping with difficult life situations.

The results of the study by Pargament et al. (1992) indicated: (a) intrinsic orientation is tied most strongly to the Spiritual end in coping; (b) intrinsic approach was associated with a spiritual method of coping, and Spiritually based coping was the strongest predictor of intrinsic orientation; (c) intrinsic
orientation was also positively related to appraisal of the event as a Threat-Spiritual, and it was accompanied by a greater sense of spiritual risk in life situations, while at the same time framing life problems in a more positive, constructive terms; (d) extrinsic orientation was associated with Self-Development religious purpose and Restraint, and there appeared to be a more desperate trend in coping; (e) in the appraisal of the negative event, extrinsic orientation was associated with a lower level of Self-blame, greater perceived Threat-Personal Health, a lesser feeling that it is an Opportunity to Grow, and a greater sense of Cannot Handle; (f) extrinsic orientation was also related to the appraisal of Can Change the situation, though it was also associated with Cannot Handle; perhaps the extrinsics feel that although the negative situation has taken them beyond their coping resources, they can still modify their situation by turning to religion; and (g) quest orientation was primarily associated with religious coping activities, such as personal improvement through Good Deeds and the voicing of Discontent to God (pp. 509–511). Pargament et al. concluded that coping efforts might lead to changes in the general orientation system—that critical life events could have an impact on our general religious approach to life, resulting in a transformation from the self to the sacred (p. 511).

Pargament (1997) also discussed three distinctive approaches to control in coping: “(1) the self-directing approach, wherein people rely on themselves in coping rather than on God, (2) the deferring approach, in which the responsibility for coping is passively deferred to God; and (3) the collaborative approach, in which the individual and God are both active partners in coping” (p. 180).
Another coping method that can be investigated is pleas and petitions to God, which has both active and passive elements. Pargament summarizes the styles of coping and the reliance on God as follows:

In self-directing coping, control is sought by the self. In deferring coping, control is sought by God. In collaborative coping, control is sought with God. And in petitionary coping, control is sought through God (p. 183).

Research has shown that the collaborative style is associated with a more committed, relational form of religion, as well as a greater sense of personal control and greater self-esteem (Pargament, 1997). In the collaborative style, both God and the individual are viewed as active contributors working together to solve problems (Pargament et al., 1988, p. 92).

There are numerous verses in the New Testament supporting the collaborative style and indicating that this style is an indication of spiritual maturity. In the book of John, Jesus describes the importance of a partnership between the believer and Himself when He said:

Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.

(15:4-5)

Paul captured the essence of a collaborative style of problem-solving when he wrote:
Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ’s sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong. (2 Cor. 12:9-10)

These Scriptures show that the collaborative style of problem-solving is an essential component of spiritual maturity. Pargament et al. (1988) identified the three main styles of problem-solving (Self-Directing, Deferring, and Collaborative) through factor analytic methods and subsequently developed the Religious Problem-Solving Scale, Short Form (RPSS). Therefore, the Religious Problem-Solving Scale, which was designed to measure the problem-solving styles, is useful in evaluating this aspect of spiritual maturity.

Spiritual Experiences and Spiritual Maturity

The basic components that have been reviewed thus far include: a mature relationship with God, a secure attachment to God, an awareness of God’s presence, and interdependence on God in problem-solving and coping with stressful circumstances in life. To develop a spiritually mature relationship with God, individuals must somehow come to know God. According to Packer (1973), “knowing God is an emotional relationship, as well as an intellectual and volitional one, and could not indeed be a deep relation between persons were it not so” (p. 40). Although knowing God is a more complex process than knowing another person; both require a direct experience with the object of the relationship. Therefore, another component of spiritual maturity is both ordinary and extraordinary spiritual experiences with God.
Individuals come to know God as they experience Him, as God reveals Himself to them through their experience of Him at work in their lives (Blackaby & King, 1994, p. 6). God uses the problems in peoples’ lives to draw them closer to Him. Individuals’ relationship with the divine will most likely entail some form of spiritual experiences that facilitate their attachment to God. Humans were made in the image of God; and He intended for them to relate to Him with their body, mind, emotions, and will, as well as their spirit (Macaulay & Barrs, 1978, p. 36). In the Christian faith, the Holy Spirit is also known as the Paraclete, which means the one who comes along side. Macaulay and Barrs captured the essence of this relationship when they wrote, “Each believer has as close a relationship with the Spirit as the disciples had with Christ” (p. 105). The Holy Spirit dwells inside individuals communing with their spirit and influencing their mind, will, and emotions. Erickson (1983/1998) described the Holy Spirit’s indwelling and illumination of the believer when he wrote, “The Spirit...is able to affect one more intensely because, dwelling within, he can get to the very center of one’s thinking and emotions, and lead one into all truth, as Jesus promised” (p. 889).

According to the Christian faith, the Spirit is sovereign over Christian growth; the Holy Spirit enables us to become attached to God (Erickson, 1983/1998; Thiessen, 1949/2001; Willard, 2000, p.257). The Holy Spirit is also known as the Spirit of Truth; the Holy Spirit helps us to understand and be responsive to biblical truths. We were created to know God, and as we spiritually mature we grow in our knowledge of God (Packer, 1973, p. 33).
However, according to Packer, “we must learn to measure ourselves, not by our knowledge about God, not by our gifts and responsibilities in the church, but by how we pray and what goes in our hearts” (p. 32). William James (1902/1925) in his Varieties of Religious Experiences wrote:

That prayer or inner communion with the spirit thereof—be that spirit “God” or “law”—is a process wherein work is really done, and spiritual energy flows in and produces effects, psychological or material, within the phenomenal world. (p. 485)

The Prophet Jeremiah expressed the importance of knowing God when he wrote, “Let not the wise man boast of his wisdom or the strong man boast of his strength or the rich man boast of his riches, but let him who boasts boast about this: that he understands and knows me” (Jer. 9:23-24).

Spirituality has been historically thought of as the vehicle to a relationship with the transcendent (God). Although mysticism, in Christianity, is a widely misunderstood term, it is the spiritual path of seeking to know God through direct experience (Zuck, 2002, p. 1). Voyle (1994) investigated the effects of mystical experiences on Christian maturity. He used the Intrinsic/Extrinsic (I-E)-Revised Scale (Gorsuch & McPherson, 1989) as a measure of Christian maturity and the Mysticism Scale (Hood, 1975) as a measure of mystical experiences to assess the impact of mystical experiences on three Episcopal parishes (Voyle, 1994, p. 2). The results indicate that the I/E-Revised Scale measures one aspect of Christian maturity: It assesses the extent to which individuals allow their
beliefs to impact all aspects of their lives. The scale also relates positively and significantly with the Mysticism (M) scale (Voyle, 1994).

According to Hood (1985) an essential feature of mysticism is an experience of unity; it involves a transformation from the self to the sacred. William James (1902/1925) also describes this experience, “In mystic states we both become one with the Absolute and we become aware of our oneness” (p. 419). Hood developed the M Scale based on Stace’s (1960) conceptualization of mystical experiences, which he believed had five characteristics (as cited in Hood, 1985, p. 176):

1. **The mystical experience is noetic.** The person having the experience perceives it is a valid source of knowledge and not just a subjective experience.

2. **The mystical experience is ineffable,** it cannot simply be described in words.

3. **The mystical experience is holy.** While this is the religious aspect of the experience, it is not necessarily expressed in any particular theological terms.

4. **The mystical experience is profound yet enjoyable and characterized by positive affect.**

5. **The mystical experience is paradoxical.** It defies logic. (as cited in Hood, 1985, p. 176)
A Christian version of the M scale (Mysticism Scale, Christ Version; see Appendix D) was developed for Evangelicals (Hood & Williamson, 2000, p. 235). Since the M Scale relates to measures of openness to experience, religious experiences broadly construed, and traditional religious motivation, it is believed that the M Scale, Christ version, can be used to assess the mystical spiritual experiences component of spiritual maturity.

Spirituality and religiousness have gained attention as health research variables. An article by Hinterkopf (1994) addresses the integration of spiritual experiences in counseling. In her article she defines spiritual experience as “(a) a presently felt phenomenon, (b) involving an awareness of the transcendent dimension, (c) bringing new meanings, and (d) that lead to growth” (p. 165-166). Her definition of spiritual experiences assumes that psychological growth and spiritual growth are similar and it is concerned with a psychospiritual change process.

Underwood and Teresi (2002) developed the Daily Spiritual Experiences Scale (DSES) as part of a group project to develop a multidimensional approach to the measurement of religious and spiritual variables to use in health studies, (see Appendix E). They believed that daily spiritual experiences are one aspect of religiousness and spirituality that had not been adequately addressed. The scale is “intended to measure a person’s perception of the transcendent (God, the divine) in daily life and his or her perception of his or her interaction with or involvement of the transcendent in life” (Underwood & Teresi, 2002, p. 23). The
DSES is designed to assess the daily spiritual experience for the average person and purposively avoids assessing extraordinary experiences; it assesses a practical spirituality rather than a mystical one.

There has been relatively little research on the effects of spiritual experiences in daily life with overall health outcomes. The inclusion of the DSES in health studies reveals how religiousness and spirituality might impact physical and mental health. The findings of the studies utilizing the DSES showed that daily spiritual experiences are significantly related to quality of life, indicating that spiritual experiences could act as a buffer during the stresses and difficulties of life (Underwood & Teresi, p. 31). It is reasonable to assume that the DSES is useful in assessing the presence of ordinary spiritual experiences, which is another basic component of spiritual maturity.

Mental Health and Spiritual Maturity

With the recent development of the Multidimensional Measurement of Religiousness and Spirituality (MMRS), sponsored by the Fetzer Institute and the National Institute on Aging (1999), the field of psychology of religion appears to be heading back in the direction of a more religiously based spirituality. This instrument assesses each relevant dimension of religiousness and spirituality for their effects on physical and mental health (Fetzer Institute, 1999, p. 2).

The primary goal of the MMRS is to assess health-relevant domains of religiousness and spirituality (Fetzer Institute, 1999, p. 3). To conceptualize and measure key health-relevant domains, the panel of scholars made a distinction.
between religiousness and spirituality: (a) Religion has "specific behavioral, social, doctrinal, and denominational characteristics because it involves a system of worship and doctrine that is shared in a group"; and (b) Spirituality is "concerned with the transcendent, addressing ultimate questions about life's meaning, with the assumption that there is more to life than what we see or fully understand; it can call us beyond self to concern and compassion for others" (Fetzer Institute, 1999, pp. 2-3).

Research suggests a connection between religiousness and positive appraisals of situations (seeing negative events as an opportunity for individuals to grow stronger in their relationship with God; Pargament, 1997, p.173; Pargament et al., 1992). As such, emotional well-being is presumably associated with spiritual maturity. The Beck Depression Inventory-II (BDI-II) serves as an indicator of emotional well-being and, therefore, an indirect assessment of spiritual maturity (Beck, Steer & Brown, 1996). It is assumed that spiritual maturity is negatively correlated with the BDI-II. That is, spiritually mature individuals would be less likely to report symptoms of depression.

Spiritual Disciplines and Spiritual Maturity

Participation in religious services, prayer, and Bible reading has been shown to strengthen religious belief systems and to promote an increased sense of well-being (Fetzer Institute, 1999, p. 3; Jenkins & Pargament, 1988; Pargament et al., 1988; Spilka, Shaver, & Kirkpatrick, 1985). Religious involvement also seems to have an insulating effect on the emotional and physical well-being of individuals during crisis.
Spiritual disciplines have been utilized over the centuries as a means to help people of faith reorder their lives by reorienting how they think, behave, and relate to God and to their community (Eck, 2002, p. 271). Willard (1988) explains the value of the spiritual disciplines to spiritual growth when he writes:

The disciplines are activities of mind and body purposefully undertaken, to bring our personality and total being into effective cooperation with the divine order. (p. 68) A discipline is an activity within our power—something we can do—which brings us to a point where we can do what we at present cannot do by direct effort. (p. 106)

The ultimate goal of Christian spiritual maturity is for individuals to become like Christ in character, which will enable them to experience a life of relationship and intimacy with God and to grow in love for God and other people. According to Robert Foster (1978), who wrote Celebration of Discipline, “We have only one thing to do, namely, to experience a life of relationship and intimacy with God” (p. 4).

Dallas Willard (1988), author of The Spirit of the Disciplines, states, “We can become like Christ in character and in power and thus realize our highest ideal of well-being and well-doing” (p. ix). Jesus points out the path to spiritual growth:

Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me. He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love him and show myself to him. (John 14: 21)

Spiritual growth is an active process that requires an orientation toward explicit obedience to Christ (Willard, 2000). People are responsible for obeying the word
of Christ, his gospel, and his commands; however, they cannot obey Christ, or even trust him, without the work of the Holy Spirit. Erickson (1983/1998) wrote:

The Holy Spirit also works sanctification in the life of the believer. By sanctification is meant the continued transformation of moral and spiritual character so that the believer's life actually comes to mirror the standing he or she already has in God's sight (p. 890). It is the Spirit who is at work in the believer, bringing about likeness to Christ. (p. 983)

Although sanctification is the work of the Holy Spirit, it is not a passive matter on the believer's part (Erickson, 1983, 1998, p. 983). While sanctification is God's work, the believer has a role as well, "entailing both removal of sinfulness and development of holiness"—bearing an actual likeness to God (p. 983). Believers are "constantly exhorted to work and to grow in the matters pertaining to salvation" (p. 983).

Foster (1978) tells us, "The disciplines allow us to place ourselves before God so that he can transform us" (p. 7).

According to Willard (1988), the spiritual disciplines "show us effectively how we can 'offer our bodies as living sacrifices, holy and acceptable unto God' and how our 'spiritual worship' (Romans 12:1) really is inseparable from the offering up of our bodies in specific ways" (p. 19). Therefore, the spiritual disciplines become a viable means for persons to offer more of themselves to Christ.

Through the exercise of the spiritual disciplines, people surrender more of themselves to be transformed by the work of the Holy Spirit. The apostle Paul
said, “A man reaps what he sows. The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit from the Spirit will reap eternal life” (Gal. 6:8). Paul’s analogy clearly illustrates the importance of surrender. As a person surrenders more of his or her life to Christ, he or she sows more to the Spirit. David Wilkerson (2002) describes what living a surrendered life means to a Christian when he wrote:

The surrendered life is the act of giving back to Jesus the life he granted you. It’s relinquishing control, rights, power, direction, all the things you do and say. It is totally resigning your life over to his hands, to do with you as he pleases. (p. 1)

Jesus reveals that He led a surrendered life when He said, “I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me” (John 6:38). The surrendered life is something individuals must choose by their own free will. By choosing to exercise the spiritual disciplines, people can learn to live like Christ.

In his letter to Timothy, the Apostle Paul stresses the importance of exercising the disciplines, “For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come” (1 Tim. 4:8). People can best learn how to live the surrendered life by following the example of Christ and practicing the very activities that He engaged in throughout His ministry. These activities help individuals to yield their bodies to Christ for His service. They help to purge them of the things that
are not of God and to become a vessel that can be empowered by the Holy Spirit
to do "good works" as the following scripture illustrates:

But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but
also of wood and of earth and some to honor and some to dishonor. If a
man purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honor, sanctified,
and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work.

(2 Tim. 2:20-21)

So, as individuals engage in the spiritual disciplines, they surrender more of their
lives to Christ and therefore, to the intrinsic working of the Holy Spirit. The
resulting inner transformation is revealed as their outward behavior becomes
more like Christ.

For individuals to practice the spiritual disciplines, they must learn what
the disciplines are and then decide how to incorporate them into their daily lives.
The disciplines are revealed in the life of Christ, and people can learn His ways
as they observe His actions recorded in the Scriptures. Foster (1978) organized
the spiritual disciplines into three categories: the inward disciplines consisting of
meditation, prayer, fasting, and study; the outward disciplines consisting of
simplicity, solitude, submission, and service; and the corporate disciplines,
consisting of confession, worship, guidance, and celebration.

Willard (1988) divides his list of spiritual disciplines into two categories,
the disciplines of abstinence and the disciplines of engagement. The disciplines
of abstinence include: solitude, silence, fasting, frugality, chastity, secrecy, and
sacrifice; while the disciplines of engagement include: study, worship,
celebration, service, prayer, fellowship, confession, and submission. The Holy Spirit oversees our spiritual training. Jesus clarifies the Spirit's role in the lives of believers, "But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you" (John 14:25, 26). The Holy Spirit can teach individuals how to incorporate the spiritual disciplines into their daily lives; all they have to do is learn how to be sensitive and responsive to His promptings. There are many spiritual disciplines that Jesus faithfully practiced, but there are three that are emphasized in the evangelical community and are the core of every individual's program: prayer, including times of solitude as well as cooperate prayer; study, both of the Word of God and study of God working in our lives; and fellowship with other Christians, including involvement in a church ministry, daily service to others, confession, and cooperate worship.

Spiritual disciplines play an important role in spiritual growth and are an essential component of spiritual maturity. Gerald G. May provides an overview of the value of spiritual formation when he writes, "Spiritual formation is a rather general term referring to all attempts, means, instructions, and disciplines intended towards deepening of faith and furtherance of spiritual growth. It includes educational endeavors as well as the more intimate and in-depth process of spiritual direction" (as cited in Willard, 2000, p. 254).

Willard (2000) expressed the need to develop a better understanding of spiritual formation when he wrote, "We need to understand what the formation of the human spirit is, and how it can best be done as Christ would have done it"
According to Willard, spiritual formation can be best understood in terms of three different meanings or movements: (a) as training in special spiritual activities, including the spiritual disciplines; (b) as shaping the inner life, the spiritual side of the human being (the formation of the heart or will, along with the emotions and intellect as the primary focus); and (c) as shaping by the spiritual realm, “by the Holy Spirit and other spiritual agencies involved in the kingdom of God, especially the Word of God” (pp. 254–255).

For spiritual formation to be effective it must be oriented toward explicit obedience to Christ, to fulfilling the job description of Christ’s people clearly outlined in the Great Commission:

Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age (Matt. 28: 19-20). (Willard, 2000, p. 255)

In the postmodern era, there has been an uncertainty about how Christians should conduct themselves because the goal and measure of spiritual formation as specified in the Great Commission has been virtually ignored. A new postmodern philosophy has challenged the authority of the church and provided the world with a new and more acceptable spin on biblical interpretation. There are now consumerism-based churches where the motto is the “customer is always right,” instead of an absolute standard of right and wrong found in the biblical truths. People are told that anything goes because their truth is what matters and if it feels good it must be right because our happiness is the number
one priority in life. Many churches have developed a “Burger King philosophy” for their members—“Have it your way.”

A concrete plan and practice for the purpose of facilitating spiritual growth has been seriously lacking. Willard (2000) discussed how this plan might be formulated when he wrote:

Spiritual formation in Christ is accomplished, and the Great Commission fulfilled, as the regenerate soul makes its highest intent to live in the commandments of Christ, and accordingly makes realistic plans to realize this intent by an adequate course of spiritual disciplines. God gives us others to share the pilgrimage, and we will be met by Christ in every step of the way. (p. 257)

Therefore, individual spiritual growth can be best accomplished within a community of believers. According to Willard, an important question for the Christian community is: “How do we accomplish the goal of Christian spiritual formation as measured by the unconditional love of Jesus Christ and specified by the “job description of the Great Commission?” (p. 258).

40 Days of Purpose

The 40 Days of Purpose, a spiritual growth campaign, appears to be a timely and decisive response to the question that Willard posed to the Christian community. Rick Warren, founder of the program, is the senior pastor of Saddleback Valley Community Church in Orange County, California. He has taught in seminars to over 22,000 pastors and church leaders from 60 denominations and 42 countries. The Saddleback Church is the fastest growing
Baptist church in American history. The 40 Days of Purpose is a biblically based practical strategy to help the followers of Christ grow in their spiritual maturity. This program has also been referred to as a *Purpose-Driven Life Campaign* because it is designed to answer one of life’s most important questions: What on earth am I here for? (Warren, 1995).

The initial campaign was designed to run for 40 days (7 weeks) beginning on October 12, 2002, and ending November 24, 2002. The 40-day time period was selected because God often used 40 days to prepare people to do extraordinary things and fulfill His purposes: "Noah’s life was transformed by 40 days of rain, Moses spent 40 days on the top of Mount Sinai, the spies were transformed by 40 days in the Promised Land, David was transformed by Goliath’s 40-day challenge, Elijah was transformed when God gave him 40 days of strength from a single meal, the entire city of Nineveh was transformed when God gave the people 40 days to change, Jesus was empowered by 40 days in the desert before beginning his public ministry, and the disciples were transformed by 40 days with Jesus after His resurrection (Warren, 2002c, p. 10).

The reasons God desires His children to mature spiritually and not remain in spiritual infancy are powerfully expressed in the words of Paul:

> It was He who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God’s people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.
Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming. Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is Christ. From Him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work” (Eph. 4:11-16).

Rick Warren’s concept of the purpose-driven church adheres to the aforementioned words of Paul, in that he advocates a shift away from a focus on church building programs to an emphasis on a people-building process. Warren (1995) believes that if a church is dedicated to building people, God will build the church.

The events of the 40 Days of Purpose are designed to give participants opportunities to engage in a number of key spiritual disciplines to facilitate spiritual growth including: (a) study, in the form of weekly Scripture memorization and reading a 40-day devotional (The Purpose Driven Life) to discover God’s purpose for the participants’ lives; (b) fellowship, involving weekly participation in a small group or Bible fellowship; (c) service, involving active participation in a church ministry; and (d) worship, involving regular church attendance and hearing all seven messages in the 40 Days of Purpose series (Warren, 2002b).

The 40 Days of Purpose is designed to teach the church family about God’s five purposes for our lives that are the basis of developing a purpose-driven church. The concept of the purpose-driven church is built on the biblical
truths found in Scripture and is best summarized by the Great Commandment and the Great Commission (Warren, 2002b). These two key passages summarize the mission and the five purposes of a purpose-driven church including: (a) worship, “Love the Lord with all your heart”; (b) ministry, “Love your neighbor as yourself” (Matt. 22:37-40); (c) evangelism, “Go and make disciples”; (d) fellowship, “Baptizing them”; (e) discipleship, “Teaching them to obey” (Matt. 28:19-20).

Statement of the Problem

On October 12, 2002, over 1,500 churches in all 50 states embarked together on an incredible spiritual journey; they all became participants in the national pilot of the 40 Days of Purpose Campaign. This study uses a multidimensional assessment approach to measure spiritual maturity to evaluate the impact of the 40 Days of Purpose on the individual spiritual growth of the participants in three different churches that were a part of this nation-wide endeavor. This study hopes to demonstrate that the 40 Days of Purpose facilitates spiritual growth in the participants. If the results of this study support the effectiveness of this program, it will be an important step in the direction of retaining the integrity of spirituality in the Christian faith.

The multidimensional approach hopes to prove to be an effective means of evaluating spiritual maturity. If the criteria of spiritual maturity, as set forth and assessed in this study, are shown to be valid, they can serve as a benchmark for future research in this area. It is important to be able to adequately assess spiritual growth programs, such as 40 Days of Purpose, to ensure that any
observed changes in spiritual maturity among participants not only be outward behavioral changes but also reflect an inward change of their hearts.
CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

Population and Sample

The population from which the samples were drawn consisted of four churches. Three of the churches were located in a small town of about 30,000 in East Texas. Two of the churches, an Assembly of God (AG), and a Southern Baptist (BET) participated in the 40 Days of Purpose and another Southern Baptist church (BC) did not participate and served as the control group for the study. The fourth church, a Southern Baptist church (BNC) in Wilmington, North Carolina, a city of about 100,000, also participated in 40 Days of Purpose. Samples of volunteers were recruited from each church.

All the recruited volunteers were used in the study to obtain a sample size close to 50 from each church. The surveys were given to the participants in a group format and were administered in three different sessions:

Session 1 (pretest) included a total sample of 209 participants (AG, N = 51; BET, N = 46; BNC, N = 66; and BC (control group), N = 46).

Session 2 (posttest 1) included a total sample of 175 participants (AG, N = 45; BET, N = 35; BNC, N = 60; BC, N = 35).

Session 3 (posttest 2) included a total sample of 147 participants (AG, N = 37; BET, N = 30; BNC, N = 53; and BC, N = 27).

There were 34 participants that dropped out between sessions 1 and 2 (16.3 % drop-out rate) and 28 participants that dropped out between sessions 2 and 3.
(16.0% drop-out rate). A total of 62 participants dropped out of the study, representing a 30.0% loss overall.

Instruments Identified

The spiritual growth of the participants was assessed using a multidimensional assessment approach. Spiritual growth was measured using multiple self-report surveys that addressed the different fundamental components of spiritual maturity that have been proposed as part of this study. The essential components of spiritual maturity identified include: (a) a quality relationship with God (realistic acceptance), awareness of His presence, and secure attachment; (b) interdependence on God in problem-solving and an ability to effectively adjust to life circumstances; (c) both ordinary spiritual experiences and extraordinary (mystical) experiences with God (the transcendent); and (d) participation in religious practices, such as the spiritual disciplines. Participants completed the six measures described below for all three assessment sessions.

1. The Spiritual Assessment Inventory (SAI; see Appendix A) is a theoretically based, psychometrically sound measure of spiritual development from a broadly theistic perspective (Hall & Edwards, 2002; Stanard et al., 2000). The contemplative spirituality literature indicates that spiritual development involves a growing awareness of God’s presence and communication in one’s life (Willard, 1998). The SAI is comprised of two primary dimensions: (a) the quality or developmental maturity of one’s relationship with God and (b) awareness of God (Slater et al., 2001, p. 13).
This dual focus, on both the quality of relationship with God and the awareness of God, offers the potential of “being able to discriminate varying levels of maturity on the vertical dimension of relationship with God among those who have consciously devoted themselves to love and serve God” (p. 13).

The SAI consists of 54 self-report items (40 one-part items and 7 two-part items) that comprise five subscales, which address the two dimensions of spiritual development. To assess a respondent’s negative experiences with God, some of the items consist of two parts (Hill & Hood, 1999, p. 367). The first dimension, the Quality of Relationship with God, is assessed by four quality subscales including: Instability (9 items), Grandiosity (7 items), Realistic Acceptance (7 items), and Disappointment (7 items). The second dimension, Awareness of God, assessed by the Awareness subscale (19 items), is a related but distinct dimension of spiritual maturity (Slater et al., 2001, p. 13). The SAI also includes an experimental Impression Management subscale (5 items) for the purpose of identifying the subject’s test-taking approach and to identify illusory spiritual health (Hall & Edwards, 2002, p. 342). There have been five factor analytic studies of the SAI, which have led to a revised version (Hall & Edwards, 1996, 2002).

All of the items on the SAI are positively worded and are presented in a 5-point Likert format, with 1 indicating “not at all true of me” and 5 indicating “very true of me” (Hall & Edwards, 1996, p. 233; Hill & Hood, 1999, p. 367). To control for overall acquiescence/social desirability, three
clinical subscales reflect health (Awareness and Realistic Acceptance) and three reflect pathology (Disappointment, Grandiosity, and Instability; Hall & Edwards, 2002). The score for a subscale is the average of the answered items comprising the scale. However, if the respondent omits more than half of the items for a given scale, the scale is not scored. On the two-part items, the scoring of the Realistic Acceptance (RA) subscale items depends on the respondent’s answer to the corresponding item on the Disappointment (D) subscale (Hall & Edwards). Specifically, if the respondent answers (1) “not at all true” on a particular item on the D subscale, then the corresponding item is not included in calculating the RA subscale score average. A high score on each subscale represents the presence of the trait specified by the subscale, whether it measures health or pathology. A high score on the Awareness subscale indicates a high degree of a person’s awareness of God’s communication and presence in his or her life. A high score on the Realistic Acceptance subscale indicates a higher developmental quality of relationship with God (Hall & Edwards, 2002). Correspondingly, a high score on the Disappointment subscale indicates disappointment with God.

Norms for the SAI have been generated using a nonclinical sample of college students from two universities in Southern California and a private Protestant university. The initial factor analysis was comprised of 193 participants, and the revisions consisted of 449 and 438 participants, respectively (Hill & Hood, 1999; Hall & Edwards, 2002). Hall also used the SAI in his dissertation with a sample of 76 participants: 26 participants in a
spiritual direction training program, 39 participants from psychology classes of a small private Christian college, and 11 participants from a Christian counseling center (Hall, Brokaw, Edwards, & Pike, 1996).

Each of the subscales on the SAI has demonstrated good internal consistency reliability (.73–.95; Slater et al., 2001, p. 13). Correlations of SAI subscales and a number of other instruments (the Bell Object Relations Inventory [BORI], the Intrinsic/Extrinsic-Revised, the Spiritual Well-Being Scale, and the Narcissistic Personality Inventory) supported the convergent validity of the instrument, in general (Slater et al., 2001, p. 14). Test-retest coefficients computed on a subsample of 17 participants ranged between .56 and .94 (Hill & Hood, 1999, p. 368). Hall and Edwards (2002) conducted a study to examine the psychometric properties of the experimental Lie subscale and found that controlling for impression management presents “a more theoretically valid picture of the relationship between Grandiosity and other variables” (p. 351).

The SAI was selected to assess two of the proposed components of spiritual maturity: quality of relationship with God and awareness of God’s presence. The quality of relationship with God was assessed by the Realistic Acceptance subscale and the awareness of God’s presence was assessed by the Awareness of God subscale.

2. The Attachment to God Scale (AGS; see Appendix B) consists of 9 items that are rated using a seven-point Likert scale (1 = not at all characteristic of me; 7 = very characteristic of me; Rowatt & Kirkpatrick, 2002,
Rowatt and Kirkpatrick developed the AGS as a measure of attachment to God and to demonstrate that the dimensions of attachment are predictive of measures of personality and affect, as well as other dimensions of religiosity related to attachment to God (Rowatt & Kirkpatrick, p. 637). The application of attachment theory to religion points to the belief that for many people God may function psychologically as an attachment figure (Kirkpatrick & Shaver, 1992). God is perceived by people in times of crisis to be a safe haven (Collins & Feeney, 2000; Kirkpatrick, 1999), as well as a secure base from which to operate on a day-to-day basis (Ainsworth et al., 1978; Bowlby, 1988; Kirkpatrick, 1999).

The two-dimensional model of God consists of six items comprising the Avoidance (vs. Security) dimension and three items comprising the Anxious dimension (Rowatt & Kirkpatrick, 2002, pp. 642–643). The single Avoidance subscale was derived by reverse-scoring the positively worded items reflecting security and summing these with the three items reflecting avoidance (p. 643). The Anxious subscale was created by summing the three items tapping anxious-ambivalent attachment to God (p. 643). The two dimensions were internally consistent and were shown to be more than a reflection of a more general adult attachment style. A secure attachment of God is reflected in low scores in both dimensions, particularly the Avoidance dimension. The AGS was selected to assess an individual's attachment to God, another proposed component of spiritual maturity.
3. The Religious Problem-Solving Scale, Short Form (RPSS; see Appendix C) was developed through factor analysis methods to assess the three main styles of religious problem-solving: (a) Self-Directing, which places the responsibility for problem solving on people rather than on God, and reflects the choice God gives individuals to direct their own lives; (b) Deferring, which stresses a passive submission to God when faced with problems, and represents individuals who wait on God for solutions; and (c) Collaborative, which stresses an active, personal exchange with God and is based on the notion of persons acting as copartners with God, working together to solve life’s challenges (Hall, Tisdale, & Brokaw, 1994; Hill & Hood, 1999; Pargament et al., 1988).

The RPSS was developed to test the hypothesis that one’s mental health is significantly related to one’s religious problem-solving style. The three problem-solving scales were designed to “distinguish different degrees of responsibility assigned to self or God in solving problems, as well as the level of initiative taken in problem solving” (Hill & Hood, 1999, p. 347). As a framework for designing the original longer scale, six phases of problem-solving were identified: “define the problem, generate alternative solutions, select a solution, implement the solution, redefine the problem, and maintain oneself emotionally” (Pargament et al., 1988, p. 93). Then, religious problem-solving items that correspond to each of the three styles were generated for each of these phases; two items were created for each of the six phases for the every religious problem-solving style (Pargament et al., 1988, p. 93).
The Collaborative, Self-Directing, and Deferring subscales were based on the idea that responsibility and initiative in problem solving are related to improved mental health (Hill & Hood, 1999, p. 347). In the Self-Directing style, the responsibility of problem solving is placed on the person. The Deferring style emphasizes the passive submission of persons to an omnipotent and authoritative God when coping with problems (Hill & Hood, 1999). The Collaborative style focuses on persons acting as copartners with God to solve life’s challenges.

The original Religious Problems Solving (RPS) Scale consisted of 36 items with each of the three subscales being comprised of 12 items. The Short Form RPSS consists of a total of 18 items, with each of the three problem-solving style subscales consisting of 6 items each. The participants rate each item using a five-point Likert scale (1 = Never; 5 = Always; Pargament et al., 1988, p. 94). The RPSS scale scores are derived by summing each of the six items comprising the scale and dividing that number by 6 (Hall et al., 1994; Pargament et al., 1988).

Pargament (1988) used a sample of 197 church members drawn from a Presbyterian church and a Missouri Synod Lutheran church in the Midwest. For this sample, the means and standard deviations for each of the three scales were as follows: Collaborative ($M = 36.02$, $SD = 10.67$); Self-Directing ($M = 29.70$, $SD = 10.71$); and Deferring ($M = 25.81$, $SD = 9.19$; Hill & Hood, 1999, pp. 348–349). On the 36-item RPSS, the range of possible scores for each of the three scales was 5–60. A Cronbach’s alpha showed internal consistency
to be high (Collaborative = .93; Self-Directing = .91; Deferring = .89). A test-retest reliability analysis among a sample of 97 college students over a one week period showed high reliability: .93 (Collaborative), .94 (Self-Directing), and .87 (Deferring; Hill & Hood, 1999, p. 348).

Fox et al., (1998) conducted a study to test the integrity of the dimensions of the RPSS with clergy and their spouses and examined the veracity of the RPSS proposed by Pargament et al. (1988). The results of the study supported the conceptualization of the three dimensions and found that the RPSS (see Appendix C) was no less effective in operationalizing the three dimensions of religious problem solving (Fox et al., 1998). The three subscales had high inter-item consistency reliability ranging from .84 to .87 (p. 676). The Short Form also correlated highly with the full form: "Collaborative (r = .97), Self-Directing (r = .98), and Deferring (r = .97) (Hill & Hood, 1999, p. 348). In fact, the short form showed better loadings and accounted for higher variances than the original scale (Fox et al., 1998, p. 677).

In conclusion, the RPSS appears to provide a good assessment of religious problem-solving style and was used in this study to assess this component of spiritual maturity.

4. The Mysticism Scale Christ Version (M; see Appendix D) is a 32-item test that yields two highly correlated factors associated with mysticism: Factor I has items reflective of minimal phenomenological experience, and Factor II deals with religious interpretation or appraisals about the experience (Hood & Williamson, 2000, p. 233). A Likert-type response format is used
(−2 = definitely not true and +2 = probably true; there is no midpoint but informants are instructed to write a “?” if they cannot decide). Grading is completed by reverse scoring all the negatively worded items, adding three points to each item’s value (including “?”), and summing all the scores. M Scale scores can range from a low of 32 to a high of 160. A past problem with the M Scale was its neutrality in regards to use of religious language (Hood & Williamson, 2000, p. 234). However, a Christ version of the M Scale was developed to be used with Evangelicals (Hood & Williamson, p. 235). The M scale, Christ version, was selected to assess the mystical experiences component of spiritual maturity.

5. The Daily Spiritual Experiences Scale (DSES; see Appendix E) was created as part of a group project to develop a multidimensional approach to the measurement of religious and spiritual variables to use in health studies (Underwood & Teresi, 2002). The DSES includes 16 items: the first 15 are scored using a Likert scale (1 = many times a day and 6 = never or almost never) and the last item is scored as a descriptive question (p. 25). The DSES showed good reliability across several studies with internal consistency estimates in the .90s (p. 22). The results of the studies utilizing the DSES showed that daily spiritual experiences are related to decreased total alcohol consumption, improved quality of life, and positive psychosocial status (p.22). The scale is “intended to measure a person’s perception of the transcendent (God, the divine) in daily life and his or her perception of his or her interaction with or involvement of the transcendent life” (p. 23). The
DSES is designed to assess the daily spiritual experience for the average person and purposively avoids assessing extraordinary experiences; it assesses a practical spirituality rather than a mystical one. Therefore, the DSES was used to assess the presence of ordinary spiritual experiences, which is another facet of spiritual maturity proposed in this study.

6. The Beck Depression Inventory-II (BDI-II) is a 21-item self-report instrument for measuring the severity of depression that can be used with adults and adolescents 13 years and older (Beck, Steer, & Brown, 1996, p. 1). The items were developed to assess symptoms corresponding to criteria for diagnosing depressive disorders listed in the American Psychiatric Association’s *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*—fourth edition (Beck et al., 1996, p. 1). For purposes of this study, it is assumed that spiritually mature individuals would be less likely to report symptoms of depression. The BDI-II was used to assess the participants’ report of depressive symptoms, with an assumption that low reports are associated with emotional well-being. Therefore, the BDI was used to indirectly assess emotional well-being, which is likely to be positively correlated with spiritual maturity.

There were also several other instruments that were designed for this study including: the 40 Days of Purpose Data Sheet (PDS), the Attendance Data Sheet (ADS), and a Personal Data Sheet. The Purpose Driven Health Assessment (PDHA; Warren, 2002a) was modified for use in this study. Each of the participants in the study was given the PDHA and the Personal Data
Sheet. The participants that participated in the 40 Days of Purpose were given the 40 Days of Purpose Data Sheet, while participants in the control group were given the Attendance Data Sheet.

1. The PDS (see Appendix F) was developed to assess the participants' degree of participation in the 40 Days of Purpose. It consisted of four items that measured how many of the behavioral goals the participant achieved during the 40 days. Behaviors measured included: number of scriptures memorized (goal was 6), percentage of daily devotionals read (goal was 100%), small-group meetings attended (goal was 6), and Sunday morning church services attended (goal was 7).

2. The ADS (see Appendix G) was developed to assess the church and Sunday school attendance of the participants in the control group. This data sheet was given so that the same number of surveys would be given during Session 2. The sheet was used to compare church attendance in the control group with church attendance in the experimental groups.

3. The PDHA (see Appendix H) from the 40 Days of Purpose Small Group Video-Based Study Guide was revised and used to assess the participant's level of commitment to continued spiritual growth by evaluating behavior that is consistent with the spiritual disciplines (Warren, 2002a). It consists of 19 items that are rated using a five-point
Likert scale (1 = just beginning; 5 = well developed). The PDHA was given to the participants who had participated in the 40 Days of Purpose, as well as to the participants who were in the control group. Although there was no pretest, the scores of the PDHA for the 40 Day Purpose participants could be compared to the scores on the PDHA for participants in the control group to assess the impact that the spiritual growth campaign had on behaviors and experiences that are associated with spiritual maturity. The PDHA was used to assess the adoption of spiritual disciplines in our daily living, which is considered to be another component of spiritual maturity.

A Personal Information sheet (see Appendix K) was also developed to collect demographic data on each participant. All of the surveys were labeled with initials to minimize face validity.

Treatment

The 40 Days of Purpose, a spiritual growth campaign, was the treatment condition in this study. Individuals attending churches that participated in the 40 Days of Purpose comprised the experimental group, while individuals attending the nonparticipating church comprised the control group. The dependent measures included selected scores on the surveys that were administered over three separate assessment sessions.

The treatment condition entailed exposure to and participation in the structured events of the 40 Days of Purpose. These events were designed to give
the participants opportunities to engage in a number of key spiritual disciplines to facilitate spiritual growth including: (a) study, in the form of weekly Scripture memorization and reading a 40-day devotional (The Purpose Driven Life) to discover God’s purpose for the participants’ lives; (b) fellowship, involving weekly participation in a small group or Bible fellowship; (c) service, involving active participation in a church ministry; and (d) worship, involving regular church attendance and hearing all seven messages in the 40 Days of Purpose series (Warren, 2002c).

The 40 Days of Purpose is designed to teach the church family about God’s five purposes for their lives, which is crucial to the development of a purpose-driven church (Warren, 1995). The five purposes of a purpose-driven church include: (1) worship, (2) ministry, (3) evangelism, (4) fellowship, and (5) discipleship (Warren, 1995).

Pilot Study

This research study was developed and implemented in a short period of time because of the limited preparation period before the commencement of the first nationwide 40 Days of Purpose Spiritual Growth Campaign; therefore, no pilot study was conducted. However, colleagues were consulted for input and revisions on the PDS, ADS, PDHA, and the Personal Information Sheet, and the Attendance Data Sheet. A pilot study would have been helpful to clarify and improve survey directions and to have accurately estimated the time required to complete the battery of surveys. Fortunately, the researchers’ time estimate was
fairly accurate and the surveys were completed within a 30–45 minute time period for all three assessment sessions.

Procedure

After obtaining permission from the Liberty University Institutional Review Board and support from the respective pastors, volunteers were recruited from four churches for this study. The only criteria for the participants in the experimental group was that they had chosen to participate in the 40 Days of Purpose and were at least 18 years of age; the only criterion for participants in the control group was that they be at least 18 years of age. A standardized presentation was made to each of the congregations to recruit volunteers. The names and contact information of the volunteers were recorded immediately following the presentation, and each volunteer received a card with the time, date, and place of the first assessment session.

There were a total of 163 volunteers from the three churches participating in the 40 Days of Purpose that served as the experimental group and 46 volunteers from the nonparticipating church that served as a control group. For specific breakdown of participants per church refer to Table 1. Volunteers were not told the exact nature of the study but were provided with some general information. Specifically, they were told that they would be taking a number of Christian surveys that would provide valuable information to their pastors and to the Christian community as well. The importance of attending all three assessment sessions was stressed. Each participant signed an informed consent (see Appendix I).
The 40 Days of Purpose began on October 12, 2002, with a Purpose Driven Life Simulcast that was shown to over 1,500 churches across America, and it continued for seven weeks, ending on November 24, 2002. The participants were asked to complete six different measures during each of three assessment sessions: Session 1 was conducted approximately 1 week before the commencement of the 40 Days of Purpose; Session 2 was conducted approximately 1 week after the conclusion of the program, and Session 3 was conducted approximately 3 months later. The surveys were administered in a group setting for all three sessions.

To maintain each participant’s confidentiality and encourage honest and frank answers, the participants were given identification (ID) numbers and only their numbers appeared on the surveys. A three-digit ID number was assigned to each subject and placed on the outside of each subject’s folder and on each item within the folder. The three-digit ID numbers were randomly assigned: The first digit referenced the participant’s church, and the second two digits referenced the individual subject. The reference codes for the four churches were: AG (1), BET (2), BNC (3), and BC (4). The A was added to the survey ID numbers to designate session 2 (Posttest 1) and B was added to the survey ID numbers to designate session 3 (Posttest 2). For example: Subject 01 from AG would be given surveys numbered with 101 for session 1, 101A for session 2, and 101B for session 3.

A set of master lists (one from each of the four churches: AG, BET, BNC, and BC) with the names of each participant and his or her ID number were
kept in a locked file. Before each assessment session the surveys were placed in a manila folder with participants’ ID numbers written on tabs. Surveys were place in a designated order in the folder and all surveys in the folders were also numbered with the participants’ ID numbers.

All participants were given the instruments in the same order throughout all of the testing sessions for both the experimental and control groups: M Scale, AGS, SAI, DSES, BDI-II, and RPSS Scale. However, minor variations occurred between the testing sessions: (a) the Personal Information Sheet was added to the pretest session assessment folder and preceded the M Scale for both the experimental and control groups; (b) the PDS was added to the posttest 1 assessment folder of the experimental group and preceded the M Scale; whereas, the ADS was added to the posttest 1 assessment folder of the control group and also preceded the M Scale; and (c) the PDHA was added to the posttest 2 assessment folder and placed after the RPSS, for both the experimental and control groups.

The participants were contacted by postcard and confirmed by phone before each survey session. Before participants arrived at each session, folders were placed on tables. When they arrived, participants were escorted to their assigned seats. Once all participants were seated, a set of instructions were read (see Appendix J), and the participants were instructed to begin. On completion, participants were instructed to place the completed surveys in the folders, and then they were free to leave.
Following the completion of each session, the surveys were collected and shipped to Liberty University for scoring by masters students in the counseling program. Because of some clerical errors with data management there were 11 files lost from session 1 (pretest) from AG and 11 files lost from session 1 (pretest) from BC. To avoid any further problems, the data was shipped back to Texas where it was scored by four individuals who were paid for their services and trained in scoring procedures. Standardized scoring directions and scoring templates were also used to minimize scoring error. After scoring was completed, the data was entered into a Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software program for analysis.

Design

This study employed a nonrandomized control-group pretest-posttest mixed design with one repeated measure to evaluate the overall facilitative effect of a spiritual growth campaign on individual spiritual development. To compare participants in the 40 Days of Purpose with nonparticipants, volunteers were recruited from three churches participating in the 40 Days of Purpose program to form the experimental group and from one church not participating in the 40 Days of Purpose to form the control group. Each subject was tested three times (pretest, posttest, and a 3-month follow-up posttest). The main independent variable was participation in the 40 Days of Purpose, with two levels: participation in the program and nonparticipation in the program. Time was a repeated factor variable because all participants were exposed to its three levels (pretest, posttest, and a 3-month follow-up posttest). The dependent variables
included pretest, posttest, and follow-up posttest scores on selected subscales from the SAI (Realistic Acceptance (RA) and Awareness of God (A) subscales) and the RPSS (Collaborative (C) subscale). This study was designed to determine whether the pretest-posttest differences for the experimental group were significantly different from the pretest-posttest difference for the control group on the RA, A, and C subscales.

Data Analysis

For the purpose of this study the dependent measures were limited to the following: (a) two subscales on the SAI, the RA and the A subscales; and (b) one subscale on the RPSS, the C subscale. The data directly related to the hypotheses in this study are contained in these selected scores. The SAI and the RPSS were selected for the primary focus of this study because they assess three of the proposed components of spiritual maturity: (a) the quality of relationship with God, measured by the RA subscale on the SAI; (b) an awareness of the God’s responsiveness, guidance, and presence of God in the life of the believer, as measured by the A subscale on the SAI; and (c) an interdependence on God in problem-solving, as measured by the C subscale on the RPSS.

Data gathered from the other instruments administered to the participants will be the focus of subsequent research analyses that will examine the impact of the 40 Days of Purpose on other proposed components of spiritual maturity.

For descriptive purposes, the mean and standard deviations were computed for the experimental and control group for the pretest, posttest 1, and
posttest 2 for the RA, A, and C subscales. To obtain a comprehensive profile of the relevant characteristics of the samples drawn from each of the four churches participating in this study, the frequency and percentage of research participants in each of the descriptive variables were calculated, including: age, sex, cultural group, income level, and education level. The mean and standard deviation were calculated for the number of years attending the present church and the in the current denomination, as well. The frequency and percentage of participants in the various descriptive categories were also calculated for the experimental and control groups, respectively.

The degree of participation among the participants in the 40 Days of Purpose was also examined. To obtain a comprehensive profile of the degree of participation in the 40 Days of Purpose for each church in the experimental group, the mean and standard deviation were computed for each of the variables measured by the 40 Days of Purpose Data Sheet, including: number of scriptures memorized, percentage of devotions read, number of small group meetings attended, and number of church services attended. To obtain a comprehensive profile of attendance for the control group, the mean and standard deviation were calculated for variables measured by the Church Attendance sheet, including: number of morning church services, evening church services, and Sunday school classes attended.

The main research hypothesis (that the pretest-posttest difference for the experimental group would be significantly greater than the pretest-posttest difference for the control group) was tested using a separate two-way analysis of
variance (treatment group X time of testing), with the second factor of time being the repeated measure, for each of the three dependent measures: RA, A, and C.

The supplemental research questions that were addressed in this study for exploratory purposes to provide clarification for the main hypothesis include:

1. Are there any observable denominational differences in the impact of the 40 Days of Purpose on the spiritual growth of the participants?
2. Are there any observable differences between churches in the impact of the 40 Days of Purpose on the spiritual growth of the participants?
3. Are there any observable differences in the degree of participation in the 40 Days of Purpose among the churches in the treatment group?

Research questions 1 and 2 were evaluated using separate two-way ANOVAs, with the factor of time being the one repeated measure, for each of the three dependent measures (RA, A, and C). Research question 3 was evaluated using separate one-way ANOVAs for each of the participation variables: number of Scriptures memorized, number of small groups attended, number of church services attended, and percentage of devotions completed. Inferential statistics were used to answer the research questions to determine their usefulness in clarifying the results of the statistical analysis of the main research hypothesis.

Limitations/Delimitations

Although this study may provide useful information for future research, it is important to address possible limitations. One limitation of the study is that volunteers were recruited rather than selected as a randomized sample. The
individuals that volunteered may be more actively involved in church than individuals that did not volunteer and more likely to participate in the 40 Days of Purpose. Therefore, the sample may not reflect the program's impact on less active church members. Also, the volunteers may be motivated more toward self-improvement to begin with, which suggests that they may experience spiritual growth without exposure to the treatment (40 Days of Purpose).

To improve internal validity, a control group, consisting of recruited volunteers from a church that was not exposed to the treatment (40 Days of Purpose), was used in this study. The use of the control group reduced the chances of mistaking the effects of history, pretesting, maturation and instrumentation, for the main effects of the treatment. However, the volunteers from the control group may have been more motivated toward self-improvement and more likely to attend church on a regular basis than the church members that did not volunteer for the study.

Another limitation of the study is that it relies heavily on self-report measures. Although self-report measures are the most widely used technique in the behavioral sciences for the collection of data (Isaac & Michael, 1995/1997, p. 136), they do raise the possibility of alternative explanations for a person's response. For example, a person's responses could be influenced by their desire to give a socially acceptable response rather than respond according to what he or she is experiencing. Several of the surveys used have face validity allowing for the socially desirable response. However, according to Portney and Watkins (2000, p. 287) research has shown that self-report measures are generally valid.
Another limitation of the pretest/posttest design is the effect of contemporary history. One of the assessment sessions occurred near the Christmas holiday season, which may have contributed to participant attrition and added more stress to the participants' lives. The participants also took the same surveys on three different occasions, and the responses on the later sessions could have been influenced by familiarity with the material and a tendency to respond in a similar fashion.

Although a repeated measures design is advantageous in that it statistically controls for individual differences, practice or carryover effects can be problematic. When a pretest is given, there is a risk of sensitizing the subject to the treatment condition as well as altering a participants' response to the posttest. Since most of the assessment instruments were administered three times, there is the risk of practice effects occurring, where the individual will respond in a similar manner to the previous assessment rather than responding in accordance with the individual's current circumstances.

Despite the aforementioned limitations, the experimental design of the study (a nonrandomized control-group pretest-posttest mixed design with one repeated measure) should improve internal validity, especially if the pretest means and standard deviations for the experimental group and control group are similar. Every effort was made to ensure subject confidentiality and anonymity to encourage the participants to respond to the survey questions in a manner that was a close approximation of their experiences. The assessment sessions were scheduled to minimize inconvenience to the participants and to minimize
attrition. Although the participants in the study were recruited volunteers, the demographics of the samples from each church suggest that the samples were representative samples of each of the churches represented in the study.

This study represents a first attempt to measure the impact that a program designed to facilitate spiritual growth has on the participants' individual spiritual development. There were only two denominations represented in this study, Assembly of God and Baptist. Although the 40 Days of Purpose involved 1,500 churches across the nation, this study was restricted to two locations in the United States, a small town in East Texas and a larger metropolitan city in North Carolina. There were three different churches that comprised the experimental group but only one church that comprised the control group. The participants in this study were also recruited volunteers rather than being randomly selected, which also restricts the population to which the results of this study can be generalized.
CHAPTER IV: RESULTS

This chapter is organized into four main sections: descriptive statistics, the main research hypothesis, supplemental research questions, and unplanned analysis. The first section presents descriptive statistics including: (a) a profile and comparison of the demographic characteristics of the samples from each of the four churches participating in the study, (b) a comparison of participation variables for each of the churches in the treatment group, (c) a summary of attendance variables for the control group, (d) an account of subject attrition for each dependent measure for the experimental and control groups, and (e) the means and standard deviations of the three dependent measures for each testing period. The second section presents the results of the main research hypothesis; that is, the individuals participating in the 40 Days of Purpose program will experience greater spiritual growth than the individuals not participating in the program. The third section presents results of the statistical analyses of the supplemental research questions. Finally, the fourth section presents the results of the unplanned analyses of the Disappointment subscale that was conducted due to the high number of omissions of the Realistic Acceptance subscale scores in both the experimental and control groups.

Descriptive Statistics

The experimental group was comprised of samples drawn from three different churches participating in the 40 Days of Purpose Campaign: AG, BET, and BNC. The control group was comprised of a sample drawn from a
nonparticipating church, BC. The experimental and control groups were compared on a number of demographic variables including: age, gender, education, income, number of years of membership in the church they are presently attending, and number of years affiliated with the denomination to which they currently belong (see Appendix K for a sample of the Personal Information Sheet).

Among the demographic variables examined, there were similarities as well as differences found between the experimental and control groups. The distribution of gender was similar for both groups. The experimental group was comprised of 40.1% males and 59.9% females, while the control group consisted of 34.3% males and 65.7% females. Most of the participants in the experimental and control groups were Caucasian: 94.7% and 100%, respectively. The experimental group was also comprised of 1.3% African Americans, 2.6% Hispanics, and 1.3% Asians. The income level reported by participants in the experimental and control groups was also comparable. The majority of participants in both the experimental and control groups reported that their earnings were at the middle income level: 77% of the experimental group and 94.3% of the control group. However, 14.5% of the experimental group participants reported that their earnings fell into the high income bracket, while only 5.7% of the control group participants reported their earnings at that level.

There were other differences found between the experimental and control groups in education level, age, number of years of membership in the present church, and number of years in the current denomination. The majority of
participants in the experimental group were college graduates and postgraduates, while the majority of participants in the control group were high school graduates or had completed some college hours. There was also a notable difference in the age distribution between the experimental and control groups. The majority of participants in the experimental group were between 40 and 49 years old (41.4%), while the majority of participants in the control group were 60 years and older (40%). Participants in the experimental and control groups differed greatly in the years of membership in the church that they are presently attending and in the number of years they have been affiliated with their current denomination. The mean number of years of current church membership was 9 for the experimental group and 18 for the control group; while the mean number of years affiliated with the denomination to which they currently belong were 26 for the experimental group and 44 for the control group.

Since the experimental group was comprised of three different churches (AG, BET, and BNC), the demographics from each church were also compared. This comparison showed that the three churches had similar age, gender, and cultural distributions. However, there were some differences among the three churches on income level, level of education, number of years of church membership, and number of years in a denomination. Participants from BNC were better educated and reported higher earnings than participants from AG and BET. The mean number of years of church membership was greater for participants from BNC (M = 12.45) than participants from AG (M = 8.23) and BET (M = 5.24). The mean number of years in the denomination was greater for
both BNC ($M = 29.64$) and BET ($M = 31.20$) than AG ($M = 13.78$). See Appendix L for a breakdown by church of income level, level of education, number of years of church membership in present church, and number of years in the current denomination.

In addition to demographic variables, the degree of subject participation in the 40 Days of Purpose was assessed for each of the three churches comprising the experimental group (AG, BET, and BNC). The participation variables examined included: (a) number of Scriptures memorized, (b) number of small group meetings attended, (c) number of church services attended, and (d) percentage of devotions completed.

Examination of the participation variables showed that participants attending AG demonstrated a higher degree of participation on each of the participation variables; whereas, the participants attending BNC demonstrated the lowest degree of participation on each of the participation variables. Refer to Table 1 for descriptive statistics for the participation variables of each church in the experimental group.

Although the control group did not participate in the 40 Days of Purpose, the frequency of church and Sunday school attendance was assessed for the control group to determine the participants' degree of participation in regularly scheduled church services. Participants attended all seven services as follows: Sunday morning > 45 %, and Sunday evening and Sunday school classes approximately 40%. In sum, the control group participants demonstrated a high degree of attendance of regularly scheduled church activities.
Since this study repeated measurements across time, valid participants for the purpose of statistical analysis included only those participants that attended all three assessment sessions and had codable responses for the dependent measure being assessed. The experimental group initially consisted of 163 participants, 51 from AG, 46 from BET, and 66 from BNC. The control group initially consisted of 46 participants. Subject attrition, because of lost data, uncodable responses, and subject dropout, was considered to be at an acceptable level for two of the three dependent measures used in this study. For the Collaborative subscale, the experimental group consisted of 110 valid participants and the control group consisted of 19 valid participants. For the Awareness of God subscale, the experimental and control groups consisted of 111 and 21 valid participants, respectively. However, for the Realistic Acceptance subscale, the experimental group consisted of only 51 valid participants, while the control group consisted of 7.

There were more uncodable responses by participants on Realistic Acceptance subscale because the scoring of this scale is dependent on the scoring of the Disappointment subscale, thus preventing independent observations on these two measures. Because of uncodable responses on the Realistic Acceptance subscale: (a) 46 of 152 (30.3%) experimental participants’ scores and 15 of 35 (42.9%) control participants’ scores were omitted from the pretest scores, (b) 60 of 140 (42.9%) experimental participants’ scores and 16 of 35 (45.7%) control participants’ scores were omitted from the posttest 1 scores, and (c) 48 of 120 (40.0%) experimental participants’ scores and 15 of 27 (55.6%) control
participants' scores were omitted from the posttest 2 scores. The problem with the Realistic Acceptance subscale will be discussed in greater detail in the discussion section. Unplanned descriptive statistics and ANOVAs were conducted on the Disappointment subscale, in response to the marked loss of scores on the Realistic Acceptance subscale. These will be presented later in the results section.

Means and standard deviations were calculated for each of the three dependent measures for the pretest, posttest 1, and posttest 2 for both the experimental and control groups. The Collaborative subscale means and standard deviations were similar in both experimental and control groups for the pretest, posttest 1, and posttest 2, with no noticeable increase between assessment sessions. For the Awareness of God subscale the means were larger and the standard deviations were smaller for the control group as compared with the experimental group. There was a significant difference in the scores on the pretest of the experimental group (\(M = 3.75\)) and the pretest scores of the control group (\(M = 4.07\)) on the Awareness of God subscale (\(t_{(185)} = -2.46, p = .015\)). Although the initial scores were higher on the Awareness of God subscale, there was no noticeable increase among assessment sessions for the control group. However, the scores of the experimental group showed a slight increase over time (between the pretest, posttest 1, and posttest 2). Refer to Figure 1 for changes in experimental and control groups for the Awareness of God subscale over time.
For the Realistic Acceptance subscale, the means of the control group were slightly larger and the standard deviations were slightly smaller than the experimental group. For the control group the means increased between the pretest and posttest 1 and showed a slight decrease between posttest 1 and posttest 2. For the experimental group the means increased a small extent between the pretest and posttest 1 and between posttest 1 and posttest 2. Refer to Figure 2 for changes in experimental and control groups for the Realistic Acceptance subscale over time.

In short, for all the dependent measures the changes in the means among assessment sessions were small for both the experimental and control groups. In the experimental group there was an observable trend of increasing scores over time (from pretest to posttest2) on the Awareness of God subscale and the Realistic Acceptance subscale. In the control group, this trend was not observed for any of the dependent measures. On the Awareness of God subscale the control group demonstrated a slight decrease of scores between the pretest and posttest 1 and a slight increase between posttest 1 and posttest 2 scores. On the Realistic Acceptance subscale, the control group had a larger increase from the pretest to posttest 1 than did the experimental group. However, there was a slight decrease in scores for the control group on the Realistic Acceptance subscale from posttest 1 to posttest 2. Refer to Tables 2, 3, and 4 for the means and standard deviations of the experimental and control groups across assessment sessions on the Collaborative, Awareness of God, and Realistic Acceptance subscales, respectively.
Main Research Hypothesis

A separate two-way ANOVA (treatment group x time of testing), with the second factor of time being the repeated measure, was performed for each of the three dependent measures (Collaborative, Awareness of God, and the Realistic Acceptance subscales) to test the main research hypothesis. The research hypothesis states that the pretest-posttest difference for the experimental group would be significantly greater than the pretest-posttest difference for the control group. Since there is a higher risk of Type I error when multiple tests are performed on a single data set, a lower $p$-value than would be otherwise required is necessary for judging an effect to be significant. Since there were three dependent measures, a Bonferroni correction was used to adjust the alpha level ($\alpha = .05/3 = .017$). This procedure represents a compromise between trying to minimize Type I error and preserving the overall power of the study.

The results of the ANOVAs did not produce a $p$-value lower than .017 for any of the dependent measures: (a) for the Collaborative subscale, the interaction effect (time x treatment) was not significant ($p = .490$), there was no significant difference over time ($p = .840$), and the main effect of treatment was not significant ($p = .464$); (b) for the Awareness of God subscale, the interaction effect (time x treatment) was not significant ($p = .657$), there was no significant difference over time ($p = .601$), and the main effect of treatment was not significant ($p = .043$); and (c) for the Realistic Acceptance subscale, the interaction effect (time x treatment) was not significant ($p = .722$), there was no significant
difference over time \((p = .448)\), and the main effect of treatment was not significant \((p = .427)\).

Although none of the \(p\)-values were lower than \(.017\), the main treatment effect for the Awareness of God subscale \((p = .043)\) could be considered to have borderline significance, especially considering the small sample size of the control group. The mean of the treatment effect was 3.81 for the experimental group and 4.12 for the control group. As previously noted, there was a significant difference in the scores on the pretest of the experimental group \((M = 3.75)\) and the pretest scores of the control group \((M = 4.07)\) on the Awareness of God subscale \((t_{185} = -2.46, p = .015)\). Although the initial scores were higher on the Awareness of God subscale, there was no noticeable increase among assessment sessions for the control group. The pretest differences observed between the experimental and control groups on the Awareness of God subscale suggest that there may be some extraneous factors that might have impacted the results of this study. These extraneous factors will be identified and explained in the discussion session.

Supplemental Research Questions

In addition to the main hypothesis, there were supplemental research questions that were addressed to provide clarification of the overall results of the study. As before, a Bonferroni correction to the significance level is required \((a = .05/3 = .017)\) since a separate ANOVA will be conducted for each of the three dependent measures.
The first supplemental question was whether or not there were any observable denominational differences in the impact of the 40 Days of Purpose on the spiritual growth of the participants. For each of the three dependent measures, separate two-way ANOVAs (denomination \times time), with the second factor of time being the repeated measure, were conducted for the churches in the experimental group. Denomination was an attribute-independent variable that had two levels: Assembly of God and Baptist. The results of the ANOVAs did not produce a p-value lower than .017 for any of the dependent measures, indicating that there were not any observable denominational differences in the impact of the 40 Days of Purpose on the spiritual growth of the participants.

Although none of the p-values were lower than .017, some of the results on the Awareness of God subscale could be considered to have borderline significance. For the Awareness of God subscale, the time effect was close to reaching significance \((p = .055)\), as was the main effect \((p = .079)\).

The second supplemental question was whether or not there were any observable differences in the impact of the 40 Days of Purpose on the spiritual growth of the participants among the churches comprising the experimental group. Similar ANOVAs (church \times time) to those previously discussed were conducted for the churches in the experimental group for each of the three dependent measures. The church attended was an attribute-independent variable that had three levels: AG, BET, and BNC. Again, a Bonferroni correction was necessary \((\alpha = .05/3 = .017)\).
For the Collaborative and Realistic Acceptance subscales the results of the ANOVAs did not produce any p-values lower than .017. However, the results of the ANOVA for the Awareness of God subscale indicated that there were some significant differences: The interaction effect (time x church) was not significant ($p = .884$), there was no significance over time ($p = .072$); however, the main effect of church was significant, $F(2,108) = 6.81, p = .002$. The time effect of the Awareness of God subscale could be considered to have borderline significance. Refer to Table 6 for the mean and standard deviations of each church across assessment sessions for the Awareness of God subscale.

The results of the two-factor analysis (time x church) for the Awareness of God subscale, where only the factor of time is repeated, showed that the main effect of church was significant ($p = .002$). This result indicates that the particular church that participants attended influenced the participants’ scores on the Awareness of God subscale.

Post hoc multiple comparisons using a Bonferroni $t$-test found that the difference on the Awareness of God subscale between participants in AG and BNC was significant (Observed difference = .414, $p = .015$), as was the difference between participants in BET and BNC (Observed difference = .453, $p = .005$. The participants attending BNC scored consistently lower than participants from both AG and BET.

The third supplemental question was whether or not there were any observable differences in the degree of participation of participants in the 40 Days of Purpose among the churches in the treatment group. A post hoc one-
way ANOVA (attribute-independent variable is church attended) was conducted
for three of the four participation variables to determine whether there was a
significant difference among the churches on participation in the 40 Days of
Purpose. The results indicate that there were significant differences among the
churches for most of the participation variables evaluated: (a) the number of
Scriptures memorized by participants, $F(2,136) = 7.911, p = .001$; (b) the number of
small-group meetings attended by participants, $F(2,136) = 8.62, p < .001$; and (c) the
number of church services attended by participants, $F(2,135) = 16.79, p < .001$. The
percentage of devotions completed by participants among churches was close to
being significant, $F(2,136) = 3.88, p = .023$. Since there was a separate ANOVA
conducted for each participation variable, a Bonferroni correction was applied ($\alpha
= .05/3 = .017$).

Post hoc multiple comparisons using a Bonferroni $t$-test found that the
difference between participants in AG and BNC was the only comparison that
was significant for the number of Scriptures memorized (Observed difference =
1.48, $p < .001$). For the number of small groups attended post hoc multiple
comparisons found that the difference among participants in AG and BNC was
significant (Observed difference = 1.39, $p < .001$), as well as the difference
between participants in AG and BET, Observed difference = 1.06, $p = .021$. For
the number of church services attended post hoc multiple comparisons found
that the difference between participants in AG and BNC was significant
(Observed Difference = .812, $p < .001$).
A comparison of the percentage of participants in each category of devotions completed for each church found that there were notable differences among the churches on this participation variable as well. For example, both AG and BET had a much larger percentage of individuals who completed 91-100% of the devotions compared to BNC. See Table 1 for the percentage of participants who completed each category of devotions completed for each church in the experimental group.

Unplanned Analysis

Since a large number of scores in both the experimental and control groups had to be omitted on the Realistic Acceptance subscale, unplanned analyses were conducted on the Disappointment subscale. The scoring of the Realistic Acceptance subscale items depends on the participants' answer to the corresponding item on the Disappointment subscale. Specifically, if the participant answers (1) "not at all true" on a particular item on the Disappointment subscale, then the corresponding item is not included in calculating the Realistic Acceptance subscale score. The score for a subscale is the average of the answered items comprising the subscale. However, if the respondent omits more than half of the items for a given subscale, the subscale is not scored (Hall & Edwards, 2002). As such, when a participant answered (1) "not at all true" to more than half of the Disappointment items then the Realistic Acceptance subscale score for that participant had to be omitted. Because scores were omitted on the Realistic Acceptance subscale, the number of valid
participants dropped from 93 to 51 in the experimental group and from 15 to 7 in the control group.

On the Disappointment subscale, lower scores indicate less disappointment with God, with the response of 1 to an item being the absence of disappointment. Analyses of the Disappointment subscale scores provided additional information that was useful in clarifying the results of the statistical analysis of the main research hypothesis.

Means and standard deviations were calculated for the Disappointment subscale for the pretest, posttest 1, and posttest 2 for both the experimental and control groups. For the Disappointment subscale (spiritual growth is assumed to be associated with a decrease in scores) the means of the control group were lower and the standard deviations were smaller than the experimental group. For the control group, the means decreased between the pretest and posttest 1 and showed a slight increase between posttest 1 and posttest 2. For the experimental group, the means decreased slightly between pretest and posttest 1 and between posttest 1 and posttest 2. Refer to Table 5 for the means and standard deviations for the experimental and control groups across assessment sessions on the Disappointment subscale. Refer to Figure 3 for changes in experimental and control groups for the Disappointment subscale over time.

On the Disappointment subscale the changes in means across assessment sessions were small for both the experimental and control groups. In the experimental group, there was an observable trend of decreasing scores (indicating less disappointment with God) over time (from pretest to posttest2).
In the control group, this trend (of decreasing scores from the pretest to posttest 2) was not observed. On the Disappointment subscale, the control group had a larger decrease in scores between the pretest and posttest 1 than the experimental group. However, there was a slight increase in scores for the control group between posttest 1 and posttest 2 scores. For the experimental group there was a small but continued decrease between posttest 1 and posttest 2. Refer to Table 5 for the means and standard deviations of the experimental and control groups across assessment sessions on the Disappointment subscale.

A separate two-way ANOVA (treatment group × time of testing), with the second factor of time being the repeated measure, was performed for the Disappointment subscale to provide additional information to clarify the results of the main research hypothesis. The research hypothesis states that the pretest/posttest difference for the experimental group would be significantly greater than the pretest/posttest difference for the control group. Since there is a higher risk of Type I error when multiple tests are performed on a single data set, a lower p-value than would be otherwise required is necessary for judging an effect to be significant. Since this unplanned analysis is addressing a fourth dependent measure, a Bonferroni correction was used to adjust the alpha level (α = .05/4 = .013). This procedure represents a compromise between trying to minimize Type I error and preserving the overall power of the statistical analysis.

The results of the ANOVAs did not produce a p-value lower than .013 for the Disappointment subscale: the interaction effect (time × treatment) was not significant (p = .700), there was no significant difference over time (p = .025), and
the main effect of treatment was not significant \( (p = .076) \). The time effect \( (p = .025) \) could be considered to have borderline significance, especially considering the small sample size of the control group.

The Disappointment subscale was statistically analyzed to provide additional information for the first supplemental question about whether or not there were any observable denominational differences in the impact of the 40 Days of Purpose on the spiritual growth of the participants. A two-way ANOVA (denomination \( \times \) time), with the second factor of time being the repeated measure, was conducted for the churches in the experimental group using the Disappointment subscale as a dependent measure. Again, a Bonferroni correction was necessary \( (\alpha = .05/4 = .013) \). Denomination was an attribute-independent variable that had two levels: Assembly of God and Baptist.

The results of the ANOVA did produce a significant \( p \)-value lower than .013 for the Disappointment subscale: the interaction effect (time \( \times \) treatment) was not significant \( (p = .804) \), there was no significant difference over time \( (p = .016) \), but the main effect of treatment was significant \( F_{(1, 129)} = 8.89, p = .003 \). The significant main effect indicates that there were significant differences between the mean scores on the Disappointment subscale between the two denominations (Assembly of God, \( M = 2.46 \); Baptist, \( M = 1.921 \)). The time effect was also very close to being significant; indicating that there were notable decreases in the Disappointment subscale over time for both denominations, particularly between the pretest and posttest 2 scores. A post hoc pair-wise comparison, with a
Bonferroni correction, found a significant difference between the pretest and posttest 2 scores ($p = .012$).

A similar ANOVA (church x time) to those previously discussed were conducted for the churches in the experimental group for the Disappointment subscale. This statistical analysis was conducted to provide additional information for the second supplemental question, about whether or not there were any observable church differences in the impact of the 40 Days of Purpose on the spiritual growth of the participants. The church attended was an attribute-independent variable that had three levels: AG, BET, and BNC. A Bonferroni correction was also necessary ($\alpha = .05/4 = .013$).

The results of the ANOVA produced a $p$-value less than .013 for the Disappointment subscale: (a) the interaction effect (time x church) was not significant ($p = .978$); (b) there was a significant difference over time, $F(2,107) = 4.53$, $p = .013$; and (c) the main effect of church was not significant ($p = .019$). Although the $p$-value for the main effect of church was greater than .013, it was very close to reaching significance.
CHAPTER V: DISCUSSION

The present study attempted to evaluate the impact that a 6-week spiritual growth campaign had on the individual spiritual development of participants. This study conceptualized Christian spirituality as an academic discipline by implementing a methodological approach to studying spirituality. Since spirituality has been considered to be a core and important function of religion, Christian spirituality was investigated within the confines of a church setting. This study was designed to assess individual spiritual growth as it occurred within three churches that were participating in a spiritual growth campaign.

For the purpose of this study, spiritual growth or development was defined as an increase in spiritual maturity, which was proposed to consist of the following central characteristics: (a) a quality of relationship with God that has reached the realistic acceptance stage (Hall & Edwards, 1996); (b) an awareness of God’s responsiveness, guidance, and presence of God in the life of the believer (Hall et al., 1998); (c) an interdependence in problem-solving (a collaborative problem-solving style, the individual is in partnership with God in coping; Fox et al., 1999; Pargament et al., 1988); (d) a secure attachment to God (Rowatt & Kirkpatrick, 2002); (e) a good adjustment to difficult life circumstances (Kristensen et al., 2001); (f) a relationship with the transcendent (God, the divine), including ordinary and extraordinary experiences (Hood et al., 1993; Underwood & Teresi, 2001); and (g) a tendency to engage in spiritual disciplines for the purpose of becoming more Christ-like (Willard, 2000).
In this study, the operational definition of spiritual growth was limited to an increase in the scores associated with the following components of spiritual maturity: (a) a quality of relationship with God, as measured by the Realistic Acceptance subscale from the Spiritual Assessment Inventory (SAI) (Hall & Edwards, 1996); (b) an awareness of God's responsiveness, guidance, and presence of God in the life of the believer, as measured by the Awareness of God subscale on the SAI (Hall et al., 1998); and (c) an interdependence in problem-solving, as measured by the Collaborative subscale on the Religious Problem-Solving scale (RPSS) (Fox et al., 1999; Pargament et al., 1988).

The operational definition of spiritual growth used in this study is based on the logical assumption that spiritual growth is associated with an increase in scores on subscales that assess characteristics of spiritual maturity. This study employed a multidimensional approach to assessing increases in spiritual maturity or spiritual growth, since it is unlikely that one instrument could be used to accurately measure this complex construct.

The 40 Days of Purpose Spiritual Growth Campaign has been structured to facilitate spiritual development by providing opportunities for the participants to (a) develop a better understanding of God's Word and underlying biblical principles through the reading and study of weekly devotionals and the meditation and memorization of Scriptures; (b) increase the participants sense of meaning and purpose in their lives as they are encouraged to discover their place of service within the body of Christ; and (c) experience an increased awareness of God's presence in their lives through weekly small group meetings, where they
have opportunities to hear, as well as share, personal testimonies of how God is working in their own lives and the lives of the other group members (Warren, 2002a). The 40 Days of Purpose was chosen as the treatment condition for this study because the goals of this program are in accordance with the kind of spiritual growth experiences that Hill and Hood (1999) reported can occur throughout adulthood. The spiritual growth experiences they described include: (a) new religious experiences, which could occur during small group meetings through the hearing and sharing of personal testimonies; (b) new understandings of already existing religious beliefs or experiences, which could occur through the weekly devotionals and memorization of Scripture; (c) a greater sense of purpose or meaning in life, which could occur as individuals begin to discover their place of service within the church; and (d) a greater perceived awareness of divine involvement in everyday life, which could occur through participation in a small group (Hill & Hood, 1999, p. 159).

Overview of Findings

It was hypothesized that individuals participating in the 40 Days of Purpose Spiritual Growth Campaign would experience greater spiritual growth than individuals in the control group that did not participate in the program. Specifically, the major research hypothesis is that the pretest-posttest difference on the Realistic Acceptance, Awareness of God, and the Collaborative subscales for the experimental group (consisting of churches that participated in the 40 Days of Purpose: AG, BET, and BNC) would be significantly greater than the pretest-posttest difference of the control group (consisting of a church not
participating in the 40 Days of Purpose: BC). However, this hypothesis was not supported by the data. Although the major research hypothesis was not supported, it would be erroneous to conclude, based on this finding alone, that the 40 Days of Purpose is ineffective in promoting spiritual growth among individuals who participated in the program.

A careful examination of concomitant factors is warranted to better comprehend and clarify the results of this study. Among the factors that should be considered are the initial differences between the experimental and control groups. Overall, participants in the control group were less educated, older and had been church members and in their denomination much longer than participants in the experimental group. The majority of participants in the control group also demonstrated a high degree of attendance of regularly scheduled church services. It is reasonable to conclude that the control group consisted of participants who had already attained a fairly high level of spiritual maturity through their consistent commitment to church attendance, church membership, and to their denomination over a long period of time (the majority of participants were 60 years and older).

The experimental group was comprised of volunteers from three churches and was more heterogeneous than the control group, as demonstrated by the marked differences in demographic characteristics and the statistically significant differences in (a) degree of participation in the 40 Days of Purpose, (b) scores on the Awareness of God subscale among the churches, and (c) scores on the Disappointment subscale among the denominations comprising the experimental
group. These differences among the churches and among the denominations represented in the experimental group may have had a counteractive effect on the overall impact that the treatment (40 Days of Purpose) may have had on individual spiritual growth when compared to the more homogeneous control group. Specifically, the heterogeneity of the participants in the experimental group could have neutralized the measurable impact that the treatment condition had on individual spiritual growth.

Another factor to consider, which could help to clarify the results of this study, is the sensitivity of the assessment instruments in measuring changes in spiritual growth. Spiritual growth is similar to physical growth, in that it takes time and often occurs in small increments. Rick Warren (2002c), the founder of the 40 Days of Purpose wrote, "... real maturity is never the result of a single experience, no matter how powerful or moving. Growth is gradual" (p. 219). The means and standard deviations for the dependent measures for the experimental and control group across the assessment session indicated that the Awareness of God subscale and the Realistic Acceptance subscale may be slightly more sensitive to individual changes in spiritual growth than the Collaborative subscale.

In the experimental group, there was a consistent trend of increasing scores over time on both the Awareness of God and Realistic Acceptance subscales, but there was no such trend observed for scores in the control group. Although there were observable changes in the scores on the Awareness of God and Realistic Acceptance subscales over time in the experimental group, the
differences were not statistically significant when compared with the control group. However, one area that must be addressed in a study of this nature is the significance of the changes that occurred at the individual rather than the group level.

When the data was examined from an individual change rather than a group change perspective, it showed that there were a number of individuals from each church that showed a marked change in their scores from the pretest to the posttest 2 assessments. This finding serves as a reminder that a lack of statistical significance at the group level may not mean the lack of significant results at an individual or personal level.

The Awareness of God subscale may be more sensitive to measuring subtle changes in spiritual growth than both the Realistic Acceptance and the Collaborative subscales. On the Collaborative subscale there was no observable trend of scores increasing from the pretest to posttest 2 for the experimental or control groups. This particular subscale may be more sensitive to extraneous factors than the other two dependent measures, since religious coping could have been influenced by situational factors that were operating in the participants' lives over the assessment period. Although there was a trend of increasing scores across time for the Realistic Acceptance subscale for the experimental group, there were inherent problems with the scoring of the Realistic Acceptance subscale that resulted in a significant number of omissions for both the experimental and control groups.
The scoring of the Realistic Acceptance subscale is dependent on the participants' responses to corresponding items on the Disappointment subscale, thus preventing independent observations on these two measures. In particular, when participants respond with a (1) "not at all" on the Disappointment subscale, indicating a lack of disappointment with God, their response to the corresponding item on the Realistic Acceptance subscale must be omitted. The high number of omissions on this subscale indicates there are notable problems with its use in a church setting.

Since a large number of scores in both the experimental and control groups had to be omitted on the Realistic Acceptance subscale, unplanned analyses were conducted on the Disappointment subscale. The analyses of the Disappointment subscale yielded some findings that were helpful in clarifying the results of the main research hypothesis. The ANOVA that was performed to determine if there were any significant differences between the experimental and control groups on the Disappointment subscale produced two borderline significant findings on the effect of time ($p = .025$). This finding suggests that the Disappointment subscale may be more sensitive to changes in spiritual growth than the other dependent measures in this study.

In summary, although there was no significant difference between pretest/posttest scores of the experimental group and the pretest-posttest scores of the control group, it cannot be concluded that the 40 Days of Purpose is ineffective in facilitating individual spiritual growth, since there are other concomitant factors that may have contributed to this outcome. Possible factors
that could have contributed to a lack of significant difference between the pretest-posttest scores of the experimental and control group include:

1. The lack of homogeneity among the churches comprising the experimental group (differences in denomination and location)

2. A possible problem with the sensitivity of the instruments used in the study for measuring subtle changes in individual spiritual growth

3. The homogeneity and smaller sample size of the control group

4. The notable demographic differences between the experimental group and the control group (age, education level, number of years a member of current church, and number of years affiliated with current denomination)

5. The significantly higher scores on the Awareness of God subscale for the control group as compared to the experimental group on the pretest assessment indicating that the control group may be comprised of more spiritually mature individuals

6. Significant differences among churches comprising the experimental group in degree of participation in the 40 Days of Purpose program and mean scores on the dependent measures

While there may have been extraneous factors that contributed to the lack of significant findings between the experimental and control group, the data consistently showed that there were no significant changes across time in the scores on any of the three dependent measures for the participants in both the experimental or control group.
Recommendations

Although there were only three dependent measures used in this study, the participants were given six surveys to complete at each assessment session and data was collected on all of the surveys administered. A follow-up study is already planned that will analyze the data collected from the other instruments to evaluate the impact that the 40 Days of Purpose may have had on other components of spiritual maturity that were not addressed in this study. Since this data is part of the original set of data collected, future analyses will need to utilize multivariate analysis procedures.

Analyzing the remaining data will also help identify assessment instruments that may be more sensitive in detecting the possibly subtle changes in spiritual growth among the individual participants. A comprehensive analysis of all the data collected from the participants could possibly facilitate the development of a reliable multidimensional assessment model for spiritual growth that could be utilized in subsequent research studies.

Since the churches in the experimental group demonstrated a significant difference in the degree of participation in the 40 Days of Purpose, it would be informative to examine whether there are any correlations between the participation variables and the dependent measures. These analyses could help determine whether the degree of participation of the churches influenced the effect that the 40 Days of Purpose had on the participants’ spiritual growth.

For future studies in the area of assessing spiritual growth, the basic design of this study could be replicated with the addition of matching the control
group with the experimental group on the demographic variables addressed in this study. Matching the experimental and control group would minimize the extraneous differences and serve to better isolate the treatment effect.

The dependent measures need to be restricted to no more than three and to consist of the assessment instruments that have been identified to be most sensitive to changes in spiritual growth. It would also be advantageous to focus subsequent studies to one denomination in similar geographical locations to maximize subject homogeneity and allow the results to be generalized to a specific population.

Another suggestion would be to give the second posttest 6 months to a year after completing of the 40 Days of Purpose. Changes in individual spiritual growth in response to participation in the 40 Days of Purpose may require a longer time period of time to occur than was allowed in this study. A longitudinal study could also be implemented that would enable the participants’ spiritual development to be tracked over several years.

Another recommendation from this study includes eliminating the Realistic Acceptance subscale as a measure of spiritual growth in a church setting. Since this subscale is dependent on responses to the Disappointment subscale, it is believed that too many scores would have to be omitted because of the respondents’ answers to the corresponding items on the Disappointment subscale. In a church setting, there may be a higher level of spiritual maturity among the members. More spiritually mature individuals are probably less likely to report disappointment with God, and their responses to the Realistic
Acceptance subscale would have to be omitted. Although the analyses of the Disappointment subscale were unplanned and conducted in response to the large number of omissions on the Realistic Acceptance subscale, this subscale appeared to be the most sensitive to measuring changes that occurred in the experimental and control groups over time.

Conclusion

This study has been an inaugural effort to examine the effectiveness of the 40 Days of Purpose Spiritual Campaign on the individual spiritual growth of its participants. This program provided a unique opportunity to study spiritual growth within the framework of an experimental design. Although there were no significant differences in the pretest-posttest scores of the experimental group as compared to the control group, it cannot be concluded that the 40 Days of Purpose is ineffective in promoting spiritual growth among individuals who participated in the program because other factors may have influenced the outcome of this study.

However, this study can serve as a basic model for subsequent research in the area of assessing spiritual growth that occurs within the confines of a church setting. The experimental design can be improved by matching the experimental and control groups on a number of demographic variables to reduce the extraneous differences, which could mask the measurable treatment effect if not effectively controlled.

Since the goals of the 40 Days of Purpose are consistent with promoting the kind of spiritual growth experiences that Hill and Hood (1999, p. 159)
reported can occur throughout adulthood, the program could continue to provide an unprecedented opportunity to identify factors that can facilitate spiritual growth and development. Continued research on the 40 Days of Purpose could also provide a valuable opportunity to identify assessment instruments that are sensitive to measuring changes in spiritual growth, as well as elucidating the aspects of spiritual maturity that are most impacted by the program. The information gleaned from additional research in this area could be used to construct a viable model for spiritual assessment that could be used in subsequent research studies in the area of spiritual growth and development.

Since the last half of the 20th century has been characterized by a rise of secularism and an increasing disenchantment with religious institutions in Western society (Hill et al., 2000, p. 58), the 40 Days of Purpose provides a timely opportunity to study spiritual growth within the confines of a religious system. Future studies designed to assess individual spiritual growth and development that occur within the church body could clarify the nature of the relationship between spirituality and religion.

A commitment to scholarly work in the area of Christian spirituality could provide the knowledge base needed for the refinement of methods to promote spiritual growth and development. The results of continued investigation in this area could also provide pastors, pastoral counselors, religious leaders in the evangelical Christian community, and mental health professionals with a viable means to assess spirituality and a better understanding of how specific interventions can promote spiritual growth.
Psychological and spiritual growth have been considered to be inextricably interconnected (Benner, 1990). Research studies designed to appraise individual spiritual growth in response to a particular intervention, such as the 40 Days of Purpose, may be especially beneficial to the mental health profession. According to Standard et al. (2000) the assessment of spirituality is a new and expanding area of concern for counselors (p. 204). Standard et al. proposed that assessment of spirituality can “assist both the counselor and client in obtaining a better understanding of the role of spirituality in the issues that bring the client to counseling and in designing treatment interventions appropriate for resolution of those issues” (p. 204). The information gleaned from continued research in the area of spiritual growth could facilitate the development of an effective model for assessing individual spiritual growth in response to treatment interventions. As such, continued research in the area of spiritual growth is imperative for the successful integration of spirituality into the therapeutic setting.
Figure Caption

*Figure 1.* Mean scores of the Awareness of God subscale for the experimental and control groups: pretest, posttest 1, and posttest 2
Figure Caption

*Figure 2.* Mean scores for the Realistic Acceptance subscale for the experimental and control groups: pretest, posttest 1, and posttest 2
Realistic Acceptance Subscale

![Graph showing the means for Experimental and Control groups across different time points (Pre, Post1, Post2). The graph illustrates an increase in means over time for both groups.](image-url)
Figure Caption

*Figure 3.* Mean scores of the Disappointment subscale for the experimental and control groups: pretest, posttest 1, and posttest 2
Table 1

*Means, Standard Deviations and Percentages of Participation Variables for the Experimental Group*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participation Variables</th>
<th>Churches</th>
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<td><strong>AG</strong></td>
<td><strong>BET</strong></td>
<td><strong>BNC</strong></td>
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<td><strong>SD</strong></td>
<td><strong>M</strong></td>
<td><strong>SD</strong></td>
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<td>Scriptures Memorized</td>
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<td>3.18</td>
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<td>Church Service Attended</td>
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<td>Devotions Completed: Percentage*</td>
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<td>0-20%</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>2.5</td>
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<td>21-40%</td>
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<td>0.0</td>
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<td>41-60%</td>
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<td>81-90%</td>
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<td>91-100%</td>
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<td>64.0</td>
<td>74.0</td>
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*Percentage of participants in church completing devotions*
Table 2

*Means and Standard Deviations for the Collaborative Subscale for Experimental and Control Group: Pretest, Posttest 1, and Posttest 2*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th>SD</th>
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<td><strong>Experimental</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Pretest</td>
<td>3.21</td>
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<tr>
<td>Posttest 1</td>
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<td>Posttest 2</td>
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<td>Pretest</td>
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<td>.700</td>
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<td>Posttest 1</td>
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<td>Posttest 2</td>
<td>3.42</td>
<td>.746</td>
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</table>
Table 3

*Means and Standard Deviations for the Awareness of God Subscale for Experimental and Control Groups: Pretest, Posttest 1, and Posttest 2*

<table>
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<th></th>
<th>M</th>
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<th>Valid N</th>
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<tbody>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pretest</td>
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<td>.692</td>
<td>111</td>
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<tr>
<td>Posttest 1</td>
<td>3.84</td>
<td>.733</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Posttest 2</td>
<td>3.85</td>
<td>.693</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Control</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pretest</td>
<td>4.12</td>
<td>.506</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Posttest 1</td>
<td>4.11</td>
<td>.470</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Posttest 2</td>
<td>4.13</td>
<td>.559</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4

Means and Standard Deviations for the Realistic Acceptance Subscale for Experimental and Control Groups: Pretest, Posttest 1, and Posttest 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Valid N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Experimental</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Pretest</td>
<td>4.34</td>
<td>.598</td>
<td>51</td>
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<tr>
<td>Posttest 1</td>
<td>4.38</td>
<td>.614</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Posttest 2</td>
<td>4.40</td>
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<td>51</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Control</strong></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Pretest</td>
<td>4.43</td>
<td>.364</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Posttest 1</td>
<td>4.61</td>
<td>.261</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Posttest 2</td>
<td>4.60</td>
<td>.344</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Table 5

*Means and Standard Deviations for the Disappointment Subscale for Experimental and Control Groups: Pretest, Posttest 1, and Posttest 2*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Valid N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Experimental</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pretest</td>
<td>2.20</td>
<td>.996</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Posttest 1</td>
<td>2.08</td>
<td>.989</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Posttest 2</td>
<td>2.01</td>
<td>.942</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Control</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pretest</td>
<td>1.87</td>
<td>.800</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Posttest 1</td>
<td>1.64</td>
<td>.743</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Posttest 2</td>
<td>1.67</td>
<td>.657</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Table 6

*Means and Standard Deviations for the Awareness of God Subscale for Each Church Across Assessment Sessions*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment</th>
<th>Church</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pretest</td>
<td>AG</td>
<td>3.91</td>
<td>.819</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>BET</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>.610</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>BNC</td>
<td>3.54</td>
<td>.603</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Posttest 1</td>
<td>AG</td>
<td>4.04</td>
<td>.791</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>BET</td>
<td>4.08</td>
<td>.724</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>BNC</td>
<td>3.59</td>
<td>.635</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Posttest 2</td>
<td>AG</td>
<td>4.06</td>
<td>.763</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>BET</td>
<td>4.04</td>
<td>.626</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>BNC</td>
<td>3.63</td>
<td>.632</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 7

*Means and Standard Deviations for the Awareness of God Subscale for Each Denomination across Assessment Sessions*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment</th>
<th>Denomination</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pretest</td>
<td>Assembly of God</td>
<td>3.91</td>
<td>.819</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Baptist</td>
<td>3.71</td>
<td>.641</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Posttest 1</td>
<td>Assembly of God</td>
<td>4.04</td>
<td>.791</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Baptist</td>
<td>3.77</td>
<td>.704</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Posttest 2</td>
<td>Assembly of God</td>
<td>4.06</td>
<td>.763</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Baptist</td>
<td>3.78</td>
<td>.658</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Appendix A: Spiritual Assessment Inventory

**Instructions:**

1. Please respond to each statement below by writing the number that best represents your experience in the empty box to the right of the statement.

2. It is best to answer according to what really reflects your experience rather than what you think your experience should be.

3. Give the answer that comes to mind first. Don't spend too much time thinking about an item.

4. Give the best possible response to each statement even if it does not provide all the information you would like.

5. Try your best to respond to all statements. Your answers will be completely confidential.

6. Some of the statements consist of two parts as shown here:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2.1</th>
<th>There are times when I feel disappointed with God.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>When this happens, I still want our relationship to continue.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Your response to the second statement (2.2) tells how true this second statement (2.2) is for you when you have the experience (e.g. feeling disappointed with God) described in the first statement (2.1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not At All True</td>
<td>Slightly True</td>
<td>Moderately True</td>
<td>Substantially True</td>
<td>Very True</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>I have a sense of how God is working in my life.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>There are times when I feel disappointed with God.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>When this happens, I still want our relationship to continue.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>God's presence feels very real to me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>I am afraid that God will give up on me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>I seem to have a unique ability to influence God through my prayers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Listening to God is an essential part of my life.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>I am always in a worshipful mood when I go to church.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>There are times when I feel frustrated with God.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>When I feel this way, I still desire to put effort into our relationship.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>I am aware of God prompting me to do things.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>My emotional connection with God is unstable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>My experiences of God's responses to me impact me greatly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.1</td>
<td>There are times when I feel irritated at God.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.2</td>
<td>When I feel this way, I am able to come to some sense of resolution in our relationship.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>God recognizes that I am more spiritual than most people.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>I always seek God's guidance for every decision I make.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>I am aware of God's presence in my interactions with other people.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>There are times when I feel that God is punishing me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>I am aware of God responding to me in a variety of ways.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.1</td>
<td>There are times when I feel angry at God.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>When this happens, I still have the sense that God will always be with me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>I am aware of God attending to me in times of need.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>God understands that my needs are more important than most people's.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>--------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 I am aware of God telling me to do something.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22 I worry that I will be left out of God's plans.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23 My experiences of God's presence impact me greatly.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24 I am always as kind at home as I am at church.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 I have a sense of the direction in which God is guiding me.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26 My relationship with God is an extraordinary one that most people would not understand.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27.1 There are times when I feel betrayed by God.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27.2 When I feel this way, I put effort into restoring our relationship.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28 I am aware of God communicating to me in a variety of ways.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29 Manipulating God seems to be the best way to get what I want.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 I am aware of God's presence in times of need.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31 From day to day, I sense God being with me.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32 I pray for all my friends and relatives every day.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33.1 There are times when I feel frustrated by God for not responding to my prayers.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33.2 When I feel this way, I am able to talk it through with God.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX B: ATTACHMENT TO GOD

Instructions:

1. Please respond to each statement by circling the number that best describes your experience.

2. It is best to answer according to what really represents your experience rather than what you think your experience should be.

3. Give the answer that first comes to your mind. Do not spend too much time thinking about an item.

4. Give the best possible response to each statement.

5. Respond to all statements. Your answers will kept completely confidential.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not Characteristic of me</th>
<th>Characteristic of me</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. God seems impersonal to me. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

2. God seems to have little or no interest in my personal problems. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
3. God seems to have little or no interest in my personal affairs. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

4. I have a warm relationship with God. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

5. God knows when I need support. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

6. I feel that God is generally responsive to me. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

7. God sometimes seems responsive to my needs, but sometimes not. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

8. God's reactions to me seem to be inconsistent. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

9. God sometimes seems very warm and other times very cold to me 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
APPENDIX C: RELIGIOUS PROBLEM-SOLVING SCALES: SHORT FORM

Presented below are several statements concerning the role of religion in dealing with problems. Please: (a) READ each statement carefully, (b) THINK about how often the statements apply to you, (c) DECIDE whether each statement is true of you: (1) never; (2) occasionally; (3) fairly often; (4) very often; or (5) always. DRAW A CIRCLE around one of the five numbers to indicate how often the statement applies to you.

1 = Never
2 = Occasionally
3 = Fairly Often
4 = Very Often
5 = Always

1. When it comes to deciding how to solve a problem, God and I work together as partners.

2. After I've gone through a rough time, I try to make sense of it without relying on God.

3. Rather than trying to come up with the right solution to a problem myself, I let God decide how to deal with it.
4. When I have a problem, I talk to God about it and together we decide what it means.

5. In carrying out solutions to my problems, I wait for God to take control and know somehow He will work it out.

6. I act to solve my problems without God’s help.

7. When faced with trouble, I deal with my feelings without God’s help.

8. When a situation makes me anxious, I wait for God to take those feelings away.

9. When considering a difficult situation, God and I work together to think of possible solutions.

10. When I have difficulty, I decide what it means by myself without help from God.

11. After solving a problem, I work with God to
make sense of it.

12. Together, God and I put my plans into action.

13. I do not think about different solutions to my problems because God provides them for me.

14. When deciding on a solution, I make a choice independent of God’s input.

15. I don’t spend much time thinking about troubles I’ve had; God makes sense of them for me.

16. When I feel nervous or anxious about a problem, I work with God to find a way to relieve my worries.

17. When a troublesome issue arises, I leave it up to God to decide what it means for me.

18. When thinking about a difficulty, I try to come up with possible solutions without God’s help.
APPENDIX D: MYSTICISM SCALE, CHRIST VERSION

Note the following descriptions of experiences carefully and indicate how much each description applies to your own experience:

+1 = This description is probably true of my own experience or experiences.

-1 = This description is probably not true of my own experience or experiences.

+2 = This description is definitely true of my own experience or experiences.

-2 = This description is definitely not true of my own experience or experiences.

? = Cannot decide (please try to avoid marking any item with ?)

Please respond to each statement by circling the number that best describes your experience or experiences.

(Note: these items may be considered as applying to one experience or to several different experiences)

1. I have had an experience with Christ in which I lost awareness of time and things around me.

2. I have never experienced Christ in a way I could not express in words.
3. I have had an experience in which I seemed to be drawn into Christ.

4. I have had an experience in which everything seemed to disappear from my mind until I was conscious only of Christ.

5. I have experienced Christ's profound joy.

6. I have never had a feeling in which I felt myself to be one with Christ.

7. I have never experienced Christ's perfect peace.

8. I have never had an experience in which I felt all things were spiritually alive in Christ.

9. I have never had an experience of Christ's holiness.

10. I have never had an experience in which Christ's presence was revealed in all things.

11. I have been so aware of Christ that I had no sense of time or things around me.
12. I have had an experience in which I realized the oneness of myself and all things in Christ.

13. I have had an experience in which a greater depth of Christ was revealed to me.

14. I have never experienced Christ as being a divine presence.

15. I have never had an experience of Christ that moved me beyond an awareness of time and surroundings.

16. I have never experienced the reality of Christ.

17. I have had an experience in which Christ’s will was made known to me.

18. I have had an experience in which I felt the perfect goodness of Christ.

19. I have had an experience in which I felt everything in the world to be in accord with Christ’s creation.

20. I have had an experience of the sacredness of Christ.
21. I have never experienced Christ beyond words of description.

22. I have had an experience which left me with an awesome feeling of Christ's presence.

23. I have experienced Christ in a way that escapes words of testimony.

24. I have never had an experience in which my own self seemed to merge with Christ.

25. I have never experienced the feeling of Christ's power.

26. I have never had an experience in which deeper aspects of Christ were revealed to me.

27. I have never had an experience of Christ in which time, distance, and things around me were meaningless.

28. I have never had an experience in which I became aware of Christ's unity in everything.
29. I have had an experience in which all things seemed to reveal Christ's presence.

30. I have never had an experience in which all things seemed to be unified in Christ.

31. I have had an experience with Christ in which I felt nothing is without spiritual life.

32. I have experienced Christ in a way that no words could possibly express.
APPENDIX E: DAILY SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCES SCALE

Instructions: The list that follows includes items you may or may not experience. Please consider if and how often you have these experiences and try to disregard whether you feel you should or should not have them.

You may experience the following in your daily life. If so, how often?

1. I feel God’s presence.
   1 - Many times a day
   2 - Every day
   3 - Most days
   4 - Some days
   5 - Once in a while
   6 - Never or almost never

2. I experience a connection to all of life.
   1 - Many times a day
   2 - Every day
   3 - Most days
   4 - Some days
   5 - Once in a while
   6 - Never or almost never
3. During worship, or at other times when connecting with God, I feel joy which lifts me out of my daily concerns.

1 – Many times a day
2 – Every day
3 – Most days
4 – Some days
5 – Once in a while
6 – Never or almost never

4. I find strength in my religion or spirituality.

1 – Many times a day
2 – Every day
3 – Most days
4 – Some days
5 – Once in a while
6 – Never or almost never

5. I find comfort in my religion or spirituality.

1 – Many times a day
2 – Every day
3 – Most days
4 – Some days
5 – Once in a while
6. I feel deep inner peace or harmony.

   6 - Never or almost never

   

   1 - Many times a day

   2 - Every day

   3 - Most days

   4 - Some days

   5 - Once in a while

   6 - Never or almost never

7. I ask for God’s help in the midst of daily activities.

   

   1 - Many times a day

   2 - Every day

   3 - Most days

   4 - Some days

   5 - Once in a while

   6 - Never or almost never

8. I feel guided by God in the midst of daily activities.

   

   1 - Many times a day

   2 - Every day

   3 - Most days

   4 - Some days
5 - Once in a while
6 - Never or almost never

9. I feel God’s love for me, directly.
   1 - Many times a day
   2 - Every day
   3 - Most days
   4 - Some days
   5 - Once in a while
   6 - Never or almost never

10. I feel God’s love for me, through others.
    1 - Many times a day
    2 - Every day
    3 - Most days
    4 - Some days
    5 - Once in a while
    6 - Never or almost never

11. I am spiritually touched by the beauty of creation.
    1 - Many times a day
    2 - Every day
    3 - Most days
12. I feel thankful for my blessings.

1 - Many times a day
2 - Every day
3 - Most days
4 - Some days
5 - Once in a while
6 - Never or almost never

13. I feel a selfless caring for others.

1 - Many times a day
2 - Every day
3 - Most days
4 - Some days
5 - Once in a while
6 - Never or almost never

14. I accept others even when they do things I think are wrong.

1 - Many times a day
2 - Every day
15. I desire to be closer to God or in union with Him.

1 - Many times a day
2 - Every day
3 - Most days
4 - Some days
5 - Once in a while
6 - Never or almost never

16. In general, how close do you feel to God?

1 - Not at all close
2 - Somewhat close
3 - Very close
4 - As close as possible
APPENDIX F: 40 DAYS OF PURPOSE DATA SHEET

Directions: Read each question and circle the number that corresponds to your answer.

1. Out of the 6 scriptures, how many did you memorize? 0 1 2 3 4 5 6

2. Of the 40 daily devotionals in the *Purpose Driven Life,* approximately what percentage did you complete?

3. Of the 6 small group meetings, how many have you attended?

4. Of the 6 church services, how many have you attended?
APPENDIX G: ATTENDANCE DATA SHEET

Directions: Read each question and circle the number that corresponds to your answer.

1. Approximately how many Sunday morning church services have you attended from October 13 thru the month of November?
   - 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

2. Approximately how many Sunday evening church services have you attended from October 13 thru the month of November?
   - 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

3. Approximately how many Sunday school classes have you attended from October 13 thru the month of November?
   - 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
APPENDIX H: PURPOSE DRIVEN HEALTH ASSESSMENT

Below are a number of statements. Note the following descriptions and circle the number that best describes your own experience:

1 = Just Beginning
2 = Fair
3 = Good
4 = Very Good
5 = Well Developed

1. I am deepening my understanding of and friendship with God in community with others.
   1 2 3 4 5

2. I am growing in my ability both to share and to show my love to others.
   1 2 3 4 5

3. I am willing to share my real needs for prayer and support with others.
   1 2 3 4 5

4. I am resolving conflict constructively and am willing to forgive others.
   1 2 3 4 5

5. I have a growing relationship with God through regular time in the Bible and in prayer (spiritual habits).
   1 2 3 4 5
6. I am experiencing more of the characteristics of Jesus Christ (love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, self-control, etc.) in my life.

7. I am avoiding addictive behaviors (food, television, busyness, and the like) to meet my needs.

8. I am spending time with a Christian friend (spiritual partner) who celebrates and challenges my spiritual growth.

9. I have discovered and am further developing my unique God-given ministry.

10. I am regularly asking God to show me opportunities to serve Him and others.

11. I am serving in a regular (once a month or more) ministry in the church or community.

12. I am cultivating relationships with non-Christians and asking God to give me opportunities to share His love.
13. I am investing my time in another person or group who needs to know Christ personally.

14. I am regularly inviting unchurched or unconnected friends to my church.

15. I am praying and learning about where God can use me cross-culturally for missions.

16. I am experiencing more of the presence and power of God in my everyday life.

17. I am regularly attending services to worship God.

18. I am seeking to please God by surrendering to Him every area of my life (health, decisions, finances, relationships, future, etc.).

19. I am accepting things I cannot change and becoming more grateful for the life God has given me.
APPENDIX I: INFORMED CONSENT AGREEMENT

Please read this consent agreement carefully before you decide to participate in the study. You will receive a copy of this agreement.

Purpose of the research study: The purpose of the study is to provide information to pastors and members of the Christian community regarding the value and benefits of various Christian surveys that can be used to evaluate church programming.

What will you do in the study: You will take 6 Christian surveys during three different assessment sessions: Session one will take place today, session two will take place approximately 40 days from today, and session three will take place approximately 3 months after session two.

Time required: You will spend about 50 minutes in each session. The total time required will be less than 3 hours.

Benefits: There is no guarantee of direct benefits to you in participating in this study. The study may help us understand which surveys will be the most beneficial to pastors in assessing the needs of their congregation and you may benefit by the information you will learn about yourself as you fill out the surveys.

Confidentiality: The information that you give in this study will be handled confidentially. Your information will be assigned a code number. The list connecting your name to this number will be kept in a locked file. When the study is completed and that data have been analyzed, this list will be destroyed.

Voluntary participation: Your participation in the study is completely voluntary.
Right to withdraw from the study: You have the right to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.

How to withdraw from the study: If you wish to withdraw from the study you should contact Debra Burton in Texas at (936) 639-3233 or Ralph Fox in North Carolina at (910) 392-4179. There is no penalty for withdrawing.

Payment: You will receive no payment for participating in the study.

Who to contact if you have questions about the study: Investigator in Texas-Debra Burton, 1022 Ellis Ave., Lufkin, Texas 75904, 639-3233; Investigator in North Carolina-Ralph Fox, 623 Ripwood Rd., Wilmington, NC 28405

Who to contact about your rights in the study: Dr. Randall Davy, Chairman, Institutional Review Board, Liberty University, Lynchburg, VA 24502. Telephone (804) 582-2440

Agreement: The study described above has been explained to me. I voluntarily consent to participate in this activity. I have had an opportunity to ask questions. I understand that future questions I may have about the research or about my rights as a subject will be answered by one of the investigators listed above. I hereby release and agree to indemnify and hold harmless Liberty University, its agents, employees, successors and assigns, from any liability for any claims that may arise as a result of this research study and/or my participation therein, and in consideration of the benefits derived by me from this research study. I also hereby agree not to sue or otherwise assert any claim against Liberty University, its agent or employees for any cause of action arising out of the research study referenced above.
Signature of Participant: _____________________________

Date: ___________
APPENDIX J: SAMPLE INSTRUCTIONS TO PARTICIPANTS

Thank you so much for volunteering for this important Christian study. This is the first of three assessment sessions. The other two assessment sessions will be identical to this one.

The second session will take place approximately 40 days from now following the completion of the 40 days of purpose program (the statement following the completion... will be omitted in the control group). The third and final assessment session will take place approximately 3 months after the second assessment. Your pastor is aware that there will be two other assessment sessions, and he will determine the best times for those two sessions to take place.

You will be notified by regular mail and asked to call a number and leave a voice message to verify that you have received your notification. (E-mail, Ralph may use e-mail and send his with a request-read receipt)

Open your folder and remove the Informed Consent Agreement. This form is necessary because this study is affiliated with a particular university. Please read over the form and sign and date it. We will remove this form from your test packet, and it will be filed separately and secured to maintain your confidentiality.

In a moment you will be asked to complete a number of short surveys. All of your responses will be completely confidential and will be tabulated in another state. Only your identification (ID) number will appear on the surveys.
Read the instructions of each survey before beginning because the type of response required varies from survey to survey. It is best to answer according to what you actually experience rather than what you think your experience should be. There is no right or wrong answers. Give the first answer that comes to your mind and do not spend too much time thinking about an item. Please respond to all statements.

When you have completed the entire packet of surveys in the order they are presented, place them all back in your folder, including your Personal Information Sheet and Informed Consent Agreement and leave the folder and pencil on the desk. You are free to leave after you have completed the surveys. You may pick up your copy of the Informed Consent on your way out. Thank you again for volunteering for this important Christian study and God bless you. You may begin.
APPENDIX K: PERSONAL INFORMATION SHEET

City, State, Zip Code ____________________________

Age (Circle One Group)  20-29  30-39  40-49  50-59  60+

Number of years a member of this church? _____

Number of years in current denomination? _____

Sex (Circle One) Male  Female

Cultural group (circle one) Caucasian  African  Hispanic  Asian  Other

Income Group (Circle one) Low  Middle  Upper

Highest Level of Education achieved: _________________
APPENDIX L: DEMOGRAPHIC BREAKDOWN BY CHURCH

Income Distribution by Church

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income</th>
<th>AG</th>
<th>BET</th>
<th>BNC</th>
<th>BC (Control)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>17.5%</td>
<td>13.0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>75.0%</td>
<td>80.4%</td>
<td>75.8%</td>
<td>94.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
<td>24.2%</td>
<td>5.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Level of Education Distribution by Church

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Education</th>
<th>AG</th>
<th>BET</th>
<th>BNC</th>
<th>BC (Control)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Below High School Graduate</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School Graduate</td>
<td>32.5%</td>
<td>19.6%</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
<td>25.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some College</td>
<td>37.5%</td>
<td>26.1%</td>
<td>21.2%</td>
<td>37.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College Graduate</td>
<td>17.5%</td>
<td>34.8%</td>
<td>48.5%</td>
<td>28.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postgraduate</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
<td>19.6%</td>
<td>25.8%</td>
<td>8.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Mean and Standard Deviation: Years of Church Membership

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Church</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AG</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>8.23</td>
<td>14.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BET</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>5.24</td>
<td>2.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BNC</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>12.45</td>
<td>9.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BC (Control)</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>18.69</td>
<td>11.60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mean and Standard Deviation: Years in Denomination

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Church</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AG</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>13.78</td>
<td>17.28</td>
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<tr>
<td>BET</td>
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<td>20.06</td>
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<tr>
<td>BNC</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>29.64</td>
<td>15.91</td>
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<tr>
<td>BC (Control)</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>44.17</td>
<td>14.74</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
REFERENCES


Retrieved July 10, 2002, from


