THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN RELIGIOUS COMMITMENT AND BIBLE LITERACY IN SUBURBAN NEW YORK AND NEW JERSEY CHRISTIAN HIGH SCHOOL JUNIORS AND SENIORS

by

Pradeep Emmanuel Stephen

Liberty University

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Education

Liberty University
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ABSTRACT

This correlative study explored the relationship between the religious commitment of junior and senior Christian high school students and their level of Bible literacy as indicated by their respective scores on the Duke University Religion Index (DUREL) and Assessment of Bible Knowledge Test (ABKT). Using a non-parametric Spearman’s rho statistic for a correlation test, the study fills a gap in the literature by analyzing the strength of the relationship between students’ levels of Bible literacy and outcomes on the specific religiosity subscales on the DUREL instrument, including Organizational Religious Activity (ORA), Non-Organizational Activity (NORA) and Intrinsic Religiosity (IR). A non-random convenience sample of 70 junior and senior students was taken from a total of 131 pupils from three New York and New Jersey Christian high schools who have taken the survey instruments. There was a strong, positive association between ORA and Bible literacy. Positive correlations suggest that as religiosity scores increase, Bible literacy scores increase. Specifically, higher levels of ORA and IR, are, respectively, strongly and moderately associated with higher levels of Bible literacy. In addition to a replication of this research with a larger, national sample of both Christian and public schools, a new focus on which specific aspects of ORA and IR most significantly correlate with higher Bible literacy scores should also be studied.

Keywords: religious commitment, organizational religious activity, non-organizational activity, intrinsic religiosity, Bible literacy.
Dedication

This study, undertaken by the grace of God, to show forth the incomparable blessing and multitudinous benefits of the Holy Bible to every person in every sphere of society, is joyfully dedicated, first and foremost, to the Living Word, the Lord Jesus Christ, Who gave His all, that we may find true life everlasting. I love the Lord above all else, for He has first loved me.

Next, I dedicate this work to my beautiful wife, Kiruba, whose love, wisdom, and diligent support has truly motivated me to pursue and complete this endeavor more than any other human being. I love you deeply, my precious treasure. Also, from our union, to our gifts from above, our blessed and loving children, Samuel, Daniel, Esther, Elizabeth, and Joseph, this work is dedicated with the hope of inspiring them to continue to be lovers and seekers of the Lord God through His Word and His Holy Spirit for all their days. I love you always, my dear children.
Acknowledgments

I will bless the Lord at all times and His praise shall continually be in my mouth! I give thanks and glory to the Lord God for giving me life and that more abundantly through His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the Supreme Comforter and Enabler, Who supplied grace to do this work for His Honor. I am thankful to my father and mother, Albert and Sukumari Stephen, who first taught me the meaning of true reverence and love for the Lord and His Word, during family prayer. May that legacy continue forever in our generations and may your hearts be glad as you read this manuscript. I love you both very much.

By the great goodness of God, I am blessed to have my faithful wife, Kiruba, who is ever prayerfully encouraging me in love and faith to press on to victory in every endeavor for Him. It was no different during this long doctoral journey. I am grateful to God and to you always, dear. I am blessed to have my dear children also, who have prayed and supported their father in his intense fight to the finish in this project, understanding that God was going to get all the glory. Thank you Lord, for my precious ones, Samuel, Daniel, Esther, Elizabeth and Joseph. I recall during this time of study, my then four-year-old daughter, Elizabeth, praying, “Lord Jesus, please help Daddy to finish his EBD!” My daughter Esther, a few years older than her, also could not have understood what exactly Daddy was up to, spending long hours in the library and on the computer. But they prayed with all their little hearts for Daddy and for that I am filled with joyful tears!

My 16-year-old son Daniel, with his God-given computer skills, was especially a great and diligent helper to his dad during the survey setup and data collection from all three schools. Although my dear 18-year-old son, Samuel, who has severe autism and an intellectual disability, cannot understand his dad’s research work presently, we trust that God will enable him to
comprehend it in His time. Lastly, our youngest child Joseph, now five years old and who was born during the second year of the dissertation journey, also faithfully prayed from age of two for Daddy’s schoolwuk! What a blessing! I love each of you with all my heart!

My mother-in-law, Vilasini P. Menon, has also been a great blessing by her sacrificial prayers and physical and emotional support for our family, which allowed me to travel and continue my research during some very difficult times of medical trials that we underwent in these last seven years. My thanks go as well, to my father-in-law, Pastor Prabhakaran C. Menon, for his prayers and for helping with our family throughout this endeavor. Some of the trials we endured as a family are noted at the end of this section.

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We faced many extreme behavioral challenges with Samuel’s medical condition and my own medical situations during this period, ranging from continuous and unbearable sciatica pain due to ruptured and bulging discs from a back injury to sudden leg injuries with complicated internal bleeding of the calf and ankle as well as complex kidney cysts in the last couple of years. I am very grateful to all our friends and family, my dissertation committee members, and our EL Bethel International Church Prayer Team for your persistent prayers against the many obstacles that surfaced during this pursuit. The Lord graciously answered and enabled me to press through in faith to arrive at this point of completion for His glory. I must also give praise to God, that to the amazement of my physician and others, He has healed me of the complex cysts without the need for critical surgery and also completely healed my leg and ankle!
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.......................................................................................................................... 3  
Dedication ............................................................................................................................ 4  
Acknowledgments ................................................................................................................. 5  
List of Tables ......................................................................................................................... 12  
List of Figures ....................................................................................................................... 13  
List of Abbreviations .......................................................................................................... 14  
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION ...................................................................................... 15  
  Overview ............................................................................................................................ 15  
  Background ....................................................................................................................... 15  
  Problem Statement ............................................................................................................ 18  
  Purpose Statement ............................................................................................................ 18  
  Significance of the Study ................................................................................................. 19  
  Research Questions ......................................................................................................... 21  
  Definitions ....................................................................................................................... 21  
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW ............................................................................. 23  
  Overview .......................................................................................................................... 23  
  Theoretical Framework ..................................................................................................... 23  
    Social Cognitive Theory .............................................................................................. 25  
    Social Development Theory ........................................................................................ 26  
    Hierarchy of Needs Theory ......................................................................................... 27  
    Theory of Moral Development ..................................................................................... 28  
    Religious Coping Theory ............................................................................................ 30
Related Literature ............................................................................................................ 31
Empirical Evidence ......................................................................................................... 32
Religiosity .......................................................................................................................... 38
Bible Literacy..................................................................................................................... 38
Religiosity and the Bible in America ................................................................................. 38
The Bible and the Transmission of Morals ....................................................................... 43
The Bible, Religiosity, and Academic Achievement ......................................................... 56
Educational and Spiritual Merits of Bible Literacy Abroad .............................................. 58
Secularization and the Decline of Religion ....................................................................... 60
Return of the Bible to Public Schools ............................................................................... 61
Importance of Christian School Research on Religiosity and Bible Literacy ....... 65
Summary ............................................................................................................................ 68

CHAPTER THREE: METHODS ....................................................................................... 70
Overview ............................................................................................................................ 70
Design ................................................................................................................................ 70
Research Questions ........................................................................................................... 71
Null Hypotheses ............................................................................................................... 71
Participants and Setting .................................................................................................... 71
Instrumentation ................................................................................................................ 72
Religiosity Measure ........................................................................................................... 73
Bible Literacy Measure ..................................................................................................... 74
Procedures ......................................................................................................................... 76
Data Analysis ..................................................................................................................... 77
Appendix D: Stephen Dissertation Demographics Survey (Online) .......................... 122
Appendix E: DUREL - Duke University Religion Index ........................................ 124
Appendix F: Permission Letter/Email to Use ABKT and DUREL Instruments .......... 126
Appendix G: Assessment of Bible Knowledge Test (ABKT) ................................. 128
List of Tables

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics for Junior and Senior Students from 3 Christian Schools Located in Suburban New York and Suburban New Jersey .................................................................82

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics: ORA and Bible Scores (ABKT) .............................................................83

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics: NORA and Bible Scores (ABKT) .............................................................83

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics: IR and Bible Scores (ABKT) .................................................................83

Table 5: Tests of Normality for ABKT, ORA, NORA, and IR Variables ................................................84

Table 6: Correlations for Organizational Religious Activity (ORA) and Bible Literacy Scores (ABKT) in Juniors and Seniors ......................................................................................................................86

Table 7: Correlations for Non-Organizational Religious Activity (NORA) and Bible Literacy Scores (ABKT) in Juniors and Seniors ......................................................................................................................87

Table 8: Correlations for Intrinsic Religiosity (IR) and Bible Literacy Scores (ABKT) in Juniors and Seniors .................................................................................................................................88
List of Figures

Figure 1: Scatterplot for organizational religious activity (ORA) and Bible literacy score (ABKT) for juniors and seniors...........................................................................................................................................................................78

Figure 2: Scatterplot for non-organizational religious activity (NORA) and Bible literacy score (ABKT) for juniors and seniors ...........................................................................................................................................................................................................79

Figure 3: Scatterplot for intrinsic religiosity (IR) and Bible literacy score (ABKT) for juniors and seniors. ..........................................................................................................................................................................................................................80
List of Abbreviations

Assessment of Bible Knowledge Test (ABKT)
Cardus Education Survey (CES)
Duke University Religion Index (DUREL)
Institutional Review Board (IRB)
Intrinsic Religiosity (IR)
King James Version (KJV)
Non-Organizational Religious Activity (NORA)
Organizational Religious Activity (ORA)
Socioeconomic Status (SES)
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Overview

This study presents the importance of religious commitment and Bible literacy in a historical, social, and theoretical context. The current decline of interest in religiosity and the Bible as well the ramifications of these phenomena will be discussed. The problem of a lack of research on the relationship between the two is then addressed. Providing a solution to this problem in the form of correlational research is delineated in the purpose statement. The significance of this study in filling the gap in the literature for the contemporary academic world and the study’s associated variables and research questions is followed by definitions of pertinent terms.

Background

Two of the most important, intertwined threads that make up the pattern and tapestry of Western civilization and society, religious commitment and the Bible (Franzen, 2013), provide meaning, motivation, and healing psychologically, socially, and spiritually for our complex and troubled contemporary society and are currently disintegrating at the mandibles of secularism. The decline of religious commitment and Bible literacy, especially in recent times, has been a source of grave concern to many social scientists (Pargament, Koenig, & Perez, 2000; Prothero, 2007; Prothero & Kerby, 2015; Twenge, Sherman, Exline, & Grubbs, 2016; Xu, 2015). The far-reaching benefits of religious commitment on members of society, including students, patients, and professionals, has been well documented (Abu-Raiya, Pargament & Krause, 2016; Cruz et al., 2016; Deb, McGirr, & Sun, 2016; Jeynes, 2015a). Individuals who attend church or engage in Bible reading have shown less cigarette and other substance abuse when compared with those who do not (Francis, 2002; Koenig et al., 1998). Like religiosity, the importance of, and the
salutary effects on, a society that is Biblically literate has been established by an increasing number of recent researchers (Gourlay, 2013; Jeynes, 2015a; Prothero & Kerby, 2015).

“The 2010s are a time of tremendous change in the religious landscape of the United States,” concluded Twenge et al. (2016, p. 11), who found that by 2014, research documenting the decrease in public religious affiliation had compounded to include the private religious component, manifesting in a decline in prayer, belief in God, and even general religious identification. Declining religious literacy, of which Bible literacy is an important component, in a nation founded on Judeo-Christian principles has been caused by an increasingly secular culture (Jeynes, 2015a). Secularism is the indifference to religious ideas as well as religious skepticism and occurs on a continuum, according to some social scientists (Jeynes, 2015a). Past research has shown religious commitment and Bible literacy to be positively correlated with academic achievement and better behavior in both Christians and non-Christians (Jeynes, 2010; Onyechi, Okere, & Otu, 2016). In a recent meta-analysis study on the factors that best reduce the achievement gap, educational researcher Jeynes (2015b) found that the one variable that revealed the greatest effect size among African Americans and Latinos was personal religious faith. He further stated that, “at the present time, one could easily conclude that this society and public schools may actually discourage religious faith” (2015b, p. 547). Although the problem of the decline of both religiosity and Bible literacy has reached historical proportions, it has not always existed in this nation.

From the very inception of the United States over two centuries ago, religious sentiment and practice, of which the Bible was foundational, was influential in aspects of American society from the legislative and judicial system of government to the schools (Segall & Burke, 2013). As in our present time to a degree, and even more so during this early era of American history,
the cultural impact of the Bible was manifested in a shared cultural vocabulary filled with Biblical quotes, proverbs, and metaphors prevalent in social engagement (Dreisbach & Hall, 2014). The majority of Americans during the Revolutionary period prized religion as indispensable to “inculcating the virtue necessary for self-government” (McGarvie, 2016, p. 4).

A search of almost one thousand political documents issued between 1760 and 1805 led to the discovery that more than any other work, the Bible stood alone as the singular reference, suggesting “an intense scriptural literacy and consciousness” (Wald & Calhoun-Brown, 2014, pp. 41–42). Smith (1957/2004) noted that in the mid-19th century, Horace Mann, the father of public schools, retained the Bible as the only book for religious instruction amidst prompting from groups seeking introduce a library of other books for the same purpose. By the mid-20th century, scholars noted, “Our Protestantism is still closely bound up with the Bible,” and that “it is the Bible rather than the Prayer Book that is our most familiar friend” (Sperry, 2014, p. 138).

In the current generation, however, a very different scenario has emerged. Burggraff (2015) cited George Barna (2010) of the Barna Group as concluding, following various surveys including professing religious Americans, “The data suggest that biblical literacy is likely to decline significantly.” Gourlay (2013, p. 9) quoted prominent Yale University theologian and professor Dr. George Lindbeck lamenting the very low Biblical literacy of students of “churchgoing families” today as compared with those from decidedly nonreligious backgrounds a generation ago at Yale. In a social context, it is clear that religiosity has been on the decline for several decades and that each new generation is less religious than the one preceding it (Voas & Chaves, 2016). Thus, in a society in which religiosity and Bible literacy are waning, a host of consequential, problematic issues are very likely to emerge in increasing measure in the psychological, social, and academic domains.
**Problem Statement**

The current available scholarly literature on the topics of religious commitment and Bible literacy has mostly addressed the issues separately. Academic works professing the benefits of religious commitment have spanned across the educational, psychological, social, political, economic, and even medical disciplines (Abu-Raiya et al., 2016; Cruz et al., 2016; Deb et al., 2016; Jeynes, 2015b). To a lesser degree, Bible literacy has been also highlighted by scholars for its merits not only academically, but also economically and socially (Francis, 2002; Jeynes, 2010; Koenig et al., 1998). The interconnectedness of the two topics is readily recognized, as the Bible is the foundational treatise not only of Western civilization but more specifically of the most prominent faith in the United States, the Christian faith.

Gourlay, who investigated Southern Baptist adult Sunday School participants for their level of Bible literacy and found low levels following testing, has called for future follow-up research, stating, “further study into the Bible literacy of younger age groups would yield rich data” (2013, p. 21). The problem is that a review of the literature has revealed a substantive gap in assessing the relationship between the desirable factors of religious commitment and Bible literacy among Christian high school students, especially at a time when religiosity and Bible literacy are simultaneously suffering an unprecedented decline (Burggraff, 2015; Voas & Chaves, 2016).

**Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this study was to determine whether there is a statistically significant relationship between religious commitment and Bible literacy in high school junior and senior students as measured by the Duke University Religion Index (DUREL) and Assessment of Bible Knowledge Test (ABKT). This study contributes to the literature by assessing the strength of the
relationship between religious commitment and Bible literacy. Using a quantitative correlational design, the research was conducted in three suburban New York and New Jersey Christian schools. The study was done in the upper grades of the three high schools serving approximately 500 students (downstate New York), 235 (upstate New York), and 349 (southern New Jersey) students respectively. Seventy students from a non-random convenience sample of 131 participants were taken from a population of 182 juniors and seniors. The variables were the three components of religious commitment: Organizational Religious Activity (ORA), Non-Organizational Religious Activity (NORA) and intrinsic religiosity (IR) and Bible literacy and the direction and strength of the relationship between the two was determined using a Spearman’s rho statistic correlational analysis.

Religious commitment/religiosity consists of the three dimensions of ORA, NORA, and IR (Koenig, Parkerson, & Meador, 1997). ORA involves public religious activities such as attending religious services or participating in other group-related religious activities such as prayer groups, Scripture study groups, etc. (Koenig et al., 1997). NORA consists of religious activities performed in private, such as prayer, Scripture study, watching religious TV, or listening to religious radio (Koenig et al., 1997). IR is defined as the degree of personal religious commitment or motivation and involves pursuing religion as an ultimate end in itself (Koenig et al., 1997). Bible literacy refers to an individual’s general recognition of key Bible facts (Reese, 2010).

**Significance of the Study**

This study was significant in that it addressed a gap in the literature concerning the relationship between religious commitment and Bible literacy in Christian high school juniors and seniors. Gourlay (2013), Jeynes (2010), and Reese (2010) have all completed studies
evaluating a general relationship between religiosity as it pertains to church or Sunday school attendance and Bible literacy, as well as comparing one or both of these faith factors with academic achievement and behavior. However, there had not been a study conducted to test the strength and direction of the relationship between the two very important and interconnected variables of religious commitment and Bible literacy in two and a half decades (Clark, 1991). Furthermore, the Clark study was done on adults, not adolescents in a Christian school, and was conducted at a time when the decline of these two areas of faith was not as drastic as it is at the present day.

This study can help to provide information for both academics and political stakeholders on the exact nature of religiosity and Bible literacy amongst a representative sample of upper-level high schoolers in a major U.S. city. Unlike the previous studies, three specific components of religiosity were researched: Organizational Religious Activity (ORA), Non-Organizational Religious Activity (NORA), and Intrinsic Religiosity (IR), and the relationship between each of these three variables and Bible literacy was tested. As attested by the literature, the nation has reached a disastrously low point in church attendance and other religious practices, including the reading of the Bible, which results in a general lack of fundamental knowledge among youth and adults of the most influential book in Western civilization (Burggraff, 2015; Jeynes, 2015a; Voas & Chaves, 2016). The implications are enormous for society because of the accrued benefits of religiosity and Bible literacy for all in terms of academic gains, personal and social health, and economics, especially for students who will become tomorrow’s leaders (Abu-Raiya et al., 2016; Deb et al., 2016; Cruz et al., 2016; Jeynes, 2015b). The results of this study may greatly benefit students and society in general by suggesting which attribute, religious commitment or Bible literacy, may be found to be stronger or weaker, and whether the three subscales of religious
commitment, ORA, NORA, and IR, may influence Bible literacy and/or vice versa, giving impetus to creating ways in which to strengthen these areas.

**Research Questions**

This study sought to answer the following research questions:

**RQ1:** What is the relationship between Organizational Religious Activity (ORA) and Bible literacy?

**RQ2:** What is the relationship between Non-Organizational Religious activity (NORA) and Bible literacy?

**RQ3:** What is the relationship between Intrinsic Religiosity (IR) and Bible literacy?

**Definitions**

For the purpose of this study, the following definitions were applied:

1. *Religious commitment/religiosity* - consists of the three dimensions of Organizational Religious Activity (ORA), Non-Organizational Religious Activity (NORA), and Intrinsic Religiosity (IR) (Koenig et al., 1997).

2. *Organizational Religious Activity (ORA)* - involves public religious activities such as attending religious services or participating in other group-related religious activities (prayer groups, Scripture study groups, etc.) (Koenig et al., 1997).

3. *Non-Organizational Religious Activity (NORA)* - consists of religious activities performed in private, such as prayer, Scripture study, watching religious TV, or listening to religious radio (Koenig et al., 1997).

4. *Intrinsic Religiosity (IR)* - degree of personal religious commitment or motivation, involves pursuing religion as an ultimate end in itself (Koenig et al., 1997).

5. *Bible Literacy* - an individual’s general recognition of key Bible facts (Reese, 2010).
6. *Assessment of Bible Knowledge Test (ABKT)* - a 100-item measure used to assess Bible knowledge (Reese, 2010).

7. *Duke University Religion Index (DUREL)* - a five-item measure of religious involvement (Koenig et al., 1997).
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

This section will discuss the theoretical or conceptual framework for this study on the relationship between religious commitment and Bible literacy from Bandura, Vygotsky, Maslow, Kohlberg, and Pargament. It will be followed by a related literature section, in which the history of religion and the Bible in the United States and their rise and fall through sociological and political forces and pertinent studies on the wide-ranging benefits of religiosity and Bible literacy will be outlined. The need to measure the current level of religious commitment and Bible literacy in Christian school adolescent students and the need to study the strength of the relationship between the two will introduce the present research to fill the void that exists in the literature. The literature review will conclude with a summary.

Theoretical Framework

Since religiosity and Bible literacy naturally concern the social, psychological, moral, and academic domains, theorists who have provided insight into the dynamics in these areas will be considered in order to discover the significance of religious commitment and Bible literacy along with the benefits that follow for individuals and for society in general. From a theoretical and conceptual context, the importance, relationship, and associated benefits of religiosity and Bible literacy are better understood from the principles of Bandura’s (1986) Social Cognitive Theory, Vygotsky’s (1978) Social Development Theory, Maslow’s (1943, 1954) Hierarchy of Needs, Kohlberg’s (1981) Theory of Moral Development, and Pargament’s (1997) Religious Coping Theory. These theories also have implications on the value of the Bible and religious commitment in relation to a good work ethic, in personal and social well-being during the
affliction of various illnesses, and in benefitting one’s mind and body, including the suppression and elimination of inclinations to engage in self-injurious behavior such as substance abuse.

Religious commitment, evidenced by participation in organizational activities such as church attendance, can promote cognitive processing influenced by observing of others in the social domain (Bandura, 1986) of the church (Hardie, Pearce, & Denton, 2013). Religious behaviors learned from those modeling this behavior can in turn naturally affect the non-organizational engagement of attendees in other related activities such as personal prayer, Bible reading, or the use of religious music and films.

Individuals attending religious gatherings learn from the teaching and example of members in the social circle how to attribute their experiences to the spiritual domain, thus gaining cognitive tools to make sense of information (Vygotsky, 1978), affording a “realm or filter of social and spiritual support” (Rousseau, 2014, p. 210) and informing a paradigm shift in future thinking and behavior (Nelson, 1997). Again, Vygotsky’s (1978) Zone of Proximal Development, closely aligned with Bandura’s (1986) Social Cognitive Theory, states that this effect can occur with the guidance of adults. The result of such social interactions serve to promote one’s religiosity, which can lead to a greater ability to cope with life events and other stressors in society (Krause, Ironson, Pargament, & Hill, 2016).

Maslow’s (1943, 1954) Hierarchy of Needs included the concept of self-actualization, whereby the individual moves from self-needs to altruism, becoming more compassionate and functioning as a solution to problems in society (D’Souza & Gurin, 2016). Kohlberg’s (1981) Theory of Moral Development recognized six stages of moral development for healthy individuals grouped into three categories: preconventional morality, conventional morality, and postconventional morality (Ndubisi et al., 2016). Preconventional morality is concerned with
self-interest and gratification. Conventional morality is abiding by the law and in pleasing others. Finally, social contracts and development of universal ethical principles appear in postconventional morality. As with Maslow’s (1943, 1954) self-actualization, Kohlberg’s (1981) postconventional morality defines the goodness of ethics and altruism by one of the main principles of the Judeo-Christian faith, which is to love one’s neighbor as oneself (Leviticus 19:17–18; Mark 12:29–31 King James Version [KJV]).

An appreciation of the foundational elements of Western civilization in such as institutions and fields as government, art, music, and education require a knowledge of the Bible. Religious commitment is known to contribute to mental and relational health as well as to the physical healing of patients. As the aforementioned overview of the theoretical study of the topic has shown, individuals who engage in religious activities organizationally or privately, may learn principles of moral behavior by engaging with religious concepts, observing religious teachers, and reading the Bible. Finally, if such universally accepted virtues as altruism and diligence in duty, and not the undesirable, negative attributes of self-centeredness and slothfulness so prevalent in the modern culture, are to be gained and developed by the moral principles contained in the Bible, then the sharp decline in religiosity and Bible literacy in recent years should be seen as a serious detriment to the functioning of a healthy society.

Social Cognitive Theory

Social Cognitive Theory explains how people learn and continue behavior patterns (Bandura, 1997). It considers how environment, people, and behavior are continually influencing each other. The environment, including other people, provides models for behavior. Observational learning results as a person observes the actions of another person and that behavior is reinforced (Bandura, 1997).
Bandura (1986) studied the effects of students’ predisposition to a set pattern of behavior in a social context and discussed the effects of exposure to knowledge and gaining of new skills to modify that behavior. Furthermore, in the Social Cognitive Theory context, Bible reading as a learned behavior, understood for its merits both personally and socially, as reinforced by internal satisfaction from its prescriptive directives for seeking peace, success, and intrinsic rewards as well as from external rewards in the form of praise of the religious community in which the student is immersed, can in turn provide the motivation to acquire increased Bible literacy.

In terms of Bible literacy having an equally viable influence on religious commitment, Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1986) once again provides the explanation for how this can occur. Observational learning need not only be from live human sources, but can also occur through exposure to mass media, which can serve to shape and influence perception, values, and behavior. Bandura (1977) spoke of the ability of “children and adults acquire attitudes, emotional responses, and new styles of conduct through filmed and televised modeling” (p. 27). In non-organizational religious activity such as watching Biblical movies or sermons as well as through reading the text of the Bible itself, attitudes, emotional responses, and new styles of conduct of the Bible characters can be formed as well.

Social Development Theory

Len Vygotsky theorized that social learning precedes development. Vygotsky (1978) in his Social Development Theory stated, “Every function in the child’s cultural development appears twice: first, on the social level, and later, on the individual level; first, between people (interpsychological) and then inside the child (intrapsychological)” (p. 57). He also spoke of the Zone of Proximal Development, which is distance between a learner’s need for an adult’s or peer’s guidance to perform a task and the independent functioning of the student in performing
the task. In the present religious context, church leaders and experienced peers can guide and teach religious activities such as prayer and Bible reading, enabling the development of the conceptual language skills necessary for growth in these areas through these social interactions (Sigel, 2016).

**Hierarchy of Needs Theory**

Abraham Maslow’s (1943, 1954) Hierarchy of Needs is a theory on human motivation and has five levels. The four levels of lower-order needs represent physiological needs, while the fifth level explains growth needs. Behavior is said to be influenced by the lower-level needs first and then by higher-level needs. In order from lowest to highest these are: physiological, safety, belongingness, esteem, and self-actualization. Physiological includes air, food, water, sex, sleep, and other factors of homeostasis. Safety includes security of environment, employment, resources, health, and property. Belongingness includes love, friendship, intimacy, and family. Esteem includes confidence, self-esteem, achievement, and respect. Self-actualization includes morality, creativity, and problem solving (Maslow, 1943).

Not unlike Kohlberg’s (1981) highest stage of moral development in which conscience plays a role in behavior also in relation to the environment and people (D’Souza & Gurin, 2016), Maslow’s self-actualization leads one to consider morality and the “rightness” of choices and behavior. The role of religion and the Bible in inculcating moral virtues is renowned in virtually every relationship in society from employers to employees, husband to wife, citizens to leaders and even parents to children (Eph. 6:1 KJV). McMinn (2011) wrote, “Though Maslow would not agree that the Christian faith can help lead people to emotional health, his reports of the characteristics and desires of healthy people who have moved beyond preoccupation with self (he called them self-actualizers) are remarkably similar to the fruit of the Spirit described by the
apostle Paul in Galatians 5:22–23” (p. 46). These include love, joy, peace, patience, and self-control.

**Theory of Moral Development**

Lawrence Kohlberg expanded on the work of Jean Piaget on the theory of moral development. He stated that ethical behavior did not result from a mere increase in knowledge of cultural values. Moral development was rather concerned with, “transformations that occur in a person’s form or structure of thought” (Kohlberg & Hersh, 1977, p. 54). Kohlberg’s (1981) Theory of Moral Development was explained in three levels and six stages.

**Level I: Preconventional/premoral** (Patton, Renn, Guido & Quaye, 2016, p. 339).

Stage 1 describes the obedience and punishment orientation:

- What is right is defined as obeying rules to avoid punishment and refraining from physical harming others and their property.
- Individuals justify actions based on avoidance of punishment and the superior power of authorities.

Stage 2 concerns the self-interested orientation:

- Rules are followed by individuals if it is in their interest to do so.
- Others’ needs are in view, but self-satisfaction and minimal harm to oneself are primary.

**Level II: Conventional/role conformity** (Patton, Renn, Guido & Quaye, 2016, p. 340).

Stage 3 refers to the good image orientation:

- Gaining approval of others and sharing expectations of others take precedence over self-interest.
- Conformity to appropriate social roles with close individuals is of importance at this stage.
Stage 4 describes the authority and social-order-maintaining orientation:

- Individuals view society as having a consistent set of rules that are equally applicable to all.
- Fulfilling societal obligations for maintaining order is essential at this stage.


Stage 5 concerns the contractual/legalistic orientation:

- Basic human rights and values are considered when evaluating laws and institutionalized rules are deemed to have a rational basis.
- Morality is based on agreements between members in society to protect all.

Stage 6 refers to the morality of individual principles of conscience:

- The viewpoints of all are considered in any moral dilemma and decisions are made based on universal, generalizable principles that apply in all situations.
- If one acts otherwise, self-condemnation and guilt result (Staub, 2013).

Moral competency, as described by Kohlberg (1964), is “the capacity to make decisions and judgments which are moral (i.e., based on internal principles) and to act in accordance with such judgments” (as cited in Asahara, Kobayashi & Ono, 2015, p. 18). In the eyes of many early authorities on education in this country, the Bible was the most effective means to convey moral values to students. Biblical values have been celebrated since founding of the United States for their promotion of moral and ethical behavior amongst people. Schultz (2008) stated that one of the most important principles of education is that it “must not hinder the spiritual and moral development of the next generation” (p. 20). The basic tenets of the Judeo-Christian faith have the golden rule at the foundation, namely, “And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise” (Luke 6:31 KJV). The Old Testament equivalent of this principle is found
in Leviticus 19:18 (KJV), where the Lord commands, “Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself: I am the Lord.” Many have viewed such a motivation derived from the Scriptures as essential to live and interact in a benevolent manner with other human beings favorably.

**Religious Coping Theory**

Xu (2015) summarized Kenneth Pargament’s (1997) Religious Coping Theory as consisting of the following seven features. First, religion is a quest for significance in relation to the sacred and coping is a mechanism by which significance is sought out during times of stress. Second, the involvement of religion in coping is possible due to the fact that religiosity is readily available as a feasible vehicle with which to cope with stress. The more religiously committed one is, the greater his or her potential use of religion to assist in the coping process and profit from it is. Third, religion is a dynamic process in which significance is located, sustained, and transformed as situational factors change. Fourth, religious coping performs five major functions: to discover meaning, to garner control, to acquire comfort by virtue of closeness to God, to achieve closeness with others, and to transform life (Xu, 2015). Fifth, religion usually functions as a sustaining force in the coping process to maintain control and adapt transformational religious coping methods such as religious conversion to find a new meaning and purpose. Sixth, particular religious coping methods can be classified into two broad groups: positive and negative. Generally, positive religious coping strategies express “a secure relationship with a transcendent force, a sense of spiritual connectedness with others, and a benevolent world view” (Pargament, Feuille, & Burdzy, 2011, p. 51). Thus, they tend to be salutary for individuals under stress. By contrast, negative religious coping approaches mirror “underlying spiritual tensions and struggles within oneself, with others, and with the divine”
Seventh, the combined religious moderator-deterrent model suggests that religious coping has a moderating function in protecting religious individuals in times of stress from the harm of stress and also acts as a deterrent by promoting more favorable outcomes regardless of the intensity of stress (Xu, 2015).

In terms of religiosity as a coping mechanism, the social contexts of Organizational Religious Activity (ORA), Non-Organizational Religious activity (NORA), and Intrinsic Religiosity (IR) can all be enhanced by cognitive processing coupled with observation of others in the social domain of the church (Hardie et al., 2013) and the family turning to prayer, congregational support, and Bible reading, reflecting Bandura’s social cognitive theory in action. Thus, religion, which is also largely informed by the Bible as to the nature and character of God, is able to provide coping strategies as the practitioner draws closer to God and people during a time of illness and stress and are the better for it, mentally and emotionally (Pargament et al., 2011). It is not inconceivable then that students who are religiously committed may turn to the Bible for coping support during times of stress from life situations or even everyday stress and thus naturally gain greater familiarity with the Bible and consequently a higher level of Bible literacy.

**Related Literature**

The centrality and significance of religious commitment and the Bible in the history of our nation since the time of the Revolution can readily be observed in our culture in literary classics, films, music, art, and government. Mangalwadi (2012) asserted that Western values and institutions are indebted to the Bible as a moral and intellectual compass for providing legitimacy for their existence. The Judeo-Christian faith of the Western world continues to influence society, as it is “irrefutably a basic element of our culture” (Gundolf & Filser, 2013, p. 178). The
practical relevance and benefits of faith are also prominent in providing relief and prosperity in our modern society in terms of psychological, physiological, economic, social, and academic welfare. A leading social scientist of our day wrote, “There is a certain degree of irony that at a time when East Asian countries such as Korea, China, Singapore, Taiwan, and Eastern Europe are looking to faith as a major factor in contributing to the strength and prosperity of the United States and Western Europe in the 16th through 20th centuries, that the United States is quick to dismiss faith as having any real inherent value, especially when it comes to academic achievement” (Jeynes, 2015a, pp. 544–545).

Moral and academic decline in our nation and society has seemingly almost numbed the conscience of a generation, as many philosophers and researchers scramble for a cause and a solution. It is safe to say that this phenomenon has been occurring for some time now, but never so much as at the present (Twenge, 2014). Many scholars have posited that a marked decrease in religious affiliation and practice and Bible literacy has produced a generation of individuals who are not only unable to cope with the stresses of modern life but also are more individualistic and unconcerned about others (Twenge et al., 2016). Yet, Jeynes (2015a) stated, “At the present time, one could easily conclude that this society and public schools may actually discourage religious faith” (p. 547).

**Empirical Evidence**

In the most recent study on assessing present day religiosity in our culture, Twenge et al. (2016) wrote, “Nearly a third of Millennials were secular not merely in religious affiliation but also in belief in God, religiosity, and religious service attendance, many more than Boomers and Generation Xers at the same age. Eight times more 18- to 29-year-olds never prayed in 2014 versus the early 1980s” (p. 10). However, this problem is not just prevalent in the secular world.
The downward spiral of decreasing religiosity and Bible literacy is even obvious now in some church establishments of certain denominations.

While one may rationalize that involvement in Organizational Religious Activity (one of the three the DUREL subscales) may automatically ensure Bible literacy, recent research shows otherwise. Burggraff (2015) cited George Barna (2010) of the Barna Group as concluding, following various surveys even including professing religious Americans that, “The data suggest that biblical literacy is likely to decline significantly.” As an indication of this trend it was noted that:

- Sixty percent of Americans cannot name even five of the Ten Commandments
- Eighty-two percent of Americans believe the phrase “God helps those who help themselves” is a Bible verse
- Twelve percent of adults believe that Joan of Arc was Noah’s wife
- A survey of graduating high school seniors revealed that over 50 percent thought that Sodom and Gomorrah were husband and wife (Marlin, 2012, as cited in Burggraff, 2015, p. 400).

In a survey conducted amongst adult parishioners, Reese (2010, p. 171) found that “an analysis of the data indicated that the adult Bible class participants who took the ABKT for this research study scored an average of 73.78 percent. The mean score for OT [Old Testament] questions was 70.7 percent. The mean score for the NT [New Testament] was 77.8 percent.” Gourlay (2013, p. 18) in a similar study lamented that most of the groups of churches he studied would fail, as “the average adult Sunday school performed below 70%.”

Although it should follow logically that the Bible would be a great resource to assist in building up the character of the pupil, many view it simply as a religious tool for proselytizing.
and readily discount its benefits. In citing an extract from the executive summary of the Cardus research from 2011 through 2014, Edlin (2016) states that the data dispels such unfounded fears:

In contrast to the popular stereotypes portraying Christian schools as promoting a socially fragmented, anti-intellectual, politically radical and militantly right-winged lifestyle, this comprehensive study reveals a very different picture of the Christian school graduate. Compared to their public school, Catholic school, and non-religious private school peers, Protestant Christian school graduates are uniquely compliant, generous, outwardly-focused individuals who stabilize their communities by their uncommon commitment to their families, their churches, and larger society. Graduates of Christian schools donate money significantly more than graduates of other schools, despite having lower household income. [Graduates of Christian schools] report emphasizing family as one of the most important values in their schools. [They have] more children and divorce less frequently than their peers from public and Catholic schools. We find no evidence that Christian schools are breeding grounds for the right wing of political conservatives (p. 25).

Two distinct benefits of a Bible education in a public school are positive educational and behavior outcomes (Jeynes, 2010). Researchers have stated that stories of historical figures who were moral exemplars can aid students to imitate them by developing “moral literacy” (Seider, 2012, p. 27). Bible stories and characters provide context and a locus for moral values and ethical decision-making. In his study focusing on Biblical literacy and academic and behavior outcomes, Jeynes (2009b) presented the following results:

This study assessed the relationship between Bible literacy among secondary school students and their academic achievement and school behavior. A total of 160 students
who attended either Christian or public schools in the 7th to 12th grade were randomly selected for the study sample. Three measures of Bible knowledge were combined to obtain an overall measure of Bible literacy. The results indicate that students with the highest level of Bible literacy also had the highest average grade point average (GPA) and the highest ranking in test and grade results. In contrast, those with the lowest level of Bible literacy also had the lowest average GPA and the lowest ranking in test and grade results. This trend held for students attending both Christian schools and public schools. Christian school students were also rated higher than public school students in school behavior (p. 36).

This tremendous claim certainly ought to be replicated in further studies to validate the findings. If such a correlation can be objectively shown from research experiments and studies, then the local school superintendents and principals and, indeed, the United States Department of Education should most certainly take notice and join the efforts of organizations marketing different Bible curricula for use in the public schools. After all, the impact of student behavior and performance is not only presently felt around the country in every realm from the social sphere to the business side of our government’s productivity, including tax dollars spent for attending to delinquency and violent acts amongst our youth, but will be influential for generations to come.

Erickson and Phillips (2012) found that religiosity, including Organized Religious Activity (ORA) and Non-Organizational Religious Activity (NORA), were positively related to educational attainment, defined as graduation from high school and college enrollment. They further reported:
The findings advance the growing body of research on adolescent religious behavior and education by connecting religious behavior to educational attainment. When examined in isolation from other measures of religious involvement, religious salience, frequency of prayer, church attendance, and youth group participation are all related to high school graduation and college enrollment. When all of the religious involvement measures are modeled together, church attendance remains a salient predictor of high school graduation, while prayer is more important for college enrollment (p. 583).

Academic achievement was greater for pupils attending private religious schools than for those attending public schools (Jeynes, 2010). Educational researchers have recommended that public schools learn from the religious schools in order to produce the same gains in academic achievement for their students (Jeynes, 2010). The learning atmosphere is critical to the academic and social development of students. A safe place where there is good behavior is the best place to learn, and researchers have pointed to religious evangelical schools as having this kind of atmosphere to a greater extent than their counterpart public schools. Although some have suggested that the socioeconomic status (SES) of students in private schools is higher than for those in public schools and thus afford this better opportunity, meta-analyses controlling for SES found that this was not a factor in the results studied. Moral or character education, naturally intersecting the students’ study of the Bible narratives, whether from a literary or historical point of view, lends itself to producing a safer climate for learning overall by promoting good behavior.

Some educators have stated that Biblical literacy improves a student’s overall educational ability and even enhances college preparedness. Some have also argued that there is a positive effect on behavior of students engaged in Bible literacy. In a study conducted at the University
of Oregon (Taylor & Powers, 1928), those who voluntarily read the Bible were found to have a more positive character from the perspective of their high school teachers compared to those under compulsory Bible study (Jeynes, 2010). Strong character can lend itself to better self-discipline, which in turn may influence better concentration in learning, study habits, etc. It is interesting to note that this study, along with a meta-analysis of 10 other studies by Jeynes (2010), also suggested a positive relationship between increased intelligence and Bible knowledge.

There was a calculated effect size of .33 in those studies, indicating that there was a strong relationship between Bible literacy and academic and behavioral scores. Furthermore, in the three studies that focused on academic achievement, an even greater effect size of .73 was found in analysis of the relationship between Biblical literacy and academic achievement. Using only high quality studies yielded the same effect size of .73, which in conclusion seemed to provide some compelling reasons for all to note the merits of implementing an elective Bible course in the public high school curriculum (Jeynes, 2010).

In a study on the association between Bible literacy and religiosity, Clark (1991) found that there was a direct positive relationship between the two among 699 adults surveyed with a 50-item Bible questionnaire and a 23-item religiosity questionnaire. He surveyed different denominational groups as well as Jewish adults. While the study was done more than 25 years ago and only tested adults, the decline in both religiosity and Bible literacy has plummeted to unprecedented rates in more recent times as noted earlier and there was no research conducted on which of the three factors of religiosity (ORA, NORA, or IR) had a more significant or less significant relationship to Bible literacy scores.
Religiosity

Religious commitment or religiosity is said to consist of the three dimensions of Organizational Religious Activity (ORA), Non-Organizational Religious Activity (NORA) and Intrinsic Religiosity (IR; Koenig et al., 1997). Yet, it is also a multidimensional concept consisting of: cognitive aspects such as religious belief; behavioral components involving such actions as Bible reading, church attendance, prayer, and giving charitably; and the affective aspect of sentiments towards people, things, or institutions (Yeganeh, 2015).

Bible Literacy

As the term Bible literacy suggests, it is defined as literacy in Biblical instruction and consists of a knowledge base of historical and spiritual themes contained in the Bible. Dreisbach (2016) cited Biblical literacy as an example of the secondary dictionary definition for literacy, namely, a condition or quality of being knowledgeable in a particular subject or field. It is also a social skill as much as an academic one due to its significance in assisting individuals to appreciate and engage with the products of famous and obscure authors alike in the areas of literature, media, and the arts. Its moral component is inescapable and provides direct teaching in the form of principles and parables for a productive and peaceful coexistence with others in society.

Religiosity and the Bible in America

The rich connection of the sacred Book to even the roots of the new nation is well documented in the following facts. The first book printed on American soil was the The Bay Psalm Book in 1640. It was the Massachusetts Bay Colony’s version of the Book of Psalms from the Old Testament of the Bible and was intended for congregational or private worship. In the New England Primer (1690), the English alphabet was taught to young students using
Biblical content, and this textbook was the most widely used item of literature in schools for some 100 years (Donegan, 2015). The educational pioneer, Noah Webster, released his version of the textbook in 1789. The alphabet, beginning with A, was taught in the following poetic manner: “In Adam’s Fall, We sinned all” (Ford, 1899, p. 125).

The passage of the Old Deluder Satan Act (1647) in the Massachusetts Bay Colony marked the advent of the public school on the continent (Breitborde & Kolodny, 2015). Based on the premise that children are bent toward disobedience naturally through the cunning devices of the devil, it was conceded that there was a real need to provide direct instruction to counter that influence with the teachings of the Bible. In the 19th century, new thoughts on a character education without the Bible were promoted by notable figures such as Horace Mann. While traditionally, the Bible had been used to teach morality, division over which doctrines to teach in the public schools triggered the introduction of The McGuffey Readers (1836), which included moralistic teachings in the context of fables. Most of the nation utilized these books in the classrooms, circulating some 120 million copies and teaching youth such values as diligence and honesty, along with grammar (Yuh, 2015).

The early settlers of New England, as well as those in the Middle Colonies and southern areas, believed that literacy was very important to develop in children so as to promote comprehension of the Bible and thereby inculcate moral values in them. Thus, since instilling moral virtue in its young citizens was a top priority and literacy was a tool to be used to that end, it was natural that literacy, in turn, was a high priority to them as well (Dreisbach, 2015). The possession of a copy of the Bible meant ownership of the single most important book in the world and the well-educated, Cambridge-graduated Puritan leaders emphasized its indispensability in studying both spiritual and scientific truth in creation. The historically and
Currently prestigious universities, Harvard and Yale, were originally deemed centers of education for truth seekers.

Myriads of statesman and educators in our nation’s history have advocated for the utility of the Bible in promoting the universally hailed attributes of diligence in work and study and self-discipline. U.S. President John Adams advised:

Suppose a nation in some distant Region should take the Bible for their only law Book, and every member should regulate his conduct by the precepts there exhibited! Every member would be obliged in conscience, to temperance, frugality, and industry; to justice, kindness, and charity towards his fellow men; and to piety, love, and reverence toward Almighty God . . . What a Eutopia, what a Paradise would this region be. (Adams & Adams, 1850, pp. 6–7)

The Northwest Ordinance of 1787 drew prominence to moral education in Article 3: “Religion, morality, and knowledge, being necessary to good government and happiness of mankind, schools, and the means of education shall forever be encouraged” (as cited in Scott, 2014, p. 78). As early as 1791, Dr. Benjamin Rush contended that to deprive our youth of Biblical instruction in the public school setting was to hinder the greatest means to their moral awakening (Rush, 1806). He was a pioneer physician, a signer of the Declaration of Independence, and the publisher of the first chemistry textbook in the new nation. Furthermore, Rush opined that the new nation’s very freedoms would be undermined without morality translated into the practical attribute of self-discipline in the education of children (Jeynes, 2007; Murray, 2012). Fisher Ames, another founding father and representative in the U.S. Congress, expressed in a publication printed in 1809 that the morals taught in the Bible were noble and beneficial to the extent that it warranted being used from the earliest years of educational training.
of the nation’s children. Ames stated that morals and religion alone can procure true liberty and that these must be treasured by citizens (as cited in Burczak, 2014).

Surveying the extensively documented work, *Revivalism & Social Reform* (1957/2004) by history professor and graduate of Harvard University Timothy L. Smith, it appears that the effect of the Bible’s moral teachings created widespread social progress across the United States particularly in the 1800s, when the sacred tome was enthusiastically taught and promoted. Great revivals led by highly influential preachers canvassed the land (Ogan, 2016). Hundreds of Bible-supporting men and women stood up to defend the demands of Scripture to love one’s neighbors and seek to extend practical forms of mercy to the destitute and diseased. The Gospel of Jesus Christ was understood to be available for all people based on their choice to receive it as taught by Arminianism and not by the predestination theology of Calvinism (Coates, 2015). Indeed, it was not so much the elite clergy who heralded this massive social reform in the land, but masses of common folks of all ages who read the Bible and understood from its tenets that “slavery, poverty, and greed” must be overturned by voicing concerns against the same and by good works of charity (Smith, 2004, p. 8). A large portion of the population, even in cities where immigrants had predominantly settled, was in favor of temperance reform due to belief in the progressive teachings of the Bible. Church attendance, which is an activity commonly used by social scientists to measure religiosity (Brenner, 2016), and the study of the Bible among Blacks and Whites alike provoked outcries and action against the vices of liquor-drinking and slavery (Rossinow, 2015).

In New York, the Bible House was built in 1853 at a cost of $280,000, giving bold testimony to its great influence in the political as well as religious culture of the day (Smith, 1957/2004). The idea that the Bible is merely a book of antiquated creeds, offering hope for a
better world in the hereafter but not so much in the here and now, is thoroughly repudiated by the fervent activity of thousands of Bible supporters in the Civil War era of the nation who invaded the slums and saloons via street outreaches and political and social reform with a message of hope backed by generous hands of mercy. Holiness and humanitarianism were inseparable to many of these proponents of the sacred teachings of the Bible (Smith, 1957/2004). Religious fervor in antebellum America flourished as evidenced by tens of thousands of subscribers to religious magazines at the time (Goldstein & Haveman, 2013). Religious commitment in the population influenced social reform, particularly in the move to abolish slavery, leading to advances in educational opportunities for African Americans, which would not have been possible otherwise (Bertocchi & Dimico, 2014).

Historian Timothy Smith (1957/2004) averred that revival Christianity was the driving force behind a massive onslaught against the social evil of slavery. The very life of the key religious figure of the Bible, Jesus Christ, and the story of His atoning death for the salvation of mankind, as depicted in detail in the New Testament gospels, gripped the conscience of a society that had lost its basic moral sensibility. Once more, a return to the Bible brought upon awareness to many a Biblically literate member of society of the dignity of every creature of God, particularly a human being, irrespective of the color of his skin or ethnic background (Smith, 1957/2004).

David Page was a principal of the normal school in Albany, New York, where high school graduates were offered teacher training. Page was also a good friend of Horace Mann and was a noted advocate for a moral and religiously based public education as well as a pioneer of teacher education in the 1840s. He wrote:
The true spirit of the teacher, that can recognize and reverence the handiwork of God in every child, and that burns with the desire to be instrumental in training it to the highest attainment of which it is capable,—such a spirit is the first thing to be sought by the teacher, and without it the highest talent cannot make him truly excellent in his profession. (Wakefield, 2012, p. 293)

The father of the common school, Horace Mann, believed with other contemporaries who helped inaugurate the movement, that the present generation was to consciously steward children and their education in order to train productive future members of society (Persky, 2015). He asserted that Bible and religious training should be a central focus of public school education.

The history of the United States reveals a very religious people from the inception of the nation up until the last century. Religiosity has been shown to help Americans to manifest the character required for both individual and social progress, while standing as a bastion to preserve decency and thwart negative attitudes and behavior. Plummer & Hilton (2014) have noted that an increase in personal religiosity has been shown to ameliorate negative out-comes, such as depression, coping with serious illness, and avoidance of delinquent behavior among others. In addition, specific religious practices have been found to have their own unique effect on similar societal ills. These practices include church attendance, regular prayer, and the study of sacred texts. Such findings support the notion that to the extent that religious education can influence students to engage in both private and public religious practices, benefits can be accrued both on individual and societal levels (p. 135).

The Bible and the Transmission of Morals

Morality in one’s belief and practice, inclusive of traits such as diligence, integrity, purity, etc., can be defined as moral commitment. It is this moral commitment in a religious
context that previous researchers have asserted have such profound positive effects on academics and behavior of students (Onyechi et al., 2016). Certainly, many have argued that the use of the Bible is instrumental in producing such moral commitment (Feinberg & Layton, 2013). One need only look at the early settlers of America such as the pilgrims and particularly the Puritans, who regularly read and taught the Bible and their overall achievement in academics and business as well as in government.

Kohlberg & Hersh (1977) have stated, “Whether we like it or not schooling is a moral enterprise” (p. 53). If morals can be gained by virtue of exposure to and study of the Bible as literature, then it is indeed within the framework of what is legally acceptable in teaching it in the public schools because it is still taught as non-sectarian and non-devotional. President Bill Clinton, as a non-religious citizen, made the following comment at James Madison High School in Vienna, Virginia on July 12, 1995: “The First Amendment does not -- I will say again -- does not convert our schools into religion-free zones” (Religious Tolerance, 1995; Jeynes, 2010). Once again, it must be emphasized that the Supreme Court has ruled that teaching about religion and using the Bible in the classroom may both exist in any curriculum if they are not a part of religious worship, but are integrated as a part of the offerings within a secular program. The Supreme Court clearly affirmed this position in Stone v. Graham (1980) when it stated, “The Bible may constitutionally be used in an appropriate study of history, civilization, ethics, comparative religion, or the like” (Jankowski, 2013, p. 371).

Ethics can be defined as moral principles governing a person’s or group’s behavior. In considering the emphasis on a good work ethic in the context of religiosity, it may be helpful to establish a core definition unifying all the effects of religious commitment using non-religious and non-sectarian language. Religious commitment produces a personal moral ethos derived
from religious literature teachings, which in turn translates into positive, healthy, and productive prosocial behaviors in the individual. Lerner & Schmid Callina (2015) stated that moral functioning, behavioral strengths, and civic character are all necessary for good character. The very content of the Bible literature and the outworking of religious commitment lend themselves to the virtues of not only a good work ethic, but also to positive behaviors, while abstaining from and rather condemning those antisocial and detrimental behaviors of violence, alcohol and drug use, promiscuous activity, etc. (Foubert, Watson, Brosi, & Fuqua, 2012; Jeynes, 2010).

Mann observed the ill effects of social discord in Europe and hoped to promote a true democratic attitude in students to prevent the same in American schools (Hunt & Carper, 2012). At the foundation of such a democratic attitude is a true concern for others. When one examines the golden rule found in the Judeo-Christian teachings of the Old and New Testaments of the Bible, the fundamental standard of behavior is presented to the reader or student in the universally hailed virtue of caring for others as one would care for oneself. Immoral behavior would be considered a violation of this principle and the following verses from the Bible emphasize the blessing of a pure, prosocial thought life and action.

“Blessed are the pure in heart” and “Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart” (Matthew 5:8, 2 Timothy 2:22 KJV).

The notion of taking shortcuts due to laziness and seeking to get ahead by means of cheating is at once detestable to the one who holds to the standards of the Bible. As an example, one can read the following Scriptures:

The way of the slothful man is as a hedge of thorns: but the way of the righteous is made plain (Prov. 15:19 KJV).
But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness (2 Cor. 4:2 KJV).

Character becomes more important than recognition, especially when it is “ill-gotten” or “dishonest gain,” as the Bible puts it (Prov. 20:23 KJV). Moral virtues such as diligence and perseverance are repeatedly taught in the Bible and are influential in academic achievement (Jeynes, 2010). Diligence in duty and the management of time and resources is encouraged as well in the Bible:

So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom (Ps. 90:12 KJV).

Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest (Eccl. 9:10 KJV)

He that gathereth in summer is a wise son: but he that sleepeth in harvest is a son that causeth shame (Prov. 10:5 KJV).

Ethical judgment is important to a society’s development, and Jeynes (2015a) has asserted that it has influence over whether the economy flourishes. The same authors stated that ethical development cannot be separated from one’s religious and spiritual values. If this is the case in the world of the adult workforce, then it behooves educators who are in the business of preparing tomorrow’s leaders to develop a sound work ethic. As the most published book of all time, the Bible also presents tenets that promote the same.

Finding harmony within oneself and others is a worthy and necessary goal of education. Thus, the inner peace that comes from a clear conscience can lead to positive effects all around. Character education has been paraded as the missing element in the educational process.

Research suggests that comprehensive, high quality character education, as defined
below, is not only effective at promoting the development of good character, but is a promising approach to the prevention of a wide range of contemporary problems. These include aggressive and antisocial behaviors, drug use, precocious sexual activity, criminal activities, academic under-achievement, and school failure. (Battistich, 2008)

Character, however, is a part of a greater sense of one’s own spirituality. Glazer (1999) wrote: “Spirituality in education begins with questions: What is my experience? What is my effect? What are the interrelationships between myself and others? Are these being attended to?” (p. 12).

Answering these questions ought to lead to benefits for the individual and society as well. Yet, there is no guarantee that there will be systematic instruction on the inherent moral qualities that will aid in developing that spirituality. Twenge et al. (2016) posited that although some consider spirituality and religiosity to be two separate constructs, still there is overlap so that highly religious (performing rituals driven by belief) individuals are often also spiritual (seeking transcendence and meaning). They further wrote, “Therefore, as religious commitment has decreased, one may also expect decreases in private religious practice and individual spirituality” (Twenge et al. 2016, p. 2). This of course amounts to a new generation that does not really seek meaning any longer, as religiosity is losing ground in the lives of many individualistic people.

The Judeo-Christian work ethic, compassion, etc., found in the Bible provides spiritual teachings that lead to moral living. However, the return of the Biblical component to public school education can only be discussed following some preliminary scrutiny on the historic and modern movement for moral instruction in the curriculum.

According to the U.S. Department of Education (2010), the expected results of seven Social and Character Development (SACD) programs over three-year period from 2004 to 2007,
in evaluating over six thousand third to fifth graders from over eighty schools in various regions of the country, were reportedly not met. In light of this failure, perhaps, receiving character education and moral instruction in the course of studying the Biblical narrative in the Old Testament and the New Testament, may provide an effective context for successful transmission of spiritual values that will lead to gains in academics and behavior. Those who espouse the Christian faith, such as the founders of Harvard, are of the opinion that the goal of education is to know Christ (Pierce, 1833). The Person of Christ has, over time, been universally hailed as a virtuous and admirable character, embodying noble qualities. Knowing Christ as depicted in the Bible means living in love and denying one’s selfish motives.

Yet, whether one belongs to a religion or not, most would argue that an educated person would be in a better position to make positive contributions to society than an uneducated individual. If academic benefits can accrue as a result of absorbing such qualities as diligence, social concern, and self-discipline, as taught in the literature of the Bible, then the warrant for the study of the same by public school pupils cannot be overlooked. The need for moral instruction to develop character in students has never been so universally highlighted as in recent years in the wake of waning academic scores and increasing delinquency and school violence. In calling attention to developing important character qualities, Baehr (2013) states:

An intellectual virtues approach to education is necessarily social or relational. Personal change and growth occur most readily in the context of trusting and caring relationships. Therefore, teachers educating for intellectual virtues will place a premium on developing such relationships with their students. (p. 254)

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. (1947) stated, “Intelligence plus character—that is the goal of true education.” Dr. King was an ordained minister of the Christian faith, and he also decried the
danger of educational and technological advances without sustaining spirituality. In 1964, following the awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize, he stated, “The richer we have become materially, the poorer we become morally and spiritually” (Haberman, 1999, p. 334). Some educational researchers have noted that in very real sense, all schools are belief- or faith-driven in that they have a belief system of what constitutes good teaching and learning and desired products of their school’s philosophy and practice (Edlin, 2016). The important question is whether they place true value in their mission statement and in their practice on development of moral character. While historically, moral teaching was intertwined with the basic reading material in the early colonial and pre-industrial revolution public schools, the emphasis on character education in public schools is only making resurgence in the last three decades following a period of a primary focus on knowledge acquisition. With the increase of school violence and other undesirable outcomes such as teen pregnancies, many have come to appreciate the value, indeed, the quite desperate need for the inclusion of character education.

Moral education seems to have taken on a rather new and different meaning, when modern psychology produced values clarification, devoid of any religious undertones whatsoever. Values clarification was implemented by public schools to carefully raise the moral consciousness and responsibility of students via constructive activities that called on the student to clarify his or her own values and make decisions based on those values. It offered a seven-step approach by Simon et al. (1972), that depended on internal cognitive and affective decision-making processes. The educators were trained to function as facilitators and no moral instruction was given. After some years, research showed that the values clarification approach was not at all effective in helping children to become morally responsible. During the Reagan presidency, many wondered whether allowing children to construct their own morality was wise at all. It
appeared that the priority of character of development in K–12 school children envisioned by Thomas Jefferson and Horace Mann, among many other notable figures in American education, had been lost (Soutter & Seider, 2013).

Delving back into the ancient past in reviewing the foundations of educational philosophy over the years, one finds that such an influential figure as Aristotle believed that character was tied to virtuous living. Virtuous living was what would ultimately give a person happiness. He believed that by habituation or practice, one can become virtuous. Another prominent philosopher, Socrates, declared that virtue was a companion goal of knowledge, both of which were necessary to make one an intelligent and benevolent citizen. Character has been seen by many to be synonymous with good behavior. Good character, according to Thomas Lickona (1991), “consists of knowing the good, desiring the good, and doing the good” and naturally involves being just, caring and diligent (as cited in Lerner & Schmid Callina, 2015).

It is interesting indeed that the four prominent school systems in the history of educational philosophy, the Greeks, Romans, Christians, and Renaissance Humanists, all believed that moral instruction was indispensable to developing citizens of good character, which was viewed as the overarching goal of all true education (Jeynes, 2010). While intellectual prowess was desirable, it was secondary to the primary goal of teaching essential moral virtues to pupils. Reformer Martin Luther maintained that all diligence must be given to ensure that children are, “properly educated” in the virtue of serving others as a transcendent goal in academics (as cited in Androne, 2014, p. 82). Wisdom, good habits, knowledge, and divine inspiration were among the common themes that surprisingly placed Aristotle, Plato, and Cicero on the same plane with the Christian and Renaissance Humanist educational leaders.

Few educators would argue against the notion that good behavior is something that ought
to expected to naturally issue forth from a person with a good moral constitution. Hence, in the quest to promote good behavior, it would be deemed essential to discover how a person, who is born into an increasingly unjust and immoral world, can become good and consequently, manifest that goodness in both word and deed. Traditionally and historically, youth have been under the tutelage of not only the school, but the larger community of the home and religious institutions for moral instruction. Indeed, the school must join with the parents in educating the child not in only in reading, writing, and arithmetic, but also in moral values and good behavior. Most people would agree that in recent years, however, the media has been the instructor of children’s morality, or more aptly put, of their immorality.

With the introduction of smartphones capable of storing and playing media content from audio and video to live streaming of all types of morally harmful items, children are inundated with that which is driving them to destroy themselves and society. Dishonesty, illicit sexual behavior, substance abuse, and violent crime are all promoted in the media. These same children often arrive in the schools to a “neutral education” devoid of any direct moral instruction to counter these evils. Whereas a concern for the declining academic achievement led to the introduction of legislation such as the No Child Left Behind Act, still the menacing reality of an increasing lack of empathy amongst students for fellow students and society in general has left educators seeking for a solution for offering some moral training as well (Brown, 2013).

Gardener’s multiple intelligences included interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligences, which require the ability to sense and reflect on one’s own moods, desires, and intentions to show care and respect for others (as cited in Seider, 2012).

Others have pointed out that, while a rapid increase in technology and knowledge in our is generally welcomed, the use of these can be detrimental, if there are no guiding ethics,
whereby the students who become tech-savvy experts can employ in tandem with their genius. In the tradition of the ancients, teaching character came before the teaching of academia. There was a greater value assigned to the moral qualities of the student than his or her intellectual development. Teaching some form of morality or the existence of some fixed, universally accepted values of good was necessary to combat the relativistic morality propagated by the values clarification and cognitive moral development models (Lind, 2016). In the early stages of developing a character education program, standards needed to be defined.

In 1992, the Six Pillars of the Character Counts! program, teaching traits such as trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring and citizenship, set the tone for a variety of local school programs to augment the moral development of youth across the country (Meidl & Meidl, 2013, p. 167). Many schools even today have a character trait for the day such as courage and seek to inculcate that in the pupils by exposure on bulletin boards, rehearsal over the loudspeaker in the morning, etc. Conflict resolution has also been at the heart of many of these efforts so students may learn the art of mediation in order to procure and maintain peace and a sense of ownership in the school community.

It has been suggested that the Eleven Principles of Effective Character Education (Berkowitz, 2012) may assist schools in establishing their own programs based on the needs presented in their community. Yet, for all the resurgence of interest and support for character education programs, the recent consensus of the United States Department of Education (2010) is that overall, there is no significant increase in the academic or behavioral performance of students who are taught using a character education curriculum. As the quest for a universally accepted, effective character education program for the nation’s youth continues, researchers have begun to focus on specific traits influencing the cognitive, affective, and behavioral
domains, which are needed for individual and social benefits (Berkowitz, 2012). Some social scientists have found a direct correlation to the absence of a Biblical literacy program and academic and social aptitude of students (Jeynes, 2009a). The influence of the Bible and the development of religiosity in Christian schools have no doubt contributed to producing graduates who are better adjusted socially than their counterparts from secular backgrounds (Edlin, 2016).

As the best seller of all time and the most published book in history, the Bible deserves study on its own merits as a unique body of literature. It has had a profound influence on the words of the English language (Kang, 2013). It is difficult to ignore the influence of the Bible on the nations of the world in a variety of domains ranging from the arts to the legal system, particularly in a Western public educational system. Direct quotations from the Bible or allusions to Biblical narratives and morals inundate classical literature, including the famous works of Shakespeare. Commonly used phrases such as going the second mile and character descriptions such as the Good Samaritan or Goliath originated in the Bible. Yet, many teachers and professors of secular education have attested to the sore deficiency of Bible knowledge in most high school and college freshman students.

Referring to the unique place of the greatest exponent of the Bible, namely the historical figure of Jesus Christ Himself, O’Reilly and Dugard (2013) stated, “In the history of mankind, no one has achieved worldwide fame with no outside resources whatsoever” (p. 272). Sociologist Nancy Ammerman is quoted by Prothero (2007, p. 95) as coining the teaching of morality in the classrooms using the Bible tenets, devoid of doctrinal issues, as “Golden Rule Christianity.” Martin Luther King Jr. said that Christ’s love is creative and redemptive, and President Ronald Reagan stated in 1984 that, “By dying for us, Jesus showed how far our love should be ready to go—all the way” (Dugard & O’Reilly, 2013, p. 273).
The teachings of Jesus have molded societies across the globe and have not ceased to do so even today (Dugard & O’Reilly, 2013). Stephen Prothero (2007) stated that Horace Mann had a five-elements approach to universal education, which included the goal of teaching virtue and a shared morality necessary for “preserving social order and preserving democracy” in a non-sectarian way (p. 94). Social reform on a national level, had risen to attempt eradication of such destructive and unconscionable vices as alcohol and slavery. This effort, gaining aid by famous evangelists such as Charles Finney in the 1800s, was most directly impacted by spiritual revival of individuals through the teachings of the Bible (Queen, Prothero, Shattuck, & Gardiner, 1996). Others, such as the international evangelist D. L. Moody, were concerned with reviving men’s souls, beginning with outreaches to the poverty-stricken, forgotten members of society such as the children in the slum dwellings of the city of Chicago in 1858 (Queen et al., 1996).

Social reform and concern for the amelioration and happiness of all members of society has always been the outgrowth of following the Golden Rule as taught in the Bible.

The life and teachings of the single Person by which our timeline is divided from B.C. to A.D., Jesus Christ, ought to be studied. The parables of Jesus themselves are full of moral instruction as to what righteous or good behavior is and what wicked or harmful behavior is (Verhey, 2014). Such universally hailed values may be taught to school children, indirectly via reading the Bible, the source of the life and teachings of Jesus Christ, Who epitomizes the truth, as He is esteemed by many. Perhaps, then it would not be difficult to convince the public school officials that there is real, practical value in taking this instruction even a step further. The values themselves ought to be separately studied for their significance in today’s society. However, when there is a Person attached to the morals being studied, then there can be a concrete context that the relativistic climate can concede to. The pupils can now understand the
intrinsic worth and objective reality of moral truth, i.e., right and wrong, as well as the inevitable consequences, both now and in the future, for the choices that they will make.

It is suggested in this study that giving students access to knowledge of the Bible, which is a foundational book on moral judgment and offers instruction concerning good and evil in its narratives, would allow them to consider their own moral standing and self-perception with regards to effecting necessary change to conform to universal values such as empathy and diligence in duty. Gleaning from the life of Bible characters such as King Solomon and the Apostle Paul, good moral judgment and virtuous behavior can be taught and transmitted with a lasting effect until the student has internalized them to the extent that a physical teacher is no longer needed when facing ethical decisions (Crossan, Mazutis, & Seijts, 2013). Its universal appeal can be witnessed in history even within the past 150 years. From the personal philosophies of British missionaries from the free world to the inhabitants of the Congo in the beginning of the 20th century, Bible and Christian literacy offered a “new revolutionary idea of personal responsibility for one’s fate, which was underpinned by Christian notions of freewill and judgment,” liberating men to take a proactive role in acquiring and applying this information to their formerly restrictive, victimizing, and daunting superstitious culture (Maxwell, 2016, p. 13). This knowledge of free will and capacity as well as the responsibility to make sound judgments enhanced by familiarity with the Bible can extend to serving as an indicator of social behavior. Ma (2013) found that social behavior of adolescents could be predicted by their level of moral judgment. In his study, the prosocial subjects had a higher level of moral orientation and judgment.

Exposure to a Bible curriculum may cause students to locate virtues and aspire to possess these virtues. Bible narratives such as the famous Good Samaritan passage in the New
Testament can present students with the higher value of self-sacrifice for the welfare of another, hence leading them to consider unselfish behavior and the internal rewards of fulfillment in doing the right thing. Citizenship and being a true neighbor to one in need, irrespective of his racial, social, or economic status, is a laudable goal, as taught by Jesus in that parable. Values of unselfishness and self-centered existence are poignantly contrasted in the example. Going beyond the limitation of social cognitive theory, Biblical instruction can augment emotional involvement in a scenario such as the one found in the Good Samaritan story and affect change in moral self-perception, which may lead to a change in behavior.

The Bible, Religiosity, and Academic Achievement

The intersection of religiosity, the Bible, and academic achievement is worthy of consideration, as education can determine a society’s future. In terms of motivating students to strive for excellence, two out of a myriad of Scriptural exhortations are quoted here: one from the New Testament epistle of the Apostle Paul to the Colossians and another from the Old Testament book of Proverbs.

And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ (Col. 3:23–24 KJV).

Seest thou a man diligent in his business? he shall stand before kings; he shall not stand before mean men (Prov. 22:29 KJV).

The Bible, as literature, requires and stimulates higher-order reading skills. As a book full of history, poetry, parables, and idioms, the Bible presents moral dilemmas to the student and in the process engages the reader to pursue a variety of themes, which in turn may enhance fluency. In reading the Bible, the exposure to such sophistication may assist the student in
digesting other material alluding to it and of similar or greater level of reading difficulty (Jeynes, 2013). Reading is the basic skill that will determine comprehension levels in a variety of other subjects and disciplines in one’s grade level of study, whether it is in math word problems, scientific narratives, historical literature study, etc.

Literacy rates in general have been greatly impacted by spiritual and moral revival and an attraction to the copious stories of virtually every genre found in the Bible, not to mention some of the most dramatic and thought-provoking tales about which countless other books and motion pictures have been made or spun off. According to Dr. Robert L. Simonds (1996), President of Citizens for Excellence in Education, a variety of skills that cover a number of academic disciplines are enhanced through the study of the Bible as literature. Among the objectives of such a course, he offered the following:

To equip students with literary forms and symbols in the Bible that are constantly referred to in art, music, and literature.

To give the student understanding of the influence of the Bible on history, law, community, and cultural life.

To give insight into the founding fathers’ worldviews taken from the Bible promoting human rights, women’s rights, social justice, etc.

To provide knowledge of Middle-Eastern history (Jewish-Arab), conflicts, geography, and religions.

To teach students how to learn, and use, multiple and complex reference skills (Simonds, 1996).

A well-rounded education is not just comprised of a liberal arts curriculum across various academic disciplines but must also include the foundational masterpiece, the Bible (Skeen &
Researchers have pointed out the glaring ignorance of high school students and entering college freshmen of the Bible, which they have recognized as a fundamental requirement for possessing a well-rounded education. *The New Dictionary of Cultural Literacy: What Every American Needs to Know* (Hirsch, Kett, & Trefil, 2002) presents over 250 words, phrases, themes, and stories from the Bible that are considered essential knowledge for all members of our society, as indicated by book’s title.

**Educational and Spiritual Merits of Bible Literacy Abroad**

Lest the instrumentality of the sacred Book to spark social and educational revival should seem limited to the American continent, Jonathan Rose, winner of numerous literary prizes, in his meticulously documented book *The Intellectual Life of the British Working Classes*, quoted a coal miner of the last century thus:

> It is true that our fathers, in Wales, taught us a religion of cast-iron dogma, which, according to all the theories, should have made us obscurantists, inhabiting a very small world. But it did not . . . I defy any child of ordinary intelligence to read the Bible constantly (in the Authorized Version) without acquiring a genuine literary taste, a sense of style, and at least a feeling for the beauty of words. Before I was twelve I had developed an appreciation of good prose, and the Bible created in me a zest for literature. (Rose, 2001, p. 239–240)

In terms of spiritual revival, the famed Chinese evangelist Dr. John Sung (Li & Smalley, 2016), who graduated with honors from Ohio State University with a PhD in chemistry, was instrumental in motivating some 300,000 to 500,000 individuals in the Far East to read and study the Bible. Dr. Timothy Tow, wrote in biography of John Sung,

> The Bible Society’s stock of Chinese and English Bibles and bilingual Testaments
sold out in less than a week. To cope with the situation, large quantities were rushed from Kuala Lumpur, the Malayan (Malaysian) capital. Revival came also to the Bible Society (Tow, 1985, p. 28).

Tow (1985) elaborated further on the thirst for reading copious amounts of the newly found favorite sacred tome and astonishing further literacy benefits:

Dr. Sung told us he read eleven chapters of the Bible a day and thirteen on the Lord’s Day. So he exhorted us to read ours everyday. If we read an average of three chapters a day, he said, we would cover over 1,095 chapters out of a total of 1,189 in one year.

Reading the Bible was no chore then, but a wonderful new experience: “O how love I thy law! It is my meditation all the day” (Psalm 119:97).

As for me, attending the John Sung Revival Meetings not only made me realize the importance of the Chinese language, but also helped me to study it as a subject for the Cambridge School Certificate Examination. By reading the Chinese Bible through, which has a vocabulary of about 2000 different Chinese characters, I had gained not a little to equip me for the test. Praise the Lord! This was one added blessing in reading God’s Word in Chinese for me. Reading the Bible in English had also improved my English. When one of the earliest modern translations by Moffat appeared, I bought a copy to further improve my English.

Another benefit I had gotten from the Revival Meetings was the unction of “linguistic gear-shifting” of my native Teochew to Hokkien. The two dialects very similar, nearer to each other than Portuguese to Spanish. The important element in learning any spoken language, however, is acquiring the right accent. It was a marvel for me, a Teochew, who rarely had contact with the Hokkien-speaking before this, to adapt
to fluent Hokkien after a mere two week campaign (Tow, 1985, p. 29).

Yet another example of increases in general literacy rates among a people group exposed to the most published book in history is the Hangul-speaking people from Korea. According to Jeynes and Robinson (2012) in the exhaustive work The International Handbook of Protestant Education, the influence of the Bible in education efforts across the globe is worth noting. In a chapter entitled Protestant Influence on Korean Education Development under a section subtitled The Education of Korean Women Begun by Protestant Missionaries, the authors note the extensive use of the Bible by “Bible women” to teach multitudes of other women in the country, who otherwise would have no opportunity to learn the art of reading or in becoming educated (Jeynes & Robinson, 2012). It is documented also that the sudden increase of Bibles published by missionary enterprises contributed to substantial increase in literacy rates among that people group.

**Secularization and the Decline of Religion**

By the Second World War, a move toward secularizing education became popular. Many had bought into the theories of such figures as Karl Marx and Sigmund Freud who believed that there would be an inverse relationship between modernization and religiosity. In other words, as society and its children learn the ability to rationalize better as technology advances, the worthlessness of religious beliefs would naturally become obvious and people would forsake them (Brenner, 2016). Disillusionment on the part of students and educators alike in the wake of the Vietnam War, sexual and substance experimentation, and a revolt against the government and institutions in general exposed a moral vacuum in society’s consciousness. Yet, it seemed that no one knew how to officially address it in the educational domain.

However, in Engel v. Vitale (1962) and Abington v. Schempp (1963) and its companion
case, *Murray v. Curlett* (1962) (as cited in Capek, 2016), the court ruled that school sponsored prayer and Bible reading violated the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment. It also stated, “It certainly may be said that the Bible is worthy of study for its literary and historic qualities. Nothing we have said here indicates that such study of the Bible or of religion, when presented objectively as a part of a secular (public school) program of education, may not be effected consistently with the First Amendment” (Norton, 2000, p. 367).

In *Stone v. Graham* (1980), it was declared that “the Bible may constitutionally be used in an appropriate study of history, civilization, ethics, comparative religion, or the like.” Despite the apparently common but mistaken notion that the First Amendment establishes separation of church and state and thus outlaws the Bible in schools, the actual prohibition put forth in this ruling is teaching the Bible from a devotional perspective. It follows from a number of other rulings then, if taught in a non-devotional manner, such as in the study of its historical and literary context, such teaching of the Bible is unobjectionable according to the law of the land. This inclination to seek the utility of the most popular and most published book in history, along with a push towards encouraging religiosity, may be the only antidote to quelling the increasing tide of secularization in our society. Barna & Kinnaman, (2014) lamented that in rising measure, the attitudes of modern young adults plainly reveal that secularization is no longer an exception, but it is the norm.

**Return of the Bible to Public Schools**

In the last ten years, school districts across the United States have offered Bible courses as electives for high school students. These states have either integrated the Bible as a textbook in their curriculum or at least as a literary and historical work worthy of study through the use of complimentary textbooks. This trend began with the nationwide efforts of two organizations
called the National Council on Bible Curriculum in Public Schools and the Bible Literacy Project providing funding to teach the Bible curriculum. Beginning with Georgia in 2006, over 40 states have followed in offering the elective courses (National Council on Bible Curriculum in Public Schools, 2017). It appeared that more individuals were beginning to admit that, “Quality life does not simply happen because the Ten Commandments hang on a classroom wall or because children are taught a mantra about just saying no” (Peterson & Seligman, 2004, p. 12).

Academics have long proposed the view that a true understanding of American history is impossible without a knowledge of the Bible (Jeynes, 2012; Marshall & Manuel, 2009). They have posited that students cannot be regarded as having a well-rounded education without a working knowledge of the Bible (Hirsch et al., 2002; Jeynes, 2012). If studying the Bible as literature can increase students’ knowledge level of the Bible, and this increase, in turn, can be linked to positive academic outcomes, then greater appreciation and attention to the development and support of such Bible courses in the public schools can impact our generation of students and society for the better.

Bible study was a “normal” and widely accepted practice in the country for many decades in the history of the American public school system until the 1960s (Laats, 2012, p. 322). Academic achievement has been positively correlated to Bible literacy by more than one researcher in recent years (Jeynes, 2013). Some scholars have proposed that a study of the Bible in the classroom is an integral component of a liberal education, a needed, “corrective” measure to combat Biblical illiteracy, and a tool to promote an unbiased understanding of the basis of our American culture (Feinberg & Layton, 2013). The corrective method introduced thus far to raise Bible literacy has been the Bible elective course, and there was a need to measure the relationship of enrollment in the course to students’ academic achievement.
Jeynes stated in his research, “The results of this study suggest that academic and behavioral benefits could possibly accrue if the Bible as literature is taught in the public schools” (2010, p. 539). In the work *Rethinking Bible Literacy*, Hine (2015) stated that whereas this connection was explored in a prominent way outside of the religious context by Jeynes, Bible knowledge may be transmitted best by personal reading as opposed to formal instruction. Attention is directed by Hine (2015) to the work of Filback and Krashen (2002), which supports personal Bible reading or Non-Organizational Religious Activity (NORA) as having a greater effect on transmission of Bible knowledge. This research exploring Non-Organizational Religiosity Activity (NORA) factors versus Organizational Religiosity Activity (ORA) factors and their relationship to Bible literacy, sought to determine whether NORA has a greater effect than ORA.

The leaders of Bible literacy organizations recommended an overview of the Bible in the high school classroom setting, including a survey from both the Old Testament and New Testament (The Bible Literacy Project, 2017). The survey would yield a closer look at not only the major events that took place in history in Bible times, but also draw the students to study the lives of the main characters. Hence, character education is wonderfully interwoven as a hidden curriculum of sorts. Although the narrative is not meant to directly support the Judeo-Christian worldview, the values of honesty, courage, diligence, faithfulness, etc. are automatically placed in front of the pupils. In this manner, for example, the story of Jesus’s compassionate self-sacrifice for the sins of the world may naturally bring out the universally hailed moral character trait of being unselfish and caring for the welfare of others. Work and family conflicts can be extremely stressful for adults and children alike, but it is possible that the qualities of love, hope and forgiveness found in the Bible via encouragement from Bible-believing individuals in Bible
study groups, can provide significant relief in dealing with these stressors (Henderson, 2014, p. 1563).

According to the social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1986) and the theory of moral development (Kohlberg, 1991), exposure to information, particularly that which has a moral element to it, whether it be in stories via books and or other media, can either positively or negatively affect individuals who are exposed to it (Heyler, Armenakis, Walker, & Collier, 2016). This is especially the case with the developing minds of youngsters as described in the Vygotsky’s (1978) social learning theory and the zone of proximal development. If, due to personal greed in companies marketing media for consumption within these youthful circles, violence and immorality sells, and in a free enterprise economy society is unable to curb this, then the least that can be done is to combat this via provision of that which is morally healthy in the public schools. Once again, the teachings found in the literature of the 66 books in the Bible have been endorsed by many influential leaders in our nation as promoting precisely that end. As the proverbial saying goes in the area of computer learning, “garbage in, garbage out”; no less can be expected from youth who are left with merely academic goals to strive for, with ample opportunity to wallow in the mire of violent and immoral literature and other media without a responsible provision of media that would prove to enhance and promote benevolent attitudes and behavior in society.

In interviews, college professors from Princeton to Yale, as reported in the Bible Literacy Report II (2006), have expressed that the single book that they most desired incoming freshmen to have read is the Bible and that it is “absolutely crucial” (p. 6). The works of writers such as Faulkner or Flannery O’Connor are incomprehensible (Wiedmann, 2014) according to many educators unless one knows the Biblical content and context for the relevant allusions made in
their works (Bible Literacy Report II, 2006; Xiamei, 2016). As mentioned above, the worthy goal of spurring a moral awakening in the students via an appreciation for the Bible is hoped for. The Bible in the classrooms is an amazing phenomenon today, following years of downplaying and even rejecting its value in our educational system and our culture. The renewed interest in its influence is the beginning of its return as a moral shaper of the current and next generation. Following is the State of Georgia’s Standards for the Bible Course:

Course Description:

The purpose of the course shall be to accommodate the rights and desires of those teachers and students who wish to teach and study the New Testament and to familiarize students with the contents of the New Testament, the history recorded by the New Testament, the literary style and structure of the New Testament, the customs and cultures of the peoples and societies recorded in the New Testament and the influence of the New Testament upon law, history, government, literature, art, music, customs, morals, values, and culture. The topics may include the historical background and events of the period; the life of Jesus of Nazareth; the parables of Jesus; the life and travels of Paul; and the influence of New Testament history and literature on subsequent art, music, literature, law, and events (The Bible Literacy Project, 2017).

Importance of Christian School Research on Religiosity and Bible Literacy

The 2011 Cardus Education Survey (CES) provided clear evidence that Protestant faith-based schools were outperforming public schools in producing character and citizenship values in students (Glenn, 2016; Pennings, 2011). Since one of the distinctive missions of Christian schools is to promote moral virtues in their students such as diligence, compassion, and courage, the curriculum and values of these successful schools may be studied to obtain similar benefits in
the public schools. It is cultures, schools, and scholars sympathetic to research based in a religious context that has allowed and augmented deeper analysis of its value for the mainstream public. Educational researchers and other social scientists who have studied the effects of Bible study in a structured, private school classroom instructional program, as well as personal religiosity factors such as church attendance and private devotional practices, have directed professionals to consider how these factors may apply in a secular context for similar success (Jeynes, 2010; Jeynes 2015b). It is this approach that guided this researcher to ascertain the different aforementioned contributory elements for increased religiosity and Bible literacy in Christian high school students so as to identify whether the resultant findings of the interplay between ORA, NORA, and IR and Bible literacy will produce new insight into benefits for Christian and secular school students as well.

Technology has had an especially harmful impact on bad behavior in developing adolescents (Brown, 2013). In a society in which students are bombarded with cruelty, immorality, and violence through a proliferation of content directed to consumers via media found even in a cell phone, Bible literacy and religious commitment in students can elicit the exercise of cognitive moral judgment in relevant contexts so as to cause them to behave in an altruistic manner. Beech (2016) referred to the monstrous, counter-productive potential of educated human beings lacking morals evidenced by the trained physicians, nurses, and engineers who committed unthinkable crimes against humanity during the Holocaust of the 1940s. When tracing the history of Christian education in private schools and of values-based education or moral instruction in the American public schools, it should be evident that without a spiritual/religious context from which to teach pro-social behavior and a good work ethic, it is very difficult if not impossible to pass on the virtues desirable for the next generation of leaders.
For all of the promising research done in the name of defending a nationwide, school-wide character education program, the violence and poor academic performance has hardly been mitigated.

In the *State of the Bible 2015* research study commissioned by the American Bible Society, the Barna Group (2015) surveyed a total of 2,010 adults 18 years of age and older of a representative sample of the major ethnic groups from all 50 states of the US. The research aims included: perceptions of the Bible, Bible penetration, Bible engagement, Bible literacy, moral decline, social impact, and giving to non-profit organizations. The Barna Group (2015) found that for five consecutive years, it was found that “Americans overwhelmingly name the Bible as the book that comes to mind when they think of sacred literature or holy books (79%)” (p. 5). According to their study, 88% of Americans own at least one Bible and greater than 66% of non-Christian homes possess a Bible as well. In commenting on moral decline, 31% of adults (up from 26% in 2014) attributed it to a lack of Bible reading. The study revealed also that Bible readers are much more likely to donate more money to non-profit organizations than non-Bible readers. The amount donated is directly correlated (but not necessarily causally related) to the frequency with which Americans read the Bible (The Barna Group, p. 32).

Yet the Bible literacy level of those surveyed showed startling deficiencies. Of the four generational segments examined, Boomers and Millennials had greatly overestimated their Bible knowledge level when the actual knowledge level was much lower. Of interest to the academic community is the study of factors that may contribute to academic achievement and behavioral outcomes. The positive correlation of both religious commitment and Bible literacy to academic and behavioral outcomes have been published in separate studies in recent years. Given that
surveys in recent years have shown that this nation is experiencing a major crisis in Bible illiteracy, even people engaged in Organizational Religious Activity (ORA) are also found to be facing a great decline in Bible literacy. This research endeavor also tested this finding among other variables.

This study therefore examined whether Bible literacy as measured by the ABKT in Christian high school juniors and seniors differed depending on their degree of ORA as measured by the DUREL instrument. Of interest to this study was also the answer to the question of whether the relationship between Bible literacy scores of students on the ABKT and scores on the DUREL subscales of Non-Organizational Religious Activity (NORA) or Intrinsic Activity (IR) would show a positive or negative correlation with regards to each subscale.

If a strong positive correlation can be established in any of the subscale scores and Bible literacy outcomes, then a next step for social scientists would be to investigate ways in which to strengthen either or both factors of religious commitment (including subscales) and Bible literacy amongst students. Perhaps academic and scientific experts may be called on to suggest ways in which religious commitment of students can be enhanced as well as provide consideration of possible release time for religious activities that may prove beneficial to educational goals. These steps may well lead a generation with increased academic and behavioral performance as well as produce well-rounded citizens who have a deeper understanding and appreciation for our national heritage, culture, and social and political framework and operation.

**Summary**

This literature review has provided ample evidence in support of the notion that religiosity and Bible literacy can positively influence individuals and society. The inherent relationship between religious commitment and Bible literacy has suggested those who possess
either or both gain similar salutary benefits in terms of better knowledge base in understanding Western civilization and its political, economic, academic, and arts structures. Due to the prolific use of the Bible in our culture since the founding of the nation and enduring up to the present, Biblically literate individuals have the tools they need to flourish in this manner. Furthermore, the moral and healing properties of religiosity, including reading and meditating on the Scriptures, across a range of areas from deterring psychotic behavior to promoting altruistic character and enhancing social interactions in the community, have been demonstrated by many scholars and professionals hailing from a host of academic and clinical disciplines.

There appears to be a strong case against popular notions that assert that public schools, no matter how faulty, are still producing democratic citizens (Campbell, 2012). Thus, lessons from schools in the private sector that are successful due to giving priority to incorporating Bible literacy and fostering religious commitment can and should be readily absorbed by public schools for similar success to ensue. The present study in determining the strength of the relationship between religious commitment and Bible literacy can help to better explain the dynamic between the two, lay the groundwork for follow-up studies, and provide recommendations to strengthen them as indispensable aids to not only preserving the sanity of society, but also to move it up to a higher, more peaceful, and more productive plane.
CHAPTER THREE: METHODS

Overview

This section on methods will provide information on the research in terms of design, research questions, hypotheses, the participants and setting, instrumentation, procedures, and data analysis. The rationale for the particular methods of analysis and design will be discussed. In order to be able to replicate the study for future research, procedures will be clearly presented. It is hoped that the strength and direction of the relationship between the two different variable types (three subscales for religious commitment on the DUREL measure and one score for Bible literacy on the ABKT measure) will provide information necessary to better understand the dynamics of both in the context of our culture.

Design

Since this quantitative correlational study examined the relationship between variables measured on an interval/ratio scale, a Spearman’s rho correlation was the most appropriate analysis to conduct (Creswell, 2014; Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007; Warner, 2013). In correlational research, a sample size of 66 is the required minimum for a medium effect size with a statistical power of .7 at the .05 alpha level (Gall et al., 2007). The Spearman’s rho correlation test was used to determine the direction and degree of the linear relationship between variables. Gall et al. (2007) stated that the most commonly employed bivariate correlational technique is the Pearson correlation coefficient $r$, as continuous scores are widely dealt with in academic research in education and since it is associated with a small standard of error. However, if normality assumptions are violated, the researcher may use the Spearman’s rho analysis. The Spearman’s rho correlation analysis is thus sufficient to determine the strength of the relationship between
religious commitment and Bible literacy. It is important to note that correlation does not necessarily imply causation (Gall et al., 2007).

**Research Questions**

This study sought to answer the following research questions:

**RQ1:** What is the relationship between Organizational Religious Activity (ORA) and Bible literacy?

**RQ2:** What is the relationship between Non-Organizational Religious Activity (NORA) and Bible literacy?

**RQ3:** What is the relationship between Intrinsic Religiosity (IR) and Bible literacy?

**Null Hypotheses**

The null hypotheses for this study were:

**H₀₁:** There is no statistically significant relationship between Organizational Religious Activity (ORA) and Bible literacy.

**H₀₂:** There is no statistically significant relationship between Non-Organizational Religious Activity (NORA) and Bible literacy.

**H₀₃:** There is no statistically significant relationship between Intrinsic Religiosity (IR) and Bible literacy.

**Participants and Setting**

The participants for the study were junior and senior high school students located in two middle- to upper-income suburban Christian schools in New York and one middle- to upper-income suburban Christian school in New Jersey during the spring semester of the 2016–2017 school year. The first school is located in downstate New York, and this K–12 school serves approximately 500 students. The second school is located in upstate New York, and this K–12
school serves approximately 235 students. The third school is located in southern New Jersey, and this K–12 school serves 349 students. From these three schools, a convenience sample of a total of 70 participants were chosen from the junior and senior grades. One hundred thirty-one surveys were administered with a response rate of a total 70 completed student surveys, ensuring that the minimum sample size of the 66 was exceeded. According to Gall et al. (2007), for a medium effect size with statistical power of .7 at the .05 alpha level, 66 students are the required minimum. The sample included 35 females and 35 males. A group of 47 students were from the downstate suburban New York high school population, which is approximately 70% White, 9% Hispanic, 7% Black, 5% Asian, 1% Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, and 1% American Indian/Alaska Native (National Center for Education Statistics, 2016). From the upstate suburban New York high school, 29 students were be taken from a population that is approximately 43% White, 17% Black, 15% Hispanic, 9% Asian/Pacific Islander, 2% American Indian/Alaska Native and 14%, two or more races (National Center for Education Statistics, 2016). From the suburban southern New Jersey high school, four students were taken from a population that is approximately 47% White, 37% Black, 15% Hispanic, and less than 1% Asian/Pacific Islander (National Center for Education Statistics, 2016).

**Instrumentation**

In addition to the demographic survey, this study employed two instruments: the Duke University Religion Index (DUREL, see Appendix D) and the Assessment of Bible Knowledge Test (ABKT). The Duke University Religion Index (DUREL) is a measure of religiosity that has been used in both educational and healthcare studies (Koenig et al., 1997). Permission was granted by the author for use in this study and inclusion in the manuscript (see Appendix E).
Religiosity Measure

The DUREL instrument consists of three subscales: Organizational Religious Activity (ORA), Non-Organizational Religiosity, and subjective or Intrinsic Religiosity (IR). The three-item IR subscale had a Cronbach’s alpha of 0.75 (Koenig & Büssing, 2010). The two-week test-retest reliability of the DUREL is high (intra-class correlation coefficient of 0.91). It had internal consistency (Cronbach’s alpha between 0.78 and 0.91) and convergent validity with other established measures of religiosity ($r_s = 0.71–0.86$) (Koenig & Büssing, 2010). Thus, the overall scale has high test-retest reliability (intra-class correlation = 0.91), high internal consistence (Cronbach’s alpha = 0.78–0.91), and high convergent validity with other measures of religiosity ($r_s = 0.71–0.86$), and the factor structure of the DUREL has now been demonstrated and confirmed in separate samples by other independent investigative teams. The DUREL has been used in over 100 published studies conducted throughout the world and is available in 10 languages (Koenig & Büssing, 2010).

Scoring of the instrument has a range of 5 to 27, corresponding to lowest to highest religiosity levels. The first subscale, ORA, is assessed with the question “How often do you attend church or other religious meetings?” and is scored on a six-point scale. The second subscale, NORA, is assessed with the question “How often do you spend time in private religious activities such as prayer, meditation, or Bible study?” and is also scored on a six-point scale. The third subscale, IR, is designed as a psychological construct rather than a measure of professed behavior and is assessed with three items, each on a five-point scale. Responses to the questions that comprise the three scales on the DUREL instrument are reverse scored prior to statistical analysis. The instrument was used in numerous studies (e.g., Deb et al., 2016; Epps, 2014; Reichard, 2011).
Authors of the DUREL advise scoring each subscale separately, rather than creating a total summary score by adding up the three subscales, since multiple collinearity between them may affect the accuracy of the estimated effects accompanying each subscale (Koenig & Büssing, 2010). They also caution that the subscales could cancel the effects of one another if combined into a single score or analysis (Koenig & Büssing, 2010). Thus, the single-item survey question for ORA and NORA, respectively, will be scored for analysis as separate subscale scores, and the three-item IR portion of the DUREL will scored as a separate subscale.

The survey was administered online, and 15 minutes was allotted for its completion by the student. The researcher scored the students’ responses (see Appendix E for permission to use the instrument and include it in the manuscript).

Bible Literacy Measure

The instrument (see Appendix F) used to assess Bible knowledge was the Assessment of Bible Knowledge Test (ABKT), which is comprised of 100 questions and was authored by Dr. Michael Reese (Reese, 2010). The purpose of this instrument was to measure the general Bible knowledge of adult church members of a group of churches in a particular Christian denomination. It was developed using 185 fill-in-the blank questions on Bible facts, which were administered to a pilot group to identify and edit or rule out any ambiguous or improperly worded questions (Reese, 2010). The ABKT was subsequently administered to adult Bible classes at the Mannington Church of Christ (Mannington, West Virginia) and a split-half reliability coefficient was used to determine the test’s reliability.

An expert panel comprised of Dr. Edward Buchanan of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary and others in the field of Christian education reviewed the instrument, and a revision of the ABKT containing 100 multiple-choice questions was edited by the researcher (Reese,
2010). Scoring was straightforward in that either the selected answer was scored as correct, earning one point, or incorrect, forfeiting the point. The mean scores of the participants in each church included in Reese’s study were then used for statistical calculations. In addition to Reese (2010) utilizing the ABKT instrument in his research, Dennery (2012) used an abridged version of the same in her study for testing Biblical literacy in members of a local African American church.

The range of possible scores is from 0 to 100 percent. Each correct answer here was allotted 1 point for a maximum of 100 points or 100 percent if all questions were answered correctly. The survey was administered online and up to an hour and 30 minutes was allotted for its completion by the student. The researcher scored the students’ responses (see Appendix E for permission to use the instrument and to include it in the manuscript).

Content validity is defined by Rubio, Berg-Weger, Tebb, Lee, and Rauch (2003) as referring “to the extent to which the items on a measure assess the same content or how well the content material was sampled in the measure” (p. 94). Reese (2010) originally enlisted and obtained the favorable support for content validity from an expert panel comprised of several professionals including Dr. Edward Buchanan and Dr. Travis Heath Bradshaw. Dr. Edward Buchanan holds a PhD in education and is a member of the American Educational Research Association (AERA) and Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development (ACSD). Dr. Travis Heath Bradshaw holds a PhD from the University of Florida and is a professor of geography and advanced statistics at the Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary.

To test for internal consistency, Cronbach’s alpha measures “the extent to which items in a single test are consistent among themselves and with the test as a whole” (Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2009, p. 160). It is used often for measurements representing multiple questionnaire
items, particularly in the social and organizational sciences (Bonett & Wright, 2015). The Cronbach’s alpha for the ABKT instrument was .966 (Reese, 2010). In addition to this, Reese (2010) obtained a split-half reliability correlation coefficient of .944 using the Spearman-Brown coefficient and the Guttman split-half coefficient. Thus, the ABKT was validated by Reese (2010, cited by Gourlay (2013), and used in a study by Dennery (2012).

**Procedures**

During April of 2017, Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval (Appendix H) was sought and granted to conduct the data collection and proceed with the study. Next, the superintendents/headmasters of the three schools were contacted for permission to conduct the study, which was granted with official permission letters (Appendix A). Following this approval, also during the Spring 2017 semester, recruitment letters and consent forms were sent to parents and students, including a total of 182 juniors and seniors in the three schools combined (Appendix B). Detailed instructions were provided in the consent forms, including how to respond to the researcher with their choice to participate or not. For the 131 students interested in participating in the study, further instructions on survey administration were provided, yielding a final total of \( n = 70 \) completed surveys. Faculty members of the three schools assisted in deployment of surveys. Along with the IRB’s approval (Appendix C), all risk factors to participants were minimized during the study.

The demographic survey (Appendix D) and the two instruments, the DUREL (Appendix E) and the ABKT (Appendix G), were located by the faculty and the students online with a specific link provided that directed them to survey.zohopublic.com. The results were kept confidential with anonymity intact by not recording any names of students. Since the zoho.com survey platform did not support the export of data to SPSS, the survey results were exported to
Excel. The survey information was then transferred to the computer database software program SPSS for statistical analysis.

**Data Analysis**

A Spearman’s rho correlation test was used in this research. According to Gall et al. (2007), the Pearson correlation coefficient $r$ is the most widely used bivariate correlational technique because most educational measures yield continuous scores since $r$ has a small standard error. If normality cannot be met in the variables, however, the Spearman’s rho may be used. Since Spearman’s rho requires ordinal or ranked data, the interval data used here needed to be converted to ordinal data. Using SPSS software ensured that the data were automatically converted when selecting Spearman’s rho calculations. Whereas results of the correlation analyses are typically conducted at the significance level of $p < .05$ so as to ensure against the possibility of a Type I error (Gravetter & Wallnau, 2014), examining three correlations requires a Bonferroni correction. The Bonferroni correction was utilized in order to limit the possibility of a Type I error. The usual alpha level of .05 was divided by the number of significance tests run, three, to give a per-comparison alpha of .02 (Warner, 2013). Normality was examined by creating a scatter plot diagram, which should yield a symmetrical, linear shape.
Figure 1. Scatterplot for organizational religious activity (ORA) and Bible literacy score (ABKT) for juniors and seniors.
Figure 2. Scatterplot for non-organizational religious activity (NORA) and Bible literacy score (ABKT) for juniors and seniors.
Figure 3. Scatterplot for intrinsic religiosity (IR) and Bible literacy score (ABKT) for juniors and seniors.

It is clear from Figures 1, 2, and 3 that the normality assumption was not met. Linearity was not observed using a scatterplot diagram. Homoscedasticity, which will ensure that both variables will have similar variability, was also checked with the scatterplot diagram. However, the observation of a cigar shape, indicating that the normality assumption is tenable, could not be found either.

Data were analyzed using SPSS statistical software. Correlations were interpreted and reported with Cohen’s $d$ (1988) conventions. In this study investigating the relationship between the two variables of religiosity using the Likert-scale of the DUREL measure and Bible literacy using the ABKT, the following descriptive statistics ($M$, $SD$), number per cell ($n$), degrees of freedom ($df$), observed $r$ value ($r$), the significance level ($p$) and power were reported.
CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Overview

A Pearson product-moment correlation could not be used for the variables under study due to violations of normality assumptions for the data. However, the Spearman’s rho was used to show a strong positive relationship between Organizational Religious Activity (ORA) and Bible literacy scores. There were also strong correlations between Non-Organizational Religious Activity (NORA) and Bible literacy, as was the case with Intrinsic Religious Activity (IR) and Bible literacy scores.

Research Questions

RQ1: What is the relationship between Organizational Religious Activity (ORA) and Bible literacy?

RQ2: What is the relationship between Non-Organizational Religious activity (NORA) and Bible literacy?

RQ3: What is the relationship between Intrinsic Religiosity (IR) and Bible literacy?

Null Hypotheses

H₀1: There is no statistically significant relationship between Organizational Religious Activity (ORA) and Bible literacy.

H₀2: There is no statistically significant relationship between Non-Organizational Religious Activity (NORA) and Bible literacy.

H₀3: There is no statistically significant relationship between Intrinsic Religiosity (IR) and Bible literacy.
Descriptive Statistics

Table 1

*Demographic Characteristics for Junior and Senior Students from 3 Christian Schools*

*Located in Suburban New York and Suburban New Jersey*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Juniors and Seniors Frequency</th>
<th>Juniors and Seniors Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>50.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>50.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ethnicity</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>50.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8.57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>20.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>20.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian/Alaska Native</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.43%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The genders were evenly distributed for male and female at 35 participants for each. Caucasian students were the majority in this group at 35, with Hispanic students and Asian students at 14 each. African American students for this sample numbered 6, with one student of American Indian/Alaska Native descent.
Table 2

*Descriptive Statistics: ORA and Bible Scores (ABKT)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statistic</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Min.</th>
<th>Max.</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>Std. Dev.</th>
<th>Variance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ORA</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>6.00</td>
<td>5.07</td>
<td>.14719</td>
<td>1.23149</td>
<td>1.517</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABKT</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>70.00</td>
<td>24.00</td>
<td>94.00</td>
<td>63.28</td>
<td>2.2837</td>
<td>19.1069</td>
<td>365.077</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3

*Descriptive Statistics: NORA and Bible Scores (ABKT)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statistic</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Min.</th>
<th>Max.</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>Std. Dev.</th>
<th>Variance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NORA</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>6.00</td>
<td>4.06</td>
<td>.18968</td>
<td>1.58696</td>
<td>2.518</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABKT</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>70.00</td>
<td>24.00</td>
<td>94.00</td>
<td>63.28</td>
<td>2.2837</td>
<td>19.1069</td>
<td>365.077</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4

*Descriptive Statistics: IR and Bible Scores (ABKT)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statistic</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Min.</th>
<th>Max.</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>Std. Dev.</th>
<th>Variance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IR</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>10.00</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>15.00</td>
<td>12.56</td>
<td>.30836</td>
<td>2.57994</td>
<td>6.656</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABKT</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>70.00</td>
<td>24.00</td>
<td>94.00</td>
<td>63.28</td>
<td>2.2837</td>
<td>19.1069</td>
<td>365.077</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It appears from the descriptive statistics for ABKT and the three subscales of the religiosity index that on average, $n = 70$ students scored 63.29 points out of 100 and scored fairly highly on the ORA at 5.07 out of a possible 6 points with a standard deviation of 1.23. They scored a bit lower on the NORA survey item at 4.05 out of a possible 6 points with a standard deviation of 1.59. The combined score of the final three questions on the DUREL index for IR
yielded an average of 12.56 points out of a possible 15, or approximately 84% for this subscale, with a standard deviation of 2.58.

Table 5

*Tests of Normality for ABKT, ORA, NORA, and IR Variables*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Kolmogorov-Smirnov Statistic</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>Shapiro-Wilk Statistic</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ORA</td>
<td>.263</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.748</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NORA</td>
<td>.210</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.885</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IR</td>
<td>.182</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.853</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABKT</td>
<td>.095</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>.195</td>
<td>.953</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>.011</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Lilliefors Significance Correction*

In examining Table 5 for the test of normality for the four variables of ABKT, ORA, NORA and IR, it is readily apparent that the significance of .000 for the three subscales of religiosity is \( p < 0.05 \), in which case the null hypothesis that the variables are not statistically significantly different than a normal distribution must be rejected. The value at .000 is smaller than the alpha of 5%, or .005, proving the values for the religiosity index are not normally distributed. The ABKT scores appear to indicate that the null hypothesis should be accepted for normality; however, in this case, the Shapiro-Wilk presents a significance less than the alpha of 5%, contradicting the former assumption under Kolmogorov-Smirnov. Hence, instead of using a Pearson’s \( r \) for determining the strength and direction of correlation, the non-parametric alternative, Spearman’s rho, was employed.

**Results**

**Research Question One**

**RQ1:** What is the relationship between Organizational Religious Activity (ORA) and Bible literacy?
The first research question was examined through the following null hypotheses:

**H₀₁**: There is no statistically significant relationship between Organizational Religious Activity (ORA) and Bible literacy. A Spearman’s rho correlation coefficient was conducted to evaluate the null hypothesis that there is no relationship between students’ ORA and Bible literacy \( (n = 70) \). Preliminary analysis revealed that were violations in the assumptions of normality, linearity, and homoscedasticity (see Figure 1). There was significant evidence to reject the null hypothesis and conclude that at the p-value .000 or \( p < .001 \), there was medium to strong positive association between ORA \( (M = 5.07, SD = 1.23) \) and Bible literacy \( (M = 63.28, SD = 19.11) \). Higher levels of ORA are associated with higher levels of Bible literacy.

In answer to the first research question, Table 6 presents evidence that the Spearman correlation coefficient was statistically significant \( (r = .498, p \text{ value} < 0.001) \). In accounting for the three simultaneous variable-subcales of the religiosity index paired individually in the correlation analysis to the Bible literacy scores on the ABKT, the Bonferroni test must be applied. In this case, the usual 0.05 level was divided by the three variables and reduced to 0.02.
Table 6.

*Correlations for Organizational Religious Activity (ORA) and Bible Literacy Scores (ABKT) in Juniors and Seniors*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>ABKT</th>
<th>ORA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spearman’s rho</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td>.498**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**| 1.000 | .498**|

**Correlation is significant at the 0.02 level (2-tailed).**

According to Cohen (1988), a correlation coefficient of .10–.29 indicates a weak relationship, .30–.49 indicates a medium–strength relationship, and .50–1.0 signifies a strong or large relationship. Thus, there is a medium relationship and almost strong relationship at .50 between the ABKT and the ORA of these students. To calculate the coefficient of determination, .498 is simply squared and multiplied by 100 to yield 24.80% shared variance. It signifies that the students’ ORA score helps explain 24.80% of the variance in their scores in ABKT or Bible literacy test.

**Research Question Two**

**RQ2:** What is the relationship between Non-Organizational Religious Activity (NORA) and Bible literacy?

The second research question was examined through the following null hypotheses:

**Ho2:** There is no statistically significant relationship between Non-Organizational Religious Activity (NORA) and Bible literacy.
Table 7. Correlations for Non-Organizational Religious Activity (NORA) and Bible Literacy Scores (ABKT) in Juniors and Seniors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>ABKT</th>
<th>NORA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<td>Spearman’s rho</td>
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<td>ABKT Correlation Coefficient</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td>.282*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
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<td>N</td>
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<td>NORA Correlation Coefficient</td>
<td>.282*</td>
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*Correlation is significant at the 0.02 level (2-tailed).

A Spearman’s rho correlation coefficient was conducted to evaluate the null hypothesis that there is no relationship between students’ NORA and Bible literacy (n = 70). Preliminary analysis revealed that there were violations in the assumptions of normality, linearity, and homoscedasticity (see Figure 2). There was significant evidence to reject the null hypothesis with $p = .018$ and conclude that there was a weak to borderline medium relationship and a positive association between NORA ($M = 4.05$, $SD = 1.59$) and Bible literacy ($M = 63.28$, $SD = 19.11$). According to Cohen (1988), a correlation coefficient of .10–.29 indicates a weak relationship, .30–.49 indicates a medium-strength relationship, and .50–1.0 signifies a strong or large relationship. Table 7 presents evidence that the Spearman correlation coefficient was statistically significant ($r = .282$, $p$ value = 0.18), albeit with a weak to borderline medium relationship at .282 between the ABKT and the NORA of these students. To calculate the coefficient of determination, .282 is simply squared and multiplied by 100 to yield 7.95% shared
variance. It signifies that the students’ NORA score helps explain 7.95% of the variance in their scores in ABKT or Bible literacy test.

**Research Question Three**

**RQ3**: What is the relationship between intrinsic religiosity (IR) and Bible literacy?

The first research question was examined through the following null hypotheses:

**H₀₃**: There is no statistically significant relationship between intrinsic religiosity (IR) and Bible literacy.

Table 8. *Correlations for Intrinsic Religiosity (IR) and Bible Literacy Scores (ABKT) in Juniors and Seniors*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Spearman’s rho</th>
<th>ABKT Correlation Coefficient</th>
<th>IR Correlation Coefficient</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td>0.307**</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
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<td>0.010</td>
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<td>N</td>
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<tr>
<td>IR Correlation Coefficient</td>
<td>.307**</td>
<td>1.000</td>
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<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>0.010</td>
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**Correlation is significant at the 0.02 level (2-tailed).**

A Spearman’s rho correlation coefficient was conducted to evaluate the null hypothesis that there is no relationship between students’ IR activity and Bible literacy (*n* = 70).

Preliminary analysis revealed that were violations in the assumptions of normality, linearity, and homoscedasticity (see Figure 3). There was significant evidence to reject the null hypothesis, with *p* = 0.010, and conclude that there was borderline medium-strength, positive association between IR (*M* = 12.56, *SD* = 2.58) and Bible literacy (*M* = 63.28, *SD* = 19.11). Higher levels of IR are associated with higher levels of Bible literacy. According to Cohen (1988), a correlation
coefficient of .10–.29 indicates a weak relationship, .30–.49 indicates a medium-strength relationship and .50–1.0 signifies a strong or large relationship. Table 8 presents evidence that the Spearman correlation coefficient was statistically significant ($r = .307$, $p$ value = .010). Thus, there is a medium-strength relationship at .307 between the ABKT and the IR of these students. To calculate the coefficient of determination, .307 is simply squared and multiplied by 100 to yield 9.42% shared variance. It signifies that the students’ IR score helps explain 9.42% of the variance in their scores in ABKT or Bible literacy test.
CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS

Overview

This final chapter will present a discussion of the literature and the results of the present study. Previous pertinent studies will be reviewed in light of the variables of Bible literacy and the three components of religiosity: Organizational Religious Activity (ORA), Non-Organizational Religious Activity (NORA), and Intrinsic Religiosity (IR). Each of the previously stated three hypotheses concerning any correlative significance between the said variables will be examined in light of the various theories explained earlier, the results, and other studies. This study aligned with previous research that appeared to indicate the presence of a possible positive correlation between Bible literacy and religiosity. The exploration of such a relationship was deemed plausible since the natural intersection of both categories of these variables related to faith simultaneously appeared to affect other variables such as academic and behavioral outcomes. The implications of the findings, the limitations of the study, and recommendations for future studies will also be discussed.

Discussion

The purpose of this research study was to determine whether there is a statistically significant relationship between religious commitment and Bible literacy in high school junior and senior students. The study reviewed available literature on Bible literacy, religiosity, and the merits and effects of both on a host of areas ranging from academic benefits to psychological and social health. The significant positive results of both variables were observed in studies by social scientists and medical researchers and led to the question of whether the Bible literacy and religiosity had any positive relationship.
Three research questions were developed into three corresponding null hypotheses examining the relationship between Bible literacy and the three areas of religious commitment of interest: Organizational Religious Activity (ORA), Non-Organizational Religious Activity (NORA), and Intrinsic Religiosity (IR). Instrumentation used to measure these variables included the Duke University Religion Index (DUREL) and Assessment of Bible Knowledge Test (ABKT). This study contributes to the literature by assessing the strength of the relationship between religious commitment and Bible literacy.

Bible literacy has long been appreciated by religious enthusiasts all over the world for obvious reasons. However, it is perhaps in recent times only that a growing consensus has developed from academic circles attesting to the educational benefits accrued from familiarizing oneself with the Bible, including from a greater appreciation of history, literature, the arts, politics, and medicine (Deb et al., 2016; Cruz et al., 2016). As the best seller of all time and the most published of all book in history, the Bible is a timeless marvel. Religiosity has also been long embedded in man, so that many today would agree with their predecessors that man is a religious creature. Having a desire to know one’s ultimate purpose and find satisfaction in an approach to life that seeks something more than oneself has led many a seeker on a natural path to discovering or re-discovering the ageless resource that declares such things from cover to cover.

In the Judeo-Christian world, of which the western hemisphere represents a good part, many who are religious naturally seem to know more of the Bible than their non-religious counterparts. This fact appeared to be a given for years until a generation or two ago. Current research has shown that even among churchgoers, that Bible literacy has reached an all-time low in our society (Prothero & Kerby, 2015). With the risk of further, perhaps irreparable decline in
religiosity and Bible literacy ever on the horizon, social scientists are mobilizing efforts to
determine how the two may be related and influence everything from cognition to morality and
mental and physical well-being as well as civilization in general, particularly since the sacred
book has left an indelible mark on the English language (Kang, 2013).

The investigation was begun, then, by examining the religiosity, or organizational, non-
organizational, and intrinsic religious activity, of those students who may have had the greatest
exposure over time to religion in Christian schools and yet have also exhibited a surprising
decline in faith and Bible literacy in recent decades, even leaving for secular colleges following
graduation from Christian schools (Burggraff, 2015; Shultz, 2008). This study on the
relationship between religiosity and Bible literacy in high school juniors and seniors in Christian
high schools sought to focus on Bible knowledge, as evidenced by the use of a 100-item
Assessment of Bible Knowledge (ABKT) and three subscales’ components of religiosity in the
DUREL religion index: Organizational Religious Activity (ORA), Non-Organizational Religious
Activity (NORA), and Intrinsic Religiosity (IR).

Hypothesis One

The first null hypothesis, \( H_0 \), stated: There is no statistically significant relationship
between Organizational Religious Activity (ORA) and Bible literacy. Therefore, to reject the
null hypothesis as stated above, the results must demonstrate a statistically significant correlation
between ORA and Bible literacy.

In a study on the association between Bible literacy and general religiosity in 10 religious
groups and non-religious groups, including one Jewish, seven various traditional Christian
denominations, and two Unitarian and atheist, Clark (1991) found that there was a direct positive
correlation between Bible literacy and religiosity in 699 adults that were surveyed on a 50-item
Bible questionnaire and a 23-item religiosity questionnaire. The Unitarians and atheists achieved the lowest mean scores, presumably due to not having as much exposure to the Bible as the other traditionally Bible-centered groups, since the Bible is not central to the beliefs of these groups, but rather just one among many sources on which their beliefs are based (Clark, 1991).

The scores included an overall score for the five dimensions of religiosity: ideological (IR), intellectual (ORA, NORA, IR), experiential (ORA, NORA, IR), ritualistic (ORA, NORA) and consequential (IR). As indicated above, questions on Clark’s religiosity survey instrument had common ground with the particular ORA, NORA, and IR question types found on the DUREL instrument. However, isolating these areas for analysis to determine which of these three components of religious commitment may influence Bible literacy has not been specifically studied until now. Clark (1991) stated that according to the results of his study, as overall religiosity increased, Bible literacy increased as well, with a significant correlation coefficient for all groups of $r = .34$

It was noted earlier that, in light of Bandura’s (1986) social cognitive theory and Vygotsky’s (1978) zone of proximal development, participation in organized religious activity may foster cognitive processing through observation and imitation of other community members who model religious and moral behavior and serve as a social and spiritual support (Nelson, 1997; Rousseau, 2014). Krause et al. (2016) posited that religiosity can have positive effects on the coping abilities of persons undergoing various kinds of stress. Francis (2002) and Keonig et al. (1998) have reported that people engaged in organized religious activity (ORA), such as church attendance, have shown decreased abuse of harmful substances such as cigarettes when compared with non-religious counterparts who did not attend church. Clark (1991) stated that increased church attendance had a direct correlation with decreased delinquent behavior.
Positive behavior and academic achievement has also been demonstrated by youth who possess religious commitment and a greater degree of Bible literacy (Jeynes, 2013; Onyechi et al., 2016).

In a meta-analysis of 10 other studies by Jeynes (2010), a positive relationship was observed between higher intelligence and Bible knowledge. A calculated effect size of .33 indicated a significant relationship between Bible literacy and academic and behavioral scores. An even larger effect size of .73 was found in studying the relationship between Biblical literacy and academic achievement (Jeynes, 2010). Erickson and Philips (2012) stated, “When all of the religious involvement measures are modeled together, church attendance remains a salient predictor of high school graduation” (p. 583).

Judging from the results of Clark’s (1991) study showing a positive correlation between religiosity and Bible literacy and studies of various researchers mentioned above, who found both sets of variables to have positive correlation to a host of positive, varied benefits, it was expected that the ORA and Bible literacy would also have a positive correlation. Gourlay (2013) also found a strong positive correlation between tenure of church attendance and Bible literacy scores. The results of the present study confirm this hypothesis. There was sufficient evidence to reject the null hypothesis and conclude that there was a strong, positive association between ORA ($M = 5.07$, $SD = 1.23$) and Bible literacy ($M = 63.28$, $SD = 19.11$; see Table 2), with a correlation coefficient of .50, $p$-value=.000 or $p < .001$. (see Table 6). It was concluded that higher levels of ORA are associated with higher levels of Bible literacy.

**Hypothesis Two**

The second null hypothesis, $H_02$, stated: There is no statistically significant relationship between non-organizational religious activity (NORA) and Bible literacy. Therefore, to reject the null hypothesis as stated above, the results must demonstrate a statistically significant
correlation between NORA and Bible literacy. While the scores for NORA were expected to be as strong as ORA in its positive relationship to Bible literacy, it was much weaker, with a correlation coefficient of .282 (see Table 7), p-value = .018, NORA ($M = 4.05$, $SD = 1.59$) and Bible literacy ($M = 63.28$, $SD = 19.11$; see Table 3). Although researchers had posited that a personal religious faith significantly affected the academic achievement of groups such as African Americans and Latinos in a positive manner, just which components of religiosity were responsible for this phenomenon has not been studied (Jeynes, 2015b). Similarly, religious faith or religiosity has also been suspected as the deciding factor for the general prosperity of the United States and Western Europe for the last four centuries in the eyes of Eastern foreign nations such as China (Jeynes, 2015a). Again, a specific factor of personal religious faith has not been indicated as having the said effect on such prosperity. It was hypothesized that a personal pursuit of religiosity in terms of Bible reading, study, prayer, or viewing recorded or broadcast sermons would have a rather strong, direct effect on Bible literacy, but the results proved otherwise in this study. If according to Maslow (1943), self-actualization, which includes morality, creativity and problem solving, represents the higher-order growth level need and motivation of human beings, then a natural gravitation to the Bible, such as may be found in the personal, NORA experience of reading the holy book and praying to secure these ends, may not be outside of reason. This may be assumed due to the fact that the Bible has long been renowned for its teaching on wisdom for living a fulfilling life in a loving and productive relationship to God and man.

Perhaps, whereas more concentration and the required increased motivation to pursue such means to promote one’s own religiosity was understood as a given, this may not be the case with all individuals. However, the weaker-than-expected relationship may be due to the exact
opposite effect on those surveyed, who may have actually had less concentration and motivation to grasp the Biblical content delivered to them via various personal activities and media than if they were situated in a group setting. Nonetheless, there was a positive correlation between NORA and Bible literacy as hypothesized.

**Hypothesis Three**

The third null hypothesis, $H_03$, stated: There is no statistically significant relationship between intrinsic religiosity (IR) and Bible literacy. Therefore, to reject the null hypothesis stated above, the results must demonstrate a statistically significant correlation between IR and Bible literacy. The positive correlation in strength that appears next behind the observed relationship between ORA and Bible literacy has been observed between Intrinsic Religiosity and Bible Literacy with a medium coefficient of .307 at $p = .01$ level (see Table 8). Table 4 reveals IR ($M = 12.56, SD = 2.58$) and Bible literacy ($M = 63.28, SD = 19.11$). Consistent with the overall, positive effect of religiosity in the above-mentioned studies, IR was also expected to rise as Bible literacy scores increased. This was observed, although to a lesser extent that that found in the association between ORA and Bible literacy. It can be assumed that those who internalize their personal religious faith or religiosity to a degree that it has great influence in their practical day-to-day decisions must have an internal locus that is established upon certain uncompromised convictions. It has been stated from the literature review that the Bible can naturally contribute to morality and the decision-making process of individuals in reflecting religious ethics derived from its content (Crossan et al., 2013; Feinberg & Layton, 2013). Maslow’s (1943, 1954) hierarchy of needs theory introduced the concept of self-actualization and Kohlberg’s (1981) theory of moral development proclaimed postconventional morality to reflect the highest end of morality in the human personality as an altruistic disposition of
character. If the golden rule of truly loving one’s neighbor as repeatedly taught in the Bible and exemplified by Jesus Christ and moral prophets and leaders in its contents is examined regularly through reading of the Bible, then it may be that IR in an individual, i.e., bringing the Divine Presence and religious approach to one’s daily life, may be a natural result. Similarly, an individual who is committed to acquiring Biblical knowledge with the intent of seeking answers to the meaning of life and how to live life may foster greater retention when reading the Bible and consult it more frequently than one who does not have a strong degree of Intrinsic Religiosity. Thus, it seems logical that increased Bible literacy and Intrinsic Religiosity, as a component of religious commitment, may have strong correlations, as found in the results of this study.

Implications

The results of this study on the scores of students on the DUREL ORA subscale and the ABKT are clear. The implications are that if this line of research is pursued further, it can have significant impact on the perspective, interest, and investment of stakeholders, including social scientists, on the value of organized religious activity in fostering Bible literacy to augment greater academic achievement, social benefits, and psychological well-being. There is also good evidence that encouraging development of a sense of the Divine in one’s life, i.e., the Presence of God, can produce similar accrued benefits as observed in the relationship between the scores on the DUREL IR subscale and the ABKT. Although the weakest relationship was observed between NORA and ABKT, the relationship was still positive, indicating that there is some benefit in encouraging the development of all three components (ORA, NORA, and IR) of religiosity in connection with increased Bible literacy. Bible study in public schools has recently gained great recognition in American society as a rich resource to promote the academic and
social benefits described in previous literature (Abu-Raiya et al., 2016; Jeynes, 2015a). As of this writing, Kentucky has become the latest state to pass a Bible literacy law, which legislates the offering of Bible elective courses in their public schools (Kentucky Legislature, 2017). Although the present study has not established causality, nor was it conducted to determine such, consistent with scholarly literature on the subject, a positive relationship among the variables has been found. It would be of great interest, however, to research causality in terms of whether religious commitment causes an increase in Bible literacy or Bible literacy affects an increase in religiosity. This would allow schools to determine the best means to improve the degree of the causative factor in students, as positive benefits from both have been documented in previous studies, and to improve one would inevitably improve the other if causation can be determined. Furthermore, it stands to reason that if both religious commitment and Bible literacy can positively influence students and ultimately society in a variety of areas, then a combined increase in students may well produce an even greater effect.

Limitations

Among the limitations of this study is the fact that a relatively small sample size of three schools from two states in the northeastern part of the United States were surveyed. Therefore, it may not be thought to be generalizable for the population of Christian high school juniors and seniors across the country, or even across the Northeast for that matter. Another limitation was, perhaps, due to a delay of some months between coordination of the respective schools, the timing of the data collection coinciding with the end of the school year. It may be that the junior students and especially the senior students were anxious to leave class in the last month and weeks of school and did not concentrate fully on the test, producing an average of 63.28 points out of a 100. Finally, due to the difficulty in locating validated Bible tests with established
reliability for this sample group, the survey used was atypically and was rather lengthy, with 100 questions. This could be the reason, perhaps, that out of 131 respondents, only 70 completed the survey.

**Recommendations for Future Research**

Future research should be done on a larger sample size, a greater number of schools, and eventually covering a greater cross section of the nation to produce more generalizable results. The surveys should be given well before the end of the school year to perhaps ensure better concentration on the part of the students and, hence, also produce a greater number of completed surveys. Experimental studies may also be conducted to ascertain which Bible curriculum may be the most effective in influencing religiosity measures and Bible literacy in Christian school students. Professional development and training program for teachers of Bible electives may be studied as well to determine their individual level of effectiveness on the outcomes of Bible literacy testing on participating students from Christian schools.

The same experimental studies may be conducted in public-school Bible classes to gather data from that particular population also and compare the Christian school students’ results with the public-school students’ results. Further studies should also investigate the impact of release time for religious/Biblical instruction in public schools to determine the effect on the religiosity and Bible literacy levels of participants. As discussed earlier, Bandura’s (1986) social cognitive theory and Vygotsky’s (1978) social development theory suggest that group dynamics, in an otherwise non-religious setting off campus, may have an impact on the religiosity and Bible literacy levels of participating students. Finally, a similar study to the present one can be undertaken to study the specific subcomponents of religiosity and their relationship to Bible literacy. For example, is it church attendance or youth group attendance in the ORA component
of religiosity that has a greater impact on Bible literacy levels? Similarly, in surveying youth with regard to the subcomponents of Bible reading practices or exposure to Bible-based media in the NORA component of religious commitment, which subcomponent may indicate a greater impact on Bible literacy levels?

Causality in the relationship of religious commitment to Bible literacy would be a very important and interesting phenomenon to research, in terms of directionality. For instance, does religious commitment influence Bible literacy or vice versa? Is there a mutual influence, and if so, which is more significant in influencing the other variable? Given the substantive support in the body of literature for a host of positive benefits resulting from both religious commitment and Bible literacy as individual factors in influencing academic achievement, mental health, and social well-being, follow-up studies to determine causality may produce a greater overall effect. If it is understood from research that one or both factors is found to be causative in relation to the other, state government legislature or local school administrators may be led to encourage the augmentation of religious commitment and the study of the Bible as literature and history. To foster development in either factor may well serve to increase the aggregate positive effect on students and thereby on society as a whole.
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January 4, 2017

To Whom It May Concern:

As Superintendent, I am granting permission for Pradeep to conduct research at our site for his doctoral research regarding THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN RELIGIOUS COMMITMENT AND BIBLE LITERACY IN SUBURBAN NEW YORK CHRISTIAN HIGH SCHOOL JUNIORS AND SENIORS.

If you have any questions, feel free to contact me directly.

Sincerely,
February 1, 2017

To Whom It May Concern:

As Headmaster of [redacted], I am granting permission to Pradeep E. Stephen to conduct research at our site for his doctoral research regarding THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN RELIGIOUS COMMITMENT AND BIBLE LITERACY IN SUBURBAN NEW YORK CHRISTIAN HIGH SCHOOL JUNIORS AND SENIORS.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me directly.

Sincerely,

[redacted]
Headmaster

"THAT THE GENERATION TO COME MIGHT KNOW . . . THAT THEY SHOULD PUT THEIR CONFIDENCE IN GOD." (Psalm 78:6,7)
May 19, 2017

To whom it may concern,

As the Headmaster of Life Center Academy, I am granting permission for Pradeep E. Stephen to conduct research at our school for his doctoral research regarding The Relationship Between Religious Commitment and Bible Literacy in High School Juniors and Seniors in New York and New Jersey.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me directly.

Sincerely,

Headmaster
Appendix B: Parent Consent/Student Assent Form

The Liberty University Institutional Review Board has approved this document for use from 4/7/2017 to 4/6/2018
Protocol # 2827.040717

PARENT/GUARDIAN CONSENT FORM/CHILD ASSENT FORM
The Relationship between Religious Commitment and Bible Literacy in Christian High School Juniors and Seniors in New York and New Jersey
Pradeep Stephen
Liberty University
School of Education

Your child is invited to be in a research study of religious commitment and Bible literacy in high school students. He or she was selected as a possible participant, because of his or her enrollment in 11th or 12th grade in a Christian school. Please read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to allow him or her to be in the study.

Pradeep Stephen, a doctoral candidate in the School of Education at Liberty University, is conducting this study.

Background Information: The purpose of this study is to determine how the religious commitment and the Bible literacy of high school juniors and seniors are related.

Procedures: If you agree to allow your child to be in this study, I would ask him or her to do the following things:
1. Complete a brief online demographic survey taking approximately 5 minutes.
2. Complete a brief online religiosity survey (DUREL) taking approximately 5-10 minutes.
3. Complete the online 100 item Bible knowledge survey (ABKT) taking approximately 30 minutes.

Risks and Benefits of being in the Study: The risks involved in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks you would encounter in everyday life. Participants should not expect to receive a direct benefit from taking part in this study. Benefits to society include the potential use of programs to strengthen religious commitment and Bible literacy in public school students and thus improve their spirituality, overall health, academic progress and social wellness.

Compensation: Your child will be entered in a drawing drawing to win (1) of (2) $50.00 Amazon.com gift cards upon completion of the surveys. I will ask each student to provide his or her email address so that I may enter the student in the drawing. The email addresses will be separated from the survey responses by the survey software, so the surveys will remain anonymous.

Confidentiality: The records of this study will be kept private. In any sort of report I might publish, I will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. Research records will be stored securely and only the researcher will have access to the records. I may share the data I collect from your child for use in future research studies or with other researchers; if I share the data that I collect about your child, I will remove any information that could identify him or her, if applicable, before I share the data.

Any hard copies of letters/surveys used will be kept locked in a cabinet and any online survey
data will be kept in a password protected computer file on the researcher’s laptop with accessibility to only the researcher. Privacy of survey data will be ensured through the use of separate computers to access and complete surveys and will also be ensured due to the anonymous nature of the surveys. Data will be kept secure for three years upon completion of the study and then disposed of by shredding/permanently deleting associated files. Upon completion of the study, I will publish only the aggregate results of the survey.

**Voluntary Nature of the Study:** Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to allow your child to participate will not affect his or her current or future relations with [Redacted], or Liberty University. If you decide to allow your child to participate, he or she is free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time prior to submitting the surveys without affecting those relationships.

**Contacts and Questions:** The researcher conducting this study is Pradeep Stephen. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you are encouraged to contact him by email at pestephen@liberty.edu. You may also contact the researcher’s faculty advisor, Dr. Paul Tapper, at patapper@liberty.edu.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, you are encouraged to contact the Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd, Green Hall 1887, Lynchburg, VA 24515 or email at irb@liberty.edu.

**Please notify the researcher if you would like a copy of this information for your records.**

**Statement of Consent:** I have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to allow my child to participate in the study.

(Note: DO NOT AGREE TO ALLOW YOUR CHILD TO PARTICIPATE UNLESS IRB APPROVAL INFORMATION WITH CURRENT DATES HAS BEEN ADDED TO THIS DOCUMENT.)

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April 7, 2017
Pradeep Emmanuel Stephen  IRB Approval 2827.040717: The Relationship between Religious Commitment and Bible Literacy in Suburban New York Christian High School Juniors and Seniors
Dear Pradeep Emmanuel Stephen,

We are pleased to inform you that your study has been approved by the Liberty University IRB. This approval is extended to you for one year from the date provided above with your protocol number. If data collection proceeds past one year, or if you make changes in the methodology as it pertains to human subjects, you must submit an appropriate update form to the IRB. The forms for these cases were attached to your approval email.

Thank you for your cooperation with the IRB, and we wish you well with your research project. Sincerely,

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Administrative Chair of Institutional Research

The Graduate School

Liberty University | Training Champions for Christ since 1971
Appendix D: Stephen Dissertation Demographics Survey (Online)

Directions: Please fill in or select the appropriate response. You will have 5 minutes to complete this survey.

1. Age ________

2. Gender: Male______Female_______

3. Junior______ Senior_______

4. Ethnic Background

(1) Hispanic or Latino
(2) Asian
(3) Black or African American
(4) Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
(5) White

5. What was the approximate combined income of your parents before taxes last year?
   __ Less than $40,000
   __ About $40,000 to $50,000
__ About $50,000 to $60,000
__ About $60,000 to $70,000
__ About $70,000 to $80,000
__ About $80,000 to $100,000
__ About $100,000 to $120,000
__ About $120,000 to $140,000
__ About $140,000 to $160,000
__ About $160,000 to $180,000
__ About $180,000 to $200,000
__ More than $200,000
__ I don’t know
Appendix E: DUREL - Duke University Religion Index

Directions: Choose the number in front of the answer that most accurately describes your usual behavior or belief (circle only one answer for each question). You will have up to 10 minutes to complete this survey.

(1) How often do you attend church or other religious meetings?
1. More than once/wk.
2. Once a week
3. A few times a month
4. A few times a year
5. Once a year or less
6. Never

(2) How often do you spend time in private religious activities, such as prayer, meditation or Bible study?
1. More than once a day
2. Daily
3. Two or more times/week
4. Once a week
5. A few times a month
6. Rarely or never

The following section contains 3 statements about religious belief or experience. Please mark the extent to which each statement is true or not true for you.

(3) In my life, I experience the presence of the Divine (i.e., God).
1. Definitely true of me
2. Tends to be true
3. Unsure
4. Tends not to be true
5. Definitely not true

(4) My religious beliefs are what really lie behind my whole approach to life.
1. Definitely true of me
2. Tends to be true
3. Unsure
4. Tends not to be true
5. Definitely not true

(5) I try hard to carry my religion over into all other dealings in life.
1. Definitely true of me
2. Tends to be true
3. Unsure
4. Tends not to be true
5. Definitely not true
Appendix F: Permission Letter/Email to Use ABKT and DUREL Instruments

To whom it may concern,

I give permission to Pradeep Stephen to use the Assessment of Bible Knowledge in his doctoral studies research. The test may not be altered or edited in any way. The test is to be used only in his doctoral research.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Michael P. Reese, Ed.D.
December 7, 2016 12:17 pm email reply content from Dr. Michael Reese

Dear Pradeep,

I give you permission to use the ABKT instrument in the manuscript of your dissertation.

Blessings,

Michael Reese, Ed.D.

December 7, 2016 3:36 pm email reply content from Dr. Harold Koenig

Pradeep,

You have my permission to use the Durel instrument for your doctoral study and to include it in your manuscript.

Harold Koenig, M.D.
Appendix G: Assessment of Bible Knowledge Test (ABKT)

Instructions:

Please choose the best answer to each question. Answer all questions even if you aren't sure of the answer. Thank you for your cooperation.

(All surveys are anonymous – do not sign your name.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Options</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1) What is the name of the woman who became queen and saved the Jewish nation from annihilation? | a) Esther  
  b) Deborah  
  c) Tamar  
  d) Dinah |
| 2) Which man killed Absalom?                                             | a) Benjamin  
  b) Joab  
  c) Elkanah  
  d) Elisha |
| 3) What is the first commandment?                                       | a) Honor your father and your mother  
  b) You shall honor Caesar  
  c) You shall not steal  
  d) You shall have no other gods before me |
| 4) What is the name of the Philistine giant David killed?                | a) Ahud  
  b) Goliath  
  c) Sennacherib  
  d) Andrew |
| 5) Who was the king of Salem?                                            | a) Melchizedek  
  b) Hezekiah  
  c) Herod  
  d) David |
| 6) It was prophesied that Judah would be in captivity how many years?    | a) 70  
  b) 10  
  c) 30  
  d) 100 |
7) Jacob's name was changed to?
   a) Laban
   b) Jeremiah
   c) Jesus
   d) Israel

8) Judah went into captivity in which country?
   a) Egypt
   b) Babylon
   c) Canaan
   d) Assyria

9) Who authored most of the Psalms?
   a) David
   b) Isaiah
   c) Solomon
   d) Daniel

10) Who took Moses' place as leader of Israel?
    a) Joshua
    b) Aaron
    c) David
    d) Solomon

11) What was the name of the king of Judah whose life was extended fifteen years?
    a) Judah
    b) Solomon
    c) Joash
    d) Hezekiah

12) Which O.T. prophet was swallowed by a great fish?
    a) Jonah
    b) Micah
    c) Joel
    d) Malachi

13) Who was Moses' father-in-law?
    a) Jethro
    b) Daniel
    c) Aaron
    d) Laban

14) Which Old Testament prophet wrote, "Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel"?
    a) Malachi
    b) Hezekiah
    c) Nahum
    d) Isaiah

15) Who built the first Temple?
    a) Solomon
    b) Noah
    c) David
    d) Saul

16) God caused how many plagues in Egypt?
    a) 12
    b) 100
    c) 10
    d) 30
17) Which book records the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem in 52 days?
   
a) Joshua  
b) Malachi  
c) Nehemiah  
d) Genesis

18) What was the name of the woman Judge of Israel?
   
a) Deborah  
b) Jezebel  
c) Eve  
d) Ruth

19) Which Old Testament Prophet wrote about a valley full of dry bones?
   
a) Habakkuk  
b) Ezekiel  
c) Joel  
d) Isaiah

20) What sign did God give to show that He would never destroy the world by water again?
   
a) Fire  
b) Rainbow  
c) Earthquake  
d) Famine

21) Which O.T. prophet wrote about sowing the wind and reaping the whirlwind?
   
a) Amos  
b) Job  
c) Hosea  
d) Micah

22) Pharaoh commanded that every son born to the Israelites be

23) Who is the father of the Edomites?
   
a) Josiah  
b) Moses  
c) Esau  
d) Edom

24) Who was the wisest man of the Old Testament?
   
a) Cain  
b) Ezekiel  
c) Solomon  
d) Methuselah

25) Which O.T. prophetic book predicts the birthplace of the Messiah?
   
a) Jonah  
b) Isaiah  
c) Song of Solomon  
d) Micah

26) Who hid the spies that Joshua sent?
   
a) Miriam  
b) Eve  
c) Rahab  
d) Mary
27) Which city did God destroy when the Israelites marched around it seven times on the seventh day?
   a) Bethlehem
   b) Jericho
   c) Cairo
   d) Jerusalem

28) What did Gideon place on the threshing floor to receive a sign from God?
   a) Fleece
   b) Coins
   c) Bible
   d) Water

29) The Jubilee fell on what year?
   a) 1st
   b) 50th
   c) 70th
   d) 25th

30) What O.T. prophet declares that his people are destroyed for lack of knowledge?
   a) Hosea
   b) John
   c) Nahum
   d) Zechariah

31) What was the first plague God caused in Egypt?
   a) Water to blood
   b) Ice
   c) Fire
   d) Lice

32) Ruth was from what country?
   a) Egypt
   b) Israel
   c) Cyprus
   d) Moab

33) What was the name of Israel's first king?
   a) Saul
   b) Solomon
   c) Abraham
   d) Hezekiah

34) Who was the first murderer?
   a) Abimelech
   b) Saul of Tarsus
   c) Abel
   d) Cain

35) The Israelites were slaves for 400 years in which country?
   a) Babylon
   b) Moab
   c) Egypt
   d) Assyria

36) The Tabernacle was covered by a pillar of fire by night and what by day?
   a) Water
   b) Cloud
   c) Gold
   d) Vines
37) Which prophet said, “You are the man”?

a) Saul  
b) Nathan  
c) Nebuchadnezzar  
d) Lot

38) Of the twelve spies sent into the land of Canaan only Joshua and ______ brought back a favorable report that the land could be conquered.

a) Caleb  
b) Moses  
c) Lot  
d) Abraham

39) On what day were man and woman created?

a) Sixth  
b) First  
c) Second  
d) Seventh

40) Which O.T. prophet was thrown into a lion’s den?

a) Daniel  
b) Hosea  
c) Nahum  
d) Isaiah

41) What was the name of Abraham and Sarah’s promised son?

a) Isaac  
b) Jethro  
c) Joseph  
d) Moses

42) What was the name of the king of Persia who allowed Judah to return from captivity to Jerusalem?

a) Josiah  
b) Solomon  
c) Herod the Great  
d) Cyrus

43) What animal asked Balaam, “What have I done to you that you have struck me these three times”?

a) Camel  
b) Snake  
c) Monkey  
d) Donkey

44) Who was the brother of Moses?

a) Samuel  
b) Abraham  
c) Gideon  
d) Aaron

45) The author of the book of Genesis was?

a) David  
b) Solomon  
c) Moses  
d) John the Baptist

46) How many years did the Israelites wander in the wilderness?

a) 100  
b) 40  
c) 7  
d) 1
47) How many books are in the Old Testament?
   a) 39
   b) 30
   c) 27
   d) 66

48) What prophet prophesied during Ahab’s reign?
   a) John
   b) Caleb
   c) Job
   d) Elijah

49) What kind of fire did Nadab and Abihu offer?
   a) Yellow
   b) Hot
   c) Strange
   d) Artificial

50) What caused Samson’s strength to leave him?
   a) Cut his hair
   b) Ate unclean food
   c) Got drunk
   d) Committed adultery

51) Who wrote most of the books of the New Testament?
   a) Paul
   b) Jesus
   c) Apollos
   d) John

52) How many missionary journeys did Paul take?
   a) 7
   b) 10
   c) 3
   d) 12

53) What was Jesus’ first recorded miracle?
   a) Walked on water
   b) Healed the leper
   c) Turned water to wine
   d) Raised Lazarus from the dead

54) How old was Jesus when He began His public ministry?
   a) About 30
   b) 20
   c) About 50
   d) 12

55) In which book do we read, “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us”? 
   a) John
   b) 2 Timothy
   c) Matthew
   d) Acts

56) Who appeared to Saul of Tarsus on the Damascus road?
   a) Holy Spirit
   b) Good Samaritan
   c) Samaritan woman
   d) Jesus
57) The church began on which Jewish feast day?
   a) Sabbath  
   b) Passover  
   c) Purim  
   d) Pentecost

58) Peter instructed those on the day of Pentecost to “repent and be ____________.”
   a) Strong  
   b) Faithful  
   c) Cheerful  
   d) Baptized

59) Who said, “Behold the Lamb of God?”
   a) John the Baptist  
   b) David  
   c) Wise men  
   d) Shepherds

60) Who is the head of the New Testament church?
   a) The preacher  
   b) Elders  
   c) Christ  
   d) Christians

61) What was the name of Jesus’ cousin who “prepared His way”?
   a) Isaiah  
   b) Luke  
   c) John the Baptist  
   d) Saul

62) What was the name of the place where Jesus was crucified?
   a) Garden of Gethsemane  
   b) Tartarus  
   c) Gehenna  
   d) Golgotha

63) Who was forced to carry Jesus’ Cross?
   a) Caiphas  
   b) Roman Soldier  
   c) Simon of Cyrene  
   d) Simon Peter

64) Who was king when Jesus was born?
   a) Josiah  
   b) Nero  
   c) David  
   d) Herod

65) What was the name of the man who loved to have the preeminence in the church?
   a) Job  
   b) Diotrophes  
   c) Demas  
   d) Peter

66) The apostles were to be witnesses to Jesus first in which city?
   a) Bethlehem  
   b) Rome  
   c) Jerusalem  
   d) Nazareth
67) What was the name of Mary and Martha's brother that Jesus resurrected from the dead?
   a) Philemon
   b) Lazarus
   c) Laban
   d) Onesimus

68) Who said, "Did you not know that I must be about My Father's business"?
   a) Joseph
   b) Jesus
   c) Paul
   d) Mary

69) Jesus grew up in which town?
   a) Jerusalem
   b) Capernaum
   c) Nazareth
   d) Bethany

70) What is the name of the place Jesus went to pray before He was crucified?
   a) Calvary
   b) Garden of Gethsemane
   c) Bethany
   d) Temple

71) Who said, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God"?
   a) Jesus
   b) Peter
   c) James
   d) Luke

72) Where did Joseph and Mary take the young child Jesus to avoid his murder?
   a) Spain
   b) Samaria
   c) Egypt
   d) Nazareth

73) What is the Christian to put on to be able to stand against the wiles of the devil?
   a) Coat of many colors
   b) Whole armor of God
   c) Modest dress
   d) Baptism

74) Where was Jesus born?
   a) Bethlehem
   b) Rome
   c) Nazareth
   d) Jerusalem

75) What was Matthew's occupation?
   a) Preacher
   b) Tax collector
   c) Prophet
   d) Farmer

76) The wages of sin is?
   a) Greed
   b) Hell
   c) Mammon
   d) Death
77) How many books are there in the New Testament?  
   a) 12  
   b) 66  
   c) 27  
   d) 39

78) Jesus said our treasures should be stored (laid up) where?  
   a) Heart  
   b) Heaven  
   c) Church  
   d) Mansions

79) Who asked Jesus "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?"?  
   a) Rich young ruler  
   b) Cornelius  
   c) Nicodemus  
   d) Martha

80) Which church did Jesus describe as lukewarm?  
   a) Philadelphia  
   b) Laodicca  
   c) Galatia  
   d) Sardis

81) Who taught the Ethiopian treasurer about Jesus?  
   a) Paul  
   b) Jesus  
   c) Philip  
   d) Luke

82) How many apostles did Jesus originally have?  
   a) 21  
   b) 12  
   c) 7  
   d) 3

83) Faith without what is dead?  
   a) Peace  
   b) Works  
   c) Love  
   d) Righteousness

84) God's ________ is "living and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword"?  
   a) Knife  
   b) Anger  
   c) Tongue  
   d) Word

85) Who is the author and finisher of our faith?  
   a) Paul  
   b) Jesus  
   c) Holy Spirit  
   d) Scribes

86) What does the bread represent in the Lord's Supper (communion)?  
   a) Jesus' blood  
   b) Jesus' body  
   c) The church  
   d) The Word
87) The fullest account of the Sermon on the Mount is found in which book?
   a) Matthew  
   b) Revelation  
   c) Romans  
   d) Acts

88) Jesus resurrected on which day of the week?
   a) Wednesday  
   b) Monday  
   c) Saturday  
   d) Sunday

89) Who did Jesus predict would deny Him three times before the rooster crowed?
   a) Judas  
   b) Thomas  
   c) Peter  
   d) Pilate

90) To whom was Peter referring when he said, "This is the stone which was rejected by you builders, which has become the chief cornerstone."
   a) Foolish man  
   b) Himself  
   c) Jesus  
   d) Gentiles

91) In the Parable of the Seed and the Sower what does the seed represent?
   a) Love  
   b) Word of God  
   c) People  
   d) World

92) To whom did Jesus say "...whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst"?
   a) Good Samaritan  
   b) Ethiopian eunuch  
   c) Thief on the Cross  
   d) Samaritan woman

93) Who climbed a sycamore tree to see Jesus?
   a) Zacchaeus  
   b) The Serpent  
   c) Absalom  
   d) Amos

94) To whom did Aquila and Priscilla explain the way of God more accurately?
   a) Paul  
   b) Nicodemus  
   c) Apollos  
   d) John

95) Who is "the Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End"?
   a) Jesus  
   b) Adam  
   c) The Father  
   d) Mary

96) "For by ________ have you been saved through faith."
   a) Grace  
   b) Hope  
   c) Works  
   d) Blood
97) Who "washed his hands" of Jesus' death?
   a) Herod
   b) Agrippa
   c) Pontius Pilate
   d) Nero

98) Who was the first Christian martyr?
   a) Stephen
   b) Paul
   c) John the Baptist
   d) James

99) What did Jesus predict would happen to the Son of Man on the third day after His death?
   a) He would be buried
   b) He would be denied
   c) He would be raised up
   d) He would ascend into heaven

100) How many gospel accounts are there?
   a) 1
   b) 10
   c) 3
   d) 4