Religion and Family Life among Seventh-day Adventists

ROGER L. DUDLEY AND MARGARET G. DUDLEY*

Five studies are reviewed which explore relationships between religion and family life among members of the Seventh-day Adventist church in the United States and Canada. The tension between social learning and emancipation theories provide the basis for explaining the extent to which family practices influence the religious behavior of offspring. At the same time, intrinsic-extrinsic orientations to religion provide clues as to how religion influences family satisfaction. Studies on adolescent religious alienation, frequency of family worship, transmission of values, youth retention in the church, and marital satisfaction are reviewed within the theoretical framework outlined.

In their search for those factors which influence human behavior, social scientists have had to take into account the area of religion. While there has been vigorous debate as to the nature of the religious influence, some arguing that it is negative and destructive to human personality (Ellis, 1977), others seeing it as constructive (Mowrer, 1961), there is no doubt that it is widespread and deeply rooted in the human experience.

A review of the literature by Gorsuch (1976) revealed over 20 studies in which religion predicted behaviors in the areas of race relations, sexual behavior, and use of illicit drugs. Quakers were more likely to have antiwar attitudes than those of other religions (Connors, Leonard, & Burnham, 1968); people who were liberal in politics tended to be more liberal in religion (Hadden, 1963; Johnson, 1966); and degree of orthodoxy of religious beliefs has been reported to be associated with degree of authoritarianism and anti-Semitism (Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswik, Levinson, & Sanford, 1950; Glock & Stark, 1966).

Another important set of variables are those concerning the family (D'Antonio & Aldous, 1983). Virtually all people begin life in a family of origin, and the majority establish some sort of family of their own upon reaching adulthood. How do religion and family life relate to each other?

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RELIGION AND FAMILY LIFE

Early research in this field employed rather rough measures of religiosity. For example, Lenski (1961) found that fertility and divorce rates differed among the three classifications of Protestant, Catholic, and Jew. Peterson (1964) reported that marital adjustment varied among those belonging to liberal religious groups, those in institutional-authoritarian groups, and those in the no-church group.

More recently, multidimensional measures of religiosity have been employed. Marital adjustment or satisfaction has been related to church attendance patterns (Kunz & Albrecht, 1977), salience of religion (Schumm, Bollman, & Jurich, 1982), personal prayer (Gruner, 1985), churches that emphasized religious conversion and greater emotional participation in public services (Snider, 1971), and religious independents versus those with church affiliations (Bock & Radelet, 1988). Hunt and King (1978) found six religious variables to be clearly related to marital satisfaction: organizational activity, extrinsic religious motivation, tolerance of others, creedal assent, orientation to growth and striving, and religious agreement between the couple.

Shrum (1980) reported that the more frequent the church-attendance pattern, the higher the rate for intact marriages and the lower the rate for divorce and separation. McCutcheon (1988) demonstrated that denominations vary in their rates of religious intermarriage.

As to adolescents, religion has been found to be related to drug usage (R. Dudley, Mutch, & Cruise, 1987) and premarital sex (Woodroof, 1985). The religious activity of parents influenced the religious activity of their adolescent children (Kieren & Munro, 1987; Potvin & Sloane, 1985). Hoge, Petrillo, and Smith (1982) discovered that value transmission was strongest in families where the parents had definite religious beliefs, agreed on them, and carried out conscious religious socialization in the home. Johnson (1973) found that students who accepted their parents' religious values perceived their families as happier, warmer, and more accepting than did students who rejected these values.

Some studies have looked at religion and family life within a particular religious community rather than across denominational lines. For example, within the Mormon church Heaton (1986) explored religion and fertility, and Johnson, Duke, Eberley, and Sartain (1988) investigated wives' employment status and marital happiness.

How might the relationship between religion and family life be explained? To begin with, "there is an inherently conservative aspect to religion" because "religious symbols link the believers' present experience with meanings derived from the group's tradition" (McGuire, 1987, p. 190). Religious groups seek to transmit their community values to their offspring. Some of the most important of these values concern the structure and interactions of the family.

While the social mechanisms linking religious ideology and familial behavior are varied and complex, social learning theory (Gage & Berliner, 1979) offers one helpful framework. Through observation of our social world, through cognitive interpretations of that world, and through reinforcements or punishments of our responses in that world, attitudes and behaviors are learned and are carried through into adulthood.

"The influence of religion begins when parents use religious values in socializing their children. Religious rites mark major events in the life cycle including puberty, marriage, births of children, and death. Religion regulates premarital sexual behavior,
mate selection, family size, and marital stability. Religious orthodoxy on issues such as sexual behavior and male authority may also be a source of stress in family relationships.” (Heaton & Goodman, 1985, p. 344) Through the process of internalization, the child eventually comes to view the norms as his or her own. Control by others is replaced by self-control.

Dean Kelley (1977) has proposed that the difference between churches that are growing in membership and those that are declining can be found in their commitment and strictness. Since the business of religion is to explain the meaning of life in ultimate terms, those churches that demonstrate their seriousness by the strength of their demands are most likely to attract the attention of those seeking the answers to existential questions. If this principle applies to individuals as well as to churches, we might expect that parents who hold values that impact widely on their lifestyles and who are more committed to them will be more successful in transmitting these values to their children.

On the other hand, while social learning theory would lead to the conclusion that young people will choose religious values similar to those of their parents, the tendency of adolescents to rebel from parental standards is apparent. Emancipation theory (Dudley & Dudley, 1986) helps to explain this contrast. Each developmental stage has its own particular tasks and challenges (Erikson, 1963). Among the tasks of adolescence are gaining emotional and economic independence from parents and forming separate and personal identities. With the prolongation of adolescence in modern technological societies, young people who reach physical and sexual maturity in the early teens, but who may be years away from emotional and economic maturity, are likely to make a psychological statement of independence by rejecting important parental values, some of which may deal with religion and family practices.

Thus two contrasting theories propose two tendencies. One would incline youth to adopt parental values as their own while the other would lead them to reject these values. While the results of both theories can be seen in most young people, we propose that the relative strength of the tendencies will depend on the quality of the relationships formed between the youth and their parents or other religious authority figures. Several of the studies to be reviewed illustrate this point.

This construct leads naturally into another perspective. While family practices influence religion, does type of religion influence quality of family life? Are reciprocal influences occurring? McGuire (1987) has stated that religious orientations influence power relationships, ideals of married love, the degree of interpersonal communication, allocation of tasks and resources, decision making, and rewards in marriage. From a theoretical standpoint, the difference in religious orientations as pioneered by Gordon Allport (1950, 1966) is helpful.

Allport (1950) began his work by attempting to distinguish between mature and immature religiosity. The mature personality is characterized by three attributes: the ability to look beyond self-interest and self-gratification, the ability to see self from another’s point of view, and a unity of personality which is a result of all experience. Later, these constructs were developed into extrinsic and intrinsic orientations to religion (Allport, 1966). In contrast to extrinsic religiosity which is “strictly utilitarian: useful for the self in granting safety, social standing, solace, and endorsement for one’s chosen way of life,... the intrinsic form of the religious sentiment regards faith as a supreme value in its own right... A religious sentiment of this sort floods the whole life with motivation and meaning. Religion is no longer limited to single segments of self-interest.” (p. 455)
People who have an intrinsic orientation or who are more religiously mature are less selfish and more considerate of the needs of others. They are more tolerant of differing ideas and behaviors (Dudley & Cruise, in press). Therefore, they generally make “better” marriage partners and parents. We would propose then that those parents possessing intrinsic/mature religious qualities are more likely to find marital satisfaction and more likely to build the type of parent-child relationships that will facilitate values transmission. Several of the studies which follow explore these hypotheses.

The present paper confines itself to one religious group, the Seventh-day Adventist church. Adventists have traditionally made family-life concerns part of their religion. In fact, of their 27 Fundamental Beliefs, one concerns marriage and the family. It reads:

Marriage was divinely established in Eden and affirmed by Jesus to be a lifelong union between a man and a woman in loving companionship. For the Christian, a marriage commitment is to God as well as to the spouse, and should be entered into only between partners who share a common faith. Mutual love, honor, respect, and responsibility are the fabric of this relationship, which is to reflect the love, sanctity, closeness, and permanence of the relationship between Christ and His church. Regarding divorce, Jesus taught that the person who divorces a spouse, except for fornication, and marries another, commits adultery. Although some family relationships may fall short of the ideal, marriage partners who fully commit themselves to each other in Christ may achieve loving unity through the guidance of the Spirit and the nurture of the church. God blesses the family and intends that its members shall assist each other toward complete maturity. Parents are to bring up their children to love and obey the Lord. By their example and the words they are to teach them that Christ is a loving disciplinarian, ever tender and caring, who wants them to become members of His body, the family of God. Increasing family closeness is one of the earmarks of the final gospel message. (Ministerial Assn., 1988, p. 294)

This review will summarize some of the more significant research relating religion to family life among Seventh-day Adventists. It does not presume to be exhaustive but selects five studies that address the theoretical issues previously mentioned.

In correlational studies the choice of the dependent variable often is made arbitrarily according to the objectives of the researchers. Correlation does not determine causation, and it is not always easy to determine the direction of influence when two variables are found to be related, or even if the mutual varying might not be the result of other unmeasured factors. Thus, one might look for the effects of religion on family life or for the effects of family life on religion. One of the following studies was structured with the former purpose in mind, and four with the latter.

TEENAGE RELIGIOUS ALIENATION AND THE FAMILY

Dudley (1978a, 1978b) surveyed 400 students chosen by a stratified random method (schools selected from geographic regions proportionate to Adventist membership in those areas) from among all students enrolled in Seventh-day Adventist secondary schools in the United States, achieving a 100% response rate. Each young person was asked to complete the Youth Perceptual Inventory, an instrument especially constructed for the study, which consisted of 16 Likert-type attitude scales. One scale measured alienation from religion—the dependent variable; the others measured the independent variables.
In this sample, 68.5% of the youth had parents who were married and lived together, 23.5% came from homes divided by divorce or separation, and 8% came from homes marked by the death of a parent. The 23.5% divorce rate was nearly twice that reported by Crider and Kistler (1979) in a survey of over 2000 Adventist members from 46 different geographical locations, but the former rate may be closer to the truth. Intact homes were the rule with the latter group where 81% reported that they had been married only once and were still living with their original spouses. Only 12% indicated that they had experienced divorce or its functional equivalent. Comparison with other data, however, led Crider and Kistler to suggest that the true figure might be closer to 15-17%. They speculated that their adults might be hesitant to admit to a divorce since the practice has been historically frowned upon by the church. Presumably, the youth would be more frank in their disclosures.

While some of the independent variables dealt with school-related attitudes and understandings of the Adventist faith, seven of them were concerned with areas of family life. Six of these were found to be significantly correlated with alienation from religion. They were, in descending order of strength, as follows: (1) relationship with parent, (2) authoritarianism perceived in parents, (3) family harmony, (4) sincerity of parents' religious profession, (5) emancipation from parents achieved, and (6) harshness of parental discipline.

All of these scales represent the perceptions of the adolescents and did not attempt to measure the families directly. In every case the high score was the negative attitude involved. Thus, those youth who perceived their relationships with their parents as poor, saw their parents as authoritarian, sensed a lack of harmony in their families, believed their parents to be insincere or hypocritical in their religious expressions, felt unemancipated in the growing-up process, and perceived their parents to be harsh disciplinarians were more likely to be alienated from religion—both in general and from the Adventist church.

A multiple regression analysis with all 15 predictor variables regressed on alienation from religion explained 52% of the alienation variance. Because of considerable overlap among the predictors, only two family-life variables were able to make a significant contribution in this particular equation. The quality of relationships with parents was significant at the .01 level, and the perceptions of the harshness of parental discipline was significant at the .05 level.

A separate stepwise multiple regression on alienation from religion was performed, using only the six significant family-life variables. Four variables were chosen as making a significant contribution, explaining 19% of the alienation variance. In order of importance they were: relationships with parents, authoritarianism in parents, harshness of parental discipline, and sincerity of parental religious experience.

Thus, there are family-life factors that are related to attitudes toward religion on the part of teenagers, whether religion is conceived of as personal experience or response to the community of faith adhered to by the parents. While a study of this type cannot determine direction of causation, logic suggests that altering family-life practices is more likely to prove fruitful than is reducing teenage alienation in order to have happier families.

Parents who seek harmonious relationships with their children, who are democratic in their family government, who live what they preach in their religious and moral lives, who aid their teenagers toward responsible self-government, who use loving but firm disciplinary measures, and who, above all, seek to promote peace and cooperation...
Among the members of the family are more likely to have offspring who reach their adolescent years with personal religious faith and positive attitudes toward the religious community of their elders. In other words, parents who model those qualities associated with mature or intrinsic religion tend to be more effective at religious socialization and are better able to direct the process of emancipation into constructive expressions.

FAMILY WORSHIP AND ITS CORRELATES

The Institute of Church Ministry at Andrews University conducted a church growth study which collected questionnaires from 8,223 Seventh-day Adventists who were members of 149 randomly selected churches in the United States and Canada (all members present at a given worship service were surveyed). The family worship data from this study were then analyzed and published by Youngberg and Youngberg (1983). In this study, 28% revealed that they have daily family worship, and 20.3% stated that they usually have family worship. These two groups were combined to make up the family worshipers (48.3%). The non-family worshipers (51.7%) were those who sometimes or never participated in family worship. These data compare closely with Crider and Kistler (1979), who reported that 34% of the homes claimed to conduct regular family worship with another 18% conducting it on an irregular basis (mostly weekends) for a total of 52%.

Youngberg and Youngberg (1983) then compared the family worshipers with the non-family worshipers on personal devotional habits. As shown in Table 1, the family worshipers scored higher on each of these items.

Table 1 Comparison of Devotional Practices Between Family Worshipers and Non-Family Worshipers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Practice</th>
<th>Family Worshipers</th>
<th>Non-family Worshipers</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Daily personal Bible Study</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daily prayer for conversion of specific people</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regular study of Ellen White books</td>
<td>50*5</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meet regularly with a small study or fellowship group</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

13972 members who always or usually have family worship
24251 members who never or only occasionally have family worship
3Ellen White was one of the founders of the Adventist church. Members regard her as having had the gift of prophecy, and her books are read for spiritual counsel and inspiration.
Respondents were given an opportunity to self-rate themselves (Likert scale 1-5) on their perceived relationship with Jesus Christ, assurance that they were right with God, and knowledge of what spiritual gifts they possessed. In each area, at least 18% more of the family worshipers rated themselves higher than did the non-family worshipers. The researchers also indicated that family worshipers consistently expressed a more positive attitude toward their church. These respondents indicated a higher regard for their pastor, his sermons, his wife, and for their fellow church members. The family worshipers were more involved in giving Bible studies, community outreach, financial support for this outreach, and helping neighbors with their personal problems.

Family worship alone is not the only variable that contributes to a vibrant Christian experience, but it apparently provides a vehicle for religious socialization within a shared family experience. The Youngberg and Youngberg analysis revealed that along with family worship a cluster of spiritual dynamics appeared which were related to a more religiously committed lifestyle. The researchers wondered what would happen to the spiritual life of the church if every family, as compared to the present 48.3%, were to participate in daily family worship.

TRANSMISSION OF RELIGIOUS VALUES FROM PARENTS TO ADOLESCENTS

A research effort by Dudley and Dudley (1986) on 21 churches randomly selected from Seventh-day Adventist congregations with memberships over 500 in the United States yielded 712 individual surveys (218 triads and 29 dyads). Father-mother-youth triads (from intact homes) were asked to complete surveys showing amount of agreement with religious value statements.

In accordance with social learning theory, it was hypothesized that the stated religious values of individual adolescents within this group would tend to resemble those of their particular parents. That is, more traditional parents (who are in agreement on religious values) will tend to rear more traditional children, and less traditional parents will tend to rear less traditional children.

On the other hand, in accordance with emancipation theory, adolescents are faced with the developmental task of establishing separate and personal identities. In this process, rejection of parental values often occurs as a result of the adolescent's effort to make a statement of independence. Teenagers may adopt values quite different from their parents in their efforts to place a deliberate or subconscious psychological distance between the generations. Therefore, it was expected that the adolescents as a group would tend to be less traditional than their parents.

A Value Attitude Scale (VAS) was constructed from 20 of the items on the questionnaire with a reliability coefficient of .85. The emancipation theory hypotheses which concerned differences were tested by t-tests for correlated means. The social learning theory hypotheses which concerned similarities were tested by Pearson product moment correlations. In order to preserve the dyad data, youth and mothers were analyzed separately from youth and fathers. For the multiple regression analysis which determined the best predictors of the VAS, the common data was combined from the 218 triads.

Significant differences (emancipation theory) were found between youth and their parents on the VAS and a majority of the individual items. Mothers were the most
traditional, fathers less than mothers, and youth less traditional than either mothers or fathers. A definite generation gap concerning values exists.

Significant similarities (social learning theory) were found between youth and their parents on the VAS and a majority of the individual items. The correlations between youth and mothers were somewhat stronger than between youth and fathers. In spite of the generation gap, youth tended to resemble their parents in religious values held. While they leaned toward the non-traditional end of the scale, they were more likely to vary with their parents on the traditional to non-traditional continuum.

The multiple regression analysis revealed that three predictors (mother VAS, father VAS, and whether youth was baptized member) were significantly related to the Youth Value Attitude Scale, explaining 27% of its variance. The values of the mothers were stronger predictors of the values of the youth than were the values of fathers. This supports the literature that suggests that mothers have greater influence on the development of values in their offspring than do fathers (Acock & Bengston, 1978; Newcomb & Svehla, 1937). Individual youth were somewhat more likely to vary on the traditional continuum with the mother than with the father. Yet when analyzed as a group, there was a greater difference between youth and mothers than between youth and fathers.

When parents were not in agreement on religious values, the adolescents were more likely to agree with the fathers than the mothers. Since mothers tended to be most traditional, youth least traditional, and fathers in between, in those cases where parents disagreed between themselves, youth were more likely to resemble the less-traditional parent—that is, the father. This would suggest that if mothers want to be effective in transmitting their values to their adolescents, both of the parents need to be in agreement on values they consider to be important.

THE FAMILY AND THE FUTURE OF THE CHURCH

Kangas (1988) conducted a study for the North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists, surveying 1511 15 and 16-year-old youth (64% response rate) from 659 Adventist churches in the United States and Canada selected by a stratified random method (number of churches selected proportionate to membership in a geographic region). This was the first, or baseline, year of a 10-year longitudinal study on youth retention in the Adventist Church. Her lengthy questionnaire included items on religious attitudes such as future intentions to remain in the Adventist church, happiness with religion, importance of religion, etc. It also included items on the family such as marital status of the home, religiously divided homes, closeness of family relationships, participation in family worship, etc.

About 65% of the teenagers came from homes where both parents were Adventists. In the other 35%, one or both parents were non-members. Does this make a difference in youth attitudes? The two groups were contrasted as to extent of agreement on seven key items concerning religious attitudes and future intentions. Table 2 shows the results.

In every case, those who came from religiously intact homes were more positive toward religion and the church. Happiness with religion and intention to remain Adventists both showed ten-point differences. Also, those from united homes were significantly more likely to desire to marry Adventists than were the others. When both parents were Adventists, there was a greater chance that the teenager would remain in the church 10 years later.
Table 2 Comparison of Attitudes Between Teenagers From Homes Where Both Parents Are SDA and Homes Where They are Not

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Agree Both Parents Adventists</th>
<th>Agree Both Parents Not Adventists</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Religion important in life</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Love experience with Jesus</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be the best Adventist Christian possible</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Happy with my religion</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rebellious toward my religion</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intend to remain an Adventist</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never belong to another denomination</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1987 Teenagers whose parents are both Adventist
1.507 Teenagers whose parents are not both Adventists

Parents are teaching the same values, the united religious influence is stronger than if the teenagers are weighing the value systems of each separately. The religious socialization is more focused, hence more effective, when it represents a complete family unit rather than an isolated parent in a two-parent family.

What about the marital status of the parents? Of these teenagers, 68% came from homes where their biological parents were still married and living together, 27% had parents who were separated or divorced, and 5% of the cases came from families where parents had died. The divorce rate was very close to the 23.5% found by Dudley (1978a, 1978b) over a decade earlier. While precise figures are very difficult to obtain, this large, representative study suggests that over one fourth of Adventist homes have experienced this tragedy.

Does the structure of the family make a difference? A contrast of those from intact homes with those from divided homes on the same seven key items used for religiously divided homes is shown in Table 3.

On every item those from intact homes were more positive toward the church than those from divided homes. The spread was not great, but it ran to seven or eight percentage points on four of the items, including happiness with religion and intention to remain Adventists, a difference that was statistically significant. Those from intact homes were also significantly more likely to desire to marry Adventists. While it is not the entire answer, an intact home plays a role in retaining youth within the church.
The youth were asked to rate certain items as to their helpfulness on their personal spiritual experience. "What I learned at home" was rated helpful by 85%; "What I learned at church," by 79%; and "What I learned at school," by 54%. On another set, the members of the home family were rated helpful by 74%, the church family, by 55%, and the school family, by 35%. Finally, the spiritual commitment of the parents was rated helpful by 70%, that of the pastor, by 66%, and that of teachers, by 50%. The first-place position of the home on all three sets is noteworthy. Home and parents seem to be the strongest influences on the attitudes of adolescents by a number of different measures.

RELIGIOSITY AND MARITAL SATISFACTION

Seventh-day Adventists married and living with their spouses were selected for the study conducted by Dudley (1988) from four midwestern states by means of a systematic sequential computerized program (every 34th name on a regional church paper mailing list). The data for this research were taken from the 228 usable questionnaires that were received.

The purpose of this study was to determine the extent to which multidimensional religiosity contributed to marital satisfaction for Seventh-day Adventists. A 63-item research instrument was constructed from several intact scales as well as modified scales to measure ideology, religious experience, salience, intrinsic-extrinsic orientation, public and private ritualistic practices, and congruence.

Table 3 Comparison of Attitudes Between Teenagers From Intact and Divided Homes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Agree(^1) Intact Homes</th>
<th>Agree(^2) Divided Homes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Religion important in life</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Love Experience with Jesus</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be the best Adventist Christian possible</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Happy with my religion</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rebellious toward my religion</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intend to remain an Adventist</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never belong to another denomination</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^1\) 1032 teenagers whose biological parents are still married and together  
\(^2\) 397 teenagers whose biological parents are separated or divorced
The Locke-Wallace Short Marital Adjustment Test (Locke and Wallace, 1959), the dependent scale in this study, contains a question in which participants indicate on a seven-point continuum their degree of happiness or unhappiness. The three points that range between very unhappy and unhappy were checked by 22.8% of the participants, and the four points that range between happy and perfectly happy were checked by 77.2%.

A multiple regression analysis revealed a number of statistically significant relationships between religiosity and marital satisfaction. At \( p < .0001 \) were family worship and perceived congruence with spouse on religiosity and church attendance; at \( p < .01 \) were intrinsic orientation and private ritualistic practices; at \( p < .05 \) were religious experience, public ritualistic practices, and salience of religion.

The religious variables explained or predicted 32% of the variance on the marital satisfaction scores. When the religious and demographic variables (age, gender, years married, income, education, children at home) were analyzed together, the variance explained increased by only 2%.

A stepwise multiple regression analysis program revealed that the strongest predictors for marital satisfaction were the religious variables in which spouses shared religious activities. The individuals who indicated that their marriage partners were equally religious, attended church as often as they did, and engaged in family worship, were more likely to score higher on their marital satisfaction scores than those who did not share these religious experiences.

An open-ended question at the end of the instrument gave participants an opportunity to briefly state what effect religion had on their marital relationships. Of the 189 who answered this question, 163 stated that it had a positive effect. The main theme of these testimonials was that their religion made them more tolerant, helped them think of the needs of others, helped them resolve conflict, strengthened their marriages, helped them overlook flaws and be more loving, helped them be more forgiving, and helped them treat each other with respect. A number stated that if it had not been for the help that religion had given, their marriages would surely have ended in divorce. These are the traits that persons with an intrinsic religious orientation exhibit.

Of these 189 respondents, 28 volunteered that they were married to non-members. Fifteen of these or 54% indicated they were unhappily married; yet 75% of all spouses married to non-members testified that religion had a positive effect on their marriages. (Some of the unhappy married felt that their religious faith enabled them to cope with their unhappiness.)

This research would not seem to support those who claim that religion is divisive and destructive even though Seventh-day Adventists are experiencing marital problems and divorce as does the culture in which they exist. An overwhelming majority of the respondents claimed that their religion provided faith and strength to meet life's problems and challenges. By examining characteristics of marriages that are doing well, clues to strengthen marriages that need help should emerge. And the results of this research provide a place to begin finding these clues.

SUMMARY

While it is difficult to briefly draw together the multiple threads of the reported research, several themes stand out. Socialization into religious beliefs and practices...
takes place within a family setting. Adventist children, like those of other denominations, tend to adopt religious value systems resembling, to at least some degree, those of their parents. At the same time, the centrifugal force of emancipation tend to separate adolescents from the value systems of their parents. Whether emancipation will occur as a developmental part of socialization or an abrupt break with it will depend, at least partly, on family structures and practices. Here such factors as personal commitment of the parents, agreement on values between father and mother, worshiping together in the home, sincerity and example of the parents, quality of parent-youth relationships, loving discipline, and warmth of home climate seem to be important.

These studies support the theory that how adults are religious is more important than the fact or the intensity of being religious. Mature or intrinsic religiosity leads to a faith which informs the whole life and causes its adherents to be able to take the perspective of others with tolerance and loving concern. This in turn makes a difference as to marital satisfaction and family harmony, especially when these attitudes and behaviors are shared by the various family members. Thus, the way religion operates in the life may influence the satisfaction found in the marriage and the success of the process of socializing the younger generation in the value system of the family.

REFERENCES


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<th>Domestic</th>
<th>Foreign*</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individual</td>
<td>$30</td>
<td>$36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institution</td>
<td>$55</td>
<td>$61</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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