

## CHAPTER 23

# Religious and Spiritual Development

PAMELA EBSTYNE KING and CHRIS J. BOYATZIS

<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	975
<b>DEMOGRAPHICS OF ADOLESCENT RELIGIOUSNESS AND SPIRITUALITY</b>	976
<b>HISTORY OF THE STUDY OF CHILD AND ADOLESCENT RELIGION AND SPIRITUALITY</b>	978
<b>DEFINITIONS OF RELIGIOUS AND SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT IN CHILDHOOD AND ADOLESCENCE</b>	978
<b>THEORIES OF RELIGIOUS AND SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT IN CHILDHOOD AND ADOLESCENCE</b>	980
<b>Psychoanalytic and Attachment Approaches</b>	980
<b>Cognitive-Developmental Approaches</b>	981
<b>Faith Development Theory</b>	982
<b>Relational Developmental Systems Perspectives</b>	982
<b>Reciprocating Spirituality</b>	984
<b>CHILDHOOD AND RELIGION AND SPIRITUALITY</b>	984
<b>Cognitive-Developmental Approaches to Religious Cognition</b>	985
<b>A Social-Ecology Approach to Children's Religious and Spiritual Development</b>	987
<b>RELIGION IN THE FAMILY: THE VALUE OF MULTIPLE VARIABLES AND INTERACTION EFFECTS</b>	989
<b>Children's Religiousness, Spirituality, and Well-Being</b>	990
<b>ADOLESCENCE AND RELIGIOUS AND SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT</b>	993
<b>Adolescent Development and Religion and Spirituality</b>	993
<b>Adolescent Religious Development</b>	994
<b>Adolescent Spiritual Development</b>	995
<b>Social Ecology of Influences on Adolescent Religiousness and Spirituality</b>	997
<b>Potential Influences of Religion and Spirituality on Adolescent Development</b>	1002
<b>Positive Youth Development and Adolescent Religiousness and Spirituality</b>	1004
<b>NEGATIVE ASPECTS OF RELIGION AND SPIRITUALITY</b>	1010
<b>INTEGRATIVE COMMENTS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS</b>	1011
<b>Relational and Reciprocating Spirituality</b>	1011
<b>Are Religion and Spirituality Good for Children and Adolescents?</b>	1011
<b>Children's "Horizontal" Spirituality and Growth Toward Reciprocal Relationality</b>	1011
<b>Building a Better Mousetrap: Improving Our Methodologies</b>	1012
<b>Why Not Organized Religion?</b>	1013
<b>CONCLUSIONS</b>	1014
<b>REFERENCES</b>	1014

## INTRODUCTION

Religion and spirituality have long been integral in the human experience. Fittingly, some of psychology's early giants wrestled with the religious and spiritual impulse, such as James' (1902/1982) deep exploration of religious and spiritual experience and Freud's (1927/1961) dismissal of religion as a universal neurosis. The field's early turn to objectivist, positivist science and the rise of behaviorism contributed to a neglect of religiosity and spirituality in empirical psychology. This neglect has occurred in

developmental science as well. But times have changed, as reflected dramatically by the first-ever inclusion in 2006 of a chapter on religion and spirituality in the *Handbook of Child Psychology*. (In contrast, the 1998 edition had a mere handful of references to religious or spiritual topics.) The 2006 chapter, "Religious and Spiritual Development Throughout the Life Span," by Oser, Scarlett, and Bucher, emphasized a theoretical life-span approach, appropriate for its position in *Volume 1: Theoretical Models of Human Development*. In light of burgeoning research on these

topics, this chapter is situated in the more research-focused *Volume 3: Socioemotional Processes*.

Our chapter reviews current knowledge on child and adolescent religiousness and spirituality and presents a vision for the future. We examine theoretical frameworks but focus on the recent explosion of findings on religion and spirituality in childhood and adolescence. As such, we first describe religious and spiritual development as unique domains of human development and explore how young people develop in both. Second, we discuss how religion and spirituality may serve as developmental systems or contexts that contribute distinctively to child and adolescent development.

We first discuss the field's recent growth and describe the demographic landscape of religion and spirituality in the lives of children and adolescents, in the United States in particular. We present data indicating that religion and spirituality are important aspects of the everyday lives of millions of young people in our world. We then move to the challenge of defining our terms—religious and spiritual development. Next, we examine major theoretical perspectives that are particularly helpful for understanding religious and spiritual development. We then devote most of the chapter to religion and spirituality in childhood and adolescence. We attempt to elucidate what religious and spiritual development entails and how religion and spirituality may matter in the lives of youth. Finally, we offer suggestions for a more integrative science of religious and spiritual development as well as map future directions for the field.

For several reasons we discuss children and adolescents separately. First, there is an ever-growing number of scholars and practitioners particularly interested in adolescence. Thus, developmental scientists have become increasingly age segregated, if you will, with the strong establishment of the Society for Research in Adolescence and many adolescence journals. Second, the designs and samples of studies are almost always age-segregated themselves; in fact, a distinct shortcoming of the field is the dearth of longitudinal or even cross-sectional studies spanning childhood and adolescence. Third, the foci of religion and spirituality research are different for the two age periods. Research on children is dominated by a cognitive-developmental orientation that examines how children *think* about religious topics (e.g., God) and a socialization orientation that focuses on the family and parent-child dynamics. In contrast, little work on adolescents examines their religious cognition, and the socialization approach is considerably broader, incorporating peers, ethnic issues, and other factors. Finally, in

contrast to the growing but still small amount of work on children's well-being in relation to religion and spirituality, extensive research on adolescents is concerned with religion and spirituality in association with psychosocial issues such as identity, thriving, risk, and resilience. Thus, when developmental scientists talk about children's and adolescents' religion and spirituality, they are often talking about different things.

At the outset, we want to note a couple of limitations of our chapter. The study of religious and spiritual development in children and adolescents has not, until recently, been anywhere close to a mainstream concern of scholars. Thus, in many ways the field is in its nascent stages. Consequently, the existing literature is limited in its scope. For instance, existing research is dominated by U.S. samples as well as Western assumptions regarding the self and human development. Given the unusually high rates of religiousness in the United States (Lippman & McIntosh, 2010) and the history of the field of psychology of religion within the American Psychological Association, it may not be surprising that the extant research comes largely from the United States, on American samples; hence our literature reflects this. That said, we do review studies from outside the United States as well as examine literature that focuses on many particular ethnic groups in the United States. In addition, the vast majority of research has focused on how religion and spirituality are associated with variables that are standard psychological outcomes (e.g., mental health, academic performance, substance use). Consequently, our review here says relatively little about how religion and spirituality may be linked in children and adolescents to more extreme negative outcomes, such as intergroup hostility, violence, or terrorism. We hope that future research may illuminate whether childhood and adolescent socialization experiences influence the odds for youths' involvement in such violent and antisocial acts, but for now the psychological literature is rather quiet on these matters within the age range that is the scope of our chapter.

## DEMOGRAPHICS OF ADOLESCENT RELIGIOUSNESS AND SPIRITUALITY

Across cultures and continents, many adolescents endorse strong religious beliefs (Lippman & McIntosh, 2010). One apparent trend is a de-emphasis on traditional religious values as countries became more developed, and another theme is the "clear imprint" of some countries' influential

religious traditions leading to higher rates of religiosity among youth.

Benson, Scales, Syvertsen, and Roehlkepartain (2012) conducted a “global portrait” of youth spirituality among 6,725 youth ages 12–25 spanning eight countries across five continents. Participants were invited through in-country research partner organizations to complete primarily web-based questionnaires. Although sampling was not random, efforts were made to represent a range of socioeconomic and educational backgrounds. The results suggested that spirituality and religion are relevant to many of the world’s youth. According to Benson, Scales, et al., 77% of youth indicated some type of religious affiliation, with Christianity the largest (49%), followed by Hinduism (15%), Islam (9%), Buddhism (2%), and “other religion” (2%). Approximately 18% of respondents indicated that they did not ascribe to any religious affiliation. Most participants indicated that the following aspects of spirituality were important life goals: following God or a higher power (61%), feeling close to God or a higher power (65%), and praying, meditating, and studying sacred texts (69%).

Major overviews of the literature demonstrate that religion and spirituality are prominent in children’s and adolescents’ psychological development (Pargament, Mahoney, Exline, Jones, & Shafranske, 2013; Roehlkepartain, King, Wagener, & Benson, 2006). The most representative study of religion in American youth documented that the vast majority of adolescents (84%) affiliate with one particular religious group (Smith & Denton, 2005). In terms of specific religious identifications, NSYR data show that most U.S. youth self-identify as Christian (75%) with 52% identifying as Protestant and 23% Catholic. In addition, 2.5% self-identity as Mormon, 1.5% as Jewish, 0.5% as Muslim, and another 1%–2% with other religions. Approximately 3% of adolescents self-identify with two different religions, likely due to the increase in interreligious marriages in U.S. society. The 16% minority of NSYR adolescents who did not report any religious identification were labeled *nonreligious*. Among these, most self-identified as “just not religious” (10%), “atheist” (1.5%), or “agnostic” (1.5%). The remaining 3% of “nonreligious youth” seemed uncertain, suggesting some adolescents may have “unexplored” religious identities. Some teenagers who did not identify with a religion were raised in a household where religion was present. Interview data suggested that intellectual skepticism and disbelief were the main reasons for lack of religious transmission in these homes.

Although “nonreligious” youth are a minority, this segment of youth is growing. According to ChildTrends

(2013) Monitoring the Future Data, during the 1990s the percentage of youth reporting that religion was very important in their lives fluctuated slightly, though in general it increased among all grades studied. But between 2000 and 2010, the share of youth who report such a role for religion decreased significantly, from 37% to 29% among 14-year-olds, 32% to 25% among 16-year-olds, and 32% to 27% among 18-year-olds. Thus, as in the adult population (Pew Forum, 2012), the numbers of religiously unaffiliated adolescents are increasing.

Perhaps the most studied variables indexing religiousness beyond religious self-identification is individuals’ self-rated importance of religion and frequency of attendance of religious services. These measures are often combined and globally referred to as religiosity or religiousness. (Combining these different kinds of variables may be problematic, as some index identity or beliefs and some index religious behavior, though the different measures are usually highly correlated.) Smith and Denton (2005) reported that about half of U.S. adolescents (Ages 13–17 years) indicate a strong and positive orientation to religion and faith in their lives and the other half have little or no regard for them. Recent analysis suggests that just more than a quarter of U.S. adolescents report that religion is “very important” to them (ChildTrends, 2013). ChildTrends noted that, despite a rise in youth who report attending a service once a week from 1991 to 2002, religious attendance decreased significantly between 2002 and 2010 for 14-, 16-, and 18-year-olds, dropping from 44% to 39%, 42% to 33%, and 35% to 30%, respectively.

Sex differences in adolescent religiousness and spirituality are consistently reported. ChildTrends (2013) reported a higher proportion of females responding that religion is very important in their lives. Specifically, in 2010, this gender gap increased slightly with age, from four percentage points among 14-year-olds, to five points among 16-year-olds, to seven among 18-year-olds. Similarly, Smith and Denton (2005) reported that, compared to adolescent boys, adolescent girls aged 13–17 years old were more religious on a broad spectrum of indices, as girls were more likely to: attend religious services, see religion as shaping their daily lives, have made a personal commitment to God, be involved in religious youth groups, pray alone, and feel closer to God. These differences remained after accounting for youths’ social backgrounds.

Consistent with national data on adults, African American adolescents were more likely than European American ones to report that religion played a very important role in their lives (ChildTrends, 2013). In 2010, 46% of

African American 18-year-olds reported that religion was very important whereas only 24% of European American adolescents did. Differences in lower grades were smaller but consistent. Latino 16-year-olds were slightly more likely than European American 10th graders to report that religion plays a very important role in their lives, but Latino students of other ages were not significantly different from European American students. Similarly, African American students reported higher rates of regular attendance than European American students, though the gap decreased with age. Compared to their European American peers, 14-year-old Latina/o American students reported lower rates of regular attendance but no significant attendance differences in 16- and 18-year-olds.

### HISTORY OF THE STUDY OF CHILD AND ADOLESCENT RELIGION AND SPIRITUALITY

In light of the role of religion and spirituality among contemporary children and adolescents, it is disconcerting that religion and spirituality have been so neglected within developmental science as contexts and domains of development. As we will indicate, these contexts seem to have a strong impact on child and adolescent well-being, prosocial and antisocial behavior, coping, values, sense of purpose, and identity. Fortunately, we have witnessed a surge of interest during the past 15 years in religion and spirituality in child and youth development.

At one end of the scholarly pipeline, dissertations on children and spirituality have increased, with most appearing since 2000, and a four-fold increase in the number of dissertations from 2007 to 2012. At the other end of the pipeline, of the peer-reviewed articles published in six top-tier developmental journals<sup>1</sup> from 1990 to 2012, the percentage on religion and spirituality increased by more than 50% from 1990–2002 to 2003–2012, with 1.4% of all articles addressing this topic (Benson, Roehlkepartain, & Rude, 2003). In addition, many major volumes have recently appeared, including the *Handbook of Spiritual Development in Childhood and Adolescence* (Roehlkepartain et al., 2006), with 34 chapters on a broad spectrum of contexts and developmental domains within spiritual development. Other recent publications have included

an encyclopedia of religious and spiritual development (Dowling & Scarlett, 2006), and edited books focusing on cognitive-developmental issues (e.g., Rosengren, Johnson, & Harris, 2000) and spirituality and thriving (Lerner, Roeser, & Phelps, 2008; Warren, Lerner, & Phelps, 2012). The past decade has also seen a spate of special journal issues on religious and spiritual development (Boyatzis, 2003), religion and spirituality in the family (Boyatzis, 2006a), and religion and spirituality in adolescence (Benson, Roehlkepartain, & Hong, 2008; Boyatzis & Hambrick-Dixon, 2008; King & Boyatzis, 2004). As noted earlier, the 2006 edition of the *Handbook of Child Psychology* for the first time included a chapter on religious and spiritual development (Oser et al., 2006). Prior to 2000, there were no edited volumes, handbooks, handbook chapters, or special issues on child and adolescent religious and spiritual development in the developmental sciences.

It is clear that research in this field has not only grown in quantity but improved in quality. Recent studies have advanced beyond the typical earlier study that tested for correlations between a single religiousness variable (often parents' worship attendance) and a child outcome. While this correlational approach is still common in the field, recent studies feature more complex conceptualizations of variables, more sophisticated quantitative approaches, and more in-depth qualitative approaches.

### DEFINITIONS OF RELIGIOUS AND SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT IN CHILDHOOD AND ADOLESCENCE

A recent proliferation of descriptive approaches to defining religiousness and spirituality has characterized the field of psychology of religion and spirituality (see Pargament et al., 2013). Initially, in psychology the terms *religion* and *spirituality* were used synonymously (see James, 1902/1982). Until recently this area of study has been plagued by conflation and confusion of terms, but we are now moving toward more clarity. As the field has evolved, the concepts of religion and spirituality have begun to diverge both in scholarship and popular culture (Koenig, McCullough, & Larson, 2001). For example, young people are increasingly identifying as “spiritual, but not religious” (Smith & Denton, 2005). In the literature, religion is increasingly conceptualized as an organized socio-cultural-historical system, and spirituality as an individual's personal quest for meaning, satisfaction,

<sup>1</sup>*Child Development, Developmental Psychology, International Journal of Behavioral Development, Journal of Adolescent Research, Journal of Early Adolescence, and Journal of Research on Adolescence.*

and wisdom. For instance, a widely used definition of religion is:

... an organized system of beliefs, practices, rituals, and symbols that serve (a) to facilitate individuals' closeness to the sacred or transcendent other (i.e., God, higher power, ultimate truth) and (b) to bring about an understanding of an individual's relationship and responsibility to others living together in community. (Koenig et al., 2001, p. 18)

From this perspective, religiousness refers to the extent to which an individual has a relationship with a particular institutionalized religion's approach to ultimate reality. This relationship occurs through affiliation with an organized religion, participation in its prescribed rituals and practices, and reflection or embrace of its espoused beliefs. Religious development would then entail the qualitative change and growth in the engagement in and understanding of the religious community and its rituals, creeds, sacred texts, and beliefs.

In contrast, Koenig et al. (2001) defined spirituality as "a personal quest for understanding answers to ultimate questions about life, about meaning, and about relationship to the sacred or transcendent, which may (or may not) lead to or arise from the development of religious rituals and the formation of community" (p. 18). This conception aligns with the view of personal religiousness or spirituality as a "search for the sacred" in which the sacred is an individual's concept of God, the divine, and transcendent reality, as well as other aspects of life that take on divine character or are imbued with divine-like qualities, such as transcendence, immanence, boundlessness, and ultimacy (Pargament et al., 2013). It is also consistent with definitions from the field of youth development that emphasize a capacity for self-transcendence and goals of awareness, connectedness, meaning, purpose, and contribution (Benson et al., 2012; Good, Willoughby, & Busseri, 2011; King, Clardy, & Ramos, in press; Lerner et al., 2008).

From a youth development perspective spiritual development was initially understood as growth in "the intrinsic capacity for self-transcendence, in which the self is embedded in something greater than the self, including the sacred... shaped both within and outside of religious traditions, beliefs, and practices" (Benson et al., 2003, pp. 205–206). Recent research suggests that spiritual development involves "transactions that are characterized by transcendence leading to a clarity and commitment of beliefs and identity resulting in behaviors that contribute to the self and society" (King, et al., in press). This definition's latter thrust—that spiritual development results

in contributions to self or society—is typically absent in notions of children's spiritual development (e.g., Hay & Nye, 1998) but is more prevalent in the adolescent literature (e.g., Benson et al., 2012). Other scholars have asserted that spirituality is intrinsic to human beings and is "a self-transcending awareness that is biologically structured into the human species" (Hay, Reich, & Utsch, 2006, p. 50).

These definitions offer helpful starting points in this emerging field and characterize spirituality as (a) a human propensity; (b) socialized and shaped by multiple experiences, sometimes within organized religion but also outside it in multiple social and natural contexts; and (c) characterized by a sense of connectedness and *relationality* to what is beyond the self. We use the term *relationality* to emphasize the centrality of relating to another or others for human development (Kuczynski & De Mol, Chapter 9, this *Handbook*, Volume 1; Lerner, 2006; Overton, 2013) in general and in spiritual development in particular (King, Ramos, & Clardy, 2013; Mahoney, 2010, 2013). Spirituality, then, is not restricted to a particular religious doctrine or sacred entity; God or a theistic version thereof is not a priori the only transcendent entity with which children or teens could experience relationships. These definitions also suggest that children's spiritual and relational consciousness emerge prior to religious socialization (Hay & Nye, 1998). The positing of a spiritual propensity in very young children presupposes that children are spiritual beings first and then are acculturated (or not) within a religious tradition that channels inchoate spirituality into particular institutional expressions (rituals, creeds, etc.). These definitions also convey that children's spirituality is subject to many influences, including family and culture.

One proposal (C. N. Johnson & Boyatzis, 2006) is that spiritual development proceeds from intuitive understanding to increasingly reflective thought about what is beyond the self. Children possess powerful inference mechanisms for intuitively sorting out reality and the supernatural. Such intuition is integrated with increasing reflection and is supported and scaffolded by cultural practices that orient the child to cultural modes of spiritual knowing and being. Thus, spiritual development arises not from mere acquisition of knowledge about the transcendent but from increasingly meaningful and organized experiential connections of the self to, in James's (1902/1982) words, the "something more." These connections transform the self by shaping beliefs, values, identity, fidelity, and actions.

Although an emphasis on personal as opposed to institutional levels may clarify the distinctions between religion and spirituality, there is considerable overlap between

them. Religion ought not be viewed as purely institutional; important individual-level processes such as interpreting and constructing religious worldviews are central to child and adolescent religiousness. Conversely, when spirituality is treated too narrowly as an individual phenomenon, the varied ways that spirituality grows and expresses itself in intimate relationships, families, congregations, and cultures may be overlooked. Indeed, many personal spiritual expressions are embedded in larger religious or social contexts. Religion and spirituality are multidimensional constructs with diverse cognitions, feelings, behaviors, experiences, and relationships and must be considered multilevel from theoretical and methodological vantages. Given the increasing conceptual clarity in the field, we try to distinctly use “religion” and “spirituality” based on the constructs under discussion. However, these terms are still often conflated in the literature and when unable to draw distinctions we will refer to “religiousness and spirituality” or to “religious and spiritual development.”

As we turn to theory, in our view there is no satisfactory “grand theory” of religious and spiritual development. Although some extant theories elucidate specific areas of religious and spiritual development, it is unclear whether they can capture the breadth and complexity of religious and spiritual development. As stated by King and Roeser (2009, p. 439):

The study of religion and spirituality in developmental science hinges upon whether it is possible to formulate *good* theories from which scientists derive clear and scientifically tractable definitions of what religion and spirituality *are* substantively, what they *do* functionally... and how they *develop* systematically.

## THEORIES OF RELIGIOUS AND SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT IN CHILDHOOD AND ADOLESCENCE

Although an exhaustive review of theories related to religious and spiritual development is beyond the scope of this empirically focused chapter (see King & Roeser, 2009; Oser et al., 2006), we review theories within development science that are helpful to understanding the nature and function of religion and spirituality in development.

### Psychoanalytic and Attachment Approaches

Due to space limitations, we combine psychoanalytic and attachment accounts of religious development. According

to object relations theory, individuals internalize affectively charged representations of their relationships with significant others such as parents as “psychic objects.” These images of parents serve as “templates” for God images (Rizzuto, 1979). In this theory, God images are posited to serve as “transitional objects” that can reduce attachment insecurity as children develop independence from caregivers and in the face of significant change and stress. Rizzuto emphasized that one’s private, subjective, “living” God is often different from any “official” God of organized religion. Developmentally, this private, living God emerges prior to formal religious socialization, developing in early childhood as a transitional object based on emotion-laden images of both parents and of self. This focus on the vital link between the child’s early experiences with one’s parents and the child’s God image has much in common with attachment theory.

Attachment theory is an important framework in the study of religious development. Building on Bowlby’s theory (e.g., 1988), Kirkpatrick and Shaver (1990), and Granqvist (e.g., Granqvist & Dickie, 2006) have likened individuals’ relationships with God to their relational attachments to parents. The fundamental tenet is that the internal working model of the parent-child relationship is used as an internal working model for the individual’s image of and relationship with God. Throughout life, the activation of the attachment system leads the individual to seek comfort (or not) from God in times of stress, as the child would (or not) from a parent. The models most often tested are the correspondence model and the compensation model.

The *correspondence model* posits that individuals’ internal working models of their attachments to their parents serve as the basis for the God attachment: those securely attached to their parents would have secure attachments to God, and those insecurely attached to parents would have insecure attachments to God. In contrast, the *compensation model* posits that an early insecure attachment with an earthly parent does not seal one’s fate with a divine parent but that one can develop an attachment to God as a substitute attachment figure, due to God’s perceived responsive and consistent loving, forgiving, and protective functions. There is evidence for both processes in adults but in children there is only limited evidence for correspondence, as the compensation process may not emerge until adolescence or later (Richert & Granqvist, 2013).

Nevertheless, the correspondence hypothesis is supported by some work on children. When asked to place a symbolic God figure on a felt board near a child figure

in an attachment-activating scenario, children who were securely attached to their mothers placed the God figure closer to the child than did children who were insecurely attached; this pattern occurred in Swedish 5- to 7-year-olds (Granqvist, Ljungdahl, & Dickie, 2007) and Italian 6- to 8-year-old children (Cassiba, Granqvist, & Costantini, 2013). Adolescents with secure attachments to parents are likely to adopt the faith and God images (or lack thereof) of their parents (e.g., Hertel & Donahue, 1995). The compensation process has received support in other studies. Children were more likely to describe a loving, present God if their fathers were absent from the home (Dickie et al., 1997). Adolescents with insecure attachments were likely to seek security by joining religious organizations and others rejected their parents' religion due to their distant or difficult relationships with parents (Smith, 2003b).

Across childhood and adolescence, attachment theorists would suggest that children begin with a "living God" representation based on the relationship with their parents, and across childhood and adolescence increasingly view God in relational and interpersonal terms. Thus, explicitly conscious relational images of God may become more salient during adolescence. This trend is manifested in adolescents' prayer concepts that show a move from children's concrete instrumental view of prayer as "talking to" God toward the adolescent view that prayer is more conversational "talking with" God (Scarlett & Perriello, 1991). In sum, attachment theory may elucidate many aspects of religious and spiritual development though better measures are needed to capture children's more implicit content and functions of the God image and attachment at nonconscious, physical, and nonverbal levels (E. B. Davis, Moriarty, & Mauch, 2013).

### Cognitive-Developmental Approaches

To a considerable extent the study of children's religious and spiritual development has been the study of children's thinking about religious concepts (e.g., God, prayer), and thus has reflected developmental psychology's broader Piagetian-cognitive hegemony. Cognitive-developmentalism posits several tenets of cognitive development applied to religious cognition: qualitatively distinct stages of thinking that are yoked to a specific age range, a progression from concrete to abstract understanding, and the march from immature thought to the *telos* of mature abstract and rational thought.

In the 1960s, David Elkind conducted a series of important studies in the Piagetian cognitive-developmental

tradition on children's religious cognition (e.g., Elkind, 1961). Elkind's work on children's prayer concepts (Long, Elkind, & Spilka, 1967) and his broader theoretical explanation (Elkind, 1970) are exemplary accounts of that era's approach. His work confirmed theoretical expectations that children's religious thinking showed stage-like progress from concrete and egocentric to more abstract and socio-centric thought. Religious cognition was merely a specific case of a generic conceptual process.

A new wave of cognitive-developmentalism in the 1980s ushered in a rejection of global stages that characterized, at any one age, all of a child's thinking and replaced them with models of domain-specificity, viewing the child as a builder of naive folk theories of specific domains (e.g., Carey, 1985). By the 1990s, domain specificity and research on children's theory of mind had become so central in the field that scientists viewed children's religious concepts (e.g., God) as part of the general growth of understanding of the mind, agency, and mental-physical causality. Children's religious cognitions were understood to operate under the same tendencies of children's everyday cognition but within specific domains of thought (Boyer, 1994).

In the case of beliefs about God, the anthropomorphic God images common to children and adults arise from the natural extension and application of an intuitive folk psychology (used to understand people) to supernatural figures. These ontologies possess several key features. First, they include counterintuitive beliefs (i.e., they violate ordinary expectations, as in the case of spiritual entities who are immortal or omniscient). Second, counterintuitive religious beliefs operate within the implicit backdrop of theory of mind that equips children with a prepared set of qualities to extend to religious agents (e.g., "My supernatural God has wishes and thoughts and worries [just like all beings with minds do]"). Third, the combination of the agents' counterintuitiveness with the judgment that such agents are *real* make the beliefs more salient to those who hold them, and their salience enhances their likelihood that they will be transmitted to others.

Another revision is the claim that children's and adults' thinking may not be altogether different. Magical thinking and rational thinking, "ordinary" and "extraordinary" reality, and other thought processes that seemingly compete with each other may in fact all coexist in the minds of children and adults. As Woolley (2000) put it, "children's minds are not inherently one way or another—not inherently magical nor inherently rational" (pp. 126–127). Such claims shake the venerable views of the child as cognitively

immature and cognitive growth as an invariant, stage-like march from irrational fantasy toward the *telos* of rational logic. This new characterization has been supported by a review of children's and adults' thinking about origins of life, death, and illness. Legare, Evans, Rosengren, and Harris (2012) concluded that as children get older they do not "lose" early intuitive thought processes but instead develop a coexistence model that integrates their previous intuitive and often supernatural accounts with later-developing scientific explanations. Legare et al. found that supernatural explanations were used more often by adults than younger children. Thus, supernatural beliefs—in developing and industrialized countries—do not diminish with age and with exposure to scientific knowledge from education or culture. Cognitive-developmental theories of religion and spirituality will surely evolve in relation to our broader accounts of cognitive development.

### Faith Development Theory

Perhaps the most comprehensive stage theory was James Fowler's (1981) Faith Development Theory, a synthesis of the stage theories of Erikson, Piaget, and Kohlberg to explain the ontogeny of faith development. Fowler asserted that faith is a relational construct, incorporating the self in relation to others and in relation to some shared center of transcendent value or significance that exerts an ordering significance on one's life. This center of value in major religions is God or some transcendent reality, though one's center of value and thus faith need not be religious; Fowler claims that one's center of value could be an ideology or cause (e.g., nationalism, environmentalism) or a personal priority (e.g., career, money). One's faith, then, reflects and shapes one's deepest values, beliefs, and meanings and reflects "the human quest for relation to transcendence" (p. 14) and to the universal.

Here we describe the two stages of faith that correspond to the age range of interest in this chapter. During middle childhood (corresponding to Erikson's stage of industry versus inferiority and Piaget's stage of concrete operations), children are in a "mythic-literal" stage. Religious principles are taken at face value with a moral realism to them, and symbols are one-dimensional, with little conceptual or symbolic analysis. Faith is built around concrete story-like narratives whose meanings come from culturally available meaning systems. A challenge late in this stage is reconciling narratives from different sociocultural sources that would lead to conflict or dissonance (e.g., reconciling Biblical and evolutionary accounts of human origins).

With the onset of early formal operational thinking, young adolescents enter a "synthetic-conventional" stage in which they adopt the shared centers of values of others (conventional) without much reflection or analysis (hence synthetic). At this time, young adolescents' ability to be aware of what other people think can make youth sensitive to others' judgments of them and be susceptible to the "tyranny of the they" and a herd mentality regarding the shared centers of value they may adopt. Thus, adolescents are prone to embrace shared centers of value that could be profoundly different, ranging from love and justice to hate or nihilism. The adolescent synthetic-conventional faith is an "absorbed" and tacit one that is conformist rather than critically scrutinized. These more introspective processes emerge in later adolescence, corresponding to the faith stage Fowler labeled "individuating-reflective," when youth move from an absorbed tacit faith to an examined explicit faith orientation that is more truly one's own.

Although some agree with the proposed general stage progression, Fowler's theory has been criticized for its structural and cognitive basis and for its suggestion that children are limited to less mature forms of faith (e.g., Balswick, King, & Reimer, 2005). At most chronological ages, even the subjects in Fowler's original study showed striking individual variation (see Boyatzis, 2005, 2013, on these problems). Thus, psychologists of religion have criticized stage theory for failing to capture the diversity of faith at any one age, especially the unevenness and nonlinear nature of faith progression (Hood, Hill, & Spilka, 2009), just as developmentalists have rejected traditional stage theories for failing to capture variation in development at any one particular age.

### Relational Developmental Systems Perspectives

As empirical challenges have highlighted the limitations of stage theories, relational developmental systems perspectives are increasing in popularity. These theories emphasize that ontogeny occurs through mutually influential relations between individuals and the many levels of the bioecology in which they are embedded across time (Lerner, 2006; Overton, 2013). Development occurs at all levels of the system—biological, psychological, social, cultural, and so forth. As such, relational developmental systems theory provides a meta-framework consistent with bioecological theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1974), sociocultural theory (Vygotsky, 1978), and social transaction models (Kuczynski, 2003).



From a relational developmental systems perspective, religious and spiritual development occur through ongoing transactions between individuals and their multiple socio-cultural contexts (Lerner, Dowling, & Anderson, 2003). Religious development can be described as the systematic changes in how one understands and participates in the doctrines, practices, and rituals of religious institutions. Thus, from a relational developmental systems approach, as a young person interacts with friends, family, faith community, and so forth, he or she will change in beliefs, commitments, and engagement in religion. This process is well recognized. Less clarity exists regarding the nature of spiritual development. Scholars are now addressing what exactly develops in spiritual development (Benson et al., 2012; Good et al., 2011; King et al., in press; Warren et al., 2012).

Recent theoretical and empirical literature suggests that relationality is central to spirituality. These systemic approaches highlight bidirectional relations, or reciprocity, between young people and their world. From this perspective, it is not just the interactions that influence spiritual development, but the interactions themselves, the capacity for transcendence, and the young persons' responses are central to spiritual development.

Transcendence involves a shifting of a young person's cognitive and emotional orientation from one's self to another in such a way that it provides ultimate value and meaning beyond the mundane and material, shapes identity, and motivates an active response (Lerner et al., 2008). When a young person experiences a meaningful connection with something of significance beyond him or herself, he or she may become aware of and feel connected to peers, nature, God or a divine entity, a sense of all of humanity, or a specific religious community.

However, not all transactions are transcendent. Specifically, those transactions between an individual and another (e.g., God, nature, community) promote transcendence when the interaction informs beliefs, meaning, identity, purpose, and/or fidelity and serves to motivate contribution to the well-being of the world beyond themselves. This contribution does not necessitate a public interaction, but research on adolescents suggests that spirituality involves living and acting consistently with one's beliefs (Benson et al., 2012; Dowling et al., 2004; King et al., in press; Warren et al., 2012).

Consequently, spiritual development involves transcendence, transformation, and action. We must note that these latter processes would be more readily apparent in older youth than younger children. One implication is that

spiritual development at any age would share fundamental characteristics (e.g., a relational connectedness to what is beyond the self) but have different manifestations and effects at different ages.

Although an expression of the divine is not needed to instigate spiritual development, the forces that stimulate spiritual growth are imbued with divine-like qualities, such as immanence, boundlessness, and ultimacy (Pargament et al., 2013). This spiritual transcendence instigates, as James (1902/1982) described, systematic changes within the self and leads to increases in one's awareness (Benson et al., 2012), identity (Templeton & Eccles, 2006), fidelity (King et al., in press, 2013), purpose (Damon, Menon, & Bronk, 2003), and action (King & Benson, 2006).

To summarize, relational developmental systems theories are framed within a relational meta-model that provides a set of person-context processes useful for exploring the complexity of spiritual development. For instance, relational developmental systems theories point to the plasticity of human development (Overton, 2013) and the resulting capacity for change and growth in development generally, and in spirituality specifically. Such approaches also emphasize the reciprocity of interactions between young persons and their world, highlighting that spiritual development is an active process and involves relating and responding. Such personal transformation or growth and contribution or service to the greater good is reflected in many spiritual and religious traditions. The relational developmental systems theories' emphasis on diversity and the interactions *within* the individual and *between* individual and context acknowledges the complexity of spiritual development. As such, religious and spiritual development are linked to processes in other developmental domains, as highlighted by our discussion of attachment and cognitive-developmental approaches and, as we discuss later, identity and moral development.

Relational developmental systems may be the most current formulation of understanding adolescent spiritual development. Although the meta-model provides a promising lens through which to view and investigate religious and spiritual development, empirical research has only begun. The research presented in this volume points to other studies indicating that spiritual development is an active process and not only involves transcendence but personal transformation as evidenced by identity, fidelity, and actions consistent with one's beliefs. Relational developmental systems theory provides an integrative approach to human development and helps us see how spirituality interacts with all of the levels within the developmental system.

Accordingly, our discussions in this chapter explore many systems that shape religious and spiritual development as well as how religion and spirituality influence child and adolescent development. However, before reviewing existing literature on child and adolescent religious and spiritual development, we examine reciprocating spirituality in order to emphasize the importance of bidirectional relationships between young persons and their context that contribute to religious and spiritual development.

### Reciprocating Spirituality

Collectively, these relational-systems frameworks articulate a view of spiritual development that involves the development of key psychological processes (e.g., attachment, cognition, and—as we shall argue—identity) that emerge and grow as young persons interact with their surrounding environment. Relationality is key to our understanding of spirituality, and signifies the importance of attachment, whether young people attach to a transcendent other out of prescriptive internal working models or a need to compensate because of deficient working models. Though recent conceptualizations have emphasized relational spirituality (King et al., 2013; Mahoney, 2010), we propose *reciprocating spirituality* as a more appropriate formulation that conveys the relational and active processes in spiritual development.

Spiritual development involves the growing capacity to transcend the self, requiring the increase of cognitive and emotional capacities to be aware of and grasp that which is beyond the self, while reciprocally growing in self knowledge and understanding. This process requires the development of identity, purpose, values, meaning-systems, and eventually results in fidelity to an ideology. Further reciprocity is evident as the young person then responds to transcendence out of a sense of fidelity with actions that are consistent with their beliefs, values, and self-concept. Such actions are characterized by contribution, compassion, and leadership and require prosocial, moral, and civic development (Lerner et al., 2003). Spirituality is more than a feeling of transcendence, but a growing sense of identity or awareness that motivates or propels young people to care for themselves and to contribute to the greater good (King et al., 2013).

No doubt this description paints a picture of mature spirituality that is characterized by connection, commitment, and coherence (King et al., in press). As in all domains of development, this process takes place in the ongoing bidirectional interactions between individuals and their

context. This process is not linear. Research has noted that children's imagination and lack of analytical skills enable them to engage in spiritual emotions of wonder and awe (Roehlkepartain et al., 2006), and be more open to spiritual experience, whether through nature or religion (Fowler, 1981). Furthermore, loss, challenge, and doubt may also deepen faith by making meaning out of difficult situations and by renewed devotion or commitment to spiritual ideals.

Consequently, we recognize that spiritual development varies across individuals depending on their development and integration of the various psychological processes involved. For example, younger children may not have the reflective skills necessary to consciously integrate their experiences of the sacred or their beliefs with their identity and actions. Mentally handicapped children's spiritual development may be more based on their relational capacities than cognitive capacities. We believe that the spiritual development trajectory is unique for all people based on their individual (e.g., biological, psychological) factors and their relations with their contexts (e.g., cultural, religious). Despite these diverse expressions, we argue that the developmental trajectory of reciprocating spirituality is toward coherence of transcendence, fidelity, and contribution. As such we propose the notion of reciprocating spirituality to capture the complexity and richness of this developmental process. We next discuss the development of religion and spirituality and their roles in childhood and adolescence.

## CHILDHOOD AND RELIGION AND SPIRITUALITY

This section integrates theory and research on different topics in children's religious and spiritual development and focuses on the most current and rigorous research. We have chosen these specific topics because they have clearly dominated, for decades, the research on children. In addition, the research has described the emergence of the cognitive and relational capacities necessary for reciprocating spirituality. One area of research reflects cognitive-developmental approaches to children's thinking about religious concepts; this work posits that there are cognitive-maturational processes that shape such thinking. A different but related approach is a sociocultural and social ecology view that examines how children's thinking about religious and spiritual topics is associated with the beliefs of their parents or other socializing agents. This work often tests the degree to which children's religious

cognition corresponds to or is independent from their parents' religious cognition. Another focus is on socialization dynamics and parent-child relationships that may affect children's religiousness or spirituality. A relatively new area of work examines links between children's behaviors and specific constellations of their parents' religiousness and parenting; an important lesson from that body of work is that the interactions between these variables are particularly revealing about how religion "works" in the family. After that, we address religion and children's well-being to learn whether the available evidence supports the notion that religion and spirituality are "good" for children. In that section, we offer important caveats about avoiding simplistic interpretations and conclusions and instead urge researchers to recognize the complex and nuanced relationships between religiousness and child outcomes. Finally, we offer important new directions for research on children.

### **Cognitive-Developmental Approaches to Religious Cognition**

The venerable emphasis in developmental psychology on children's thinking is abundantly evident in work on children, religion, and spirituality. This section provides an overview of the major specific domains of children's religious cognition.

#### *Children's Concepts of God*

The longest-studied religious-cognition topic is children's thinking about God. This focus is not surprising, given that God and the relationship with God is the central component of most organized religions and that most research has been done by Westerners in Western settings, where monotheism predominates. The most robust conclusion from this work is that children think about God in anthropomorphic terms. Studies on religiously diverse samples have found widespread anthropomorphism with some denominational variation. In his collection of school-children's drawings, Coles (1990) found that 87% depicted God's face. Pitts (1976) sampled 6- to 10-year-old children and found the most anthropomorphic God drawings by Mormon, Mennonite, and Lutheran children and the least by Jewish and Unitarian children, consistent with the God imagery in their religions. Heller (1986) also found that Hindu children, more than Jewish, Baptist, or Roman Catholic children, described a multifaceted God who feels close and like a person in some ways yet is also an abstract and intangible form of energy. Hindu children's beliefs

reflect their doctrine about different gods with different natures and functions. Taken together, these studies show that many children anthropomorphize God but also that children in different religions and cultures conceptualize God in diverse and often nonanthropomorphic ways that reflect the impact of sociocultural influences.

The anthropomorphizing tendency has been typically explained by cognitive-developmentalists as resulting from an extension of an intuitive folk psychology to supernatural figures (Boyer, 2001). However, research by J. L. Barrett et al. challenges this view of the child's God as a personified God. J. L. Barrett and Keil (1996) and J. L. Barrett and Richert (2003) have studied young children to test whether they equate God's qualities with human qualities (i.e., think about God anthropomorphically). They have offered an alternative, "preparedness" hypothesis, which posits that children are prepared conceptually at young ages to think about God's *unique qualities*—not only those shared with humans. In one study (J. L. Barrett, Newman, & Richert, 2003) 5-year-olds claimed that God, but not their mothers, would immediately understand ambiguous drawings. In another (J. L. Barrett, Richert, & Driesenga, 2001), 3- to 7-year-old children claimed that God but not their mothers would know the contents of a cracker box that actually contained rocks. A study (Wigger, Paxson, & Ryan, 2013) of 3- to 8-year-old children challenged the anthropomorphism hypothesis because, with age, children made increasingly appropriate attributions of knowledge to real friends, imaginary friends, and dogs, but their claims of God's knowledge did not change with age—God was omniscient at all ages. Provocatively, while imaginary companions were less knowing than God, they were more knowing than real friends or dogs. N. Knight (2008) found somewhat similar results with Yukatek Mayan children in Mexico, who viewed the "Catholic God" as more knowing than other figures including people, animals, the Sun God, and forest spirits. As in the Wigger et al. study, these latter invisible entities were endowed with more knowledge than humans or animals.

However, in an excellent study, Lane, Wellman, and Evans (2010) addressed the preparedness argument. They tested young children's beliefs about ordinary characters (mom, a girl) and extraordinary ones (God) using a false belief task. The young preschoolers (40- to 52-month-olds) failed to attribute false beliefs to any characters; all characters including God would know a crayon box had marbles, hence God was not special in this knowledge. Children in the middle age group (53- to 59-month-olds) said that ordinary characters and God would have false beliefs, hence

God was not omniscient. In the oldest group (59+ months) children said that ordinary characters would mistakenly think the box held crayons but God would know it held marbles. These data suggest that young children are prepared to first think about God in anthropomorphic terms and only later, around age 5, adapt and overcome those propensities to appreciate God's counterintuitive, special abilities. Lane et al. note that their interpretation is supported by other studies. For example, in one study of Greek Orthodox children, 3- and 4-year-olds claimed that both a young girl and God would be ignorant of the hidden contents of a box; only at the age of 5 did children believe that God would have unique knowledge of the box's contents (Makris & Pnevmatikos, 2007). Thus, both hypotheses—that God is an anthropomorphized figure and that children are prepared to recognize God's uniqueness—have received support, and future research must determine under what testing and sociocultural conditions children seem to endorse one over the other. For example, we need more evidence on children from families (from atheist to fundamentalist) and religions (monotheistic to polytheistic) that vary widely in their theistic views.

### *Children's Concepts of the Soul and Afterlife*

Although children's thoughts about the soul have received less empirical attention than God concepts, more scientists are exploring how children think about death, the soul, and the afterlife. Contemporary cognitive-developmental work indicates that children's beliefs about the afterlife are related to children's early distinction between minds and bodies (Bering & Bjorklund, 2004; Richert & Harris, 2006). Children know that physical/biological functions cease at death; however, children do not clearly see that death terminates all mental and emotional processes.

Bering, Blasi, and Bjorklund (2005) used a clever task involving a mouse (puppet) eaten by a hungry alligator to study afterlife beliefs in 5- to 12-year-old secular and Catholic children in Spain. Results showed that children, especially younger ones and children who attended a religious school, understand that biological processes cease at death but that psychological processes continue in the afterlife. If children hold early intuitions about the afterlife, they are reified and scaffolded by surrounding familial and cultural practices that provide ample testimony and rituals. As Bering et al. (2005, p. 600) stated, in a socialization milieu that regularly espouses the continued spiritual life of the deceased, "biological reasoning about the psychological status of dead agents may be set aside

in favor of explicit religious ideas that defy naturalistic principles." Richert and Harris (2006) have claimed that, rather than thinking of people as dualists in the traditional body/mind or body/soul dichotomy, humans may think more along a tripartite model of fundamental essences—of the body, mind, and soul—and while body and mind die the "soul" persists after death. Such concepts would arise, Richert and Harris claim, from surrounding testimony that commonly draws such distinctions. For example, children would be unlikely to hear phrases such as "the mind lives on" but would commonly hear "the soul (or spirit) lives on." Future research must learn more precisely how testimony from parents and organized religion about the soul/afterlife affects how children understand death and afterlife.

### *Children's Understanding of Prayer*

William James (1902/1982) claimed that prayer is the "very soul and essence of religion" (p. 464) and that prayer is a central ritual in many religions. Perhaps the earliest study of how children understand prayer was by Long et al. (1967). Younger children (5 to 7 years of age) described prayer as an emotionally neutral, perfunctory act at specific times and locations. Prayers were said by all children, prayers came from heaven and God, and God had to process prayers one at a time. In the early elementary school years (7 to 9 years of age), prayer was seen as a specific act motivated by a desire (often to ask God for material objects). Prayers were not said by all children because some were too sleepy to pray and some did not "want anything." In later school years (9 to 12), prayer became a mental, private activity to communicate with God. Prayer was no longer yoked to ritual events, and beliefs motivated prayer: Those who didn't believe in God didn't pray. Older children saw prayer as a means to ask God to respond to more abstract, humanitarian needs such as peace, and a coping function was evident because children said negative emotions could lead to prayer.

Scarlett and Perriello (1991) explored concepts of prayer in adolescents who were asked to write prayers they would make in response to hypothetical vignettes (e.g., a friend was ill with cancer). Age trends emerged in the content and functions of prayers, as 13-year-olds made petitions to God to help the friend get well, 15-year-olds asked God to give the friend strength for her struggles, and college students expressed a search for meaning amidst doubt. When describing the nature and function of prayer, subjects' responses progressed with age from objective concerns (asking God for things) to subjective issues

(coping with feelings) to becoming closer to God. Other analyses revealed that young people's beliefs progressed from thinking of prayer as "talking to" God to "talking with" God, reflecting increased maturity in both the breadth and depth of relationality with the transcendent.

Subsequent research corroborated and refined the developmental patterns. Bamford and Lagattuta (2010) tested 4-, 6-, and 8-year-olds and adults on a variety of measures. Interview questions included "Can prayer be done in the head or do you have to say words?" and "Is prayer the same thing as talking to God?" After being given a story and vignette, children were asked how the characters' diverse feelings might inspire the characters to pray and how praying might help their feelings. With increasing age, children better understood that prayer is a mental activity done in one's head (endorsed by 45% of 4-year-olds but 84% of older children) and that prayer and talking to God are the same thing (43% of 4-year-olds but 90% and 94% of 6- and 8-year-olds). Children also came to better appreciate the role of emotions in prayers. Four- and 6-year-olds believed that positive emotions more than negative ones would cause people to pray, whereas 8-year-olds believed that both kinds of emotions would similarly inspire prayer. From 6 to 8 years of age there were significant increases in beliefs that negative emotions would lead to prayer and declines in beliefs that positive emotions would. As for the emotional benefits of praying, children felt that people would feel better after praying.

Bamford and Lagattuta (2010) also tested two alternative hypotheses: a *religious socialization model* in which children's knowledge of prayer (tapped by the questions described above) would be associated with their level of religious experience and education, and a *cognitive maturation model* in which children's prayer concepts would reflect age-related cognitive constraints. Parents provided data on children's religious activities (e.g., prayer with others, discussion about religion with parents, etc.). Although children's understanding of prayer was positively correlated with religious activity in the two younger ages, on most measures there were no relationships between children's religious activity and their prayer knowledge. Only 4-year-olds showed a link between religious activity and prayer knowledge but this association emerged on a minority of measures. Thus, this study does not support the socialization hypothesis, and neither did another study on parents' religiosity and their young children's comprehension of prayer (Woolley & Phelps, 2001). Bamford and Lagattuta noted that there may be other ways, not addressed in their study, that socialization could influence children's

prayer sophistication, but overall the results supported the cognitive maturation model in early childhood.

### *Summary of Cognitive-Developmental Approaches*

The above review shows that exciting work has investigated how children think about entities and processes that are central to world religions and children's sociocultural contexts. This work reflects a Piagetian-infused focus on structural change in children's thinking as well as a more contemporary understanding of how children recruit both endogenous cognitive processes and cultural inputs to shape their thoughts. A sociocultural account of children's religious cognition underscores the fact that children's (and adults') thinking takes place in a rich social milieu. In our view, a key goal for future work is to synthesize methods and interpretive frameworks from cognitive-developmental and sociocultural approaches into a more helpful multilevel analysis of children's religious and spiritual cognition and growth in order to understand how cognitive abilities contribute to more fully developed spirituality. Future research must also correct an imbalance in the literature: We know much about *how children think* about God, prayer, and the afterlife, but less about how do children *feel* about such issues, and whether it matters? More work (perhaps informed by attachment theory) is needed on children's affect and emotion-laden responses to God, prayer, and the afterlife. How are children's personal feelings about God related to their own self-esteem, anxiety, or depression? Do these outcomes differ for children who believe in God and those who do not? What kinds of feelings about God motivate young children's prosocial behavior? We touch on some pertinent work below, but we know little about these questions that might illuminate more fully how personal religion "matters" for children.

### **A Social-Ecology Approach to Children's Religious and Spiritual Development**

Several frameworks organize our thinking about the myriad social influences on children's religious and spiritual development. A bioecological model (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006) posits multiple interrelated contexts of influence on children's development. These contexts range from proximal *microsystems* (e.g., family, school, peer group, religious community) to more distal *macrosystems* (e.g., dominant cultural values and ideologies). Thus, it takes a village to raise a religious or spiritual child but the family is the "first village" (Boyatzis, 2005, 2013). In this section we focus on the family because this context has received

by far the most empirical attention. The adolescent section below addresses the family as well as additional contexts (for an extensive treatment of sociocultural contexts, see Roehlkepartain et al., 2006).

A sociocultural model emphasizes the influence of knowledgeable adults and peers who scaffold children in culturally meaningful practices to help young apprentices move to higher competence (Rogoff, 2003; Vygotsky, 1978). Hence, parents, relatives, clergy, educators, older siblings, and knowledgeable friends can act as mentors. Such mentors can guide children to more advanced levels of spiritual connectedness to the sacred and, in religious contexts, greater understanding and engagement in rituals, creeds, and worship. A sociocultural perspective suggests that parents' practices and beliefs give children "cognitive anchors" (Ozorak, 1989).

Another framework for family processes (Kuczynski, 2003) is a transactional model positing that children and parents influence each other in bidirectional, reciprocal exchanges. This conception, which is associated with relational developmental systems theories (see Kuczynski & De Mol, Chapter 9, this *Handbook*, Volume 1), departs from the traditional view that parents shape children in a unilateral Parent→Child fashion. That "transmission" model long dominated religious socialization research but, as we discuss below, and again reflecting relational developmental systems ideas, scholars now endorse a more dynamic conceptualization of multidirectional influences (see Boyatzis, 2005; Boyatzis, Dollahite, & Marks, 2006).

Children's religious and spiritual beliefs and attitudes may be shaped and influenced in various ways within the family through induction of beliefs (from subtle persuasion to dogmatic insistence), narrative, rewards and punishments, and behavioral modeling. Children may revise their implicit religious theories and beliefs when exposed to conflicting parental testimony or experiences that support alternate accounts (P. L. Harris & Koenig, 2006) or as "secondary adjustments" brought about through "third-party discussions" in the family (Kuczynski, 2003, p. 10) about religious and spiritual issues. In addition, the earlier section on religious cognitions makes clear that whatever input or testimony children receive from their families must be processed through the child's inherent cognitive structures. For example, in studies of adolescents, children's own religious beliefs are more strongly related to their perception of what their parents believe than what the parents themselves report believing (Bao, Whitbeck, Hoyt, & Conger, 1999; Okagaki & Bevis, 1999).

### *Communication and Beliefs About Religion and Spirituality in the Family*

One challenge in studying the family context is to identify immediate, proximal processes within parent-child relationships that go beyond measures of relationship quality (Mahoney & Tarakeshwar, 2005). A good candidate for such a proximal process is parent-child conversation about religion, which may be an important mechanism through which parents socialize their children. In a study of Christian families (Boyatzis & Janicki, 2003) with children aged 3 to 12, parents completed a religious-conversation diary for 2 weeks as well as survey measures on the topics, frequency, setting, and processes involved in such conversations. Parents (overwhelmingly mothers) and children discussed religious and spiritual issues close to three times per week; the most common topics in this Christian sample were God, Jesus, and prayer. Analyses of diary conversations revealed that children were active participants in conversations—they initiated and terminated about half the conversations, spoke as much as parents did, and frequently asked questions and offered their own views.

These data suggest that, in family discourse about religion, children are active participants rather than passive recipients of ideas "transmitted" by parents, and that, in many families, a bidirectional style is more prominent than a uni-lateral parent-to-child dynamic. For instance, Flor and Knapp (2001) assessed Christian families with school-age children in the rural U.S. South. Regression analyses revealed that frequent bidirectional communication about religion predicted the importance of religion and belief in God for children. These patterns were especially apparent in same-sex dyads (mother-daughter, father-son). Thus, an open communication style between parents and children may influence children's religious development. (The later adolescent section describes additional work that confirms these bidirectional processes.) Future work should examine how different parenting styles and parental religiosity variables (e.g., fundamentalism) interact to shape parents' communication style and impact on children.

A study by Braswell, Rosengren, and Berenbaum (2011) studied Midwestern Protestant and Catholic parents' beliefs about religion (and magic and science) and whether they encouraged their children to hold such beliefs. Parents felt it was important for their children to learn about religion (a *M* of 4.4 out of 5) though they felt it was more important for them to learn about science (*M* = 4.6). Interestingly, parents felt that it was important for their children to learn

about religion at a significantly younger age (4.9 years) than about science (5.4 years). When asked to choose different mechanisms through which their children should learn about religion, parents almost never chose “on their own” but 31% chose “with help” and 64% “on their own with help.” The strength of parents’ religious beliefs was highly related ( $r = .76, p < .001$ ) to the belief that they should encourage such beliefs in their children.

Parents’ endorsement of mythical, culturally salient characters such as Santa Claus, the Easter Bunny, and the Tooth Fairy is sometimes related to their children’s belief in them (Prentice, Manosevitz, & Hubbs, 1978; Rosengren, Kalish, Hickling, & Gelman, 1994), but correspondence between parents and children is not so strong as to suggest children think what their parents want them to. When parents encouraged their children to believe in the Easter Bunny, 23% did *not* believe, and when parents discouraged belief, fully 47% of their children *did* believe in the Easter Bunny (Prentice et al., 1978). These findings attenuate the notion that parents somehow “transmit” their beliefs to children in some simple uni-directional fashion.

Taylor and Carlson (2000) reported parents’ attitudes about children’s fantasy play through ethnographies and interviews. Parents’ religious views influenced their reactions to children’s fantasy and engagement with imaginary companions. Mennonite parents had strongly negative reactions to imaginary companions whereas Hindu parents often reacted positively, perhaps believing that communication with invisible companions may be a way for children to interact with spirits from a past life. This interpretation reflects their religious tradition of belief in reincarnated and metaphysical entities.

Evans (2000) compared the beliefs about origins (Creationist or evolutionist accounts) of children in secular families and in fundamentalist Christian families, who also attended religious schools or were home-schooled. To some degree, family type did matter—fundamentalist Christian children overwhelmingly embraced Creationist views with virtually no endorsement of evolutionist ones. However, even young children (7 to 9 years of age) from *secular* homes embraced Creationist views, and not until early adolescence did youth in secular homes began to consistently share their families’ evolutionist cosmologies. Evans notes that in even a “saturated” belief environment, sociocultural messages are filtered through the child’s intuitive belief system.

Overall, family research indicates that both cognitive-developmental and sociocultural theories are informative. The evidence is limited on just how similar or “anchored”

children’s beliefs are relative to their parents’, but the available data make clear that the independence and distinctiveness of children’s thoughts refutes simplistic models portraying children as passive recipients of parental beliefs and instead highlights children’s active roles in their religious and spiritual development (for more on children’s agency, see Boyatzis, 2011).

While parent-child communication has long been a topic of mainstream family research, developmental scientists have given scant attention to parent-child communication about religion and spirituality. We believe that future work will prove this family dynamic to be a crucial locus of children’s (and parents’) religious and spiritual growth. However, further research is needed to more fully understand how parents’ beliefs are conveyed in their *actual* behavior and communication; this is a crucial missing piece of the religion and family puzzle. More data are also needed on what “mix” or balance of parents’ verbal communication about religion and their overt behaviors (e.g., praying with or attending worship with children) constitutes the most “saturated” or effective context for religious socialization. Such work will be most informative if it bridges the dominant cognitive-developmental and sociocultural models of religious and spiritual development.

#### RELIGION IN THE FAMILY: THE VALUE OF MULTIPLE VARIABLES AND INTERACTION EFFECTS

Although religiousness is recognized as highly multidimensional, more than three quarters of studies on religion and family from the past three decades measured religiosity with only one or two items (Mahoney, 2010). As Boyatzis (2006b) noted, family research would benefit from the study of diverse populations with measurement of multiple dimensions of religiousness, parenting, and child outcome, using multiple informants. Here we highlight several studies that capture some of these qualities and illustrate the value of measuring multiple variables and the interactions of both parent religiousness and parenting behavior.

One of the most important and challenging dimensions of parenting is discipline, which is related to parents’ religiousness in complicated ways. For example, parents with conservative Protestant affiliations endorse and use spanking more than other parents (Gershoff, Miller, & Holden, 1999). However, a stronger predictor is a continuous psychological variable—parents’ theological conservatism

and belief in Biblical literalism and inerrancy (Gershoff et al., 1999). Building on this finding, Murray-Swank, Mahoney, and Pargament (2006) tested mothers' use of spanking in relation to their theological conservatism in interaction with their sanctification of being a parent, that is, how much they imbued their parent role with sacred and divine qualities and saw parenting as "God's work." Conservatism and sanctification were not related independently to mothers' spanking, but the interaction between mothers' conservatism and sanctification predicted spanking. Specifically, theologically conservative mothers were more likely (than other conservative mothers) to spank their children if they also viewed their parental role as sanctified, sacred, and holy; in contrast, mothers who were theologically liberal were less likely (than other liberal mothers) to spank if they also viewed their role as sacred and holy.

Volling, Mahoney, and Rauer (2009) measured parents' disciplinary strategies and sanctification of parenting in relation to their preschool children's moral conduct. The more parents sanctified their role, the more they used induction (e.g., focusing on consequences of children's wrongdoing) and positive socialization techniques (e.g., approving good behavior). A key finding was that parents' positive techniques combined with sanctification of parenting to predict children's conscience development. A similar interaction obtained for children's affective discomfort: After misbehaving, children's apologizing and concern for others was highest when parents used positive socialization techniques *and* were high in sanctification of parenting.

In another study, Dumas and Nissley-Tsiopinis (2006) analyzed a diverse sample of families with preschoolers. Parents reported on sanctification of parenting and style of religious coping in response to children's defiant behavior. Sanctification did not predict children's behavior, but oppositional behavior increased when parents' religiousness was low and when mothers used negative religious coping (e.g., expressing anger at God, feeling abandoned by God). Thus, children's defiant behavior was most evident at the intersection of different facets of religiosity.

### ***Summary of Research on the Social-Ecology of the Family***

To understand the family's influence on child religious and spiritual development, new methods and designs are needed to elucidate the dynamics of parent-child relationships. Too many studies rely on parental self-reports. Future work could employ additional measures, such as direct observation of parents and children discussing

spiritual issues or engaging in shared religious rituals or practices. Another constraint in the literature is the correlational nature of designs. Future work could use longitudinal and cross-lagged designs to test whether parent-child spiritual discourse at Time 1 is causally related to youth religiousness or spirituality at Time 2. Many questions remain and it will help to use multiple measures of parenting and of proximal constructs (e.g., sanctification) rather than more global ones (e.g., religious affiliation, church attendance) (Mahoney, 2010). We now turn to work on other dimensions of well-being in children.

### **Children's Religiousness, Spirituality, and Well-Being**

A core question in the psychological study of religion and spirituality is whether and how these constructs are related to well-being (Koenig et al., 2001; Pargament, 1997). These issues have been explored in samples of normal children on outcome variables ranging from attachment to internalizing/externalizing symptoms to psychosocial constructs. Other studies have explored religious and spiritual elements in coping and outcomes in children facing acute or chronic challenges ranging from family dysfunction to medical problems to surrounding violence.

Given the generally positive role of religion and spirituality in myriad adult outcomes (Koenig et al., 2001; Pargament, 1997), an underlying hypothesis motivating this work on children is to test whether religiosity would serve positive functions, buffering children from stress or conflict in problematic situations or simply promoting positive adjustment in more optimal conditions. The research demonstrates that religion and spirituality do not have simple or direct effects in any monolithic, positive manner. Nevertheless, it is extremely rare to find any negative or undesirable links with children's outcomes. However, many studies show that religion and spirituality are associated in complicated, nuanced ways with various outcomes in various populations of children. This corpus of work on children affirms the wisdom of Pargament's (1997) admonition that asking if religion is good for people is too simplistic and that the more fruitful and valid question is, what dimensions of religion and spirituality are related to which outcomes in which populations?

### ***Religion and Coping by Children in Difficult Circumstances***

K. A. Davis and Epkins (2009) examined whether 11- to 12-year-olds' private religious practices such as prayer, scripture reading, and listening to religious programs



would buffer them against the impact of family conflict. The children's religious practices showed no direct association with their depressive and anxiety symptoms, but they did moderate relations between family conflict and the children's anxiety and depression. Specifically, family conflict was more related to young people's depression and anxiety when youth were low (as opposed to high) in private religious practices. Similarly, school-age children who prayed frequently were significantly higher in protective resources such as social connectedness and a sense of humor (Rew, Wong, & Sternglanz, 2004).

Two studies have measured how sick children use religion to cope. A qualitative study of children with cystic fibrosis (Pendleton, Cavalli, Pargament, & Nasr, 2002) found that children described 11 different religious coping strategies, including petitioning God to intercede, working with God to cope with their struggles, and expressing discontent with God or their congregation. Children felt that most of these strategies helped them with their illness. In a study of children with asthma, Benore, Pargament, and Pendleton (2008) found that the quality of children's lives and asthma severity were largely unrelated to the importance of religion and religious activities reported by parents (e.g., children's prayer/attendance frequency, religious education). In regressions that controlled for secular coping and the importance of religion, positive religious coping (e.g., "I think God is watching over me") did not predict unique variance in most outcomes, although it did predict—paradoxically—more worrying by children when they were hospitalized (which may have triggered greater use of positive religious coping). However, negative religious coping (feeling abandoned by God or feeling angry at God) during hospitalization predicted lower quality of life related to asthma, higher depression, and higher anxiety. One month later, negative coping predicted higher anxiety whereas children who used more positive coping came to feel closer to God and their faith communities.

To learn if religion has a protective buffering effect for abused children, J. Kim, McCullough, and Cicchetti (2009) examined normal and maltreated children from low-income families. This study was the first, the authors claimed, to test whether parental religiousness would be related to adjustment outcomes in maltreated children. Results showed parents' religiousness was protective for nonmaltreated children but not for maltreated children. An important pattern to emerge from this study was that different dimensions of both parents' and nonmaltreated children's religiousness interacted to predict child

outcomes. Specifically, parents' higher worship attendance predicted fewer internalizing symptoms in children who did not attend worship frequently (but not in children who did attend frequently). Also, higher importance of faith to parents predicted lower internalizing and externalizing problems in children who were low in faith (but not in children high in faith).

Another study has found that mothers' religiousness is related to better child adjustment in regions of Northern Ireland that have suffered chronic conflict between Catholics and Protestants (Goeke-Morey et al., 2013). In this study, mothers' religiousness was an aggregate score based on church attendance, importance of religion, and endorsement of Christian beliefs. Children's (*M* age = 12 years) psychological adjustment was assessed using an aggregate score based on mothers' and children's reports of the children's emotional problems, conduct problems, peer difficulties, and impulsivity. Results showed that higher maternal religiousness predicted many positive outcomes: healthier psychological adjustment in the children, stronger (more secure) child-mother attachments, and higher rates of personal disclosure to the mothers. In other analyses, several significant interactions highlighted the protective benefits conferred by mothers' religiousness. First, mothers' behavioral control was related to stronger attachment security in children when mothers were more religious but not less; second, higher family cohesion was related to strong attachment in children when mothers were more religious but not less; and third, mothers' own mental health problems were related to children's lower attachment security when mothers were less religious but not more. This study suggests that religion serves as a family asset that enhances child and family well-being in numerous ways.

Another study assessed how church attendance and private religiousness (e.g., prayer, reading the Bible) was related to aggression in African American children between 7 and 12 years of age who had previously been identified as moderately to highly aggressive (Holmes & Lochman, 2012). In regressions testing the full model of parent and child organizational and private religiousness and SES, the only predictor of children's lower aggressiveness was the parents' church attendance. An interaction between children's private religious practices and SES emerged, as the children highest in aggression were low in SES and high in private religious practices whereas the children lowest in aggression were low in both SES and private religious practices. While causality is unclear, the authors suggested that highly aggressive poor children

may pray or read Scripture to help self-regulate or control their aggression. An alternative explanation would be that such youth may seek comfort in prayer or find justification in scripture for their aggression (e.g., the Old Testament adage of “an eye for an eye”).

In sum, the small but growing literature on religion, coping, and outcomes for children suggests that religion may often, but not always, function as a personal or family asset. However, the findings do not consistently point to this conclusion, as religion did not seem to buffer abused children (J. Kim et al., 2009) or aggressive children (Holmes & Lochman, 2012); some desirable outcomes emerged only from some informants’ but not others’ reports, and some only from the interaction of certain parent and child qualities but not others. While evidence points generally to a positive role of religion in children’s lives, the findings are nuanced and complicated and confirm the need to identify which dimensions of religiousness are associated with which parenting or child variables leading to particular outcomes in particular populations. For example, because several of the studies reviewed above (Goetze-Moray et al., 2013; Holmes & Lochman, 2012; J. Kim et al., 2009) had samples with mostly single-mother families, additional research is needed to learn how religion and spirituality may operate in various family structures.

### *Religion and Children’s Well-Being*

Here we focus on two studies of children in normal circumstances. We elaborate on these two in particular because their designs are more complex than those in other studies, and these studies present data from multiple informants on multiple dimensions of religiousness or spirituality in relation to multiple child outcomes, making the studies especially informative. One study focuses on religious variables, the other study on spirituality dimensions.

Holder, Coleman, and Wallace (2010) assessed happiness in 320 eight- to twelve-year-old children from public and private religious schools. The authors posited that children’s happiness would be enhanced through religion and spirituality through the provision of social support, relationship with the divine, and a sense of meaning. Children’s happiness was assessed on four similar measures (e.g., a smiley-face task in which children chose the expression that matched how they felt), some reported by children themselves and some by their mothers. Children’s religiousness was indexed by a survey on religious practices (e.g., prayer frequency) and religious beliefs (e.g., desire to be closer to a higher power) and spirituality on a Spiritual Well-Being Questionnaire that indexed four

dimensions of self-reported spirituality: *personal*, or the value and meaning in one’s life; *communal*, or quality and depth of relationships with others; *environmental*, or a sense of awe for nature; and *transcendental*, or faith in and relationship with something or someone beyond the human level (Holder et al., 2010, p. 136).

Holder and colleagues (2010) found that children’s happiness was not related to religiosity (defined as involvement in organized religion). In contrast, happiness was correlated with some measures of spirituality, albeit with low *r*s (.12–.21). In subsequent regression analyses that controlled for children’s gender, school type, and temperament, personal and communal spirituality predicted significant variance in children’s happiness. That is, children were happier the more they had a positive sense of self and better relationships with others. One might argue that these dimensions do not reflect spirituality as much as constructs such as self-esteem and social acceptance. However, if spirituality is understood as connectedness to what is beyond the self, then relationships with peers may be an important early expression of a “horizontal” spirituality in childhood. In contrast, the more “vertical” forms of spirituality were not relevant: Children’s sense of awe for the environment did not predict any happiness outcomes and transcendental connection predicted only one of four outcomes (and only 1% of the variance at that). These last findings on the minor impact of transcendental connection are noteworthy in part because this sense of connectedness is integral to most definitions of spirituality. However, from the framework of reciprocating spirituality, perhaps what is especially crucial in childhood is the development of an interpersonal or horizontal spirituality, which may function as a foundation for the development of a relationship with more transcendent entities such as nature or the supernatural. This interpretation seems consistent with theories of faith development, attachment, and relational spirituality already described earlier, and we return to this idea later.

In a large national study, Bartkowski, Xu, and Levin (2008) used data from one wave (*N* = approximately 17,000 children) of a representative sample of kindergarten and first-grade children and their parents and teachers. This study measured several aspects of family religiosity—mothers’ and fathers’ worship attendance, frequency of discussion with the child about religion, and frequency of spousal arguing about religion. Outcomes included children’s psychological and psychosocial functioning, some rated by parents and teachers and others by only one group of informants. Regression analyses with

demographic controls showed that frequency of worship attendance by mothers and fathers (separately and together) was widely associated with children's positive outcomes (self-control, social skills) and lower levels of undesirable outcomes (internalizing and externalizing problems), as rated by parents and teachers. These findings suggest potential benefits of involvement in organized religion for different types of outcomes in children. How often parents discussed religion with the children was less influential. Of the 10 possible outcomes, this measure was significantly linked to only 3 (better self-control, approaches to learning, and interaction with peers). We want to highlight that these significant findings emerged only with parents' reports of children's outcomes; none of the teacher-reported child outcomes were significantly predicted.

Collectively, these two studies confirm that simple conclusions about the benefits of religion or spirituality are unwarranted; some dimensions of religion or spirituality are related to some outcomes in some populations. The findings reviewed thus far demonstrate that, in a research literature of modest size, religion and spirituality and children's well-being are linked in complex and nuanced ways. This conclusion contrasts with the pattern in adolescence, where religion and spirituality clearly act as positive assets.

In sum, researchers should employ more developmental designs, micro-genetic or longitudinal, to learn how religiousness and spirituality actually develop and change. Such designs will also inform us about how childhood religiousness predicts later religiousness, how earlier religiousness and spirituality relate to child outcomes at later ages, and whether certain childhood psychological profiles set the stage for particular religious or spiritual outcomes later in life. Some longitudinal work shows that infants who were high-reactive and easily stressed were more religious as adolescents (Kagan, Snidman, Kahn, & Towsley, 2007). What other childhood temperamental or psychological profiles are associated with religious outcomes? What childhood qualities and environments lead to adolescent spiritual curiosity as opposed to defensive and dogmatic closure? We have much to learn.

## ADOLESCENCE AND RELIGIOUS AND SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

Although adolescence has long been recognized as a critical phase of development for religiousness and spirituality (Erikson, 1968; Hall, 1904), empirical research on it has blossomed only recently. In this section, we discuss why

spiritual and religious development are especially prevalent during adolescence and review the recent growing body of research that attempts to identify, conceptualize, and measure religious and spiritual issues and processes in adolescence. Such inquiry has been undertaken to identify what constitutes spiritual development during adolescence, delineate distinctions between religious and spiritual development, and discern how religious and/or spiritual development are resources for positive development.

### Adolescent Development and Religion and Spirituality

In the last decade, scholars have brought to light how the marked physical, psychological, and social changes during adolescence enable young people to be developmentally poised for qualitative changes in their religious and spiritual development (Good & Willoughby, 2008; King & Roeser, 2009; King et al., 2013; Warren et al., 2012). Recognizing that youth are malleable and have the potential for growth, the following section describes how the many changes happening at different levels of the developmental system (e.g., biological, psychological, social) are germane to religion and spirituality during adolescence.

Growing evidence points to a role for biological-level variables on religious and spiritual development. Some studies have begun to examine neural correlates of religious and spiritual beliefs (see S. Harris et al., 2009). The evidence suggests that adolescent brain maturation, particularly the pruning of neural connections and increases in white matter, facilitates increased abstract reasoning that may be associated with spirituality (S. B. Johnson, Blum, & Giedd, 2009). Future research also needs to test the notion that heightened emotionality in adolescence due to maturation of the limbic system might enable adolescents to be engaged by the emotional aspects of religiousness and spirituality (see DeHaan, Yonker, & Affholter, 2011) and to experience the conviction of conversion (Smith & Denton, 2005). Insights into brain maturation during adolescence call for a multilevel future agenda to test potential influences on adolescent religious and spiritual development, ranging from neurological to psychological to family and culture (see Warren et al., 2012).

In addition, recent epigenetic research underscores the need to explore how certain genotypes interact with particular personality tendencies or childhood experiences that may lead to different religious and spiritual outcomes (see Slavich & Cole, 2013). For example, in their review of human social genomics, Slavich and Cole (2013) present growing evidence for the influence of

social context on genetic expression, including evidence for effects of spiritual practices (e.g., meditation) on genome-regulating effects. In addition, positive states associated with spirituality and religion such as gratitude, peace, and connectedness may influence genetic transcription. All of these processes illuminate how environments and experiences affect genetic and biological processes. The work by Slavich and Cole highlights the notion that spiritual and religious experience or feelings may not only influence brain process and function but genetic expression in such a way that has significant implications for adolescent health and even genomic evolution.

These biological changes may parallel cognitive and emotional developments that facilitate one of the main developmental tasks of adolescence—identity formation, in which religiousness and spirituality can play a vital role as youth endeavor to establish self-definition and belonging (Erikson, 1968; King, 2003). In striving toward identity cohesion, young people actively search for a sense of self. In this process of seeking to form a meaningful identity, adolescents are exposed to a variety of beliefs, values and roles, and they begin to ask existential questions and search for purpose (Damon, Menon, & Bronk, 2003; King, 2003, 2008; Mariano & Damon, 2008; Markstrom, 1999). These processes may reflect a quest for a philosophy of life by youth that comprise much of the religious and spiritual life. Adolescents are maturationally ready to embark on this psychological endeavor to consolidate and understand their experience of self and the world, as well as to identify themselves in terms of familial, vocational, societal, existential, and spiritual roles. Religious and spiritual communities may also be helpful to adolescents as they explore ultimate beliefs and as their relationships begin to shift.

Given the psychological growth indicative of adolescence, teenagers are developmentally prepared for deeper and broader engagement with the world beyond themselves due to emerging cognitive and emotional capacities that allow for more abstract reasoning, self-reflection on their beliefs and their place in their expanding social worlds, and more astute awareness of others and their perspectives (Warren et al., 2012) that cause them to engage in spiritual endeavors as they attempt to make sense of their world, ask existential questions and wrestle with doubt (Hunsberger, Pratt, & Pancer, 2002), seek belonging, and construct a sense of self. Given the potential import of religion and spirituality for adolescents, we turn to more recent distinctions between definitions of religiousness and spirituality in adolescents.

### Adolescent Religious Development

Religious development involves the changes in a young person's engagement in and understanding of a religion's beliefs, rituals, and community. However, until recently the vast majority of empirical studies have employed measures of more simplistic religiousness variables, such as single-item variables that measure frequency of religious attendance and level of importance of religion. In hopes of deepening an understanding of adolescent religiousness or religious development, scholars have recently moved beyond these measures to more refined constructs such as religious commitment and religious identity. The following section highlights some promising new directions.

A recent meta-analysis of empirical articles published from 1990 to 2010 demonstrates the beginning of this shift. DeHaan et al. (2011) examined theoretical underpinnings, methodologies, and operational definitions of religion, spirituality, and faith that were used in studies of adolescents and young adults. Their analysis of 119 studies revealed four categories of conceptualizations and measures of religiosity: religious attendance (i.e., how often one attends church), religious behaviors (e.g., prayer), salience of beliefs (e.g., importance of religion or God), and religious searching (e.g., the extent to which religious beliefs have changed, readiness to face existential questions). The meta-analysis revealed that, although many researchers mentioned the intention to study religion *and* spirituality, few actually distinguished between these concepts in their operational definitions and measures. Most used measures tied to traditional religious traditions. This finding is of special interest in light of the growing concerns with creating operational definitions and measures of spirituality independent of religious tradition. This issue seems all the more important given the “rise of the nones,” those who claim no religious affiliation, in adolescence (Pew Forum, 2012; Smith & Denton, 2005).

In their secondary analysis of the NYSR data, L. D. Pearce and Denton (2011) proposed a more nuanced understanding of adolescent religiousness. Using three dimensions of religiousness, *content* (specific beliefs), *conduct* (the nature and frequency of religious practices), and *centrality* (the degree to which religion is salient in one's life), they used latent class analysis to identify five different religious profiles that remained stable over-time. Two types are clearly identifiable and internally coherent—“atheists” and religious “abiders.” They comprise 3%–5% and 20%–22% of U.S. teenagers, respectively. In addition, they found “avoiders” (17%–24% of U.S. youth who

resist identification as atheist or religious), “assenters” (20%–28% who are extrinsically oriented), and “adapters” (30%–31% who are intrinsically oriented to faith but not consistently affiliated). The analysis of the three additional types demonstrated the benefit of a person-centered approach as well as the complexity of internal and external factors that contribute to adolescent religiousness.

A recent qualitative study of Christian, Jewish, and Muslim adolescents used grounded theory to explore religious commitment beyond the typical attitudinal and behavioral measures employed to index adolescent religiousness. Exploring how adolescents talk about their religious commitments, Layton, Dollahite, and Hardy (2011) found seven “anchors” with which youth grounded their religious commitments—religious traditions, rituals, and laws; God; faith traditions or denominations; faith community members; parents; scriptures or sacred texts; and religious leaders. Consistent with other scholarship (King et al., 2013; Mahoney, 2010), these findings emphasize that “relational pathways are at work in the domain of adolescent religious commitment” (Layton et al., 2011, p. 407). The concept of “religious anchor” is a multidimensional relational construct that points to the specific ways that young people connect to religion. Youth are related to their faith not only through living people but also through God, ideals, teachings, practices, and stories in sacred texts and traditions. Interestingly, youth spoke of changes in the relative importance of different faith anchors at different points in their lives. Further research is needed to understand whether different anchors are more pertinent at different ages and in differing circumstances, religious traditions, and cultures. As we suggested previously, perhaps more concrete anchors (e.g. youth leaders, rules) are more accessible to young children or adolescents, whereas more abstract anchors (e.g. God, solidarity with previous and future believers) may be more meaningful to older youth. Furthermore, examining interactions between different anchors would illuminate the nature and content of the contexts that buoy religious commitments. A study of Moroccan-Dutch Muslim youth in the Netherlands exemplifies the complex interplay between adolescents’ religious and national traditions and cultures (Verkuyten, Thijs, & Stevens, 2012). For early adolescents, their parents’ identification with their religious group predicted the young people’s religious and ethnic/national identification, but by middle adolescence these associations were no longer significant.

In turn, understanding self-concept or identity in relation to religion has gained attention (Templeton & Eccles,

2006) due to the notion that religion, like any salient domain of social experience, constitutes an important source of individual differences in the social-cognitive-affective self-schemas that are elaborated across development. Roeser, Issac, Abo-Zena, Brittain, and Peck (2008) suggested that religious identity is a personal identification with a social collective or group characterized by a particular religious tradition. Individuals who claim membership in a particular tradition share in common with other group members’ collective sacred worldviews and associated beliefs, practices, rituals, and symbols.

In a longitudinal study, Lopez, Huynh, and Fuligni (2011) demonstrated the stability and coherence of adolescent religious identity and its connection to family and ethnic identity. Other studies have shown that religious importance and participation interact to promote religious identity (Hardy, Pratt, Pancer, Olsen, & Lawford, 2011). Commitment and exploration continue to be the two major constructs used in the study of religious identity, and Layton and colleagues (2011) found that specific “anchors” of commitment served as distinct components of adolescents’ religious identity inasmuch as identity is understood in terms of religious commitments made and maintained.

These studies advance understanding and assessment of adolescent religiousness. They highlight that religiousness is a multidimensional construct that involves beliefs, participation, commitment, and relationships. Research is needed to learn whether adolescent religious identity is a construct distinct from religiousness and, if so, how it illuminates the nature and function of religion in the lives of adolescents. In the next section, we discuss conceptualizations and measurement of spiritual development as distinct from religious development.

### Adolescent Spiritual Development

In addition to studying religiousness, scholars have pursued a nuanced conceptualization and measurement of adolescent spirituality. Since 2010, scholars have made a concerted effort to understand the multifaceted nature of adolescent spirituality. The following section reviews empirical work on spirituality and spiritual development in the adolescent literature.

In a rare longitudinal study, involving 756 predominantly Canadian-born adolescents, Good, Willoughby, and Busseri (2011) examined intraindividual stability and change in spirituality and religiousness between 17 and 18 years of age. They included measures that were either more personal or institutional and more affective

or behavioral. These measures included religious activity involvement, wondering about spiritual issues, perceptions of transcendence, frequency of prayers, and frequency of meditation. Results of a cluster-analysis revealed five clusters with varying degrees of personal and institutional involvement and of affect and behavior. With the exception of the high institutional and personal cluster, the clusters remained stable over two time points. There also was strong intraindividual stability in all clusters, though a significant proportion of individuals classified as high institutional and personal at Time 1 moved into the primarily personal cluster at Time 2. This study illustrates the complexity and interrelatedness of adolescent religious and spiritual development. Some youth are committed at the institutional and personal level, while others are committed at only one or neither level. In addition, although institutional engagement may decline in later adolescence, personal modes of religiousness and spirituality are prevalent and relatively stable among adolescents.

In addition to operationalizing spirituality and religiosity distinctly, scholars have investigated spiritual identity as distinct from religious identity. In contrast to religious identity, Roeser et al. (2008) posited that the core of adolescent *spiritual identity* is a personal identification with that which is *pan-human* and *transcultural*, a solidarity with others, and values, ethics, and wisdom concerning life's ultimate existential questions relevant to all human beings. Although scholars have suggested that spiritual identity is salient in adolescence (Templeton & Eccles, 2006), there has been no empirical research on such an identity construct. Such data are needed to illuminate the potentially unique role of spiritual identity in young people. Just as identity achievement is linked to positive outcomes for youth, spiritual identity may help youth thrive and may facilitate the transition into meaningful and productive adulthood (Trommsdorff & Chen, 2012).

In addition to identity, recent attempts to elucidate spiritual development have emphasized constructs such as transcendence, awareness, connection, and contribution. In an exploratory study, the Search Institute conducted a quantitative study of 6,725 youth aged 12 to 25 from eight countries<sup>2</sup> (Benson et al., 2012). Items for an online survey were generated to explore spiritual development, drawing core spirituality constructs from numerous sources: a literature review, an international focus group study, a qualitative spiritual exemplar study, and a Delphi study

of expert practitioners and scholars of adolescent spirituality. Exploratory factor analysis was conducted on two sets of items from the online survey. The first set was intended to measure aspects of spirituality that were hypothesized to be more universal. Four psychological processes potentially integral to spiritual development were identified: connecting with others through prosocial beliefs and actions, discovering meaning, mindfulness, and alignment of values with action. The other set of items was intended to measure religious and spiritual engagement and yielded the following factors that were valid across the religions and countries represented in the sample: apprehension of God/Force, spiritual practices, religious practices, and spiritual experiences. Benson et al. then used a person-centered analysis to explore profiles of the unique ways spirituality manifested itself in the sample of diverse youth. Latent class analysis yielded six types of spiritual development involving different combinations of religious variables (e.g., attending congregation, reading sacred texts), spiritual variables (e.g., praying, experiencing God or the supernatural), and the four psychological processes described above.

Although preliminary, these Benson et al. (2012) findings suggest that spirituality is relevant for many youth from different cultural and religious backgrounds. Although the study was not longitudinal, the findings highlight important directions for future study. For instance, the researchers found that even though they did not report regular engagement with religious activities, the majority of youth reported connecting with other people through prosocial activities, seeking a sense of meaning, being mindful, and intentionally living lives aligned with their personal values. The study suggests potentially important links between youth and the ideological narratives, people, institutions, and cultures that surround them. Studies like this point toward the complexity of spirituality and psychological and behavioral components.

Another cross-cultural study explored dimensions of spiritual development in a sample of 30 culturally and religiously diverse youth from six countries<sup>3</sup> who had been nominated by an international board of scholars and practitioners of adolescent spirituality as "spiritual exemplars" for living with profound spirituality in their culture (King et al., 2013). Using consensual qualitative research methods, structured analyses of participants' narratives of their experiences of spirituality yielded a view of spirituality as

<sup>2</sup>Australia, Great Britain, Canada, Cameroon, India, Thailand, Ukraine, and the United States.

<sup>3</sup>Kenya, India, Jordan, Peru, United Kingdom, and the United States.

based on transcendence, fidelity, and action. The findings suggested that spiritual development occurs when a young person's interactions with others are linked to a deeper connection to something beyond the self (transcendence), which can lead to a growing clarity and commitment to beliefs, values, and purpose (fidelity) that motivates a way of living that benefits others (action). The adolescent participants all described meaningful connections with God, their faith community, nature, or absolute truth. Perhaps one of the most interesting findings was that awareness and experience of God, absolute truth, or humanity informed the way these youth understood the world and themselves. These young people articulated clear beliefs and a genuine commitment to ideology—to the extent that they attempted to intentionally live in a manner consistent with their beliefs and values. In other words, these young people reported profound experiences of transcendence, were able to articulate a clarity and devotion to their beliefs, and participated in spiritual leadership or service.

In regards to measuring spirituality, transcendence is the construct that has received the most empirical attention. For example, the Spiritual Transcendence Index (STI; Seidlitz et al., 2003) has eight items (e.g., “My spirituality gives me a feeling of fulfillment,” “I experience a deep communion with God”) that measure subjective experiences of the sacred and their effects on one's self-perception, feelings, goals, and ability to overcome difficulties. The scale examines how one's daily experiences are interpreted in terms of spirituality, and it has been utilized with Canadian adolescents (Good, Willoughby, & Busseri, 2011) and among U.S. evangelical youth (Schnitker, Felke, Barrett, & Emmons, in 2014). Although the STI has strong psychometrics when used in adolescent populations, it is limited to a theistic expression of transcendence and spirituality. Other empirical studies have operationalized transcendence through adolescent self-perception of awareness of God, desire for closeness with God, and connection with others (see Desrosiers, Kelly, & Miller, 2011; Dowling et al., 2004; Warren et al., 2012).

The studies reviewed above suggest that a simple conceptualization and assessment of adolescent religious and spiritual development is neither available nor appropriate. However, there is growing consensus regarding the complexity of these constructs, as researchers are moving beyond simple operational definitions of religiousness and spirituality (e.g., frequency of attendance, degree of importance). Furthermore, the exploration of spiritual development has brought attention to the significance of concepts such as religious commitment and

religious identity, as well as transcendence, awareness, meaning-making, purpose, fidelity, and actions. These findings are consistent with the growing body of research that suggests that spiritual development is a domain of human development that pertains to finding significance, meaning, and the sacred through connection to self and other. In this light, we reaffirm the concept of *reciprocating spirituality* as a vital construct for a deeper and more comprehensive grasp of the active developmental process of transcending the self; of transforming personal beliefs, commitments, and meaning; and of living consistently with those beliefs. In the next section, we investigate different features of the adolescent developmental ecosystem to more fully understand relational influences on adolescent religiousness and spirituality.

### **Social Ecology of Influences on Adolescent Religiousness and Spirituality**

From a relational developmental systems perspective, religious and spiritual development, like other areas of development, are embedded within networks of social relationships in different settings across the life span. In the following section, we describe what is understood regarding the social ecologies in which religion and spiritual development occur. First we examine research on how relationships with parents and peers, and experiences in schools and with mentors, shape religious and spiritual development during adolescence. In addition, given that religious traditions are closely connected to ethnicity and cultures, we review relationships between these broader contexts and the religious and spiritual development of youth.

#### ***Family Influences***

Like research on other aspects of socialization, parents are viewed as the key socializers of adolescents' religion and spirituality. As described earlier, parental beliefs and practices are assumed to provide the foundation for young people's own religious beliefs and practices (Ozorak, 1989), directly through explicit socialization practices and indirectly through the influence of religion on parenting behaviors (Hood et al., 2009).

The quality of the parent-adolescent relationship is central to religious socialization. Parent-child relationships characterized by frequent interaction and trust enhance religious socialization (King & Furrow, 2004), and warm, close relationships are linked to greater correspondence of offspring's religious beliefs with those of their parents

(Hoge, Petrillo, & Smith, 1982) and less religious rebellion by teens (Wilson & Sherkat, 1994). Bao et al. (1999) found that parental acceptance mediated the socialization of religious beliefs and practices, with greater acceptance leading to greater influence. Thus, warm and supportive relationships with religious parents seem to enhance the religious and spiritual development of adolescents in U.S. populations (Hardy, White, Zhang, & Ruchty, 2011) as well as Indonesian Muslim populations (French et al., 2013). In a multigenerational study, Spilman, Neppl, Donnellan, Schofield, and Conger (2013) found that parents' religiousness in one generation predicted more positive relationships between parents and adolescent children in that generation as well as higher religiousness in adolescence and adulthood.

Other research indicates that mothers and fathers have distinct roles in promoting their adolescents' spirituality. Desrosiers et al. (2011) measured a large ethnically and religiously diverse sample in the northeast United States to learn how adolescents' relational spirituality (operationalized by daily spiritual experiences, forgiveness, and positive religious coping) was related to mothers' and fathers' care and concern for their children as well as spiritual support of their children's spirituality; support was operationalized as parents' interest in and frequency of discussing spiritual and religious issues. Mothers and fathers appeared to play different roles: Adolescents' spirituality was predicted by mothers' spiritual support and dialogue (but not general care and concern), whereas adolescents' spirituality was predicted by fathers' general care and concern (but not spiritual support and dialogue). The authors suggested that mothers seem especially important because they "supply the scaffolding for the spiritual individuation process in adolescents" (p. 49), which may help their children explore spiritual dialogue with friends; having an emotionally close relationship with fathers may provide a broad, secure foundation that is more important than specific interactions around religious topics.

Family socialization of adolescents in the religious domain is comprised in large part of family rituals and conversations about religion. Results of the NSYR (Smith & Denton, 2005) showed that 54% of U.S. families engage in "giving thanks before or after meals" and 44% of youth said they talked with their families about God, scripture, prayer, or religious and spiritual matters one or more days a week. Dollahite and Marks (2005) found that families foster religious and spiritual development in children through processes such as formal teaching, parent-child discussion, role modeling, and coparticipation in prayer and other

rituals. Dollahite and Thatcher (2008) surveyed and interviewed parents and adolescents in highly religious Jewish, Christian, and Muslim families, who described various techniques to shape young people's religiousness including family devotions, worship attendance, and praying with children. In interviews, parents and adolescents both cited conversations more frequently (more than 75% of each group) than any other method. In particular, they found "youth-centered" conversations were especially effective and meaningful. In these discussions parents focused on adolescents' spiritual needs and issues in contrast to "parent-centered" conversations that emphasized parents talking rather than listening to children and not taking adolescents' concerns as priorities. The youth-centered model is akin to the bidirectional parent↔child dynamic (Boyatzis & Janicki, 2003; Flor & Knapp, 2001). In the Dollahite and Thatcher (2008) study, youth-centered conversations were described by both adolescents and parents as more positive experiences. This style may help youth adopt parents' religious values as well as strengthen parent-child relationships.

Family prayer is common in conservative Protestant, African-American Protestant, and Mormon families and likely is one major way that these American parents socialize religious practices in their offspring (e.g., Ozorak, 1989). In a national Seventh-Day Adventist population, family worship patterns that involved a high degree of adolescent participation were positively linked with stronger adolescent faith (Lee, Rice, & Gillespie, 1997). Erickson (1992) found that parental religious participation with adolescents was more efficacious than mere parental religiousness. Another study on Protestant youth found that talking with parents about religious issues and participating in religious activities together predicted adolescents' experience of God and their report of the importance of religion (King, Furrow, & Roth, 2002). In a study of African-American families, there was no main effect of parents' religiosity or parenting style on their young people's religiosity, but a significant interaction emerged as higher authoritative parenting combined with higher parental religiosity to predict modest but unique variance in young people's religiosity (Abar, Carter, & Winsler, 2009).

The dearth of longitudinal studies on this topic precludes any strong inferences about the long-term effects of parenting on the religion of offspring, especially given the considerable fluctuation of religious affiliations noted earlier (e.g., Pew Forum, 2012). In addition, other sources of influence in the family, including siblings, aunts and uncles, and grandparents are important to consider in the



religious development of youth. This larger group of family members may be especially salient for ethnic minority families that live in close proximity to their extended family and who have religious homogeneity across generations.

One study demonstrated a plethora of social influences. Regnerus, Smith, and Smith (2004) analyzed data from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health, a database focused on youth 12 to 18 years of age. The survey included two religiosity outcomes for youth: worship attendance and importance of religion. Relative influences were computed for the religiosity of parents, peers, the young people's schools, and local county norms (for worship attendance). Teens' worship attendance was related most strongly to their parents' attendance, but peers' religiosity and local county worship norms were also strong predictors of youth attendance. Interestingly, the overall importance of religion in the young people's schools was the strongest predictor of the importance that the adolescents themselves placed on religion. Together, these studies confirm the value of a social-ecology approach that analyzes multiple influences and links between them.

### *Peer Influences*

According to NSYR results (Smith & Denton, 2005), American youth generally report having peers who share their religious beliefs. Of their five closest friends, between two to three of these friends are on average said to "hold similar religious beliefs" and about one of these friends is said to "be involved in the same religious group." Conservative African-American Protestant and Mormon teens were more likely to have friends in their same religious group (Smith & Denton, 2005). King and Furrow (2004) found that religious youth, compared to their less religious peers, reported higher levels of positive social interaction, shared values, and trust with their closest friends.

These findings illustrate two important facets of adolescent religious and spiritual development: selection effects, in that youth pick peers who are religiously similar to themselves; and socialization effects, in that peers seem to shape each other. For instance, a longitudinal study of children from 7 to 22 years of age showed that the best childhood and adolescent predictors of religiosity during early adulthood were ethnicity and peers' church attendance during high school (Gunnoe & Moore, 2002). Desmond, Morgan, and Kikuchi (2010) used growth curve modeling to examine the influence of parents and peers on adolescent religious attendance and religious importance using five waves (eight years) of the National Youth Survey (1979–1987). Compared to adolescents with low peer

attachment, adolescents with high peer attachment were more likely to attend religious services initially and to believe that religion is important, although their religious service attendance and belief in the importance of religion decreased more rapidly over time.

Additional research points to how friends may influence each other's religious and spiritual development. Not surprisingly, adolescents who have friends who talk about religion and spirituality have higher self-reported religious beliefs and commitment than adolescents whose friends did not talk about their faith (Schwartz, Bukowski, & Aoki, 2006). In a large sample of Christian adolescents, perceived faith support and spiritual modeling of Christian friends were among the most important predictors of the adolescents' own faith (Schwartz, 2006). A striking finding from this study was that these peer factors mediated the influence of parents on adolescents' religiousness. Similarly, King et al. (2002) found that talking with friends about religion and participating with friends in informal religious activities (e.g., studying religious texts, attending religious camp) explained significant variance in religious commitment over and above parental influences. Desrosiers et al. (2011) found that friends' spiritual support—measured by how comfortably and how frequently adolescents reported discussing spirituality with their friends—predicted significantly higher relational spirituality in adolescents. Together these studies confirm that the peer group is a key context for religious and spiritual development.

### *School and Mentor Influences*

Studies of school effects are typically divided into those assessing direct effects of attending religious schools on student academic development and on how the student body's religious composition may exert indirect effects on adolescents' religious lives. Studying an African-American Muslim school, Nasir (2004) found that teachers viewed students as spiritual beings waiting to be developed. This social positioning based on a spiritual ideology afforded these young people a unique set of supports and identity position to promote their religious and spiritual development. Similarly, J. B. Barrett, Pearson, Muller, and Frank (2007) suggested that the private religiosity of popular schoolmates may foster a community in which religious matters are normative and valued and in turn promote personal religiosity.

A small body of literature examines the roles of adult mentors in adolescent religious and spiritual development and has documented that the relational quality of mentoring relationships is linked to their impact on spiritual

development. In a study of over 3,000 Christian adolescents, participants who described their relationship with their youth pastors as instructive, imitative, and intimate also reported that these relationships contributed significantly to their spiritual development (Schwartz, 2006). Another study found that relationships between youth pastors and their youth that are characterized by both relational intentionality and spiritual focus result in spiritual development, as indicated by outcomes such as a personal relationship with God, moral responsibility, hopeful and positive attitudes, and engaging in mission and service (Strommen & Hardel, 2000). King and Furrow (2004) also found that for religious youth, relationships with adults that were characterized by higher levels of social interaction, trust, and shared values had more influence on adolescent moral outcomes than adults who were less engaged.

Thus, intimate and interactive relationships with spiritual mentors may provide inspiration for spiritual development, showing how nonparental role models matter in adolescent religious and spiritual development. Not only are relationships important to religious and spiritual development, but institutions play an important part as well.

### *Immigration*

Given the high levels of immigration around the world, and the fact that immigrants are often more traditional peoples with historical ties to their religions and religious communities (e.g., Latinos to the Catholic Church, Turks to Islam), religious institutions serve as primary “contexts of reception” for immigrant adolescents. Such institutions afford them refuge, resources, and means for bonding with their ethnic community and mainstream culture through service and other activities (Jensen, 2008). Research on immigrant youth has revealed that congregations create opportunities for maintaining and building religious and ethnic identification and preservation (Suárez-Orozco, Singh, Abo-Zena, Du, & Roeser, 2012). In a study on acculturation, Güngör, Bornstein, and Phalet (2012) found that, when comparing acculturating Turkish-Belgian adolescents in Belgium to those living in their heritage culture (e.g., Turkish youth in Turkey, Belgian youth in Belgium), religious reaffirmation was higher among acculturating youth and was related to the cultural values of interdependence, maintenance of one’s heritage culture, and ethnic identification.

### *Race and Ethnicity*

Religions reflect myriad geographical, historical, national, and ethnic/racial influences and are thus deeply cultural

in nature, so studying religious and spiritual development apart from culture misses something fundamental about their origins and manifestations (Mattis, Ahluwalia, Cowie, & Kirkland-Harris, 2006). Initial research confirms that spiritual development in any cultural context entails a deepening and intensifying sense of connectedness to the transcendent, even if the nature of the transcendent varies dramatically across cultures (see Benson et al., 2012; King et al., in press). However, culturally and developmentally sensitive methods are needed to understand the complexity of religious and spiritual development in diverse populations. For example, in cultures where religious rites of passage align with transitions to adulthood (e.g., bar mitzvah, confirmation), communal rituals help consolidate identity more effectively than in cultures where movement into the adult working world no longer accompanies these rites (Trommsdorff & Chen, 2012). Qualitative work in London has examined young adolescents’ “bowing” to their parents (Thanissaro, 2010). This act of bowing that has some religious significance to the individual and family occurred in more than a fifth of youth across diverse religions and ethnic groups but mainly in Buddhist and Muslim families and very rarely in nonreligious families or Christian ones. Religion and ethnicity interact to either promote or impede bowing. For example, Pakistani Muslim youth in London would not bow due to religious reasons but other Muslim youth from the Indian subcontinent would bow frequently. Clearly, adolescent religious practice occurs at the intersection of complex racial, ethnic, and religious traditions. An overview of existing research on the major racial and ethnic minority populations in the United States further demonstrates the nuances of the practice and function of religiousness in different groups.

**African-American Adolescents.** As discussed previously, African-American youth are more religious than other ethnicities (ChildTrends, 2013; Smith & Denton, 2005). African-American adolescents participate in various religions including Catholicism, Islam, and other forms of Protestantism. As the mainstay of African-American culture, the church plays an important role in the identity formation process of its adolescents by serving as a refuge and support system, and outside the family the church is one of the strongest social influences within African-American communities (Mattis et al., 2006). Several studies have shown positive associations with religiosity among African-American youth. For example, African-American students who were more religious were less likely to appropriate derogatory societal messages

regarding the African-American community (Brega & Coleman, 1999). Brittan and Spencer (2012) found that religious and ethnic identity correlated with less risk behavior for African-American youth. Highly religious African-American students perform well academically, study better, and engage in fewer risky behaviors than youth less committed to religion (Abar et al., 2009; Regnerus & Elder, 2003).

**Asian-American Adolescents.** Asian-American youth, in general, tend to be less religious than youth from other racial and ethnic groups (Smith & Denton, 2005), although variation exists. Despite low levels of religion and spirituality among Asian-American youth, religion and spirituality play significant roles in some of their lives and is related to their life satisfaction (S. Kim, Miles-Mason, Kim, & Esquivel, 2013). Religious youth groups may also provide Asian-American adolescents with a sense of community and religious identity that often supersedes cultural identity. In a longitudinal study of religious identity, Lopez et al. (2011) found that Asian-American and Latino youth reported higher levels of religious identity than Caucasian youth and this identity was stable over three years of high school.

**Latino/a-American Adolescents.** Given the adherence to the Catholic Church, it is not surprising that, in the United States, Latino/a youth are more religious than Caucasian youth. In the Lopez et al. (2011) study, Latino/a youth reported higher levels of religious identity than Caucasians and also reported higher levels of religious participation than the students from Asian and European backgrounds.

Latino and Latina youth tend to identify the family and home as contexts in which they learn spiritual practices that affirm their identities and offer spiritual support (M. Knight, Author, Bentley, & Dixon, 2004). Specifically, spirituality is sustained and developed in family pedagogies by using *cuentos* (stories) and *consejos* (advice) (Norton, 2006). For example, Lopez et al. (2011) found that young Latino/a American's religious identity was linked to family identity. Research has also documented that young Latino/a American's religious involvement is linked to lower drug use and spirituality to less marijuana and hard drug use (Hodge, Cardenas, & Montoya, 2001).

### ***Summary of the Social-Ecology of Adolescent Religiousness and Spirituality***

We need to learn more about how adolescent religious and spiritual development are influenced by the features

of social and cultural contexts. In addition to the methods most often employed to identify cultural universals, cultural developmental approaches are also warranted to understand differences in spiritual and religious development within populations (Jensen, 2012). For example, it is important to note that children grow up in different nations and cultures that may promote, incorporate, or tolerate organized religion to varying degrees. For example, in the United Kingdom "spirituality" is a required curriculum topic although religion, per se, seems not to have such a prominent place in public and political discourse, whereas, in the United States religious issues are often raised in public discourse, but religion and spirituality are excluded from government-funded education. A social ecology approach needs to include these broader public and political macrosystem factors.

In addition, exploring potential moderating or mediating effects of different relationships would shed further light on the social ecology of spiritual development. For example, does the frequent "spiritual growth" of adolescents renew or challenge their parents' spirituality, and would such effects vary by ethnicity? Do clear and consistent norms and accountability across contexts (e.g., family, school, congregation) influence changes in religious and spiritual development? Furthermore, given the increasing prominence of social media and technology in the lives of adolescents and the lack of existing research on technology and youth spirituality, research that investigates the impact of these environments on religious and spiritual development is required. We do not know how adolescent immersion in social media and technology may impede or promote their experiences of spirituality. Social media undoubtedly can increase the breadth of social contacts, but do these kinds of connection "beyond the self" promote a sense of transcendence that results in personal transformation and contribution to the greater good? Are some kinds of social media more beneficial than others?

Just as in other domains of development, the social ecologies that shape adolescent religious and spiritual development are increasingly complex as youth explore and affiliate more intensely and frequently outside the family. Longitudinal designs are needed to model or clarify causal influences on adolescent religious and spiritual development. Such designs will inform the nature of bidirectional relations between young people and the environments in which they live. For example, longitudinal designs may reveal under what conditions and through what mechanisms parents or peers promote religious and

spiritual development, or how adolescent religiousness or spirituality may influence their relationships.

### **Potential Influences of Religion and Spirituality on Adolescent Development**

Empirical studies have turned toward understanding mechanisms that explain how religion and spirituality are potentially “fertile grounds” or important “anchors” for adolescent development (King, 2003; 2008). We have categorized existing studies to discuss the prominent roles of the ideological, social, and transcendent resources within religious and spiritual contexts. It behooves us to note that the large majority of studies are correlational and thus preclude any causal certainty. In addition, while many researchers presume that directionality flows from religious involvement to some positive quality in youth, the reverse directionality may apply: There may be selection effects, with youth who are higher in certain values or beliefs or more inclined to civic action or healthy behavior seeking out religious contexts that are consistent with their values and behaviors. Thus, the direction of causality in this work remains uncertain and underscores the need for designs that model or directly test causal influences.

#### ***Ideological Context***

Young people strive to make sense of the world and to assert their place in it. The beliefs, worldviews, and values of religious and spiritual traditions provide an ideological context in which young people can generate a sense of meaning, order, and place in the world that is crucial to adolescent development (King, 2003; 2008). Erikson (1965) pointed to religion as an important aspect of the socio-historical matrix in which identity takes shape. He argued that religion is the oldest and most lasting institution that promotes fidelity. Religion intentionally offers beliefs, moral codes, and values from which youth can build personal belief systems (Smith, 2003b). Adolescents’ spirituality entails the intentional identification and integration of beliefs, narrative, and values in the process of making meaning. Whether this process is one of personal construction or socialization, the intentional act of relying on personal, religious, or cultural ideology is central to spirituality and crucial to the development of identity, meaning, and purpose (Damon et al., 2003).

Religion may help youth to internalize a set of beliefs and morals. In a large sample of 10- to 18-year-olds, religious commitment and religious involvement interacted to promote moral identity (Hardy, Walker, Rackham, &

Olsen, 2012). Similarly, in studies of individuals nominated for moral excellence, participants frequently reported that religion served as a foundation for their moral identity and action (Colby & Damon, 1999; Hart & Fegley, 1995). Larson, Hansen, and Moneta (2006) found that youth involved in faith-based youth programs tended to have stronger senses of identity than youth not engaged in faith-based programs. Furthermore, they found that 75% of youth in faith-based programs reported discussing morals and values, in comparison with 24% of youth involved in other types of organized youth programs. King and Furrow (2004) found that adolescents higher in religiousness had more shared beliefs, values, and expectations with parents, friends, and adults. In addition to providing ideology, religious traditions and forms of spirituality involve communities. Below we describe processes that clarify how youth may be socially influenced by religion and spirituality.

#### ***Social Context***

Religion and spirituality do more than provide a belief system and a moral code. At their best, community members embody religious and spiritual ideological norms and serve as role models for youth (Erikson, 1968). Although religion and spirituality do not exclusively provide these social resources, ample research documents that they may be particularly effective in offering social capital, social support, and mentors. Religious influence is complex and is more thoroughly understood by the network of relationships, opportunities, and shared values common to religious congregations. It is useful to illustrate here a few different conceptions of how religion and religious settings may influence youth.

**Social Capital.** Social capital models posit that the constructive influence of religion on young people is due to the quantity and nature of relationships it provides. For instance, religious involvement strengthens young people’s access to intergenerational relationships, which are rich sources of social capital (King & Furrow, 2004; Smith, 2003a). Few other social institutions afford the opportunity that religious ones do to build trustworthy cross-generational relationships and give youth direct interaction with sources of helpful information, resources, and opportunities. For example, Benson, Scales, & Syvertsen (2011) provided an account of the resources available through religious and spiritual involvement. Structural equation modeling demonstrated that positive benefits of adolescent religiousness were partially mediated through

developmental resources available to these youth (Wagener, Furrow, King, Leffert, & Benson, 2003). In short, religious involvement provided youth with access to resources such as supportive adults and positive peer relationships, demonstrating the rich social milieu of religious participation.

**Social Channeling.** Religious institutions offer opportunities for social channeling, the conscious process on the part of adults to steer their children toward particular individuals positioned to discourage negative behaviors and promote positive life practices (Smith, 2003b). Social channeling in congregations promotes spiritual development, academic achievement, and generally positive development (Martin, White, & Perlman, 2001; Regnerus & Elder, 2003). Religious institutions and the relationships they engender also provide forms of social support that are particularly important to adolescent coping, resilience, and well-being. For example, youths' perceptions of social support from religious communities strongly predicted fewer depressive symptoms (Miller & Gur, 2002), whereas youth who perceived that their congregations were critical of them had more depressive symptoms (M. J. Pearce, Little, & Perez, 2003). It appears, then, that religious communities can be sources of social support or stress based on how youth feel about how adults in those communities perceive and treat the youth.

**Spiritual Modeling.** Based on social learning theory, spiritual modeling refers to emulating another in order to grow spiritually (Oman, 2013). Spiritual modeling emphasizes how adults may socialize young people's religious and spiritual identities to align with the beliefs, norms, and expectations of particular religious groups. A foundation of this approach is the notion that the people with whom we regularly associate shape the behavioral patterns that will be repeatedly observed and learned most thoroughly. Spiritual modeling is often provided by parents or by intentional mentors. Religious and spiritual groups are often intentional about mentoring younger members. For example, the Hindu tradition has gurus and the Christian tradition disciples. Through these relationships, adults connect youth to a larger whole, enabling them to identify with greater religious communities.

**Spiritual Scaffolding.** We suggest the term "spiritual scaffolding" to emphasize the value of an optimal balance of monitoring, interest, and support for youth in their pursuit of religious and spiritual exploration. Such scaffolding fits well with the sociocultural models described earlier. Exploration requires freedom within reasonable

boundaries to facilitate discovery and scrutiny of spiritual beliefs, engagement, and commitments. Scaffolding conducive to exploration is warm and supportive and needs to provide appropriate distance and autonomy. For example, a study of highly religious parents revealed that parental efforts to control their adolescent sons' problem behavior sometimes backfired whereas such strategies were more effective with daughters (Mahoney & Tarakeshwar, 2005). As noted in the section on family influences, children's religious beliefs are more similar to their parents' when the parents are perceived by children to be warm and accepting. These findings suggest that controlling parenting practices, in conjunction with religious teachings, may be problematic, particularly with adolescent sons, whereas autonomy support and warmth may facilitate religious socialization in sons and daughters equally in adolescence.

In summary, research confirms the importance of the social milieu associated with religion and spirituality. Religious communities teach, reinforce, and support religious and spiritual development and seem to influence other developmental outcomes. As measurement and methods become more sophisticated, research could investigate factors that determine the effectiveness of religious social engagement (e.g., religious attendance, youth group participation, mentoring) and more personal religious and/or spiritual factors. What types of spiritual scaffolding most effectively support healthy development? What religious and spiritual modeling allows for optimal identity exploration and commitment? Longitudinal designs will clarify developmental processes and trends and elucidate person-centered profiles of spiritual development. Finally, we note that our discussion is rather Western in its assumptions of autonomy and exploration as normative processes; in cultures with different presuppositions about human development, such processes may show different trajectories with different outcomes and influences on them.

### *Transcendent Context*

Religion and spirituality provide important ideological resources and social relationships that may nurture adolescent development and also foster valuable opportunities for transcendent experiences. Transcendence—connecting with something beyond the self in ways that bring about deeper awareness of one's self and others—is often intentionally nurtured in religious and spiritual communities (Roehlkepartain & Patel, 2006). Experiences of transcendence can affirm one's own sense of identity and

self-worth through a profound sense of connection to a divine or human other. In a qualitative study on spiritual youth, a Christian boy from Kenya described this sentiment: “Knowing that I’m actually a child of the Most High God, I find that I’m actually a bit special” (King et al., in press). In an affiliated quantitative study of youth, initial findings suggested that awareness of one’s inherent value and strength is a common aspect of spirituality among youth from eight different countries (Benson, Scales, et al., 2012). In addition, youth may experience transcendence through connection to religious communities. An American adolescent explained, “Well, we’re [the Jews] a people who suffer. That’s who we are and what we do. I get my social consciousness, my beliefs, my view of humanity from my Jewish traditions” (King et al., in press).

Ritual, worship, spiritual practices, and rites of passage can promote transcendence. Ongoing rituals may promote awareness of the Divine or human other, as well as confirm youths’ places in communities. In the exemplar study, a Hindu boy from India talked about rituals in this way: “It’s because of the ceremonies, which are held, and it makes people come together . . . and then sometimes you get a connection with God, a special time with God” (King et al., in press). Rites of passage are unique events that intentionally celebrate and affirm a young person’s sense of identity as a religious or spiritual person, in addition to recognizing his or her place within the faith community, which may contribute to the youth’s sense of maturity and commitment to something larger than the self.

Spiritual practices may promote experiences of transcendence. Meditation and prayer are spiritual practices, and in a nationally representative study of American youth, Smith and Denton (2005) found that 10% reported doing religious or spiritual meditation in the prior year. Meditation is associated with prefrontal cortex activation and self-regulation of pleasant emotions during cognitive reappraisals (Urry, Roeser, Lazar, & Poey, 2012). Serving the poor may be a spiritual practice because it may allow youths to experience others in different circumstances (e.g., cultural or socioeconomic) from themselves, promote civic engagement (Beyerlein, Trinitapoli, & Adler, 2011; Youniss, McLellan, & Yates, 1999) and teach the value of self-sacrifice. Such experiences are spiritual insofar as they inspire positive action and deepen the sense of connection to what is beyond the self. Of course, many “service” experiences may involve merely “going through the motions” to meet requirements for youth groups or schools, and we would presume that such experiences would not have salutary spiritual effects.

### *Summary of Religious and Spiritual Influences*

Religion and spirituality may spur adolescent development when they offer ideology, social resources, and transcendent spiritual experiences. These facets are not unique to religion and spirituality but are often characteristic of them. Perhaps the most unique aspect of religious and spiritual contexts is the potential for transcendence. Many youth programs and organizations offer ideology and rich social environments; however, not many intentionally promote experiences of transcendence where young people are encouraged and expected to acutely experience an entity beyond themselves in ways that transform their ideological commitments, inspire devotion, and shape generative behavior. Consistent with a relational developmental systems approach, it would be important to learn in future research what characteristics of the experience and context combine with characteristics of youth to result in the greatest spiritual growth. Future research that tests diverse resources within religion and spirituality could reveal how they may be beneficial—or deleterious—to youth. An important question is how the perception by youth of the supernatural is related to their development. In addition, operationalizing different experiences of transcendence would clarify the nature and role of transcendence in young people’s lives, especially in relation to contribution to the common good. In the next section, we discuss how religion and spirituality may function in the lives of youth and examine existing research on religiousness and spirituality on positive youth development.

### **Positive Youth Development and Adolescent Religiousness and Spirituality**

Given the role of plasticity and developmental regulation in RDST approaches, the field of positive youth development has emerged (see Lerner, Lerner, Bowers, & Geldhof, Chapter 16, this *Handbook*, Volume 1) and emphasizes what can go right with young people rather than what can go wrong. This emphasis on thriving, rather than the traditional mental health emphasis on pathology, reorients a discussion of youth outcomes to explore optimal development as well as risk factors. However, much of the research in this field is still concerned with risk factors and thus our review attempts to capture both approaches. Several comprehensive syntheses of the literature that examines the dual role of religion and spirituality as protective factors inhibiting risk-taking behavior while promoting well-being, resilience, and thriving have been published

(Bridges & Moore, 2002; King & Benson, 2006; King & Roeser, 2009). Consequently, the following discussion highlights studies that clarify how religion and spirituality function in the lives of adolescents.

A recent meta-analysis of 75 studies (Yonker, Schnabelrauch, & DeHaan, 2012) included measures of adolescent and young adult religiousness and/or spirituality, risk behaviors, well-being outcomes, and personality variables. Using a broad conceptualization of religiousness and spirituality, this analysis was able to assess the relationships between more conventional measures of religiousness (e.g. religious attendance, behaviors, salience) and also more personal measure of spirituality (e.g. searching). Looking across religious and spiritual variables, the authors reported the relatively modest main effect sizes. Specifically, religiousness and spirituality were moderately correlated with risk behaviors ( $-.17$ ), depression ( $-.11$ ), well-being ( $.16$ ), self-esteem ( $.11$ ), and the personality traits of Conscientiousness ( $.19$ ), Agreeableness ( $.18$ ), and Openness ( $.14$ ). The direction and magnitude of these findings indicate that religiousness and spirituality seem to have a positive but modest role in the well-being of youth.

Of particular interest was their finding that the conventional measures of religious service attendance and religious salience provided the greatest number of significant associations with beneficial outcomes, compared to measures assessing more personal forms of spirituality. This finding is important and calls into question the relevance of spirituality, at least as represented as a personal quest for the sacred or existential meaning, in predicting behavioral outcomes among adolescents and emerging adults. The NYSR Study similarly found that the minority of U.S. youths claimed to be spiritual and not religious (Smith & Denton, 2005).

The findings described above suggest that religion and spirituality may indeed have positive though modest roles in the positive development of youth. They also indicate that additional work is needed to clarify how religion and spirituality may offer distinct contributions to positive development in adolescence. For example, in line with the discussion in the previous section, these findings highlight the potential importance of the ideological and social context of religions. Attendance and salience do not reveal what particular resources are available to youth through religious participation or in religious commitment. In addition, these findings raise the question of whether transcendence that is experienced within the context of a religious congregation or community functions differently than more individual quests for meaning and transcendence.

### *Thriving and Positive Youth Development*

Research on adolescent spiritual development has evolved alongside the study of positive youth development (i.e., King & Benson, 2006; Lerner et al., 2003, 2008). It is not surprising, then, that there is a burgeoning literature examining relationships between religion, spirituality, and thriving. A noteworthy work on this topic is Warren et al.'s (2012) edited volume, *Thriving and Spirituality Among Youth*, which presents a variety of studies (many reviewed in this chapter) from mixed-method approaches that consider biological, psychological, social, and cultural factors involved with spirituality and thriving. One of the earliest studies to distinguish the roles of religion and spirituality in relation to thriving was conducted by Dowling et al. (2004). In this secondary analysis of the Search Institute's "Youth and their Parents" data set, spirituality was operationalized by: experiencing transcendence, defining the self in relationship to others, having genuine concern for others; religiousness by affiliation and participation in a religious tradition and doctrine; and thriving was defined by prosocial contributions to others. Results indicated that spirituality and religion both had direct effects on thriving, and that religion mediated the effects of spirituality on thriving. This study demonstrated that spirituality has an influence on youth thriving beyond religion and also points to the potentially important and constructive role of religious institutions.

**Health.** Many studies suggest that religion and spirituality are linked to better adolescent physical health. Church attendance predicts health-enhancing behaviors such as exercise, diet, dental hygiene, and seatbelt use (Jessor, Turbin, & Costa, 1998). In a nationally representative sample of high school seniors, religious youth were more likely to use healthy nutrition, exercise, and rest, and less likely to engage in health-compromising behaviors (Wallace & Forman, 1998). In a sample of Jewish adolescents, Benjamins (2012) found, after controlling for age, gender, and weight, that religious beliefs about health behaviors predicted behaviors related to physical activity. In adjusted regression models, the adolescents who reported that their religious beliefs influenced decisions about being physically active were active more days per week than those who said their religious beliefs did not influence such decisions.

**Mental Health and Coping.** Religion provides adolescents with resources for well-being, mental health, and coping (Mahoney, Pendleton, & Ihrke, 2006). Those

adolescents who valued church attendance and religion in general experienced fewer feelings of depression, loneliness, and hopelessness (M. J. Pearce, Jones, Schwab-Stone & Ruchkin, 2003; Sinha, Cnaan, & Gelles, 2007). In a longitudinal study on relationships between Australian adolescents' religious sentiment and psychological adjustment (Ciarrochi & Heaven, 2012), religiousness and hope were inversely related to psychoticism and neuroticism at both time points studied. After controlling for personality, structural equation modeling revealed that religious values at Age 17 did not predict improvements in self-esteem at Age 18, but they did predict improvements in hope. In addition, a longitudinal study with adolescent, parent, and teacher ratings of spirituality and religiousness found generally positive associations between Indonesian Muslim adolescents' religion and spirituality and adjustment (Sallquist, Eisenberg, French, Purwono, & Suryanti, 2010). Findings from this study indicated that, in that setting, where culture and religion were closely aligned, spirituality and religious practices were best represented as one latent construct, rather than two distinct constructs. In addition, although findings indicated that religion and spirituality had the predicted positive associations with adjustment and negative associations with maladjustment across a year, there was also some evidence that maladjustment predicted religiousness and spirituality over time, demonstrating the complex nature of the relationship between spirituality and religion and socioemotional functioning.

Religion and spirituality can serve as a resource for better coping when conceptualized in a positive manner (e.g., viewing God as benevolent) (see Mahoney et al., 2006), whereas negative forms of religious or spiritual coping (e.g., feeling punished by God) are often associated with negative outcomes. For example, one study found that Jewish youth used three distinct religious coping strategies. They tended to reframe their difficulties from a spiritual perspective, draw on their Jewish cultural relationships, and pray to God (Dubow, Pargament, Boxer, & Tarakeshwar, 2000). Among youth with diabetes and cystic fibrosis, Reynolds, Mrug, and Guion (2013) found that positive spiritual coping was associated with fewer internalizing and externalizing problems; whereas negative spiritual coping was related to more externalizing problems for youths with diabetes and cystic fibrosis. Among youths with cystic fibrosis, negative spiritual coping was also associated with internalizing problems as well, suggesting that youths with progressive, life-threatening illnesses may be more vulnerable to negative spiritual coping. In study of

youths at religious schools, Carpenter, Laney, and Mezulis (2012) found that negative religious coping significantly moderated the effects of stress on depressive symptoms in a 12-week study, with depressive symptoms being highest among adolescents exposed to high stress who reported high negative religious coping.

Besides protective qualities, religiosity and spirituality may promote positive mental health, although this relation is suggested only tentatively because the literature has been dominated by correlational designs. A positive relation between religiosity and spirituality and psychological well-being has been found in communities with different religious and spiritual traditions. For example, Kelley and Miller (2007) found that, among a diverse sample of U.S. adolescents, life satisfaction was associated with several dimensions of spirituality (e.g., daily spiritual experiences, forgiveness, positive religious coping, congregational support). Spirituality was similarly associated with life satisfaction in Korean-American Catholic adolescents (S. Kim et al., 2013). The strongest predictors of their life satisfaction were daily spiritual experiences (e.g., feeling the closeness of God), followed by their ability to forgive (others and oneself), and their sense of support from their congregations; worship attendance was not related to life satisfaction. In Muslim Kuwaiti adolescents, higher religiosity was associated with greater happiness (Abdel-Khalek, 2007). In another international study, Sabatier, Mayer, Friedlmeier, Lubiewska, and Trommsdorff (2011) found that family and country were linked in complex ways to adolescents' life satisfaction. Specifically, family orientation mediated the relationship between religiosity and life satisfaction. Higher religiosity in youth predicted higher life satisfaction, but this effect was mediated by family orientation; this effect was more salient for youths in countries with higher levels of religiosity (United States, Poland) than in those lower in national importance of religion (France, Germany). This last study illustrates the importance of a social-ecology approach to understanding how religion and spirituality may function in youths' lives.

**Academic Achievement.** Religious attendance and salience are modestly associated with better academic performance in adolescence. Youth in urban, low-income neighborhoods who are involved with their churches are more likely to stay on track academically than are peers who are not involved in their churches (Regnerus & Elder, 2003), perhaps because church attendance channels youths into relationships with people who support academics,



academic competencies, and commitments. Along those lines, Milot and Ludden (2009) found that adolescents who reported that religion was important in their lives reported less school misbehavior and higher motivation; those with high religious attendance had higher grades. Interaction effects indicated that religious importance particularly enhanced school bonding and self-efficacy in males. McKune and Hoffman (2009) found that adolescents' highest achievement occurred when parents and adolescents reported similar levels of religiosity, whereas the lowest occurred when parents reported high religiosity and adolescents reported low religiosity.

**Civic Engagement and Moral Development.** Many studies show that religion and spirituality are linked to community service, prosocial involvement, and altruism. Several studies show that more religious youth are significantly more likely to be involved in forms of civic engagement than their less religious peers (see Roehlkepartain et al., 2006). One reason may be, as one study found, that involvement in a faith-based context with a moral and value-laden framework promotes youth dialogue and self-reflection on religious justifications for one's actions (Youniss et al., 1999). In a longitudinal study, Kerestes, Youniss, and Metz (2004) tracked students' religious development from 14 to 18 along four trajectories based on being low or high in religiosity at Ages 14 and 18. Thus, there were four groups: low religiosity at both times, high religiosity at both times, low religiosity at Age 14 and high at Age 18, and high religiosity at 14 and low at 18. Participation in civic activities, extracurricular activities, and willingness to perform volunteer service was highest in the students who were high in religiosity at both times; most interestingly, civic engagement increased dramatically in students who changed from low to high religiosity across the 2 years. In a secondary analysis of data from Wave 1 of the NYSR dataset, participating in a short-term mission trip still increased the likelihood of adolescents' later participation in many forms of civic activity but particularly religious-based volunteering after controlling for demographic background, religiousness, parent religiousness, and attitudes toward the poor (Beyerlein et al., 2011).

Youth educated in Protestant secondary schools were more likely than other youth to continue to volunteer even accounting for potential influences such as parent religiousness, whereas youth schooled at home or in private nonreligious settings were significantly less likely to continue volunteering (Hill & den Dulk, 2013). The

study emphasizes the importance of the religious context through which the service was conducted. A study in the Netherlands found that both Christian and Muslim religious adolescents had more developed democratic competencies than nonreligious adolescents (Grundel & Maliepaard, 2012), again demonstrating the potential positive socializing effects of religion.

In a study on diverse U.S. youth, King and Furrow (2004) found that religious salience and religious attendance were related to altruism and empathy, and that religious youth engaged in volunteer service more often than their less religious peers. Structural equation models revealed that social capital resources (operationalized as social interaction, trust, and shared values with parents, peers, and adults) mediated the effects of religion on these moral outcomes, demonstrating the significance of the religious social context for adolescent moral and civic development. Another study demonstrated through structural equation modeling that youths who reported having a religious identity (assessed by self-report on prototypical descriptors) had more ideological frameworks for life and prosocial concerns for others (Furrow, King, & White, 2004). Adolescent youth nominated for their consistent caring behaviors toward family or community members were found to have salient moral identities and also described religion as an important influence on their moral commitments (Hart & Fegley, 1995). In the adolescent spiritual exemplar study mentioned previously, highly spiritual youth from around the world described that being moral and engaging in acts of compassion, service, justice, and leadership were central to their experience of being spiritual (King et al., in press). In another study on U.S. youth, religiosity was a significant positive predictor of kindness as well as compliant, anonymous, and altruistic prosocial behavior (Hardy & Carlo, 2005); interestingly, associations between religiosity and both compliant and altruistic prosocial behaviors were mediated by kindness, indicating that religious youth may be helpful, caring, and kind for different religious motivations. A later study (Hardy et al., 2012) of 10- to 18-year-olds found that religious commitment was indirectly related to empathy as mediated by moral identity.

In sum, this review suggests that young people who identify as religious or who are involved with institutional religion show greater prosocial behavior on a variety of measures. (In some cases, of course, there can be a "dark side" to youth involvement in religion and we address this point below.) Additional work is needed to clarify what causal mechanisms are at work and whether selection

effects (i.e., prosocial youth seek out religious organizations) explain these links, but one mechanism may be that religious involvement and commitment enhance a sense of moral identity which then leads to more prosocial action.

**Identity.** Religion and spirituality can contribute to psychosocial identity development and the broader search for purpose, meaning, and fidelity characteristic of adolescence (Damon et al., 2003; King, 2003; Templeton & Eccles, 2006). As noted previously, Lopez et al. (2011) found that Latino/a American and Asian American youths reported higher levels of religious identity than European-American youths even after controlling for ethnic differences in religious affiliation, socioeconomic background, and generational status. Although adolescents' religious identity remained mostly stable across 3 years of high school, changes in ethnic and family identities were linked to changes in their religious identity, suggesting that family, ethnic, and religious identity were closely tied for these ethnic minority youth.

Research using Marcia's (1966) identity status paradigm has yielded less conclusive findings. Youths' church attendance has been positively related to higher identity achievement, yet also foreclosure and identity diffusion have been linked to lower levels of religious importance and more orthodox Christian beliefs (Markstrom-Adams, Hofstra, & Dougher, 1994). Other researchers have shown that intrinsically religiously motivated youth (those who try to internalize and live by their faith) were most likely to have attained identity achievement (Markstrom-Adams & Smith, 1996). However, Hunsberger et al. (2001) found weak associations between religious commitment and achieved identity status in a Canadian sample.

One study of highly religious adolescents (Puffer et al., 2008) found that religious doubt was higher in youths with identity moratorium and achievement, whereas youths lower in doubt were more likely to be in identity foreclosure and diffusion. These findings could mean that youths in moratorium may experience doubt as both cause and effect of their "holding pattern" in identity, whereas youths with achieved identity may be more comfortable questioning their beliefs because they have explored and committed to ideologies. Using latent growth curve modeling and collecting data over four occasions, Hardy et al. (2011) found that late adolescents' change in religious involvement correlated negatively with identity diffusion and moratorium and positively with foreclosure. The results of cross-lagged panel analyses demonstrated effects in the expected direction from involvement to identity as

well as some, but to a lesser extent, reciprocal effects. Overall, the findings provided longitudinal evidence demonstrating that adolescents involved in communities with more cohesive norms and social structure tended to experience greater identity maturity than those who were less involved.

It is not surprising that religion has been shown to have a positive impact on adolescents' development of a sense of personal meaning and purpose (Damon et al., 2003). For instance, in a national probability sample of U.S. adolescents, religious and spiritual commitments were positively associated with their overall sense of meaning and hope for the future (Smith & Denton, 2005). Youths reporting strong religious identity (versus weak religious identity) were more likely to have a meaning framework that added direction and purpose to their lives (Furrow et al., 2004). Adolescents had greater sense of purpose and commitment to personal philosophy when they participated in religious communities (Markstrom, 1999). In addition, a qualitative study found that spirituality and religiosity appeared to guide some adolescents toward character development, service, and life purposes (Mariano & Damon, 2008).

### *Risk-Taking Behaviors*

Ample research shows that religion and spirituality may buffer against risk-taking behavior such as delinquency, substance abuse, sexual activity, substance use, and suicide (see King & Roeser, 2009). Studies have revealed important nuances in the relations between religiousness and spirituality and risk-taking behaviors. For example, Desrosiers and Miller (2008) tested a large mixed-ethnicity sample to tease apart the effects associated with congregational religious factors from more personal spiritual ones; these spiritual constructs were derived from the Brief Multidimensional Measure of Religiousness/Spirituality. Lower alcohol use was predicted by higher scores on subscales of "personal spirituality," which included forgiveness, daily spiritual experience, and positive religious coping and by higher scores on public religion variables, such as perceived support from one's congregation. However, when youths perceived their congregations to be critical of them, they scored higher in anxiety.

In a large study, Salas-Wright, Vaughn, Hodge, and Perron (2012) categorized 17,705 U.S. youths as religious regulars (40.85%), religiously devoted (18.25%), religiously infrequent (23.59%), privately religious (6.55%), or religiously disengaged (10.76%). The religiously devoted group members engaged in less substance use, less fighting, and less theft. To a lesser extent, the religious

regulars were less likely to use substances or fight, whereas the religiously infrequent and privately religious groups only used marijuana less.

Taken together these studies begin to map out different dimensions of religious and spiritual development related to positive and undesirable outcomes. Although causal certainty has not yet been attained, this approach helps us grasp the complex constellation of ideological, social, and transcendent factors involved in youth behavior. The following studies shed additional light on these issues.

**Delinquency.** The inverse relationship between religiosity and delinquent behavior among adolescents has been well established. For instance, a 2004 study on U.S. teens found that youths who perceived religion as important and who participated in religious activities reported fewer risk behaviors such as smoking, truancy, marijuana use, and depression (Sinha et al., 2007). Similarly, after controlling for sociodemographic backgrounds, higher adolescent religiosity was negatively correlated with attitudes toward delinquent behaviors, association with delinquent peers, and engagement in delinquent behaviors (B. R. Johnson, Jang, Larson, & De Li, 2001). In African American preadolescents who had been previously identified as being moderate to high in aggression, parent religious attendance and preadolescent intrinsic religiosity predicted lower aggression and the relation between preadolescent private religious activities and aggression was moderated by socioeconomic status (Holmes & Lochman, 2012). Frequent exposure to religious content (e.g. reading, watching, or hearing religious information) decreased the likelihood of antisocial practices, witnessing violence, or being the victim of violence (M. J. Pearce, Jones, et al., 2003). In a study of how spiritual beliefs and experiences moderated the effects of exposure to violence in urban African-American adolescents, Shannon, Oakes, Scheers, Richardson, and Stills (2013) found that more frequent daily spiritual experiences and positive religious coping predicted unique variance in life satisfaction and positive mood beyond effects of demographic factors and family support. In a nationally representative sample of youths aged 12 to 18 years, Regnerus and Elder (2003) found that religiosity was related to a slight decrease in delinquent behaviors in early adolescence, disappeared as a predictor of delinquent behaviors during middle adolescence, and emerged as a strong negative predictor in late adolescence.

**Substance Use.** Studies consistently show a protective role for religion in adolescent drug use. In a national U.S.

sample, religious adolescents were less likely than their nonreligious peers to drink in excess, smoke cigarettes, drink alcohol weekly, or smoke marijuana (Sinha et al., 2007). More recent studies shed light on this consistent relationship. Arguing that religious involvement provides more than social capital, Longest and Vaisey (2008) demonstrated through secondary analysis of the nationally representative longitudinal data from the NYSR that valuing religion predicted abstinence from marijuana use more than mere social control or involvement in religious institutions did. Their findings reveal the complexity of religion as a developmental context by demonstrating that a young person's commitment and value of religion catalyzes the impact of the social norms and relationships available through religious involvement.

Similarly, in another nationally representative sample of 12- to 18-year-olds, Nonnemaker, McNeely, and Blum (2006) found that adolescents' decisions to experiment with smoking tobacco were influenced by their individual practice of religion and by their participation in religious communities. Private religiousness was protective against initiation of regular smoking among nonsmokers. It also protected against initiation of experimental smoking but only when the young people frequently attended religious services or religious youth groups. However, public, not private religiousness predicted reduction and cessation of cigarette use among regular smokers. Taken together, these findings demonstrate the multifaceted influence of religion on young people's lives and make clear that religion must be examined as individual and communal as well as in terms of beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors.

Desmond, Soper, and Kraus (2011) found that three measures of peer influence—peer attitudes, behaviors, and pressure—had weaker effects on substance use in religious adolescents. Thus, even when religious youth are exposed to peers who encourage substance use, religiousness may serve as a protective factor that reduces the deleterious effect of peers. However, one study found that religiousness in heterosexual but not gay, lesbian, and transgendered youth was linked to lower substance use (Rostosky, Danner, & Riggle, 2007).

**Sexual Activity.** There is no clear link between religiosity and sexual activity. In some studies, adolescents who attended church regularly and valued religion were more likely to assent to the importance of sexual abstinence until marriage than nonreligious peers, even though their beliefs were not always congruent with their actions (Smith & Denton, 2005). Despite the higher prevalence of

beliefs in the importance of sexual abstinence, religious youths were still likely to be sexually active, though to a lesser degree than peers for whom religion was not salient (Lammers, Ireland, Resnick, & Blum, 2000). For example, adolescent identification with religion at the age of 15 predicted delayed sexual activity at ages 15 and 21 (Rostosky, Regnerus, & Wright, 2003). However, Leonard and Scott-Jones (2010) found that no measures of religiousness in 18-year-olds were correlated with age of first intercourse or frequency of sex. Furthermore, a composite score of religious variables did not predict sexual activity, and the students' sexual activity was not predicted by their beliefs regarding premarital sexual activity.

### *Summary of Outcomes and Adolescent Religiousness and Spirituality*

For many outcomes in adolescent behavior (e.g., civic engagement, delinquency), the research paints a clear picture of a positive relationship with adolescent religiosity and spirituality. These links would appear to benefit the adolescent and society. For other outcomes (e.g., sexual activity), the picture is murkier. We believe that the data support the admonition (Pargament, 1997) that, instead of assuming that religion and spirituality have some monolithic relations with outcomes, different dimensions of religiosity or spirituality should be related in different ways to different outcomes in different populations. As we have stated at various points, caution is needed in assuming any simple causal links between religion and outcomes. Finally, we see a clear need for more research closely examining person-environment matches and clarifying how religious and spiritual resources may work together to promote well-being and prevent risk and other challenges common in adolescence.

## **NEGATIVE ASPECTS OF RELIGION AND SPIRITUALITY**

As we have shown, religion and spirituality seem to function as positive resources in child and adolescent development. Many of the previous sections build the argument that connections to the transcendent are beneficial. However, religion and spirituality are multivalent constructs that do not necessarily promote well-being and thriving. Holding negative worldviews and negative perceptions of God can cause significant personal distress (Mahoney et al., 2006; Wagener & Maloney, 2006). For

example, adolescents who attributed their illnesses or stresses to God's punitive nature reported more externalizing problems than those youths who held more positive God images (Carpenter et al., 2012; Reynolds et al., 2013). In terms of social context, some religious connections or spiritual experiences can inhibit personal growth or inculcate a negative sense of identity. For example, cults may elevate the identity and needs of the group while devaluing the individual. Religious environments that impede adolescent exploration, questioning, and expression of religious doubt may thwart optimal development. History tells us that organized religion and some manifestations of transcendence and connectedness have inspired hatred and violence, hate groups, and terrorism. We see how religion can be a negative force when it causes detriment to individual or societal well-being. At this time, there is little psychological evidence available on these processes in children and adolescents.

Thriving is also dependent on a prosocial ideology that nurtures a sense of moral and civic identity (Lerner et al., 2003). If the sources of transcendence do not engender a commitment to contribution to the greater good, they might be negative spiritual influences. For example, environments that use religion to encourage violence through ideology and example do not promote thriving (King, 2008). Religious expressions that encourage an "in-group" and promote suspicion of or hostilities toward others may also undermine positive youth development (Templeton & Eccles, 2006). In addition, experiences of religion and spirituality that promote personal quests for meaning and satisfaction but not contributions beyond the self may not promote thriving and social well-being. The relational developmental systems perspective proposed in this chapter provides a lens through which to understand when religion and spirituality may be deleterious.

Specifically, we advocate for a conceptualization of spirituality that emphasizes beneficial reciprocating relationships between individuals and the many contexts in which they live. Religion or spirituality are not always conducive to thriving and can cause harm to individuals (e.g., religiously inspired child abuse, suicide bombing, oppression) or can cause individuals to do harm to the greater good (e.g., discrimination, terrorism). Just as existing research demonstrates the potential benefits of religion and spirituality, history demonstrates the potential dangers (Oser et al., 2006). Both the good and bad point to the potency of religion and spirituality for children, adolescents, and society.

## INTEGRATIVE COMMENTS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The inclusion of this chapter in a research volume of the *Handbook* marks a historical moment for the field of child and adolescent religious and spiritual development. The depth and breadth of empirical work discussed in this chapter demonstrates that the study of the nature and function of religion and spirituality in development is moving from its earlier periphery and neglect to the mainstream of developmental psychology. We hope that this chapter is the most comprehensive and current review of these topics to date. To close, we offer some conceptual perspectives that will, we hope, promote richer understanding of the foci of this chapter.

### Relational and Reciprocating Spirituality

A major theme we have emphasized is that religious and spiritual development occurs in relationships—to individuals, communities, nature, all humanity, or the supernatural. This sense of relationality is at the heart of transcendence—moving beyond the self to the discovery of meaning and transformation. Spiritual development stems from the transactions one has with transcendence. A combination of maturational constraints and sociocultural influences will shape this experience. For some the transcendent entity may be a parent, peers, a religious community, a political party, solidarity with all of humanity, or God. It is probable that the more one views the object of transcendence as sacred or meaningful, the greater the influence on the self (King et al., 2013).

This idea is supported by a study of adolescent spiritual exemplars who described various experiences of transcendence—some with God, Allah, nature, and absolute truth, for example. Because these forms of “another beyond the self” were perceived as ultimate and boundless, they had great impact on shaping the beliefs, worldview, identity, commitments, devotion, and actions of these young people. Spiritual development does not stem from *any* positive relationality but those transactions that are marked by transcendence that bring about meaning and beliefs that motivate and sustain a commitment to contributing to self and others.

From this vantage we have proposed revising the term *relational spirituality* (Mahoney, 2010; King et al., 2013) to *reciprocating spirituality*. This nuance emphasizes that spiritual development entails not only relationships but responding and contributing to the greater good. This

bidirectional movement is evident in studies that examine broad conceptualizations of spirituality (Benson et al., 2012; King et al., in press). The studies reviewed in this chapter confirm this sense of reciprocating spirituality. It has been noted that religiousness and spirituality are linked to bidirectional effects between young people and their worlds—whether parents, schools, or God. Religion and spirituality are clearly linked to identity, fidelity, and contribution—especially during adolescence. From this perspective, the heart of spiritual development lies in the interaction between the self and another that informs one’s beliefs and commitments, and motivates the young person to live in a manner mindful of others. Further research is warranted to understand the mechanisms through which transcendence may promote transformation, action, and well-being.

### Are Religion and Spirituality Good for Children and Adolescents?

Based on the research we have reviewed, one of the most important conclusions we can offer is this: Simple conclusions about whether religion or spirituality are good or bad for children and adolescents are inappropriate. In contrast, it seems prudent to ask: What dimensions of religion or spirituality are related to which outcomes in which populations, and based on data from which informants? Such a cautious and more meticulous approach is needed in research on religion or spirituality and *children’s* well-being, where the findings are nuanced. However, the literature on religion/spirituality and adolescents provides a more consistent and robust pattern of evidence suggesting that religion and spirituality promote adolescent well-being. At this time, research points to the added benefits of both personal variables such as salience, experiences of transcendence, clearly defined morals and values, as well as more social or institutional variables such as religious participation and social capital. That said, further research is needed to clarify causal directions and under what circumstances the resources available through religion and spirituality are most helpful to young people.

### Children’s “Horizontal” Spirituality and Growth Toward Reciprocal Relationality

Some transcendent relationships may be more pertinent or meaningful at different ages. Clearly, children are often *raised* as if they have relationships with the supernatural, and the social contexts they are raised in—family,

church or temple, community, and culture—can certainly strengthen those relationships. Perhaps, though, it is most important that young children develop relations with earthly others—developing “horizontal” spirituality in these social contexts. These experiences may well provide a foundation for the development of reciprocal relationality with that which is “further beyond” the self. This more “vertical” spirituality may become more salient in later childhood and adolescence. We emphasize here that young children’s spirituality is merely different from—not “less than” or “deficient” from—older children’s and adolescents’. The notion that young children’s spirituality would be particularly horizontal and grounded in human relationships seems plausible in light of many theories of development, from object relations and attachment theory to cognitive-developmental theory to faith development theory to psychosocial perspectives, that emphasize early trust as integral to the later development of spirituality and faith.

We believe that this conclusion is preliminary, because relatively little empirical data on children’s relationality with the transcendent is available. With very few exceptions, far more studies of children have measured their *parents’* religiousness than have attempted to examine any deep facets of children’s spirituality. In addition, developmental scientists do not typically treat children as experts or authorities on their own experience, a tradition that must change if we are to obtain a deeper understanding of children’s spiritual relationality of all kinds, especially vertical (see Boyatzis, 2011). These constructs call for the development and use of new tools.

### **Building a Better Mousetrap: Improving Our Methodologies**

Throughout the chapter we have offered many suggestions for future research. But a more fundamental issue is methodology. The measures and methods typically used by developmentalists may simply be inadequate for the task of assessing young children’s spirituality. Our methods may offer too crude an approach, too blunt an instrument, to capture the complexity of children’s transcendent relationality; we need better mousetraps. Even if we have faith in our measures, it behooves us to realize that “the map is not the territory.” William James (1902/1982) asserted that one of spirituality’s defining qualities was its “ineffability”—its resistance to being described. This would be all the more true for young children whose

communication abilities may be inadequate for describing transcendent connectedness.

Our understanding of religious and spiritual development would benefit from the use of multimethod approaches (see Tolan & Deutsch, Chapter 19, this *Handbook*, Volume 1). While quantitative approaches have been invaluable for measuring and charting links between constructs, qualitative approaches would help us understand more of the “how and why” of religious and spiritual development. Robert Coles’ (1990) work, *The Spiritual Life of Children*, was a stellar example of a qualitative approach. Coles talked with school-age children from Christian, Muslim, Jewish, and other backgrounds within the United States and outside it—at length, on many occasions, in various locations comfortable to the children. In his attempts to create authenticity and rapport, Coles made clear to them that, in their conversations (not “interviews”), he viewed the children as his teachers. This time-consuming personal approach may not work for all researchers or to answer all questions, nor would it be appropriate for children who are too young or too developmentally challenged for this heavily verbal approach. But it seems likely that the depths of children’s spiritual struggle and search for transcendent meaning would be revealed best using qualitative methods. Gersch’s work on “listening to children” in London is a rich example (Gersch, Dowling, Panagiotaki, & Potton, 2008). In the United States, Jennifer Beste (2012) studied Roman Catholic children’s experience with the sacrament of reconciliation or penance. She spent ample time in the children’s religious settings and acknowledged children as authorities on their own experience. As Beste asserted, “Interviewing children about what they think about their religious experiences, participation in religious rituals, religious communities, and relationship with God may very well alter or even shatter our dominant assumptions about children’s intellectual, religious, moral, and spiritual capacities, allowing us greater understanding of the actual children in our midst” (p. 170).

In their study of adolescent spiritual exemplars, King et al. (in press) traveled around the world to listen to the stories of youths who had been recognized in their communities for having “highly developed” spirituality. As nominated exemplars, these youths were viewed as expert informants who shared their experiences, opinions, and meanings about spirituality and their experiences of the transcendent. Hearing their stories and the meaning of them through in-depth interviews allowed more complex constructs like fidelity and coherence among their beliefs, identity, and actions to emerge. Without their

life narratives, these more recently recognized aspects of spiritual development would not have been evident.

In addition to qualitative methods, more advanced quantitative approaches are needed. Perhaps one of the most valuable new directions would involve using person-centered approaches rather than, or to complement, variable-centered approaches. Longitudinal designs are needed to track these personal intraindividual changes from childhood to adolescence and from adolescence to adulthood; such designs would help us identify the individual, psychological, social, and cultural factors that promote or impede religious and spiritual development and to learn how religious and spiritual development may contribute to development in other domains. Many of the developmental issues raised in this chapter could be elucidated by such longitudinal work. For example, how does the development of metacognition affect the capacity for transcendence? In addition, further research is warranted to understand how and under what circumstances experiences of transcendence bring about personal transformation and fidelity. Does fidelity based on a religious or spiritual identity sustain more generative contributions than other forms of fidelity? Which childhood antecedents of these tendencies are apparent during adolescence? Furthermore, existing research is based on assumptions of normative development. Research is needed to investigate the ontogeny of religious and spirituality development in children and adolescents who experience cognitive or emotional impairments.

Much research is needed to understand the relations between religion, spirituality, culture, and development. For example, do religious or spiritual identities function differently for youth who do not subscribe to the same beliefs and values dominant in their cultural context? Although initial research suggests consistencies across diverse religious groups (see Benson et al., 2012; King et al., in press; Trommsdorff & Chen, 2012), cultural-developmental or indigenous explorations are required to gain a more nuanced understanding of potentially different developmental trajectories among diverse expressions of spirituality or religious traditions.

It is important to note here that, consistent with a relational developmental systems perspective, spiritual development is linked to processes in other developmental domains. This interdependence creates a synergy in which spiritual development contributes to and is influenced by other changes in other developmental domains. Thus, longitudinal designs and methods to measure biological, psychological, social, cultural, and perhaps even

supervenient level variables may clarify the relations between spiritual development and other domains such as cognition, emotion, identity, moral, and civic development. Such research will give further insight into both the nature and function of spirituality in lives of children and adolescents.

It will be helpful if developmental scientists recognize that hundreds of millions of children and adolescents worldwide are raised in faith traditions, engaged and embedded in religious and spiritual communities, rituals, sacraments, scripture, practices, creeds, music, art, and proscribed and prescribed behaviors. In addition we need to learn about children growing up in atheist families or those with no ties to organized religion. An interesting qualitative study of atheist and agnostic scientists at elite U.S. universities (Ecklund & Lee, 2011) explored their plans and goals for involving religion in raising their children. The scientists revealed a striking disinterest in spirituality of any form but these same adults emphasized that exposing their children to religion was important and consistent with their value of free thinking: Involving their children in religion “was a way to expose them to diverse religious ideas so that they (the parents) do *not* inadvertently indoctrinate them with atheism” (p. 736). These groups are intriguing ones to study, and it will be interesting to learn how trajectories differ for children from atheist and religious homes (see Evans, 2000).

### Why Not Organized Religion?

Developmental science has plumbed the depths of many microsystems of development, from the family to peer group to school to others. Why not organized religion? Given that so many children worldwide are raised within organized religious traditions, it is curious, if not a serious omission, that religious institutions remain “unexamined crucibles” for children’s growth (Roehlkepartain & Patel, 2006). Developmental science would benefit from learning how children and adolescents understand and experience many aspects of the organized religions in which they grow up. These include forgiveness, sin and salvation, distinction between faith and good works, reincarnation, charity, grace and redemption, the Eucharist, karma, confirmation ceremonies, the Trinity, the power of divine figures to heal and punish, and so on. Other questions abound: How do Jewish children make sense of the Passover seder or the broader call for *tikkun olam*, to put together a broken world? What do Roman Catholic children feel and think when they are praying to a saint or statue of the Virgin Mary? How do

Hindu youth make sense of their polytheistic tradition (especially if they live in a monotheistic culture)? How are Muslim children transformed by the *hajj* to Mecca? How do children make sense of their religion's call to help the poor, or the mandates of dietary restrictions? How are children affected by the gendered nature of their gods or gender divisions in religions? What role does youths' cognitive level and family context, for example, play in these matters?

These questions and topics touch on many essential components of world religions. Many of these components are used as mechanisms to socialize children into religious conceptions of the good and moral life, appropriate notions of the self and of others, and to help children cultivate connectedness to the tradition's sacred transcendent entities and the human faith community around the children. We believe these are matters of profound importance, and think that, if more developmental scientists could take the bold step of studying these topics and questions, our field would take enormous leaps in understanding how religion plays a role in children's and adolescents' lives.

## CONCLUSIONS

Over a century ago, William James noted that the function of personal religion (which, today, he would probably label spirituality) was to motivate individuals to realize a more satisfying existence: "Not God, but life, more life, a larger, richer, more satisfying life, is, in the last analysis, the end of religion. The love of life, at any and every level of development, is the religious impulse" (1902/1982, p. 453). For James, the core of spirituality at the personal level was "fundamentally about being whole, being wholly human, and being part of the whole that is existence" (King & Roeser, 2009, p. 449). We posit that spiritual development is the domain of development through which individuals experience their wholeness and their uniqueness most fully as they transcend themselves in relation to what is greater than the self and to the extent that they are contributing to the world beyond themselves. Religious development is a more specific domain in which young people undergo qualitative change of increasing differentiation and integration in their understanding and experience of the practices, beliefs, doctrines, and communal practices of their faith community.

To ignore this area of study within human development, which has been the case until recently, is to ignore a central aspect of child and adolescent psychological development and the global challenges of our day and age. Religion

and spirituality are increasingly viewed as basic human capacities, and religious and spiritual development are increasingly visible domains of developmental science. The concept of reciprocating spirituality emphasizes how religious and spiritual development take place through the interactions between young people and the many contexts in which they live. At its best, religious and spiritual development may be able to facilitate both individual and societal well-being. Religion and spirituality potentially offer youth a host of developmental resources from the intrapersonal to social to ideological to transcendent. Let us continue to learn how these dimensions of young people's lives develop and how they may contribute in good ways (and bad) to young people's growth, thriving, and flourishing.

As developmental scientists who have studied religious and spiritual development and the roles of religion and spirituality in children's and adolescents' lives for many years, we understand that some developmentalists may find these constructs too new, unfamiliar, or broad to confidently move toward studying them. However, developmental scientists have always faced the challenge of operationally defining and measuring dimensions of development that we have come to view as central (e.g., infant emotion, attachment, adolescent identity), yet long ago may have seemed amorphous or elusive. It is axiomatic that the more we study developmental phenomena the clearer they become and the more we come to understand them—while at the same time deeper questions and mysteries are revealed. We are confident this will be the way of this field as well, that the more developmentalists examine religious and spiritual development phenomena, the clearer they will become and the more important in development they will seem.

## REFERENCES

- Abar, B., Carter, K. L., & Winsler, A. (2009). The effects of maternal parenting style and religious commitment on self-regulation, academic achievement, and risk behavior among African-American parochial college students. *Journal of Adolescence, 32*, 259–273. doi:10.1016/j.adolescence.2008.03.008
- Abdel-Khalek, A. M. (2007). Religiosity, happiness, health, and psychopathology in a probability sample of Muslim adolescents. *Mental Health, Religion & Culture, 10*, 571–583. doi:10.1080/13674670601034547
- Balswick, J. O., King, P. E., & Reimer, K. S. (2005). *The reciprocating self: Human development in theological perspective*. Downer's Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.
- Bamford, C., & Lagattuta, K. H. (2010). A new look at children's understanding of mind and emotion: The case of prayer. *Child Development, 46*, 78–92. doi:10.1037/a0016694



- Bao, W.-N., L., Whitbeck, D. H., Hoyt, D., & Conger, R. C. (1999). Perceived parental acceptance as a moderator of religious transmission among adolescent boys and girls. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, *61*, 362–374.
- Barrett, J. L., & Keil, F. C. (1996). Conceptualizing a non-natural entity: Anthropomorphism and God concepts. *Cognitive Psychology*, *31*, 219–247. doi:10.1006/cogp.1996.0017
- Barrett, J. L., & Richert, R. A. (2003). Anthropomorphism or preparedness? Exploring children's God concepts. *Review of Religious Research*, *44*, 300–312.
- Barrett, J. L., Newman, R., & Richert, R. A. (2003). When seeing is not believing: Children's understanding of humans' and non-humans' use of background knowledge in interpreting visual displays. *Journal of Cognition and Culture*, *3*, 91–108.
- Barrett, J. L., Richert, R. A., & Driesenga, A. (2001). God's beliefs versus mother's: The development of nonhuman agent concepts. *Child Development*, *72*, 50–65. doi:10.1111/1467-8624.00265
- Barrett, J. B., Pearson, J., Muller, C., & Frank, K. A. (2007). Adolescent religiosity and school contexts. *Social Science Quarterly*, *88*, 1024–1037. doi:10.1111/j.1540-6237.2007.00516.x
- Bartkowski, J. P., Xu, X., & Levin, M. L. (2008). Religion and child development: Evidence from the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study. *Social Science Research*, *37*, 18–36. doi:10.1016/j.ssresearch.2007.02.001
- Benjamins, M. R. (2012). Religious beliefs, diet, and physical activity among Jewish adolescents. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, *51*, 588–597. doi:10.1111/j.1468-5906.2012.01658.x
- Benore, E., Pargament, K. I., & Pendleton, S. (2008). An initial examination of religious coping in children with asthma. *International Journal for the Psychology of Religion*, *18*, 267–290. doi:10.1080/10508610802229197
- Benson, P. L., Roehlkepartain, E. C., & Hong, K. L. (Eds.). (2008). *Spiritual development: New directions for youth development*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Benson, P. L., Roehlkepartain, E. C., & Rude, S. P. (2003). Spiritual development in childhood and adolescence: Toward a field of inquiry. *Applied Developmental Science*, *7*, 205–213. doi:10.1207/S1532480XADS0703\_12
- Benson, P. L., Scales, P. C., & Syvertsen, A. K. (2011). The contribution of the developmental assets framework to positive youth development theory and practice. In R. M. Lerner, J. V. Lerner, & J. B. Benson (Eds.), *Positive youth development: Research and applications for promoting thriving in adolescence. Advances in child development and behavior* (Vol. 41, pp. 197–230). London, England: Elsevier.
- Benson, P. L., Scales, P. C., Syvertsen, A. K., & Roehlkepartain, E. C. (2012). Is youth spiritual development a universal developmental process? An international exploration. *Journal of Positive Psychology*, *7*, 453–470. doi:10.1080/17439760.2012.732102
- Bering, J. M., & Bjorklund, D. F. (2004). The natural emergence of reasoning about the afterlife as a developmental regularity. *Developmental Psychology*, *40*, 217–233. doi:10.1037/0012-1649.40.2.217
- Bering, J. M., Blasi, C. H., & Bjorklund, D. F. (2005). The development of “afterlife” beliefs in religiously and secularly schooled children. *British Journal of Developmental Psychology*, *23*, 587–607. doi:10.1348/026151005X36498
- Beste, J. (2012). Second graders' spirituality in the context of the sacrament of reconciliation. In K. E. Lawson (Ed.), *Understanding children's spirituality: Theology, research, and practice* (pp. 283–306). Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock.
- Beyerlein, K., Trinitapoli, J., & Adler, G. (2011). The effect of religious short-term mission trips on youth civic engagement. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, *50*, 780–795. doi:10.1111/j.1468-5906.2011.01607.x
- Bowlby, J. (1988). *A secure base: Parent-child attachment and healthy human development*. New York, NY: Basic Books.
- Boyatzis, C. J. (Ed.). (2003). Religious and spiritual development [Special issue]. *Review of Religious Research*, *44*(3), 213–219.
- Boyatzis, C. J. (2005). Children's religious and spiritual development. In R. F. Paloutzian & C. L. Park (Eds.), *Handbook of the psychology of religion and spirituality* (pp. 123–143). New York, NY: Guilford Press.
- Boyatzis, C. J. (Ed.). (2006a). Unraveling the dynamics of religion in the family and parent-child relationships [Special issue]. *International Journal for the Psychology of Religion*, *16*(4).
- Boyatzis, C. J. (Ed.). (2006b). Advancing our understanding of religious dynamics in the family and parent-child relationships [Special issue]. *International Journal for the Psychology of Religion*, *16*, 245–251.
- Boyatzis, C. J. (2011). Agency, voice, and maturity in children's religious and spiritual development. In S. R. Bales (Ed.), *The study of children in religions* (pp. 19–32). New York, NY: New York University Press.
- Boyatzis, C. J. (2013). The nature and functions of religion and spirituality in children. In K. I. Pargament, J. J. Exline, & J. W. Jones (Eds.), *APA handbook of psychology, religion, and spirituality: Vol. 1. Context, theory, and research* (pp. 497–512). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association. doi:10.1037/14045-027
- Boyatzis, C. J., Dollahite, D. C., & Marks, L. (2006). The family as a context for religious and spiritual development in children and youth. In E. C. Roehlkepartain, P. E. King, L. Wagener, & P. L. Benson (Eds.), *The handbook of spiritual development in childhood and adolescence* (pp. 297–309). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Boyatzis, C. J., & Hambrick-Dixon, P. (Eds.). (2008). Adolescent spirituality [Special section]. *Research in the Social Scientific Study of Religion*, *19*.
- Boyatzis, C. J., & Janicki, D. (2003). Parent-child communication about religion: Survey and diary data on unilateral transmission and bidirectional reciprocity styles. *Review of Religious Research*, *44*, 252–270.
- Boyer, P. (1994). *The naturalness of religious ideas: A cognitive theory of religion*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Boyer, P. (2001). *Religion explained: The evolutionary origins of religious thought*. New York, NY: Basic Books.
- Braswell, G. S., Rosengren, K. S., & Berenbaum, H. (2011). Gravity, God, and ghosts? Parents' beliefs in science, religion, and the paranormal and the encouragement of beliefs in their children. *International Journal of Behavioral Development*, *36*, 99–106. doi:10.1177/0165025411424088
- Brega, A., & Coleman, L. (1999). Effects of religiosity and racial socialization on subjective stigmatization in African-American adolescents. *Journal of Adolescence*, *22*, 223–242. doi:10.1006/jado.1999.0213
- Bridges, L. J., & Moore, K. A. (2002). Religious involvement and children's well-being: What research tells us (and what it doesn't). *Child Trends Research Brief*, *1*–8.
- Brittan, A., & Spencer, M. B. (2012). Assessing the relationship between ethnic and religious identity among and between diverse American youth. In A. Warren, R. M. Lerner, & E. Phelps (Eds.), *Thriving and spirituality among youth: Research perspectives and future possibilities* (pp. 19–29). Hoboken, NJ: Wiley. doi:10.1002/9781118092699.ch10
- Bronfenbrenner, U. (1974). Developmental research, public policy, and the ecology of childhood. *Child Development*, *45*, 1–5.
- Bronfenbrenner, U., & Morris, P. A. (2006). The bioecological model of human development. In R. M. Lerner (Ed.), *Theoretical models of human development*. Volume 1 of the *Handbook of child psychology* (6th ed., pp. 793–828). Editors-in-Chief: W. Damon & R. M. Lerner. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.
- Carey, S. (1985). *Conceptual change in childhood*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

## 1016 Religious and Spiritual Development

- Carpenter, T. P., Laney, T., & Mezulis, A. (2012). Religious coping, stress, and depressive symptoms among adolescents: A prospective study. *Psychology of Religion and Spirituality, 4*, 19–30. doi:10.1037/a0023155
- Cassiba, R., Granqvist, P., & Costantini, A. (2013). Mothers' attachment security predicts their children's sense of God's closeness. *Attachment & Human Development, 15*, 51–64. doi:10.1080/14616734.2013.743253
- ChildTrends. (2013, May 29). *Religiosity among youth*. Retrieved from <http://www.childtrends.org/?indicators=religiosity-among-youth>
- Ciarrochi, J., & Heaven, P. C. L. (2012). Religious values and the development of trait hope and self-esteem in adolescents. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion, 51*, 676–688. doi:10.1111/j.1468-5906.2012.01675.x
- Colby, A., & Damon, W. (1999). The development of extraordinary moral commitment. In M. Killen & D. Hart (Eds.), *Morality in everyday life: Developmental perspectives* (pp. 342–370). New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.
- Coles, R. (1990). *The spiritual life of children*. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin.
- Damon, W., Menon, J., & Bronk, K. (2003). The development of purpose during adolescence. *Applied Developmental Sciences, 7*, 119–127. doi:10.1207/S1532480XADS0703\_2
- Davis, K. A., & Epkins, C. C. (2009). Do private religious practices moderate the relation between family conflict and preadolescents' depression and anxiety symptoms? *Journal of Early Adolescence, 29*, 693–717. doi:10.1177/0272431608325503
- Davis, E. B., Moriarty, G. L., & Mauch, J. C. (2013). God images and God concepts: Definitions, development, and dynamics. *Psychology of Religion and Spirituality, 5*, 51–60. doi:10.1037/a0029289
- DeHaan, L. G., Yonker, J. E., & Affholter, C. (2011). More than enjoying the sunset: Conceptualization and measurement of religiosity for adolescents and emerging adults and its implications for developmental inquiry. *Journal of Psychology and Christianity, 30*, 184–195.
- Desmond, S. A., Morgan, K. H., & Kikuchi, G. (2010). Religious development: How (and why) does religiosity change from adolescence to young adulthood? *Sociological Perspectives, 53*, 247–270. doi:10.1525/sop.2010.53.2.247
- Desmond, S. A., Soper, S. E., & Kraus, R. (2011). Religiosity, peers, and delinquency: Does religiosity reduce the effect of peers on delinquency? *Sociological Spectrum, 31*, 665–694. doi:10.1080/02732173.2011.606725
- Desrosiers, A., Kelly, B. S., & Miller, L. (2011). Parent and peer relationships and relational spirituality in adolescents and young adults. *Psychology of Religion and Spirituality, 3*, 39–54. doi:10.1037/a0020037
- Desrosiers, A., & Miller, L. (2008). Substance use versus anxiety in adolescents: Are some disorders more spiritual than others? *Research in the Social Scientific Study of Religion, 19*, 237–254. doi:10.1163/ej.9789004166462.i-299.89
- Dickie, J. R., Eshleman, A. K., Merasco, D. M., Shepard, A., Vander Wilt, M., & Johnson, M. (1997). Parent-child relationships and children's images of God. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion, 36*, 25–43. doi:10.2307/1387880.
- Dollahite, D. C., & Marks, L. D. (2005). How highly religious families strive to fulfill sacred purposes. In V. Bengtson, A. Acock, K. Allen, P. Dillworth-Anderson, & D. Klein (Eds.), *Sourcebook of family theory and research* (pp. 533–541). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Dollahite, D. C., & Thatcher, J. Y. (2008). Talking about religion: How religious youth and parents discuss their faith. *Journal of Adolescent Research, 23*, 611–641. doi:10.1177/0743558408322141
- Dowling, E. M., Gestsdottir, S., Anderson, P. M., von Eye, A., Almerigi, J., & Lerner, R. M. (2004). Structural relations among spirituality, religiosity, and thriving in adolescence. *Applied Developmental Science, 8*, 7–16. doi:10.1207/S1532480XADS0801\_2
- Dowling, E. M., & Scarlett, W. G. (Eds.). (2006). *Encyclopedia of spiritual and religious development in childhood and adolescence*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Dubow, E. F., Pargament, K. I., Boxer, P., & Tarakeshwar, N. (2000). Initial investigation of Jewish early adolescents' ethnic identity, stress, and coping. *Journal of Early Adolescence, 20*, 418–441. doi:10.1177/0272431600020004003
- Dumas, J. E., & Nissley-Tsiopinis, J. (2006). Parental global religiousness, sanctification of parenting, and positive and negative religious coping as predictors of parental and child functioning. *International Journal for the Psychology of Religion, 16*, 289–310. doi:10.1207/s15327582ijpr1604\_4
- Ecklund, E. H., & Lee, K. S. (2011). Atheists and agnostics negotiate religion and family. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion, 50*, 728–743. doi:10.1111/j.1468-5906.2011.01604.x
- Elkind, D. (1961). The child's conception of his religious denomination: I, The Jewish child. *Journal of Genetic Psychology, 99*, 209–225.
- Elkind, D. (1970). The origins of religion in the child. *Review of Religious Research, 12*, 35–42.
- Erickson, J. A. (1992). Adolescent religious development and commitment: A structural equation model of the role of family, peer group, and educational influences. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion, 31*, 131–152. doi:10.2307/1387004
- Erikson, E. H. (1965). *Childhood and society* (2nd ed.). Harmondsworth, England: Penguin.
- Erikson, E. H. (1968). *Identity: Youth and crisis*. New York, NY: Norton.
- Evans, E. M. (2000). Beyond *Scopes*: Why creationism is here to stay. In K. S. Rosengren, C. N. Johnson, & P. L. Harris (Eds.), *Imagining the impossible: Magical, scientific, and religious thinking in children* (pp. 305–333). New York, NY: Cambridge University Press. doi:10.1017/CBO9780511571381.012
- Flor, D. L., & Knapp, N. F. (2001). Transmission and transaction: Predicting adolescents' internalization of parental religious values. *Journal of Family Psychology, 15*, 627–645. doi:10.1037/0893-3200.15.4.627
- Fowler, J. (1981). *Stages of faith: The psychological quest for human meaning*. San Francisco, CA: Harper.
- French, D. C., Eisenberg, N., Sallquist, J., Purwono, U., Lu, T., & Christ, S. (2013). Parent-adolescent relationships, religiosity, and the social adjustment of Indonesian Muslim adolescents. *Journal of Family Psychology, 27*, 421–430. doi:10.1037/a0032858
- Freud, S. (1961). *The future of an illusion* (J. Strachey, Ed. & Trans.). New York, NY: W. W. Norton. (Original work published 1927)
- Furrow, J. L., King, P. E., & White, K. (2004). Religion and positive youth development: Identity, meaning, and prosocial concerns. *Applied Developmental Science, 8*, 17–26. doi:10.1207/S1532480XADS0801\_3
- Gersch, I., Dowling, F., Panagiotaki, G., & Potton, A. (2008). Listening to children's views of spiritual and metaphysical concepts: A new dimension to educational psychology practice? *Educational Psychology in Practice, 24*, 225–236. doi: abs/10.1080/02667360802256782#preview
- Gershoff, E. T., Miller, P. C., & Holden, G. W. (1999). Parenting influences from the pulpit: Religious affiliation as a determinant of corporal punishment. *Journal of Family Psychology, 13*, 307–320. doi:10.1037/0893-3200.13.3.307
- Goeke-Morey, M. C., Cairns, E., Merrilees, C. E., Schermerhorn, A. C., Shirlow, P., & Cummings, E. M. (2013). Maternal religiosity, family resources and stressors, and parent-child attachment security in Northern Ireland. *Social Development, 22*, 19–37. doi:10.1111/j.1467-9507.2012.00659.x
- Good, M., & Willoughby, T. (2008). Adolescence as a sensitive period for spiritual development. *Child Development Perspectives, 2*, 32–37. doi:10.1111/j.1750-8606.2008.00038.x

- Good, M., Willoughby, T., & Busseri, M. A. (2011). Stability and change in adolescent spirituality/religiosity: A person-centered approach. *Developmental Psychology, 47*, 538–550. doi:10.1037/a0021270
- Granqvist, P., & Dickie, J. (2006). Attachment and spiritual development in childhood and adolescence. In E. C. Roehlkepartain, P. E. King, L. Wagener, & P. L. Benson (Eds.), *The handbook of spiritual development in childhood and adolescence* (pp. 197–210). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Granqvist, P., Ljungdahl, C., & Dickie, J. R. (2007). God is nowhere, God is now here: Attachment activation, security of attachment (SAT), and God's perceived closeness among 5–7 year-old children. *Attachment & Human Development, 9*, 55–71. doi:10.1080/14616730601151458
- Grundel, M., & Maliepaard, M. (2012). Knowing, understanding and practicing democratic citizenship: An investigation of the role of religion among Muslim, Christian, and non-religious adolescents. *Ethnic and Racial Studies, 35*, 2075–2096. doi:10.1080/01419870.2011.632019
- Güngör, D., Bornstein, M. H., & Phalet, K. (2012). Religiosity, values, and acculturation A study of Turkish, Turkish-Belgian, and Belgian adolescents. *International Journal of Behavioral Development, 36*, 367–373. doi:10.1177/0165025412448357
- Gunnoe, M. L., & Moore, K. A. (2002). Predictors of religiosity among youth aged 17–22: A longitudinal study of the National Survey of Children. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion, 41*, 3–22. doi:10.1111/1468-5906.00141
- Hall, G. S. (1904). *Adolescence: Its psychology and its relations to psychology, anthropology, sociology, sex, crime, religion, and education*. New York, NY: Appleton & Company. doi:10.1037/10616-000
- Hardy, S. A., & Carlo, G. (2005). Religiosity and prosocial behaviors in adolescence: The mediating role of prosocial values. *Journal of Moral Education, 34*, 231–249. doi:10.1080/03057240500127210
- Hardy, S. A., Pratt, M. W., Pancer, S., Olsen, J. A., & Lawford, H. L. (2011). Community and religious involvement as contexts of identity change across late adolescence and emerging adulthood. *International Journal of Behavioral Development, 35*, 125–135. doi:10.1177/0165025410375920
- Hardy, S. A., Walker, L. J., Rackham, D. D., & Olsen, J. A. (2012). Religiosity and adolescent empathy and aggression: The mediating role of moral identity. *Psychology of Religion and Spirituality, 4*, 237–248. doi:10.1037/a0027566
- Hardy, S. A., White, J. A., Zhang, Z., & Ruchty, J. (2011). Parenting and the socialization of religiousness and spirituality. *Psychology of Religion and Spirituality, 3*, 217–230. doi:10.1037/a0021600
- Harris, P. L., & Koenig, M. A. (2006). Truth in testimony: How children learn about science and religion. *Child Development, 77*, 505–524.
- Harris, S., Kaplan, J. T., Cunel, A., Bookheimer, S. Y., Iacoboni, M., & Cohen, M. S. (2009). The neural correlates of religious and nonreligious belief. *PLoS ONE, 4*(10), e0007272. doi:10.1371
- Hart, D., & Fegley, S. (1995). Prosocial behavior and caring in adolescence: Relations to self-understanding and social judgment. *Child Development, 66*, 1346–1359. doi:10.2307/1131651
- Heller, D. (1986). *The children's God*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Hay, D., & Nye, R. (1998). *The spirit in the child*. London, England: Fount.
- Hay, D., Reich, K. H., & Utsch, M. (2006). Spiritual development: Intersections and divergence with religious development. In E. C. Roehlkepartain, P. E. King, L. Wagener, & P. L. Benson (Eds.), *The handbook of spiritual development in childhood and adolescence* (pp. 46–59). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Hertel, B. R., & Donahue, M. J. (1995). Parental influences on god images among children: Testing Durkheim's metaphoric parallelism. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion, 34*, 186–199. doi:10.2307/1386764
- Hill, J. P., & den Dulk, K. R. (2013). Religion, volunteering, and educational setting: The effect of youth schooling type on civic engagement. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion, 52*, 179–197. doi:10.1111/jssr.12011
- Hodge, D. R., Cardenas, P., & Montoya, H. (2001). Substance use: Spirituality and religious participation as protective factors among rural youths. *Social Work Research, 25*, 153–162. doi:10.1093/swr/25.3.153
- Hoge, D. R., Petrillo, G. H. & Smith, E. I. (1982). Transmission of religious and social values from parents to teenage children. *Journal of Marriage and the Family, 44*, 569–80. doi:10.2307/351580
- Holder, M. D., Coleman, B., & Wallace, J. M. (2010). Spirituality, religiosity, and happiness in children aged 8–12 years. *Journal of Happiness Studies, 11*, 131–150. doi:10.1007/s10902-008-9126-1
- Holmes, K. J., & Lochman, J. E. (2012). The role of religiosity in African American preadolescent aggression. *Journal of Black Psychology, 38*, 497–508. doi:10.1177/0095798412443161
- Hood, R. W., Hill, P. C., & Spilka, B. (2009). *The psychology of religion: An empirical approach* (4th ed.). New York, NY: Guilford Press.
- Hunsberger, B., Pratt, M. & Pancer, S. M. (2001). Adolescent identity formation: Religious exploration and commitment. *Identity: An International Journal of Theory and Research, 1*, 365–387. doi:10.1207/S1532706XID0104\_04
- Hunsberger, B., Pratt, M. & Pancer, S. M. (2002). A longitudinal study of religious doubts in high school and beyond: Relationships, stability, and searching for answers. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion, 41*, 255–265.
- James, W. (1982). *The varieties of religious experience*. New York, NY: Penguin. (Original work published 1902)
- Jensen, L. A. (2008). Immigrant civic engagement and religion: The paradoxical roles of religious motives and organizations. In R. M. Lerner, R. W. Roeser, & E. Phelps (Eds.), *Positive youth development and spirituality: From theory to research*. West Conshohocken, PA: Templeton Foundation Press.
- Jensen, L. A. (2012). Bridging universal and cultural perspectives: A vision for developmental psychology in a global world. *Child Development Perspectives, 6*(1), 98–104.
- Jessor, R., Turbin, M., & Costa, F. (1998). Risk and protection in successful outcomes among disadvantaged adolescents. *Applied Developmental Science, 2*, 194–208. doi:10.1207/s1532480xads0204\_3
- Johnson, B. R., Jang, S. J., Larson, D. B., & De Li, S. (2001). Does adolescent religious commitment matter? A reexamination of the effects of religiosity on delinquency. *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency, 38*, 22–44. doi:10.1177/0022427801038001002
- Johnson, C. N., & Boyatzis, C. J. (2006). Cognitive-cultural foundations of spiritual development. In E. C. Roehlkepartain, P. E. King, L. Wagener, & P. L. Benson (Eds.), *The handbook of spiritual development in childhood and adolescence* (pp. 211–223). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Johnson, S. B., Blum, R. W., & Giedd, J. N. (2009). Adolescent maturity and the brain: The promise and pitfalls of neuroscience research in adolescent health policy. *Journal of Adolescent Health, 45*, 216–221. doi:10.1016/j.jadohealth.2009.05.016
- Kagan, J., Snidman, N., Kahn, V., & Towsley, S. (2007). The preservation of two infant temperaments into adolescence. *Monographs of the Society for Research in Child Development, Serial No. 287*, 72(2).
- Kelley, B. S., & Miller, L. (2007). Life satisfaction and spirituality in adolescents. *Research in the Social Scientific Study of Religion, 18*, 233–261. doi:10.1163/ej.9789004158511.i-301.91
- Kerestes, M., Youniss, J. E., & Metz, E. (2004). Longitudinal patterns of religious perspective and civic integration. *Applied Developmental Science, 8*, 39–46. doi:10.1207/S1532480XADS0801\_5
- Kim, J., McCullough, M. E., & Cicchetti, D. (2009). Parents' and children's religiosity and child behavioral adjustment among maltreated and nonmaltreated children. *Journal of Child and Family Studies, 18*, 594–605. doi:10.1007/s10826-009-9262-1

## 1018 Religious and Spiritual Development

- Kim, S., Miles-Mason, E., Kim, C. Y., & Esquivel, G. B. (2013). Religiosity/spirituality and life satisfaction in Korean American adolescents. *Psychology of Religion and Spirituality, 5*, 33–40. doi:10.1037/a0030628
- King, P. E. (2003). Religion and identity: The role of ideological, social, and spiritual contexts. *Applied Developmental Sciences, 7*, 196–203. doi:10.1207/S1532480XADS0703\_11
- King, P. E. (2008). Spirituality as fertile ground for positive youth development. In R. M. Lerner, R. Roeser, & E. Phelps (Eds.), *Positive youth development and spirituality: From theory to research* (pp. 55–73). West Conshohocken, PA: Templeton Foundation Press.
- King, P. E., & Benson, P. L. (2006). Spiritual development and adolescent well-being and thriving. In E. C. Roehlkepartain, P. E. King, L. Wagener, & P. L. Benson (Eds.), *The handbook of spiritual development in childhood and adolescence* (pp. 384–398). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- King, P. E., & Boyatzis, C. J. (2004). Exploring adolescent religious and spiritual development: Current and future theoretical and empirical perspectives [Special issue]. *Applied Developmental Science, 8*, 2–6. doi:10.1207/S1532480XADS0801\_1
- King, P. E., Clardy, C. E., & Ramos, J. R. (in press). Adolescent spiritual exemplars: Exploring adolescent spirituality among diverse youth. *Journal of Adolescent Research*.
- King, P. E., & Furrow, J. L. (2004). Religion as a resource for positive youth development: Religion, social capital, and moral outcomes. *Developmental Psychology, 40*, 703–713. doi:10.1037/0012-1649.40.5.703
- King, P. E., Furrow, J. L., & Roth, N. H. (2002). The influence of families and peers on adolescent religiousness. *Journal of Psychology and Christianity, 21*, 109–120.
- King, P. E., Ramos, J., & Clardy, C. (2013). Searching for the sacred: Religion, spirituality, and adolescent development. In K. I. Pargament, J. J. Exline, & J. W. Jones (Eds.), *APA handbook of psychology, religion, and spirituality: Vol. 1. Context, theory, and research* (pp. 513–528). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association. doi:10.1037/14045-028
- King, P. E., & Roeser, R. W. (2009). Religion and spirituality in adolescent development. In R. M. Lerner & L. Steinberg (Eds.), *Individual bases of adolescent development*. Volume 1 of the *Handbook of adolescent psychology* (3rd ed., pp. 435–478). Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.
- Kirkpatrick, L. A., & Shaver, P. R. (1990). Attachment theory and religion: Childhood attachments, religious beliefs, and conversion. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion, 29*, 315–334. doi:10.2307/1386461
- Knight, N. (2008). Yukatek Maya children's attributions of belief to natural and non-natural entities. *Journal of Cognition and Culture, 8*, 235–243. doi:10.1163/156853708X358164
- Knight, M., Author, N., Bentley, C., & Dixon, I. (2004). The power of Black and Latina/o counterstories: Urban families and college-going processes. *Anthropology & Education, 35*, 99–120. doi:10.1525/aeq.2004.35.1.99
- Koenig, H. G., McCullough, M. E., & Larson, D. B. (2001). *Handbook of religion and health*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press. doi:10.1093/acprof:oso/9780195118667.001.0001
- Kuczynski, L. (2003). Beyond bidirectionality: Bilateral conceptual frameworks for understanding dynamics in parent-child relations. In L. Kuczynski (Ed.), *Handbook of dynamics in parent-child relations* (pp. 3–24). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Lammers, C., Ireland, M., Resnick, M., & Blum, R. (2000). Influences on adolescents' decision to postpone onset of sexual intercourse: A survival analysis of virginity among youths aged 13 to 18 years. *Journal of Adolescent Health, 26*, 42–48. doi:10.1016/S1054-139X(99)00041-5
- Lane, J. D., Wellman, H. M., & Evans, E. M. (2010). Children's understanding of ordinary and extraordinary minds. *Child Development, 81*, 1475–1489. doi:10.1111/j.1467-8624.2010.01486.x
- Larson, R. W., Hansen, D. M., & Moneta, G. (2006). Differing profiles of developmental experiences across types of organized youth activities. *Developmental Psychology, 42*, 849–863. doi:10.1037/0012-1649.42.5.849
- Layton, E., Dollahite, D. C., & Hardy, S. A. (2011). Anchors of religious commitment in adolescents. *Journal of Adolescent Research, 26*, 381–413. doi:10.1177/0743558410391260
- Lee, J. W., Rice, G. T., & Gillespie, V. B. (1997). Family worship patterns and their correlation with adolescent behavior and beliefs. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion, 36*, 372–381. doi:10.2307/1387855
- Legare, C. H., Evans, E. M., Rosengren, K. S., & Harris, P. L. (2012). The coexistence of natural and supernatural explanations across cultures and development. *Child Development, 83*, 779–793. doi:10.1111/j.1467-8624.2012.01743.x
- Leonard, K. C., & Scott-Jones, D. (2010). A belief-behavior gap? Exploring religiosity and sexual activity among high school seniors. *Journal of Adolescent Research, 25*, 578–600. doi:10.1177/0743558409357732
- Lerner, R. M. (2006). Developmental science, developmental systems, and contemporary theories of human development. In R. M. Lerner (Ed.), *Theoretical models of human development*. Volume 1 of the *Handbook of child psychology* (6th ed., pp. 1–17). Editors-in-Chief: W. Damon & R. M. Lerner. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.
- Lerner, R. M., Dowling, E. M., & Anderson, P. M. (2003). Positive youth development: Thriving as a basis of personhood and civil society. *Applied Developmental Science, 7*, 172–180. doi:10.1207/S1532480XADS0703\_8
- Lerner, R. M., Roeser, R. W., & Phelps, E. (Eds.). (2008). *Positive youth development and spirituality: From theory to research*. West Conshohocken, PA: Templeton Foundation Press.
- Lippman, L. H., & McIntosh, H. (2010). The demographics of spirituality and religiosity among youth: International and U.S. patterns. *Child Trends Research Brief*, 1–5. Retrieved from <http://www.childtrends.org>
- Long, D., Elkind, D., & Spilka, B. (1967). The child's conception of prayer. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion, 6*, 101–109. doi:10.2307/1384202
- Longest, K. C., & Vaisey, S. (2008). Control or conviction: Religion and adolescent initiation of marijuana use. *Journal of Drug Issues, 38*, 689–715. doi:10.1177/002204260803800303
- Lopez, A. B., Huynh, V. W., & Fuligni, A. J. (2011). A longitudinal study of religious identity and participation during adolescence. *Child Development, 82*, 1297–1309. doi:10.1111/j.1467-8624.2011.01609.x
- Mahoney, A. (2010). Religion in families, 1999–2009: A relational spirituality framework. *Journal of Marriage and Family, 72*(4), 805–827. doi:10.1111/j.1741-3737.2010.00732.x
- Mahoney, A. (2013). The spirituality of us: Relational spirituality in the context of family relationships. In J. Exline & J. W. Jones (Eds.), *APA handbook of psychology, religion, and spirituality* (pp. 365–389). Editor-in-Chief: K. I. Pargament. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association. doi:10.1037/14045-020
- Mahoney, A., Pendleton, S., & Ihrke, H. (2006). Religious coping by children and adolescents: Unexplored territory in the realm of spiritual development. In E. C. Roehlkepartain, P. E. King, L. Wagener, & P. L. Benson (Eds.), *The handbook of spiritual development in childhood and adolescence* (pp. 341–354). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Mahoney, A., & Tarakeshwar, N. (2005). Religion's role in marriage and parenting in daily life and during family crises. In R. F. Paloutzian & C. L. Park (Eds.), *Handbook of the psychology of religion and spirituality* (pp. 177–195). New York, NY: Guilford Press.
- Makris, N., & Pnevmatikos, D. (2007). Children's understanding of human and super-natural minds. *Cognitive Development, 22*, 365–375. doi:10.1016/j.cogdev.2006.12.003

- Marcia, J. E. (1966). Development and validation of ego identity status. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 3, 551–558. doi:10.1037/h0023281
- Mariano, J. M., & Damon, W. (2008). The role of spirituality and religious faith in supporting purpose in adolescence. In R. M. Lerner, R. W. Roesser, & E. Phelps (Eds.), *Positive youth development and spirituality: From theory to research* (pp. 210–230). West Conshohocken, PA: Templeton Foundation Press.
- Markstrom, C. A. (1999). Religious involvement and adolescent psychosocial development. *Journal of Adolescence*, 22, 205–221. doi:10.1006/jado.1999.0211
- Markstrom-Adams, C. A., Hofstra, G., & Dougher, K. (1994). The ego-virtue of fidelity: A case for the study of religion and identity formation in adolescence. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 23, 453–469. doi: 10.1007/BF01538039
- Markstrom-Adams, C., & Smith, M. (1996). Identity formation and religious orientation among high schools students from the United States and Canada. *Journal of Adolescence*, 19, 247–261. doi:10.1006/jado.1996.0023
- Martin, T. F., White, J. M., & Perlman, D. (2001). Religious socialization: A test of the channeling hypothesis of parental influence on adolescent faith maturity. *Journal of Adolescent Research*, 18, 169–187. doi:10.1177/0743558402250349
- Mattis, J. S., Ahluwalia, M. K., Cowie, S. E., & Kirkland-Harris, A. M. (2006). Ethnicity, culture, and spiritual development. In E. C. Roehlkepartain, P. E. King, L. Wagner, & P. L. Benson (Eds.), *The handbook of spiritual development in childhood and adolescence* (pp. 283–296). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- McKune, B., & Hoffmann, J. P. (2009). Religion and academic achievement among adolescents. *Interdisciplinary Journal of Research on Religion*, 5: Article 10.
- Miller, L., & Gur, M. (2002). Religiousness and sexual responsibility in adolescent girls. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 31, 401–406. doi:10.1016/S1054-139X(02)00403-2
- Milot, A. S., & Ludden, A. B. (2009). The effects of religion and gender on well-being, substance use, and academic engagement among rural adolescents. *Youth & Society*, 40, 403–425. doi:10.1177/0044118X08316668
- Murray-Swank, A., Mahoney, A., & Pargament, K. I. (2006). Sanctification of parenting: Links to corporal punishment and parental warmth among Biblically conservative and liberal mothers. *International Journal for the Psychology of Religion*, 16, 271–288. doi:10.1207/s15327582ijpr1604\_3
- Nasir, N. (2004). “Halal-ing” the child: Reframing identities of opposition in an urban Muslim school. *Harvard Educational Review*, 74, 153–174.
- Nonnemaker, J., McNeely, C. A., & Blum, R. W. (2006). Public and private domains of religiosity and adolescent smoking transitions. *Social Science & Medicine*, 62, 3084–3095. doi: 10.1016/j.socscimed.2005.11.052
- Norton, N. (2006). Talking spirituality with family members: Black and Latina/o children coresearcher methodologies. *Urban Review*, 38, 313–334. doi:10.1007/s11256-006-0036-4
- Okagaki, L., & Bevis, C. (1999). Transmission of religious values: Relations between parents’ and daughters’ beliefs. *Journal of Genetic Psychology*, 160, 303–318. doi:10.1080/00221329909595401
- Oman, D. (2013). Spiritual modeling and the social learning of spirituality and religion. In K. I. Pargament, J. J. Exline, & J. W. Jones (Eds.), *APA handbook of psychology, religion, and spirituality: Vol. 1. Context, theory, and research* (pp. 187–204). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association. doi:10.1037/14045-010
- Oser, F. K., Scarlett, W. G., & Bucher, A. (2006). Religious and spiritual development throughout the lifespan. In R. M. Lerner (Ed.), *Theoretical models of human development*. Volume 1 of the *Handbook of child psychology* (6th ed., pp. 942–998). Editors-in-Chief: W. Damon & R. M. Lerner. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.
- Overton, W. F. (2013). Relationism and relational-developmental systems: A paradigm for developmental science in the post-Cartesian era. In R. M. Lerner & J. B. Benson (Eds.), *Embodiment and epigenesis: Theoretical and methodological issues in understanding the role of biology within the relational developmental system. Part A: Philosophical, theoretical, and biological dimensions. Advances in child development and behavior* (Vol. 44, pp. 24–64). London, England: Elsevier.
- Ozorak, E. W. (1989). Social and cognitive influences on the development of religious beliefs and commitment in adolescence. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 28, 448–463. doi:10.2307/1386576
- Pargament, K. I. (1997). *The psychology of religion and coping: Theory, research, and practice*. New York, NY: Guilford Press.
- Pargament, K., Mahoney, A., Exline, J. J., Jones, J. W., & Shafranske, E. (2013). Envisioning an integrative paradigm for the psychology of religion and spirituality. In K. I. Pargament, J. J. Exline & J. W. Jones (Eds.), *APA handbook of psychology, religion, and spirituality: Vol. 1. Context, theory, and research* (pp. 3–19). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association Press. doi:10.1037/14045-001
- Pearce, L. D. & Denton, M. L. (2011). *A faith of their own: Stability and change in the religiosity of American’s adolescents*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Pearce, M. J., Jones, S. M., Schwab-Stone, M. E., & Ruchkin, V. (2003). The protective effects of religiousness and parent involvement on the development of conduct problems among youth exposed to violence. *Child Development*, 74, 1682–1696. doi: 10.1046/j.1467-8624.2003.00631.x
- Pearce, M. J., Little, T. D. & Perez, J. E. (2003). Religiousness and depressive symptoms among adolescents. *Journal of Clinical Child and Adolescent Psychology*, 32, 267–276. doi:10.1207/S15374424JCCP3202\_12
- Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life. (2012, October 9). “Nones” on the rise: One-in-five adults have no religious affiliation. Retrieved from www.pewforum.org/unaffiliated/nones-on-the-rise.aspx
- Pendleton, S. M., Cavalli, K. S., Pargament, K. I., & Nasr, S. Z. (2002). Religious/spiritual coping in childhood cystic fibrosis: A qualitative study. *Pediatrics*, 109(1). doi:10.1542/peds.109.1.e8
- Pitts, V. P. (1976). Drawing the invisible: Children’s conceptualization of God. *Character Potential*, 8, 12–24.
- Prentice, N. M., Manosevitz, M., & Hubbs, L. (1978). Imaginary figures of early childhood: Santa Claus, Easter Bunny, and the Tooth Fairy. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 48, 618–628. doi:10.1111/j.1939-0025.1978.tb02566.x
- Puffer, K. A., Pence, K. G., Graverson, T. M., Wolfe, M., Pate, E., & Clegg, S. (2008). Religious doubt and identity formation: Salient predictors of adolescent religious doubt. *Journal of Psychology and Theology*, 36, 270–284.
- Regnerus, M. D., & Elder, G. H. (2003). Staying on track in school: Religious influences in high- and low-risk settings. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 42, 633–649. doi:10.1046/j.1468-5906.2003.00208.x
- Regnerus, M. D., Smith, C., & Smith, B. (2004). Social context in the development of adolescent religiosity. *Applied Developmental Science*, 8, 27–38. doi:10.1207/S1532480XADS0801\_4
- Rew, L., Wong, Y. J., & Sternglanz, R. W. (2004). The relationship between prayer, health behaviors, and protective resources in school-aged children. *Issues in Comprehensive Pediatric Nursing*, 27, 245–255. doi:10.1080/01460860490884156
- Reynolds, N., Mrug, S., & Guion, K. (2013). Spiritual coping and psychosocial adjustment of adolescents with chronic illness: The role of cognitive attributions, age, and disease group. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 52, 559–565. doi:10.1016/j.jadohealth.2012.09.007

## 1020 Religious and Spiritual Development

- Richert, R. A., & Granqvist, P. (2013). Religious and spiritual development in childhood. In R. F. Paloutzian & C. L. Park (Eds.), *Handbook of the psychology of religion and spirituality* (2nd ed., pp. 165–182). New York, NY: Guilford Press.
- Richert, R. A., & Harris, P. L. (2006). The ghost in my body: Children's developing concept of the soul. *Journal of Cognition and Culture*, 6, 409–427. doi:10.1163/156853706778554913
- Rizzuto, A. M. (1979). *The birth of the living God*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Roehlkepartain, E. C., King, P. E., Wagener, L., & Benson, P. L. (2006). *The handbook of spiritual development in childhood and adolescence*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Roehlkepartain, E. C., & Patel, E. (2006). Congregations: Unexamined crucibles for spiritual development. In E. C. Roehlkepartain, P. E. King, L. Wagener, & P. L. Benson (Eds.), *The handbook of spiritual development in childhood and adolescence* (pp. 324–336). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Roeser, R. W., Issac, S. S., Abo-Zena, M., Brittan, A., & Peck, S. C. (2008). Self and identity processes in spirituality and positive youth development. In R. M. Lerner, R. W. Roeser, & E. Phelps (Eds.), *Positive youth development and spirituality: From theory to research*. (pp. 74–105). West Conshohocken, PA: Templeton Foundation Press.
- Rogoff, B. (2003). *The cultural nature of human development*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Rosengren, K. S., Johnson, C. N., & Harris, P. L. (Eds.). (2000). *Imagining the impossible: Magical, scientific, and religious thinking in children*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press. doi:10.1017/CBO9780511571381
- Rosengren, K. S., Kalish, C. W., Hickling, A. K., & Gelman, S. A. (1994). Exploring the relation between preschool children's magical beliefs and causal thinking. *British Journal of Developmental Psychology*, 12, 69–82. doi:10.1111/j.2044-835X.1994.tb00619.x
- Rostosky, S. S., Danner, F., & Riggle, E. D. B. (2007). Is religiosity a protective factor against substance use in young adulthood? Only if you're straight! *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 40, 440–447. doi:10.1016/j.jadohealth.2006.11.144
- Rostosky, S. S., Regnerus, M. D., & Wright, M. L. (2003). Coital debut: The role of religiosity and sex attitudes in the Add Health Survey. *Journal of Sex Research*, 40, 358–367. doi:10.1080/00224490209552202
- Sabatier, C., Mayer, B., Friedlmeier, M., Lubiewska, K., & Trommsdorff, G. (2011). Religiosity, family orientation, and life satisfaction of adolescents in four countries. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 42, 1375–1393. doi:10.1177/0022022111412343
- Salas-Wright, C. P., Vaughn, M. G., Hodge, D. R., & Perron, B. E. (2012). Religiosity profiles of American youth in relation to substance use, violence, and delinquency. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 41, 1560–1575. doi:10.1007/s10964-012-9761-z
- Sallquist, J., Eisenberg, N., French, D. C., Purwono, U., & Suryanti, T. A. (2010). Indonesian adolescents' spiritual and religious experiences and their longitudinal relations with socioemotional functioning. *Developmental Psychology*, 46, 699–716. doi:10.1037/a0018879
- Scarlett, W. G., & Perriello, L. (1991). The development of prayer in adolescence. *New Directions for Child Development*, 52, 63–76. doi:10.1002/cd.23219915206
- Schnitker, S. A., Felke, T. J., Barrett, J. L., & Emmons, R. A. (2014). Longitudinal study of religious and spiritual transformation in adolescents attending Young Life summer camp: Assessing the epistemic, intrapsychic, and moral sociability functions of conversion. *Psychology of Religion and Spirituality*, 6, 83–93.
- Schwartz, K. D. (2006). Transformations in parent and friend faith support predicting adolescents' religious faith. *International Journal for the Psychology of Religion*, 16, 311–326. doi:10.1207/s15327582ijpr1604\_5
- Schwartz, K. D., Bukowski, W. M., & Aoki, W. T. (2006). Mentors, friends, and gurus: Peer and nonparent influences on spiritual development. In E. C. Roehlkepartain, P. E. King, L. Wagener, & P. L. Benson (Eds.), *The handbook of spiritual development in childhood and adolescence* (pp. 310–323). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Seidlitz, L., Abernethy, A. D., Duberstein, P. R., Evinger, J. S., Chang, T. H., & Lewis, B. (2003). Development of the Spiritual Transcendence Index. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 41, 439–453.
- Shannon, D. K., Oakes, K. E., Scheers, N. J., Richardson, F. J., & Stills, A. B. (2013). Religious beliefs as moderator of exposure to violence in African American adolescents. *Psychology of Religion & Spirituality*, 5, 172–181.
- Sinha, J. W., Cnaan, R. A., & Gelles, R. J. (2007). Adolescent risk behaviors and religion: Findings from a national study. *Journal of Adolescence*, 30, 231–249. doi:10.1016/j.adolescence.2006.02.005
- Slavich, G. M., & Cole, S. W. (2013). The emerging field of human social genomics. *Clinical Psychological Science*, 1(3), 331–348. doi:10.1177/2167702613478594
- Smith, C. (2003a). Religious participation and network closure among American adolescents. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 42, 259–267. doi:10.1111/1468-5906.00177
- Smith, C. (2003b). Theorizing religious effects among American adolescents. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 42, 17–30. doi:10.1111/1468-5906.t01-1-00158
- Smith, C. & Denton, M. L. (2005). *Soul searching: The religious and spiritual lives of American teenagers*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Spilman, S. K., Neppi, T. K., Donnellan, M. B., Schofield, T. J., & Conger, R. D. (2013). Incorporating religiosity into a developmental model of positive family functioning across generations. *Developmental Psychology*, 49, 762–774. doi:10.1037/a0028418
- Strommen, M. P., & Hardel, R. A. (2000). *Passing on the faith: A radical new model for youth and family ministry*. Winona, MN: St. Mary's Press.
- Suárez-Orozco, C., Singh, S., Abo-Zena, M. M., Du, D., & Roeser, R. W. (2012). The role of religion and worship communities in the positive development of immigrant youth. In A. Warren, R. M. Lerner, & E. Phelps (Eds.), *Thriving and spirituality among youth: Research perspectives and future possibilities* (pp. 255–288). Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.
- Taylor, M., & Carlson, S. (2000). The influence of religious beliefs on parental attitudes about children's fantasy behavior. In K. S. Rosengren, C. N. Johnson, & P. L. Harris (Eds.), *Imagining the impossible: Magical, scientific, and religious thinking in children* (pp. 247–268). New York, NY: Cambridge University Press. doi:10.1017/CBO9780511571381.010
- Templeton, J. L., & Eccles, J. S. (2006). The relation between spiritual development and identity processes. In E. C. Roehlkepartain, P. E. King, L. Wagener, & P. L. Benson (Eds.), *The handbook of spiritual development in childhood and adolescence* (pp. 252–265). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Thanissaro, P. N. (2010). "Heaven starts at your feet": Adolescent bowing to parents and associated spiritual attitudes. *International Journal of Children's Spirituality*, 15, 295–305. doi:10.1080/1364436X.2010.525625
- Trommsdorff, G., & Chen, X. (2012). *Values, religion, and culture in adolescent development*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.
- Urry, H. L., Roeser, R. W., Lazar, S. W., & Poey, A. P. (2012). Prefrontal cortical activation during emotion regulation: Linking religious/spiritual practices with well-being. In A. Warren, R. M. Lerner, & E. Phelps (Eds.), *Thriving and spirituality among youth: Research perspectives and future possibilities* (pp. 19–29). Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.
- Verkuyten, M., Thijs, J., & Stevens, G. (2012). Multiple identities and religious transmission: A study among Moroccan-Dutch Muslim

- adolescents and their parents. *Child Development*, 83(5), 1577–1590. doi:10.1111/j.1467-8624.2012.01794.x
- Volling, B. L., Mahoney, A., & Rauer, A. J. (2009). Sanctification of parenting, moral socialization, and young children's conscience development. *Psychology of Religion and Spirituality*, 1, 53–68. doi:10.1037/a0014958
- Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in society*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Wagener, L. M., Furrow, J. L., King, P. E., Leffert, N., & Benson, P. (2003). Religious involvement and developmental resources in youth. *Review of Religious Research*, 44, 271–284.
- Wagener, L. M., & Maloney, H. N. (2006). Spiritual and religious pathology in childhood and adolescence. In E. C. Roehlkepartain, P. E. King, L. Wagener, & P. L. Benson (Eds.), *The handbook of spiritual development in childhood and adolescence* (pp. 137–149). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Wallace, J. M., Jr., & Forman, T. A. (1998). Religion's role in promoting health and reducing risk among American youth. *Health Education & Behavior*, 25, 721–741. doi:10.1177/109019819802500604
- Warren, A., Lerner, R. M., & Phelps, E. (2012). *Thriving and spirituality among youth: Research perspectives and future possibilities*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.
- Wigger, J. B., Paxson, K., & Ryan, L. (2013). What do invisible friends know? Imaginary companions, God, and theory of mind. *The International Journal for the Psychology of Religion*, 23, 2–14. doi:10.1080/10508619.2013.739059
- Wilson, J., & Sherkat, D. E. (1994). Returning to the fold. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 33, 148–61. doi:10.2307/1386601
- Woolley, J. D. (2000). The development of beliefs about direct mental-physical causality in imagination, magic, and religion. In K. S. Rosengren, C. N. Johnson, & P. L. Harris (Eds.), *Imagining the impossible: Magical, scientific, and religious thinking in children* (pp. 99–129). New York, NY: Cambridge University Press. doi:10.1017/CBO9780511571381.005
- Woolley, J. D., & Phelps, K. E. (2001). The development of children's beliefs about prayer. *Journal of Cognition and Culture*, 1, 139–167.
- Yonker, J. E., Schnabelrauch, C. A., & DeHaan, L. G. (2012). The relationship between spirituality and religiosity on psychological outcomes in adolescents and emerging adults: A meta-analytic review. *Journal of Adolescence*, 35, 299–314. doi:10.1016/j.adolescence.2011.08.010
- Youniss, J. A., McLellan, J., & Yates, M. (1999). Religion, community service, and identity in American youth. *Journal of Adolescence*, 22, 243–253. doi:10.1006/jado.1999.0214