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The Relationship Between Parental Influence and Christian Spiritual Practices Among Adventist youth in Puerto Rico

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ABSTRACT

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PARENTAL INFLUENCE AND CHRISTIAN SPIRITUAL PRACTICES AMONG ADVENTIST YOUTH IN PUERTO RICO

by

Obed Jiménez

Chair: O. Jane Thayer

ABSTRACT OF GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH

Dissertation

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Title: THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PARENTAL INFLUENCE AND CHRISTIAN SPIRITUAL PRACTICES AMONG ADVENTIST YOUTH IN PUERTO RICO

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Name and degree of faculty chair: O. Jane Thayer, Ph.D.

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Problem

Typically, parents do not realize how influential they are in fostering spiritual growth in their children and are not aware of key influential factors that can motivate their children in practicing spiritual disciplines such as prayer, Bible reading, meditation, and church attendance.

Method

This study used data from the *Avance PR* study conducted during the months of March and October 1995. The population for this study was high-school students enrolled in Seventh-day Adventist academies and youth who attended Seventh-day Adventist churches in Puerto Rico. The youth sample (ages 13-25) consisted of 1,377

single, never-married subjects: 586 males and 775 females. A total of 27 independent variables, 2 dependent variables, and 2 control variables were analyzed. The independent variables were parental influence factors that included parental marital status, income level, education, attitudes, behaviors, and religious practices. The dependent variables were devotional practices and church attendance practices. The control variables were age and gender. These variables were tested using ANOVA, two-way ANOVA, Pearson correlation coefficient, and multiple regression.

Results

Twenty-seven parental influence variables were tested to examine their relationship with youth devotional practices and church attendance. When tested individually and when tested individually after controlling for age and gender, 17 variables showed a significant relationship with devotional practices and 19 variables showed a significant relationship with church attendance. Significant differences on devotional practices and church attendance were found between adolescents and young adults, and between males and females, when tested individually after controlling for age and gender. When tested together and when tested together after controlling for age and gender, 4 variables showed a significant relationship with devotional practices and 4 variables showed a significant relationship with church attendance. Three variables met the criteria for a good prediction model and were significantly related to devotional practices in all tests: family Adventist standards, family worship quantity, and parental authoritarianism. Four variables met the criteria for a good prediction model and were significantly related to church attendance in all tests: family Adventist standards, parental

role model, mother SDA, and both parents SDA. Both models predicted more than 20% of the variance of devotional and church attendance practices.

Conclusions

The relationships found in this study suggest that parents have a strong influence on the devotional and church attendance practices of their children. A few of these relationships varied depending on the age and gender of the child. The model predicting devotional practices showed that parents are more likely to increase devotional practices of their children when they (a) enforce Adventist lifestyle standards, (b) expose their children to frequent family worship, (c) and do not exert an authoritarian parental style toward their children. The model predicting church attendance showed that parents are more likely to increase church attendance practices of their children when they (a) enforce Adventist lifestyle standards, (b) are good role models of the Christian life, (c) mother is Adventist, and (d) both parents are Adventists.

Andrews University

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A Dissertation

Presented in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

by

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Dedicated to:
my wife Marcia,
my daughter Kimberly, and my son Bryan.
To God who gave me the wisdom and the strength to complete this journey.

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SOLI DEO GLORIA

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Adolescents have received a large degree of attention from researchers in respect to their physical, psychological, and social development. But researchers (Barna, 2001; Benson, Roehlkepartain, & Rude, 2003; Smith, 2005) agree that there is a lack of research in respect to their spiritual development. Spirituality plays a major role in the character formation of adolescents and eventually in their positive or negative life outcomes (Barna, 2001; Benson et al., 2003; Smith, 2005).

During this life stage, adolescents are exposed to influences that will either be beneficial or detrimental to their personal development (Barna, 2001). Adolescents need a worldview that will provide the beliefs, principles, and values that will guide their decisions and form their characters (Barna, 2001). The Christian faith offers such a worldview. Spirituality plays an important role in helping adolescents integrate a Christian worldview and lifestyle into their lives. Christian theology teaches that, through the work of the Holy Spirit, particular spiritual disciplines such as prayer, Bible study, meditation, and church attendance foster the spiritual growth of the followers of Christ (Foster, 1988; Mulholland, 1985; Thayer, 1996; Willard, 1988).

Studies (Barna, 1999; Dudley, 2000; Mueller, 2007; Ramírez-Johnson & Hernández, 2003; Smith, 2005) demonstrate that parents play an important role in the

spiritual formation of their children; they can provide a Christian worldview by which children can make decisions that can lead to positive life outcomes. Parents influence the spiritual practices of their children (Barna, 2001; Dudley, 1992). Youth who integrate spiritual practices into their lives have a more positive outlook towards life and are more committed to their faith (Smith, 2005). Youth who increase their spiritual practices decrease the probability of negative life outcomes, and youth who decrease their spiritual practices increase the probability of negative life outcomes (Smith, 2005).

Through spiritual practices, youth develop Christian values and principles that equip them to make right decisions, to take advantage of opportunities, to overcome challenges, and to enjoy the benefits of positive life outcomes (Smith, 2005). Youth involvement in the Christian faith is "positively associated with greater well-being and more positive perceptions of and attitudes about life and the future" (Smith, 2005, p. 226). Benson et al. (2003) report that a number of studies have positively associated religiosity with positive behaviors, attitudes, and outcomes (overall well-being; positive life attitudes, satisfaction and hope for the future; altruism and service; school success; physical health, etc.) and have negatively associated religiosity with at-risk behaviors (alcohol and drug use; crime, violence and delinquency; depression; danger seeking and risk taking; early sexual activity, etc.) among adolescents.

Background

Despite the value of religiosity and spirituality to the well-being of adolescents, there is a negative stereotype that adolescents are rebellious and alienated from religion. Researchers (Hines & Paulson, 2006; Mueller, 2007; Smith, 2005; Tripp, 2001) are proposing a departure from this common view of the adolescent life stage and arguing in

favor of a more positive outlook. Smith (2005) has concluded that this young generation is "exceedingly conventional" in their religious practices. They are willing to follow their parents' religious traditions more than is generally perceived or believed.

Although, in general terms, this generation of adolescents has a better attitude toward spirituality and religion, that positive attitude is not reflected in a commitment to their own religious traditions (Smith, 2005). A majority of teens report that religion is important in their lives (Barna, 2001; Dudley & Gillespie, 1992; Smith, 2005), but they are not able to explain how it is important in relevant ways. They lack the ability to explain how religion influences particular areas of their lives, their goals and aspirations, their relationships, their involvement in at-risk behaviors, etc.

In terms of religious beliefs, Smith (2005) conducted direct interviews with teenagers and found that often their beliefs were "trivial, misguided, distorted and sometimes outright doctrinally erroneous" (p. 137). Teenagers either do not comprehend the beliefs of their religious traditions or do not care to believe them. Smith expands:

> The net result . . . is that most religious teenagers' opinions and views—one can hardly call them worldviews—are vague, limited, and often quite at variance with the actual teachings of their own religion. This suggests that a strong, visible, salient, or intentional faith is not operating in the foreground of most teenagers' lives. (p. 134)

He concludes that most teenagers hold a relative, instrumental, and individualistic view of religion. That is, every individual has the right to choose what to believe and nobody has a right to judge those chosen beliefs. Moreover, religion is something that helps people feel good, be and do what they want, and helps solve their problems but there are no commitments, duties, obligations, or accountability. Religion is a servant to the needs and desires of the individual.

Concordantly with Smith (2005), Barna (2001) reports that 7 out of 10 teens say that there is no absolute moral truth. He also found that 8 out of 10 teens claim that truth is relative to the individual's circumstances. To demonstrate the degree of spiritual confusion and contradiction, Barna also found (2001) that 6 out of 10 teenagers, of this same teenage population, say that the Bible provides a "clear and totally accurate description of moral truth" (p. 92).

Wuthnow (2007) describes the spiritual landscape of youth as "spiritual tinkerers" (p. 15). Due to the exposure to a wide spectrum of information and cultures that youth experience today, they are able to choose from a vast variety of spiritual ideas, beliefs, and practices. The emphasis is placed in the person's ability to choose a workable solution to the problems and challenges that he/she is facing in the present. Wuthnow (2007) expresses: "Each individual claims the authority–in fact, the duty–to make up his or her mind about what to believe" (p. 15).

Mueller (2007) refers to this same youth spiritual landscape as "smogasboard spirituality" (p. 58). To describe his view, Mueller (2007) uses the "spiritual buffet" analogy, in which young people load their plates with a combination of elements that creates a faith system that is tailored to satisfy their personal preferences. He argues that "the postmodern emphasis on feelings over and above rationality leads many young people to look for a faith system that's more emotional" (p. 58).

Researchers (Barna, 2001; Mueller, 2007; Smith, 2005; Wuthnow, 2007) agree that our present youth spiritual landscape is an individualistic and pluralistic spiritual perspective that is very idiosyncratic of postmodern philosophical propositions. From this recent research, it appears that today's youth lack a religious or spiritual base solid

enough to produce a worldview that will provide a healthy context for the life decisions that face them.

In contrast to a religiously formed worldview, new global and technological developments are exposing youth to cultural influences that are shaping their worldview into a threatening guide. Mueller (2007) says, "This new reality has played a powerful role in shaping the spirituality, ideas, and lifestyles of today's emerging generations" (p. 51). He concludes that "we can't escape the reality that those elements–as strange and frightening as they may seem–shape their worldview and govern their lives" (p. 35).

Although culture is a powerful force that shapes young people's lives, teenagers report that their parents have the highest degree of influence in their lives (Barna, 2001; Dudley, 2000; Mueller, 2007; Ramírez-Johnson & Hernández, 2003; Smith, 2005). Typically, parents are unaware of the extent of their influence on their children's spiritual life. Smith (2005) asserts that many parents rely on teenagers' attitudes, statements, and behaviors to measure their level of parental influence. Thus, many conclude that they have lost their influence and are no longer capable of making a difference in their children's lives. Smith (2005) asserts that, for most parents, this conclusion is a mistake.

Trying to shield teenagers from the influence of culture is impossible, but increasing the influence of parents would be more attainable and would bring more positive results. In this respect, Dudley (2000) found a significant relationship between parental relationships and membership status. This study reported that youth who have a close relationship with their parents are more likely to remain in the church than youth who have a distant relationship with their parents.

Today's youth are highly relational in nature and strive to have a deeper connection with their family members (Barna, 2001). Parents can take advantage of their teenager's need of close relationships to relate to them in a more meaningful way. The "cultural-generational gap" between adults and teenagers is widening every day (Mueller, 2007). Parents need to consciously and intentionally close this generational gap in order to influence their children and to maintain healthy relationships with them.

Experts (Balswick & Balswick, 1989; Mueller, 2007) agree that family is an institution created to love, nurture, and empower children. It is a place where the spiritual, emotional, mental, physical, and social needs of children and parents are met. Mueller (2007) asserts that we are living in a period of "unprecedented and historic change in family composition, family life, and family experience" (p. 41). Social, cultural, and economical pressures are affecting modern-day family structures and relational patterns. Today's children are being raised in cold, stressful home environments that lack intimacy and family unity. Parents are being neglectful of their children's emotional and relational needs. Clark (2004) uses the term "systematic abandonment" to describe how parents have left adolescents "to figure out how to survive life on their own" (p. 42). These family relational patterns pose a threat to the emotional health of children and youth.

Family relational patterns influence the spiritual development of children and youth (Francis & Gibson, 1993). Teenagers who report good relationships with their parents are more likely to be religiously devoted than teenagers who report worse relationships with their parents (Smith, 2005). Research (Barna, 2001; Francis & Gibson,

1993; Smith, 2005) has demonstrated that parents exert a strong influence on the spiritual life of their children.

However, Barna (2001) found that parents spend very little time communicating with their children about spiritual matters. Gillespie, Donahue, Gane, and Boyatt (2004) concur that parents have a tendency to delegate the spiritual education of their children to other institutions such as church and school. Although these other institutions have an important responsibility towards the spiritual life of children, the primary responsibility rests in the family institution. Dudley (1992) explains:

> When we consider the subject of faith, values, and commitment, the church and the school have a very important role to play. We would not diminish that role. But it is well to remember that it all starts in the home. Family influences are paramount. Families are perhaps the most significant factor in helping youth develop a life-giving faith and deep religious commitment. (p. 215)

The Christian faith calls parents to transmit their religious heritage to their children in accordance with biblical precepts. "These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up" (Deut 6:6, 7).

A search of the literature revealed that although other studies have treated family influence on youth religiosity, no other study deals specifically with parental influences in relation to specific youth spiritual practices among youth in Puerto Rico. Databases such as EBSCO, ATLAReligion, WilsonSelectPlus, ERIC, ArticleFirst, PsychInfo, Dissertation Abstracts, etc., were consulted and descriptors such as parent*, spiritual*, religio*, teen*, adolescent*, youth, etc., were utilized. Dudley and Gillespie (1992); Dudley (2000); Ramírez and Hernández (2003); and Gillespie et al. (2004) studied parental influence factors in relation to faith maturity and denominational loyalty but not

specifically in relation to youth spiritual practices. This study will explore specific parental influence factors in relation to youth spiritual practices.

Statement of the Problem

A survey of the literature revealed that there is a lack of empirical research on the relationship between parental influence factors and youth spiritual practices among Puerto Rican youth. Typically, parents do not realize how influential they are in fostering their children's spiritual growth, which is extremely beneficial for their lives. More importantly, parents are not aware of key influential factors that can motivate their children in practicing spiritual disciplines such as prayer, Bible reading, meditation, and church attendance. Therefore, there is a need for empirical research to explore the role of parental influence on their children's spirituality.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between parental influence factors and youth spiritual practices.

Significance of the Study

In 1989 the Seventh-day Adventist North American Division embarked on probably the most important study on church youth done by any single religious denomination in North America at the time, the *Valuegenesis* study (Dudley, 1992). This study was conducted by Search Institute of Minneapolis in consultation with researchers from Adventist institutions and educators outside of the Adventist educational system. The *Valuegenesis* survey instrument was based on a similar questionnaire used earlier by Search Institute to study adolescents and adults from six major Protestant denominations.

The purpose of the *Valuegenesis* study was to understand the value systems of Adventist youth, particularly those who attended Adventist schools, and to "determine what factors in Adventist homes, schools, and churches nurture the values and faith that we cherish in our young people" (Dudley, 1992, p. 13)

As a follow-up to the *Valuegenesis* study, the *Avance* study was conducted to research which factors in Adventist homes, schools, and churches were related to Hispanic youth and adults' commitment to the Christian faith. This study was "focused on the unique needs and challenges facing the Hispanic Adventist community in North America" (Ramírez-Johnson & Hernández, 2003, p. xiii). *Avance* is the "largest and most extensive research of Hispanics within any religious organization in the United States" (Ramírez-Johnson & Hernández, 2003, p. xv). *Avance* included questions and scales that were used and validated by Search Institute for the *Valuegenesis* study. Although *Avance* follows a survey approach similar to *Valuegenesis*, researchers added questions that were relevant to Hispanic individuals (Hernández, 1995). Also, the *Avance* survey questionnaire was prepared in both English and Spanish. The *Avance* research team was composed of eight members that included Adventist academicians, teachers, researchers, educational administrators, and church administrators. Edwin I. Hernández was the principal investigator (Ramírez-Johnson & Hernández, 2003).

Avance PR is a continuation of the *Avance* study. *Avance PR* was conducted in Puerto Rico during the months of March and October 1995. A total of 2,064 subjects, including youth and adults, participated in the study. This study will use data from the *Avance PR* study.

The *Avance PR* research project is a study of youth spirituality from an Hispanic perspective. Benson (2004) says: "Our understanding of religious and spiritual development in adolescence has been limited by the lack of focused, large-scale studies specifically designed to examine the dynamics of religious and spiritual development during adolescence" (p. 49). The *Avance PR* study fits Benson's (2004) description of the type of studies needed to make educated and empirically based contributions to the field of youth spirituality. To this date, no study on youth spirituality has been published using *Avance PR* data.

This present study is the first attempt to understand parental influence on youth spirituality from an empirical standpoint among Adventist Puerto Rican youth. A search of the literature demonstrated that there is no other accessible published study on the relationship between parental influence and spirituality among Puerto Rican youth. This study, which uses the *Avance PR* data, will make a contribution to academic research and literature on the relationship between parental influence and spirituality of Christian youth living in Puerto Rico.

This study has the potential to help parents understand how specific parental characteristics and behaviors may influence their children's spiritual practices.

This study has the potential to provide church leaders with empirical information needed to develop church programs and activities to strengthen families so as to create home environments that foster youth spiritual growth.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework on which this study is based seeks to portray the relationship between parental influences and youth spirituality. See Figure 1. This conceptual framework is built on several hypotheses.

Youth demographics present various characteristics that influence spiritual practices among youth. For example, research (Barna, 2001; Dudley & Gillespie, 1992; Ramírez-Johnson & Hernández, 2003; Smith, 2005) has demonstrated that female adolescents are more religiously devoted than male adolescents. Thus, female adolescents have a higher probability to engage in spiritual practices than do male adolescents.

Family plays an important role in the intergenerational transmission of the Christian faith. Several conditions and characteristics of family demographics may influence youth spirituality. Families vary in their income, their parental marital status, their religious affiliation, and their parental level of education. Smith (2005) found that teens with married parents are more likely than teens with unmarried parents to be religiously devoted.

Also, there are various family and parental characteristics and behaviors that may be related to youth spirituality. Families have various levels of cohesion: Some families engage in recreation together more than other families, and some families engage in family worship more often than others. Families can enforce Christian standards in various forms and conditions. In this respect, Gillespie et al. (2004) report that quality of family worship is correlated with high denominational loyalty among teenagers. All of

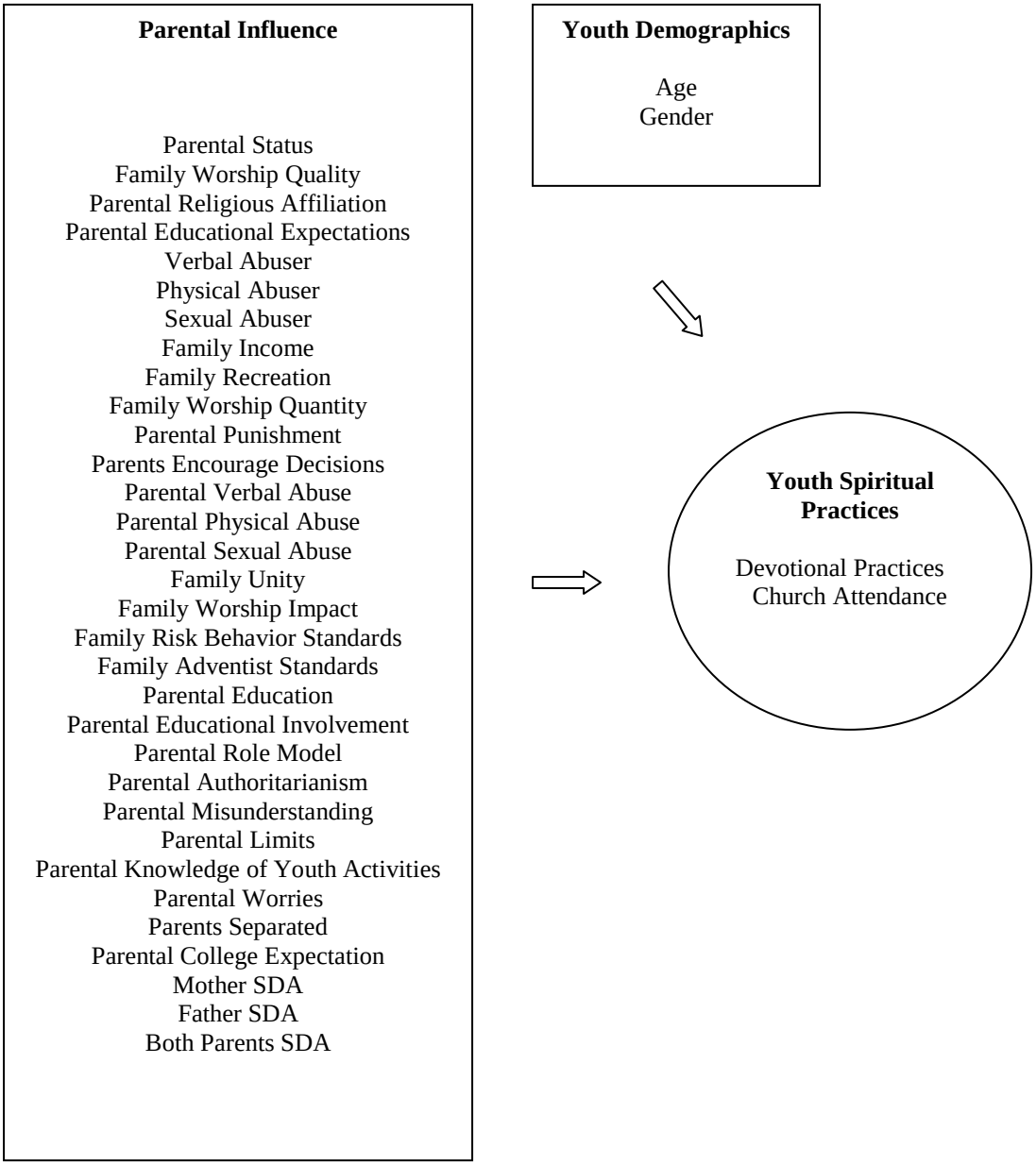


Figure 1. Conceptual framework for parental influence on youth spiritual practices.

these family circumstances, conditions, or characteristics may be related to youth spirituality and exert a degree of influence in youth engaging in spiritual practices.

Research Questions

A total of 36 variables will be analyzed in this study. The dependent variables are devotional practices and church attendance. The independent variables are parental status, family worship quality, parental religious affiliation, parental educational expectations, verbal abuser, physical abuser, sexual abuser, family income, family recreation, family worship quantity, parental punishment, parents encourage decisions, parental verbal abuse, parental physical abuse, parental sexual abuse, family unity, family worship impact, family risk behavior standards, family Adventist standards, parental education, parental educational involvement, parental role model, parental authoritarianism, parental misunderstanding, parental limits, parental knowledge of youth activities, parental worries, parents separated, parental college expectation, mother SDA, father SDA, and both parents SDA. This study will use the following control variables: age and gender.

This study will address the following research questions:

Research Question 1: What is the relationship between each parental influence variable individually and youth spiritual practices?

Research Question 2: What is the relationship between a combination of parental influence variables together and youth spiritual practices?

Research Question 3: What is the relationship between each parental influence variable individually and youth spiritual practices when controlling for age and gender?

Research Question 4: What is the relationship between a combination of parental influence variables together and youth spiritual practices when controlling for age and gender?

Research Question 5: What is the relationship between subsets of parental influence variables and youth spiritual practices?

Definitions of Terms

The following terms are used throughout this study with their corresponding meanings:

Adolescent: Includes males and females 13-17 years old.

Adventist: Refers to a member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Adventist standards: A set of beliefs, doctrinal positions, values, or commitments taught by the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Alienation: A sense of estrangement or withdrawal from religion. Laurent (1986) describes it as "characterized by a sense of not belonging or fitting in and is sometimes accompanied by anxiety, resentment or hostility" (p. 21).

Devotions: Is operationalized as the practice of prayer, Bible reading, and meditation.

Hispanic: Applies to individuals living in the United States with cultural and linguistic ancestries from such Spanish-speaking countries as Mexico, the Caribbean, Central America, and South America.

Parental authoritarianism style: High demanding, but low responsive parental style.

Parental authoritative style: High demanding and high responsive parental style.

Parental religious affiliation: Refers to affiliation or no affiliation with the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Risk behaviors: Use of tobacco, alcohol, illegal drugs, pre-marital sexual intercourse, and masturbation.

Seventh-day Adventist (SDA): Refers to a baptized member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Spirituality: Is operationalized as the practice of devotions and church attendance.

Spiritual discipline: A habit or pattern that provides the means to enter into a personal communion with God.

Socio-economic status (SES): Refers to level of education and annual family income.

Teenagers: Commonly referred to as youth whose age ends with "teen" (13-19 years old).

Transmission of beliefs and values: It is the process by which youth adopt the belief or value system of their church through parental influence or other significant adults.

Worldview: The framework of ideas and beliefs through which an individual interprets the world and interacts with it.

Young adult: Includes males and females 18-25 years old.

Youth: Includes both adolescents and young adults.

Delimitation

This study was limited to youth ages 13 to 25 years who were attending Adventist academies and churches in Puerto Rico in 1995. The sample included Adventist and non-Adventist single subjects. All available parental influence factors were selected to measure their relationship to youth spiritual practices. There are a number of other parental influential factors that might be related to youth spiritual practices that were not included in the *Avance PR* study.

Limitations

1. The *Avance PR* survey was collected during youth church meetings, held Friday nights, and at some Adventist academies in Puerto Rico. Therefore the responses of the participants reflect this particular group and may not be applicable to all Puerto Rican Adventist youth. Hernández (1995) has made a cautionary statement about the first *Avance* survey that could be applied to the *Avance PR* version: "The sample is biased to the more committed and faithfully attending members" (p. 48).

2. This study has been limited to correlational information, therefore causation cannot be proved.

3. The independent variables selected for this study were the variables found in the *Avance PR* survey. There is no claim that these are the only parental influential variables that have a relationship to youth spirituality.

4. The findings of this study are reflective of the unique characteristics of Adventist church-related youth in Puerto Rico and may not be generalized to youth populations of other cultures, denominational organizations, schools systems, or age groups that differ from the selected sample.

Organization of the Study

Chapter 1 outlines the background, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, significance of the study, conceptual framework, research questions, definition of terms, delimitation, limitations, and organization of the study.

Chapter 2 is a review of literature on the subjects of parental influence and youth spirituality.

Chapter 3 outlines the methodology used in the study, including introduction, sampling procedures and population, instrumentation, research variables, hypotheses, and summary.

Chapter 4 presents the findings of the study.

Chapter 5 presents a discussion of the findings, conclusions, and recommendations of the study.

Appendices and a list of references complete the report of this research.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Spirituality

Spirituality derives from the Hebrew word *"ruah"* which means "breath" or "spirit" and from the Latin word "*spiritus*" which means "breath of life" (Elkins, Hedstrom, Hughes, Leaf, & Saunders, 1988). Spirituality also comes from the French word "*spiritualité"* and from the Latin adjective "*spiritualis"* which in the Middle Ages meant "pertaining to monasticism" (Stuckrad, 2006, vol. 4, p. 1809). It is a relatively modern term in the Christian vocabulary having gained recent popularity in Protestantism (Musser & Price, 1992). Scholars (Fergunson, Wright, & Packer, 1988) state that the term has no direct equivalent in Scripture and attribute its origin to 18th-century French Catholicism. Giovanni Scaramelli (1687-1752) of the Society of Jesus helped spirituality emerge as a "well-defined branch of theology" when he established ascetical and mystical theology as a "science of the spiritual life" (p. 1808). In the 1960s Catholic theologians used the word *spirituality* to describe certain forms of piety actively lived (Fergunson et al., 1988).

Spirituality is a term that is difficult to define and describe. There are two basic categories of definitions for spirituality today: anthropological definitions and religious definitions. Anthropological definitions adhere to what is called "humanistic spirituality." Some scholars propose a definition of spirituality that is humanistic rather

than theistic in nature. In the second half of the 20th century a trend emerged in which spirituality was not confined to religious contexts (MacDonald, 2005). Elkins et al. (1988) researched the literature of prominent psychologists such as Abraham Maslow (1962, 1966, 1970, 1971), John Dewey (1934), William James (1958), Carl Jung (1933, 1964), Gordon Allport (1950), Martin Buber (1970), Erich Fromm (1950), and others with the purpose to delineate a humanistic definition, description, and assessment of the term spirituality. The following definition was proposed: "Spirituality . . . is a way of being and experiencing that comes about through awareness of a transcendent dimension and that is characterized by certain identifiable values in regard to self, others, nature, life, and whatever one considers to be the Ultimate" (Elkins et al., 1988, p. 10).

Proponents argue that spirituality is a human and universal phenomenon that is different from the traditional expressions of religiosity. For example, Maslow (1970) believed that religious experience could be embedded in a theistic, supernatural, or non-theistic context. Benson et al. (2003) define spiritual development as

> the process of growing the intrinsic human capacity for self-transcendence, in which the self is embedded in something greater than the self, including the sacred. It is the developmental "engine" that propels the search for connectedness, meaning, purpose, and contribution. It is shaped both within and outside of religious traditions, beliefs, and practices. (p. 205)

Although some proponents of humanistic spirituality do not reject religious or theistic spirituality, the central idea is that spirituality supersedes religious and theistic notions. Willard explains (2002):

> Spirituality and spiritual formation are often understood today as entirely human matters. The 'beyond that is within' is thought to be a human dimension or power that, if we only manage it rightly, will transform our life into divine life. Or at least it will deliver us from the chaos and brokenness of human existence. (p. 19)

Religious definitions of spirituality may respond to the particular beliefs and practices of each religious community. Religious groups vary in their conceptualization and operationalization of the term spirituality. For example, Gutierrez (1973) states that "spirituality, in the strict and profound sense of the word, is the dominion of the Spirit" (p. 203). Willard (1988) expounds spirituality as "an ordered realm of personal power founded in the God who is himself spirit and not a localizable physical body" (p. 65).

These expositors explain spirituality in two distinctive dimensions: the human dimension and the divine dimension. Spirituality is not an abstract concept; it is a human dimension that enables human beings to transcend to the divine dimension. Mulholland (1993) explains, "Our spirituality is not an 'add-on,' it is the very essence of our being" (p. 13). "Holistic spirituality is a pilgrimage of deepening responsiveness to God's control of our life and being" (Mulholland, 1993, p. 12). Spirituality is not a human-centered domain but a God-centered domain that takes into consideration human nature. Christian scholars emphasize the divine dimension of spirituality: "The spiritual life in its fullest sense means 'life in the spirit,' the linkage of the totality of life with the endeavor to discover and to do the will of God through the guidance and strengthening of the Holy Spirit" (Harkness, 1967, p. 12). Willard (1988) includes both the human and the divine dimension: "A 'spiritual life' consists in that range of activities in which people cooperatively interact with God—and with the spiritual order deriving from God's personality and action" (p. 67).

This study will focus on Christian spirituality. Jesus is the norm of Christian spirituality (Musser & Price, 1992). He exemplified true spirituality in two dimensions: his relationship with God and his interest in serving the needs of the people who

surrounded him. Christian spirituality is composed of two dimensions: the vertical and the horizontal dimensions. The vertical dimension is the personal relationship that individuals maintain with God as he has revealed himself in the person of Jesus Christ. The horizontal dimension is the personal relationship that the individual maintains with fellow human beings (Dudley & Gillespie, 1992). It deals with the realities typical of human nature in relation to others and with the outside world. Christian spirituality espouses that both dimensions are not humanistic but theistic in nature.

To a certain extent this study deals with both the vertical and the horizontal dimensions of Christian spirituality. The vertical dimension is represented in youth's devotional practices as they maintain a personal relationship with God. The horizontal dimension is represented in youth's church attendance where they expose themselves to the communal, social, and liturgical life of the Christian faith. This study will assess Christian spirituality in the form of spiritual practices of prayer, Bible reading, meditation, and church attendance.

Christian Spiritual Formation

Christian theologians have coined the term "spiritual formation" to describe the process by which spirituality is developed in the lives of human beings. Typical evangelical definitions of spiritual formation are given in the following terms: "The evolving growth of one's Christian spiritual life in conformity with Jesus Christ" (McKim, 1996, p. 267) or "spiritual formation is a process of being conformed to the image of Christ for the sake of others" (Mulholland, 1993, p. 12). Greenman and Goertz (2005) offer a more comprehensive definition: "Spiritual formation is the continuing

response to the reality of God's grace shaping us into the likeness of Jesus Christ, through the work of the Holy Spirit, in the community of faith for the sake of the world" (p. 1).

Christian spiritual formation has the ultimate goal to transform human beings into the image of God. Christians imitate Christ "in his obedience to the will of God, self-sacrifice and a life dedicated to the service of others" (Greenman & Goertz, 2005, p. 2). This gradual process of growth contradicts the "deeply engrained instant-gratification mode of our culture" (Mulholland, 1993, p. 22). Spiritual formation "is a gradual and progressive movement into spiritual depth and personal growth" (Greenman & Goertz, 2005, p. 1).

Theologians argue that human will and determination are incapable of transforming human beings into the image of God. Christian theology teaches that the source of power needed for human transformation transcends human nature: It is found in God. Willard (2002) states:

> Spiritual transformation only happens as each essential dimension of the human being is transformed to Christlikeness under the direction of a regenerate will interacting with constant overtures of grace from God. Such transformation is not the result of mere human effort and cannot be accomplished by putting pressure on the will (heart, spirit) alone. (p. 41)

Throughout the Bible it is seen that God always takes the initiative to redeem the human race (Gen 3:8, 9). Although human beings sinned, God had a plan of redemption (Gen 3:15; Gal 4:4). God loved the world and sent his only begotten Son (John 3:16) and through him, he reconciled all human beings unto him (2 Cor 5:18, 19). Paul expresses well God's intention to save the human race: "But where sin increased, grace abounded all the more, so that as sin reigned in death, even so grace would reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom 5:20, 21).

God draws all human beings nearer to him (John 6:44) so they may know him and experience salvation (John 17:3). By knowing God, human beings learn to trust in him; he imparts the gift of faith to all who are willing to accept him (Acts 3:16; Eph 2:8). Through the perfect life of Jesus Christ, God justifies those who accept him by faith (Rom 5:1). Goldstein (1988) explains: "Justification entails the legal declaration of forgiveness" (p. 14). Redemption does not end with a legal declaration of forgiveness; redemption begins with forgiveness. Jesus Christ imparts his perfect and righteous character to those who accept him so that they may be declared justified and righteous. Foster (1988) asserts: "Inner righteousness is a gift from God to be graciously received. The needed change within us is God's work, not ours" (p. 6).

Mulholland (1993) argues that there are distinctions between God's role and the human role in spiritual formation:

> The problem with being conformed is that we have a strong tendency to think that if only we do the right things we will be the right kind of Christian, as though our doing would bring about our being. But we must realize that it is God, not we ourselves, who is the source of the transformation of our being into wholeness in the image of Christ. Our part is to offer ourselves to God in ways that enable God to do that transforming work of grace. Our relationship with God, not our doing, is the source of our being. (p. 30)

Humans play a role in the transformative work of God. God always takes the initiative to transform human beings into his image. God imparts his grace so that human beings may contemplate God's love towards them in the person of Jesus Christ. When human beings contemplate and accept God's love and grace in their hearts, then they desire to submit their will to God. As a result, human beings enter into a personal relationship with God through diverse spiritual practices such as prayer, Bible reading, meditation, and worship. It is through this personal relationship that the transformative work of God begins. By

contemplating Jesus Christ, his life and sacrifice, human beings are transformed into his image. As they enter into the *"imitatio Christi,"* God's grace transforms their thoughts, feelings, desires, and, as a result, their actions. Human beings submit their will to God and place themselves before God, so that he can do the transformative work in their hearts. This "inner change" can be done only by God; human beings submit to his transformative work.

Christ's followers need not only to be justified, but also sanctified. God justifies and sanctifies. While justification is what Christ has done *for* the believer, sanctification is what Christ is doing *in* the believer. While justification is an act, sanctification is a process. Christ imputes his justice to declare forgiven those who accept him and imparts his grace so that they may be conformed into his image (Gal 4:9). Once declared righteous there is a need to grow to conform to the image of the Lord (Rom 8:29). Sanctification is not the work of the believer but the constant work of Christ in the believer. Christ calls his followers to abide in him (John 15:4) and reminds his followers: "For apart from me you can do nothing" (John 15:5).

Christian spiritual formation is concomitant with the theological term "sanctification." The word "sanctification" is used throughout the Bible; in the Old Testament the Hebrew word *qadash* (Lev. 11:44) carries the meaning of "to belong to God," while in the New Testament the Greek word *hagiasmos* means "consecration or purification" (2 Thess 2:13). Murray (1967) defines sanctification as a "process by which the believer is gradually transformed in heart, mind, will, and conduct and conformed more and more to the will of God and to the image of Christ" (p. 1).

The Bible provides the theological foundation for the concept of sanctification. God himself proclaimed the following words: "Be holy, for I am holy" (Lev 11:44). Paul admonished the Corinthians to cleanse themselves and perfect holiness in the fear of God (2 Cor 7:1), and reminded them that they were justified and sanctified in the name of Jesus Christ (1 Cor 6:11). He taught the Thessalonians that the will of God was their sanctification (1 Thess 4:3) and wished that the God of peace would sanctify them entirely (1 Thess 5:23). Paul even presents the implications of sanctification: "Pursue . . . sanctification without which no one will see the Lord" (Heb 12:14).

The Holy Scriptures call Christ's followers to grow in him. "As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him" (Col 2:6); "we are to grow up in all aspects into Him" (Eph 4:15); "grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (1 John 3:18). The ultimate goal of sanctification is that "Christ be formed in you" (Gal 4:19) not for the glory of the believer but for the glory of God. Second Thessalonians 1:11 declares that God will fulfill "the work of faith with power, so that the name of our Lord Jesus will be glorified in you." The purpose of that work of faith is to glorify Jesus. John 15:8 says: "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit." Goldstein (1988) explains: "God is glorified by the character He develops in us" (p. 15). White (1915) adds: "The very image of God is to be reproduced in humanity. The honor of God, the honor of Christ, are involved in the perfection of the character of His people" (p. 671). Paul affirms believers in the hope that "He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus" (Phil 1:6).

Sanctification is the result of a total surrender on the part of the believer as he/she permits God to make the work of transformation in their lives. Goldstein (1988)

explains: “We procure sanctification as we procure justification–by unconditional surrender to God. Sanctification, too, can come only as we surrender ourselves to God, choose to die to self, and serve God daily” (p. 15). “Genuine sanctification . . . is nothing less than a daily dying to self and daily conformity to the will of God” (White, 1915, p. 237). Mulholland (1993) adds: "We must realize that it is God, not we ourselves, who is the source of the transformation of our being into wholeness in the image of Christ. Our part is to offer ourselves to God in ways that enable God to do that transforming work of grace" (p. 32). Spiritual transformation happens only when the human will is regenerated by interacting with “constant overtures” of God’s grace (Willard, 2002, p. 41).

It is worthy to warn that this work of transformation into the image of Christ is not intended to be accomplished in complete isolation; the process of sanctification and spiritual formation takes place in the community of faith (Greenman & Goertz, 2005, p. 2). Musser and Price (1992) argue in favor of a move from the notion that spirituality is “an esoteric or elitist self-preoccupation to the praxis of inwardness before God and the communal and societal work of the Holy Spirit” (p. 462). Christian spirituality takes place in the ordinary circumstances of human life. "Christian spirituality is a form of spiritual life that deliberately cultivates a relationship with God involving the whole of existence, both in the inmost being of the soul and in one's concrete social relatedness in the world" (Musser & Price, 1992, p. 462). Mulholland (1993) stresses the importance of corporate spirituality as essential to holistic spiritual formation:

> Much of what passes for spiritual formation these days is a very privatized, individualized experience. It does not enliven and enrich the body of Christ, nor is it vitally dependent upon the body of Christ for its own wholeness. Neither does it play itself out in the dynamics of life in the world. It doesn't bring the reality of

> relationship with God and Jesus Christ to bear upon the brokenness and the pain in the world around us. There can be no personal holiness without social holiness. (p. 14)

He adds: "There can be no wholeness in the image of Christ which is not incarnate in our relationships with others, both in the body of Christ and in the world" (Mulholland, 1993, p. 17).

Christians are saved by Jesus' life in the sense that they are to live like him, not just in a distant heaven but in the midst of this broken world (Foster, 1998). By carefully considering how Jesus lived in this earth, Christians begin an "intentional *imitatio Christi,"* and learn to walk in his steps. "The Christian journey, therefore, is an intentional and continual commitment to a lifelong process of growth toward wholeness in Christ" (Mulholland, 1993, p. 24).

Spiritual Disciplines

Through the work of the Holy Spirit, Christ's followers engage in specific spiritual disciplines that foster a close and intimate relationship with Him. These spiritual disciplines are not means in themselves but ways to know and communicate with Jesus Christ. They provide the means to answer life's vital questions and to gain strength to overcome life's problems and challenges.

The word *discipline* comes from the Latin word *disciplus*, which means a pupil or a learner. Mahony (2005) states:

> To be disciplined, then, is to be caught up by the teaching of a guide . . . and to organize one's behavior and attitude according to those teachings. The person who undertakes such discipline may be understood, then to be a disciple of that which is felt to be true, a captive of that which is valuable. (p. 8699)

Major writers in the field of Christian spirituality define spiritual disciplines in the following ways. Foster (2004) says:

> The disciplines are the God-ordained means by which each of us is enabled to bring the little, individualized power pack we all possess—we call it the human body—and place it before God as 'a living sacrifice' (Rom. 12:1). It is the way we go about training in the spiritual life. (p. 1)

Willard (1988) states: "The disciplines are activities of mind and body purposefully undertaken, to bring our personality and total being into effective cooperation with the divine order" (p. 68). Ortberg (1997) believes that "spiritual disciplines are simply a means of appropriating or growing toward the life that God graciously offers" (p. 46).

Regretfully spiritual disciplines have been associated in past Christian traditions with ascetic exercises of mortification, flagellation, and self-denial. Asceticism comes from the Greek word *áskesis*, which means "exercise" and denotes the physical training of athletes and soldiers. The same concept was transferred to the spiritual life so that spiritual "exercises" were performed to achieve a higher spiritual state. The intention of ascetic practices was to bridge the gap between God and human beings, by submitting "material" desires or propensities. The conception that the physical and material world was detrimental to spiritual growth had its roots in Greek philosophy and contradicted biblical teachings.

Ascetical practices included fasting, sexual abstinence, renunciation of possessions, seclusion from society, and self-inflicting suffering. During the time of the Medieval Church, asceticism was used as a means to unite to Christ through suffering; the ascetic was brought into a mystical union with the suffering Christ (Kaelber, 2005). Suffering was a sign of identification with Jesus and a proof of pure love to God.

Moreover, asceticism was a means to achieve a higher spiritual state, to earn salvation, and to show true repentance from sin.

To reject asceticism as a means to gain salvation, Protestant reformers adhere to their belief of *sola fide.* Asceticism was perceived to be a "salvation by works" rather than a "salvation by faith" paradigm. Willard (2002) explains how this emphasis has affected spiritual formation:

> External manifestation of 'Christlikeness' is not, however, the focus of the process; and when it is made the main emphasis, the process will certainly be defeated, falling into deadening legalisms and pointless parochialism. That is what has happened so often in the past, and this fact is a major barrier to wholeheartedly embracing Christian spiritual formation in the present. (p. 23)

Modern Protestant proponents of spiritual formation have rooted their teachings in a Christ-centered approach. They have placed Jesus Christ as the center, purpose, and objective of the spiritual disciplines. "The Spirit of the Disciplines is nothing but the love of Jesus, with its resolute will to be like him whom we love" (Willard, 1988, p. xii). In *Renovation of the Heart*, Willard (2002) again placed Jesus at the center of spiritual formation:

> Christian spiritual formation is focused entirely on Jesus. Its goal is an obedience or conformity to Christ that arises out of an inner transformation accomplished throughout purposive interaction with the grace of God in Christ. Obedience is an essential outcome of Christian spiritual formation. (pp. 22-23)

Foster (2004) agrees with Willard: "In practicing the spiritual disciplines we are simply learning to fall in love with Jesus over and over and over again" (p. 1).

Modern Protestant proponents of spiritual formation have also argued in favor of a grace orientation towards the spiritual disciplines. "God has given us the disciplines of the spiritual life as a means of receiving his grace. The disciplines allow us to place ourselves before God so that he can transform us" (Foster, 1998, p. 7). Grace is even

used by Holder (2005) to define the spiritual disciplines as "God-given means of grace" (p. 251). Massey (1985) goes even further in explaining human effort in relation to God's grace:

> Discipline is indeed a human work, but it is a responsive work to the demands of God's grace. There is a legitimate 'activity' for us, even in grace, as Philippians 2:12-13 points out: 'Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for God is at work in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.' The nature of Christian discipline corresponds with our need to respond to God's grace. We know that we must respond properly in order to appropriate what God's grace provides. (p. 22)

There is also an emphasis in the role and importance of the Holy Spirit in relation to spiritual growth and transformation: "The spiritual life in its fullest sense means 'life in the spirit', the linkage of the totality of life with the endeavor to discover and to do the will of God through the guidance and strengthening of the Holy Spirit" (Harkness, 1967, p. 12). Willard (1988) emphasizes both the role of God's grace and the role of the Holy Spirit:

> If our church members are not transformed in the substance of their lives to the full range of Christlikeness, we are failing them. We are actually deceiving them. They need to experience a life transformed by the grace of God and by the power of the Holy Spirit into the image of Jesus Christ. (p. 16)

Other contemporary Protestant writers also emphasize the role of the Holy Spirit in the Christian life. Downey (2003) believes that "the Christian life [is] lived through the presence and power of the Holy Spirit" (p. 257). According to Greenman and Goertz (2005), transformation into Christlikeness can be accomplished only "through the work of the Holy Spirit" (p. 2).

The spiritual disciplines have a theological foundation in the spiritual life that Jesus exemplified in this earth. The Bible portrays instances in which he leaves behind the crowds to find a secluded place to pray (Matt 14:23; 26:36-44; Mark 1:35; 6:46;

14:32-42; Luke 5:16; 6:12; 9:18, 28-29; 11:1; 18:1-8; 40-46); portrays his knowledge of the Scriptures (Matt 21:42; 22:29; 26:54, 56; Mark 12:10, 24; 14:49; Luke 2:46, 47; John 13:18; 17:12); and recounts instances in which he attends the synagogues (Matt 12:9; 13:54; Mark 1:21; 3:1; 6:2; Luke 4:16; 6:6; 13:14; John 6:59).

Among the spiritual disciplines, Jesus practiced the disciplines of prayer, Bible study, meditation, and "church" attendance. The *imitatio Christi* implies that those who follow him, through God's grace, will be impelled by the Holy Spirit to imitate his example in integrating these spiritual disciplines into their lives. This study will investigate how parents influence their children in integrating the spiritual disciplines of prayer, Bible study, meditation, and church attendance into their lives.

Prayer

Prayer is a communion or communication with God as the ultimate personal reality in the universe (Hinson, 1990). Prayer entails a belief in the transcendent and immanent nature of God. It is a communication between the created being and the Creator. God, through his Holy Spirit, takes the initiative to communicate with his created beings (Eph 2:13-22).

Prayer, in its Christian form and expression, is based in the exemplary life of Jesus. He was known and remembered as a man of prayer. The four Gospels record 21 instances of his prayer life and 21 passages that contain his teachings about the subject of prayer (Fisher, 1964). These accounts demonstrate the importance of prayer in the life of Jesus. Fisher (1964) expresses it well: "He prayed because prayer was to Him the breath of life, the fountain of all knowledge, the source of all power, and the meaning of all existence" (p. 30).

Bible study

The Christian faith teaches that the Holy Scriptures are God's inspired word for his people. The Christian faith calls its followers to "be transformed by the renewing of your mind" (Rom 12:2) and to integrate correct thinking patterns (Phil 4:8). The Scriptures are the means to attain a transformation of the mind and to mold thinking patterns in accordance with Christian principles and values. Moreover, Scriptures themselves claim to be a mechanism of transformation (Heb 4:12) and a source of strength to overcome sin (Ps 119:11). They are a source of guidance (Ps 119:105), the source of knowing God, and the source of salvation (John 5:39).

Hebraic tradition instructed parents to teach the law to their children (Deut 4:9; 6:7). Jesus studied Scriptures in such a way that, at age 12 at the temple, all who heard him were amazed at his "understanding and answers" (Luke 2:47). Thus, Bible study is central to Christian faith.

Meditation

Christian meditation is rooted in biblical principles. In the Old Testament there are two primary Hebrew words for meditation: '*haga*' which means to utter, groan, meditate, or ponder; and '*sihach'*, which means to muse, rehearse in one's mind, or contemplate (Houdmann, Mathews-Rose, & Niles, 2002). In Josh 1:8 the Lord commands Joshua: "Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; *meditate* (*'haga'*) on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it." The psalmist describes the blessed man as one whose "delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he *meditates* (*'hagah'*) day and night" (Ps 1:2).

Christian meditation, as a spiritual exercise, is focused on the person of Jesus Christ. Balthasar (1989) defines Christian meditation as "loving, reflective, obedient contemplation of him who is God's self-expression" (p. 13). Moreover, Christian meditation is focused in God's Word. Malan (2008) explains:

> The Bible does not equate prayer with mystical meditation, but explains meditation quite differently as the sober and conscious contemplation of God's Word (Ps. 1:2). Quiet times of meditation are therefore not prayers without words but the contemplation of God's Word. It is an interaction between the mind and faith of a believer in which Scriptures are thoughtfully examined, probed and considered. (p. 5)

While Christian meditation is centered in Christ and his Word, Eastern meditation is centered in the self to know the god that is within; that is self-deification. Although Eastern meditation is centered in self, the ultimate goal is to transcend the self in order to gain new perceptions of reality (Malan, 2008). Eastern meditation seeks to suppress the rational mind to enhance the intuitive mind in order to enter an altered state of consciousness. Christian meditation is a rational and sober interaction between God, his Word, and his followers. Eastern meditation is not considered a practice among the Christian spiritual disciplines. This study seeks to measure meditation as a Christian spiritual discipline.

Church attendance

Ecclesiology is the term used in reference to the study of the church and its doctrines. *Ecclesia* is a Latin word translated from the Greek word *ekklesia*, which means "calling out." The term was used frequently in calling people to meet. The Septuagint used the word *ekklesia* to translate the Hebrew word *qahal*, which means "assembly" or "congregation" (Horn, 1979).

Jesus Christ established the Christian church on himself, the Living Rock. He said: "On this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it" (Matt 16:18). The imagery of "the Rock" is used throughout the Bible to symbolize Jesus Christ's role in the Christian church (Num 20:7-12; Deut 32:3, 4; Ps 62:7; 1 Cor 3:11; 10:4; 1 Pet 2:4). This imagery portrays symbols of steadfastness, security, solidness, stability, dependability, strength, refuge, glory, and salvation.

The church is Christ's body (Eph 2:16) and believers are members of his body (Eph 5:30). Christ is the head of the body (Col 1:18) and the head of the church (Eph 5:23). The Bible utilizes the metaphor of the family to illustrate Christian church dynamics. The church is considered a family (Eph 3:15) where people join through adoption (Rom 8:14-16) and through new birth (John 3:8). Paul utilizes familial characteristics to denote a change of status among those who unite to the church. "Through faith in Christ, those who are newly baptized are no longer slaves, but children of the heavenly Father (Gal. 3:26-4:7) who live on the basis of the new covenant" (Ministerial Association, 2005, p. 140).

There are references, both in the Old Testament and in the New Testament, of places that were considered sacred where people gathered to worship God and to fellowship with other believers. The church is a place for fellowship (*koinonia*), which is not mere socialization but "fellowship in the gospel" (Phil 1:5). It involves fellowship with God (1 John 1:3) as well as with other believers (1 John 1:3, 7). It is the place where people encounter God and experience his presence. Christians worship God for who he is and for what he has done. Foster (1998) states: "Worship is our response to the overtures of love from the heart of the Father" (p. 158). Church attendance helps people

grow spiritually when they experience the presence of God through the liturgy and are instructed in the knowledge and wisdom of the Lord, through his Word.

The Christian church is the "pillar and foundation of the truth" (1 Tim 3:15) and has the important task to teach the truth of the Bible because it brings eternal life (John 6:68). The Christian church has a direct impact on the lifestyle of its members; Christ calls them to live by "every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God" (Matt 4:4). Paul also admonishes Christians to attend church gatherings: "not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near" (Heb 10:25). Church membership entails not only the act of receiving but the act of fulfilling its mission. The mission of the Christian church is to glorify God and to lead men and women to accept Jesus Christ as their Savior (Acts 4:12, 13).

Youth Culture

American psychologist G. Stanley Hall (1904) coined the phrase "storm and stress" to depict the adolescent life stage. This theory has conceptualized adolescence into three main characteristics: parent-adolescent conflict, mood disruptions, and risk-taking behaviors. Adolescence has long been portrayed by developmental theorists as a period of constant conflict with parental and societal norms, emotional turmoil, and irrational behavior. Although early adolescence research held to the storm and stress theory, current research sees low levels of conflict, moodiness, and risk-taking as "normative" and typical of the transitions of the adolescent life stage (Hines & Paulson, 2006). A negative perception of the adolescent life stage is still maintained by parents

and teachers; these perceptions can affect adolescent development and parental expectations and nurturance.

Although there has been a general departure from the "storm and stress" psychological view (Hines & Paulson, 2006), there are still remains of negative stereotypes towards adolescence. Several researchers (Mueller, 2007; Smith, 2005; Tripp, 2001) suggest that it is time to reject the cultural cynicism surrounding the adolescent life stage as restless and rebellious. They propose a departure from the common stereotype of the American teenager as a defying person who is always looking at how to contradict and counteract the influence and guidance of previous generations. Tripp (2001, pp. 19-20) argues that adolescence is a life-stage of "wonderful parental opportunities" where penetrating questions lead to wonderful discussions and opportunities to minister. Adolescence is a time of "exploration, reflection and self-determination" (Barna, 2001, p. 82). There is a general stereotype that American teens are "deeply restless, alienated, rebellious and determined to find something that is radically different from the faith in which they were raised" (Smith, 2005, p. 119). Contrary to this notion, Smith (2005) found that teenagers are "exceedingly conventional in their religious identity and practices" (p. 120). He found that three out of four teenagers think that their religious beliefs are similar to that of their parents. American teens seem to be content to follow the faith of their families with little questioning.

Although research suggests that teenagers are willing to follow the religious tradition of their parents, a realistic assessment of today's cultural influence depicts the problems and challenges that they face in their daily lives. Today's culture imposes a mixture of challenges and opportunities to the present generation of youth. Cultural

changes are occurring at “breakneck speed,” imposing a new set of choices, pressures, problems, expectations, and fears to teenagers at younger ages (Mueller, 2007). Teenagers are exposed to the influence of the mass-media (e.g., TV, music, internet, video games), peers, family, at-risk behaviors (e.g., substance abuse, premarital sex), abuse, violence, depression, and suicide. At the same time, academic, technological, scientific, economical, and spiritual developments also offer an array of challenges and opportunities.

To believe that teenagers can be shielded from the influence and effects of culture is simply naive. Culture influences the way teenagers think and act in positive and negative ways. There is reason to be concerned about today’s cultural influence. The Commission on Children at Risk report found that "at least one of every four adolescents in the United States is currently at serious risk of not achieving productive adulthood” (as cited in Mueller, 2007, p. 40).

The plethora of problems, challenges, and opportunities that culture imposes on today’s youth demands a clear worldview and philosophy of life. Regretfully, Barna (2001) reports that 63% of teenagers admit that they don't have any comprehensive and clear philosophy of life that can guide their lifestyle and decisions, and 74% agree that they are still trying to figure out the meaning and purpose for their life. These facts reveal that today’s youth are very vulnerable to the negative influences of culture. It means that the majority of young people, who don’t have a clear philosophy of life, will make decisions based on feelings, propensities, peer pressure, and media influence. A clear set of principles is not imbedded and integrated in their lives to guide their decisions, goals, and priorities. Another disturbing finding is that the majority (53%) of

teenagers have decided that the main purpose in life is enjoyment and personal fulfillment. Forty-six percent of teenagers think that living for leisure is more important than living for career success. Evidence that this generation is comfortable with contradiction is the fact that 80% of teens reject the idea that life is ultimately meaningless (Barna, 2001).

Concerning life goals and priorities among Christian teens, they ranked them in this order: having a college degree (88%), having good physical health (87%), having close personal friendships (84%), and having a comfortable lifestyle (83%). By contrast, having a close relationship with God (66%), being deeply committed to the Christian faith (50%), and being personally active in a church (43%) were not the top priorities (Barna, 2001). Teenagers' top worries are: educational achievement (40%), family financial needs (12%), stress and pressures (11%), and problems with friends (10%) (Barna, 2001). Less than 1% of teenagers' worries are related to spiritual, ethical, or moral issues. To this effect, Barna (2001) concludes: "American teens are much more interested in what they own or accomplish in life than in the development of their character. Given the cultural context in which they have been raised, this is not surprising" (p. 87).

To understand how culture influences teenagers' self-view, Barna (2001) asked teenagers to describe themselves. He found that the majority of them considered themselves to be optimistic about the future (82%), physically attractive (74%), religious (64%), committed Christian (60%), happy (92%), trusting of other people (80%), responsible (91%), and self-reliant (86%).

Present-day youth are highly relational in nature. Friends are at the top of the list; that is why in a typical day 96% of teens will spend time with their friends. In fact, they are more likely to consult on important things with their friends than with their parents (Barna, 2001). When teenagers need advice, 55% turn to a friend, 44% to their mother, 23% to a boyfriend or a girlfriend, and 20% to their father (Zollo, 2004). More than half (51%) of teenagers acknowledge that their friends have a lot of influence on them (Barna, 2001).

If friends are important to teenagers, then attachment to mass-media is even more important. There are two key elements that teenagers must incorporate in their experience: relationships and mass-media. Relationships are "the heart of their world," and through mass-media they gain a "sense of connection with the larger world" (Barna, 2001, p. 25). To state the degree of influence that mass-media has on teenagers, Mueller (2007) says: "This generation of teenagers is the most media-saturated and media-savvy generation of all time" (p. 49). It is estimated that teenagers spend from 4 to 6 hours per day interacting with the mass-media (Barna, 2001). This amount of exposure is shaping the core existence of youth. The internet has shrunk the world into a small village, exposing this generation to an unprecedented amount of information and diversity of ideas and cultures. Communication technologies, such as cell phones, enable teenagers to interact with increased numbers of friends, family members, and even strangers, in farther regions and in shorter time frames. Music has the power to shape teenagers' system of values and to suggest different worldviews and lifestyles. TV has had such an impact on today's youth that this generation is popularly called the "MTV generation."

High exposure to mass-media has the power to influence teenagers' values, attitudes, and behaviors (Mueller, 2007). There is a significant relationship between teenagers' exposure to mass-media and engagement in at-risk behaviors:

> When media offer depictions of sex without boundaries or consequences, teenagers are prone to imitate sexual activity earlier, more often, and in a variety of ways. Teenagers who view depictions of characters who smoke and drink are more prone to engage in those behaviors themselves. More research shows that violent media can lead kids to see violence as a legitimate and normative conflict resolution strategy. (Mueller, 2007, p. 86)

Researchers (Barna, 2001; Mueller, 2007; Smith, 2005) have expressed concern for the amount of risk-taking behavior that is characteristic of this generation. Alcohol is the number one drug among teenagers. "By the time they graduate from high school, three-quarters of all teenagers will experiment with alcohol because they're pressured, bored, depressed, curious, or trying to relieve stress. And for many, it will become an addictive lifestyle" (Mueller, 2007, p. 54). Before they graduate from high school, more than half of all teenagers have tried an illicit drug (Mueller, 2007). Also, more and more teenagers are trying to satisfy their emotional needs of love and acceptance by engaging in premarital sex.

Violence has become a true menace to the teenage population. The American Medical Association states that "by the time the average child reaches the age of 18, he has witnessed 16,000 murders and 200,000 other acts of violence on TV alone" (as cited in Mueller, 2007, p. 57). The National Center for Education Statistics reports that, 30 days prior to a survey they conducted, one in six high-school students had carried a weapon. "About 33 percent of this country's high school students had been in a physical fight, and 9.2 percent had actually been assaulted or threatened with a weapon at school" (Mueller, 2007, pp. 55-56).

The amount of stress and anxiety that today's youth are handling poses a threat to their emotional health. More and more teenagers are suffering from symptoms of depression and anxiety at a younger age. One in eight suffers from clinical depression (Mueller, 2007). The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported that within a 12–month period, 17% of high-school students seriously considered attempting suicide, 16.5% of students had made a plan to attempt suicide, and 8.5% had actually attempted suicide (as cited in Mueller, 2007). Suicide is the third-leading cause of death among adolescents (Mueller, 2007).

Parents and youth workers need to understand the influence that today's culture exerts in the life of young people. However, any attempt to insulate or isolate teenagers from the influence of culture will be counterproductive to whatever good intentions motivate parents to do so. To believe that youth need to be shielded from culture is pragmatically impossible and theologically wrong (Mueller, 2007). To neglect the power of cultural influence by exposing young people to its forces without any guidance is even worse. In the midst of all external influences, parents still exert the highest degree of influence in the lives of their children (Barna, 2001; Smith, 2005).

Youth Religiosity

Teenagers are human beings who are seeking to fill the spiritual vacuum in their lives. "If you listen and look closely, you'll see and hear that their music, films, books, magazines, and very lives are crying for spiritual wholeness" (Mueller, 2007, p. 19). Youth have reported that religious faith is important for their lives. More than 80% of teenagers believe in God; more than 10% are not sure about their belief in God, and 3% do not believe in God (Smith, 2005). To this effect, Smith (2005) states:

> Thirty-six percent report that they feel very or extremely close to God; 35 percent report feeling somewhat close to God; 25 percent feel some degree of distance from God; and 3 percent do not believe in any God to feel either close to or distant from. (p. 39)

About 50% of teens reported that religious faith was very important or the most important influence in their lives (Barna, 2001; Dudley & Gillespie, 1992; Gillespie et al., 2004; Smith, 2005). A significant majority of Hispanic Protestant youth (73%) who participated in the second wave of the *National Study of Youth and Religion* reported that their religious faith shaped their daily life (Hernández, 2007) and 82% who participated in the *Avance* study said that religious faith was a very important or the most important influence in their lives (Jiménez, 2008).

A small percentage of teenagers have reported that religious faith was not important at all. While *Valuegenesis*[1] and *Valuegenesis*[2] researchers (Dudley & Gillespie, 1992; Gillespie et al., 2004) found that 2% of teenagers said that religious faith was not important at all, Smith (2005) found about 8%. Only 2% of Hispanic teenagers who participated in the *Avance* study said that religious faith was not important at all (Jiménez, 2008). According to these findings, Hispanic teenagers regard religious faith as more important in their lives than other studied teenage populations (Barna, 2001; Dudley & Gillespie, 1992; Gillespie et al., 2004; Smith, 2005).

Various researchers propose different perspectives in the intent to explain youth religiosity. Wuthnow (2007) describes young adults' spiritual life as "spiritual tinkering." Young adults' lives are marked by uncertainty and improvisation so that for them it is impossible to solve their problems through predefined solutions. Moreover, spiritual tinkering means "searching for answers to the perennial existential questions in venues that go beyond religious traditions" (p. 135). Spiritual tinkering in reality is

making eclectic choices about spirituality; it is about the freedom to make choices. The main idea is that young adults custom build their spirituality by piecing ideas from many sources. In congruency with Wuthnow's (2007) view of youth religiosity, Mueller (2007) refers to this youth spiritual landscape as "smorgasbord spirituality" (p. 58). Young people mix a combination of elements that create a faith system that is custom-tailored to satisfy their personal preferences.

Barna (2001) argues that postmodern influence is largely responsible for the contradictions and inconsistencies of this generation of teenagers. To a large degree they are unable to understand the implications for their lives of the postmodern influence they have embraced. This fact explains why teenagers are so inconsistent and contradictory between their faith and the content of that faith. According to Barna, there are three ways in which postmodernism has influenced the teenager's way of thinking: an ego-centric perspective to life; a conception that personal experience and emotion have become the arbiter of decency and righteousness; and a rejection of historical experience as relevant to today's world. Mueller (2007) agrees with Barna in the emphasis that postmodernist spirituality places on feelings and emotions; he argues that "the postmodern emphasis on feelings over and above rationality leads many young people to look for a faith system that's more emotional" (p. 58). This postmodern influence can ultimately undermine Christian values such as "goodness, sanity, morality and purposeful faith" (Barna, 2001, p. 97).

In contrast with other researchers (Barna, 2001; Mueller, 2007; Wuthnow, 2007), Smith (2005) argues that the vast majority of teenagers are "exceedingly conventional in their religious identity and practices" (p. 120). Very few teenagers are restless, alienated,

or rebellious; the majority of teenagers seem happy to follow the religious traditions of their parents. Also they assert that the major influence in their religious life is their parents, thus they have very little conflict with family members over religious matters. Teenagers tend to view religion as a positive force in individuals' lives because it provides people with strong moral foundations. Teenagers are not engaged in "spiritual seeking"; they are too conventional to pursue the idea of an "eclectic spiritual quest" (Smith, 2005, p. 128). Research findings among Adventist youth (Dudley, 2000; Dudley & Gillespie, 1992; Gillespie et al., 2004; Ramírez-Johnson & Hernández, 2003) tend to confirm Smith's (2005) propositions that teenagers are not tinkering in their spiritual lives, but rather that they are very conventional in their spiritual beliefs and practices.

Although teenagers are very conventional in their religious lives that does not mean that religion is an important concern in their everyday lives. Rather, religion seems to operate in the background of their lives; that is, that religion operates as an "invisible religiosity" instead of an "intentional religiosity" (Smith, 2005, p. 130). Religion is a very compartmentalized aspect of teenagers' religious lives. Teenagers report that religion is very important for their lives but they are unable to specify how and why it is important in particular areas of their everyday lives; which leads one to conclude that teenagers "seem to view strong religiosity as a socially desirable trait" (p. 141). The majority of teenagers could not articulate their faith, their religious beliefs and practices, or the meaning in their lives. Teenagers' knowledge of the faith traditions that they embrace are described as "meager, nebulous, and often fallacious" (p. 133). Teenagers were unable to articulate what they believe or understand about their religious traditions, which demonstrates that they either do not comprehend their own religious traditions or

do not care to believe them. Most teenagers who participated in Smith's (2005) study held religious beliefs that were "trivial, misguided, distorted, and sometimes outright doctrinally erroneous" (p. 137).

Smith (2005) asserts that teenagers' profound individualism informs issues related to religion. He states:

> Certain traditional languages and vocabularies of commitment, duty, faithfulness, obedience, calling, obligation, accountability, and ties to the past are nearly completely absent from the discourse of U.S. teenagers. Instead, religion is presumed to be something that individuals choose and must reaffirm for themselves based on their present and ongoing personal felt needs and preferences. (p. 144)

Teenagers hold an individualistic and relativistic view of truth. They reject judging other people or ideas that are different from them; they hold to the notion that "each person decides for himself" (Smith, 2005, p. 144). This fact may lead to the belief that truth does not exist or cannot be known; so individuals choose whatever version of truth works for them. This is the reason why a very small minority of teenagers believe that there is a one true religion that people should practice. Religion is rather something that each individual custom fits to his/her desires and preferences. Smith (2005) concludes: "From the wells of radical American religious individualism, contemporary U.S. teenagers have drunk deeply" (p. 147).

These generations of young people are not rebels looking to contradict the spiritual heritage that is being transmitted to them by their parents, teachers, and church members. There is sufficient evidence to conclude that youth are aware of their spiritual needs, and they are looking to satisfy them. Teenagers' conceptual framework of religion is a large reflection of the adult religion, more specifically parental religion, in which they are being socialized (Smith, 2005). Cultural influences, and philosophical and

religious movements are structuring the spiritual life of this young generation in ways that contradict fundamental and grass-roots Christian teachings. If biblical principles and values are to provide the framework and foundation on which youth base moral and ethical decisions, they will need to know what the Bible says and they will need to know how to apply it to their lives.

Youth Spiritual Practices

Spiritual practices play a major role in the spiritual growth of young people. Engagement in common spiritual practices, such as prayer and Bible reading, is clearly associated with stronger faith commitment among youth (Barna, 2001; Smith, 2005). Smith (2005) asserts: "There is no question that, empirically, more seriously religious teens intentionally engage in a variety of religious practices, and less religious teens do not" (p. 269). Most teenagers are interested in spirituality but they are only minimally committed to their faith and to the spiritual practices that will lead them to spiritual growth. They are not willing to give up their hope of spiritual growth or their commitment to the seeking of pleasure (Barna, 2001). Still, researchers report that significant numbers of youth are trying to satisfy their spiritual needs through Christian spiritual practices.

This study will focus on the Christian spiritual practices of prayer, Bible study, meditation, and church attendance among youth populations. These spiritual practices are among the most prominent and central to experiential Christianity. They include the vertical and the horizontal realms of the spiritual life. The following sections report how youth integrate these spiritual practices into their lives.

Youth Prayer

Various studies have been conducted throughout the United States and Europe that portray the spiritual practice of prayer among non-Adventist teenagers. Prayer is a daily exercise for most teenagers; 67% pray on a daily basis (Barna, 2001). Smith (2005) conducted a study among Christian denominations and the Jewish religion and found that 40% of teenagers pray daily or more often. Among Northern Ireland pupils, 26% pray on a daily basis (Francis & Craig, 2006) whereas 16% of youth in Norway do so (Lewis, Francis, & Enger, 2004). Research conducted among American young adults found that 47% pray nearly every day (Wuthnow, 2007).

Among Adventist teenagers, 53% of *Valuegenesis*[1] respondents pray at least once a day (Dudley & Gillespie, 1992). Dudley's (2000) longitudinal study respondents reported that 59% do so, and *Valuegenesis*[2] respondents report that 73% prayed at least once a day (Gillespie et al., 2004). *Avance* researchers (Ramírez-Johnson & Hernández, 2003) reported that 67% of Hispanic Adventist teenagers pray on a daily basis. Hispanic Adventist teenagers are more likely to pray on a daily basis than non-Adventist teenagers or the *Valuegenesis*[1] subjects. Among Adventist teenagers, there is a progression between recent research and an increment in frequency of prayer. Recent research studies report higher frequency of daily prayer than older research studies.

A large percentage of teenagers do not pray on a *daily* basis. Several studies report teenage prayer on a *weekly* basis. Among non-Adventist teenagers, 26% (Lewis et al., 2004), 30% (Smith, 2005), and 51% (Francis & Craig, 2006) report praying on a weekly basis. Among Adventist teenagers, 23% (Dudley, 2000), 42% (Dudley & Gillespie, 1992), and 91% (Gillespie et al., 2004) report praying on a weekly basis.

Among Adventist Hispanics, *Avance* reports that 19% of teenagers pray several times in a week (Ramírez-Johnson & Hernández, 2003). Adventist teenagers tend to pray more on a weekly basis than non-Adventist teenagers. Hispanic Adventist teenagers reported the lowest score, among Adventist and non-Adventist teenagers, in weekly prayer practices. This low score may be attributed to the fact that Hispanic Adventist teenagers, in comparison to other studied teenage populations, reported a high score in daily prayer.

Moreover there is a significant percentage of teenagers who never pray. Studies among non-Adventist teenagers report their findings. Smith (2005) reports that 15% of teenagers never pray. Francis and Craig (2006) report that 23% of Northern Ireland teenagers never pray, and Lewis et al. (2004) report that 44% of Norwegian teenagers never pray. Wuthnow (2007) found that about 25% of American young adults in their 20s never pray.

Among Adventist teenagers, 2% (Gillespie et al., 2004), 5% (Dudley & Gillespie, 1992), and 9% (Dudley, 2000) never pray. Among Adventist Hispanic teenagers, *Avance* reports that 4% never pray (Ramírez-Johnson & Hernández, 2003). Non-Adventist teenagers reported the highest scores of never praying. Hispanic Adventist teenagers are similar in never-praying scores with other Adventist teenagers but lower than non-Adventist teenagers.

Prayer is not practiced exclusively by church-attending youth, nor do all church-attending youth regularly practice prayer. Several studies have shown the importance of prayer even among non-church-attending teenagers. One out of every three non-church-attending teenagers prays occasionally (Francis & Evans, 1996), and 24% of non-religious American teenagers pray alone a few times a week or more (Smith, 2005).

Francis and Evans (1996) found that one in every eight church-attending youth do not pray outside the church worship service. Another study has shown that youth are more likely to attend church once a month than to pray once a month (Robbins & Francis, 2005). Prayer among church-attending youth may not be assumed.

Francis and Brown studied 11-year-old (1990) and 16-year-old teenagers (1991) and found that children and adolescents who pray seem to do so more likely as a result of explicit teaching or implicit example from family and church members rather than as a spontaneous need or developmental dynamics. They found support for the importance of social learning and modeling in respect to prayer practices among children and adolescents. Children's practice of prayer is a function of strong social and parental influences (Francis & Brown, 1991). Eleven-year-old children's attitudinal predisposition to pray is a direct function of their own and their parents' church attendance and denominational identity. Adolescents who attend church have a more positive attitude towards prayer than do adolescents from non-churchgoing homes. When researchers compared the results of both studies (Francis & Brown, 1990, 1991) in relation to attitudinal predisposition to pray and the private practice of prayer among 11-year-old children and 16-year-old teenagers, they found that parental influence was greater for 11-year old children than for 16-year old teenagers. It seems that there is a decrease of influence on the attitudinal predisposition to pray and the private practice of prayer as there is an increase in age among this teenage population.

Several studies demonstrate benefits of the practice of prayer among teenagers. Faith maturity was correlated (between .40 to .49) with frequency of personal prayer (Dudley & Gillespie, 1992). Faith commitment was related to personal prayer (Smith,

2005). Frequency of devotional practices was correlated (between .20 to .29) with frequency of church attendance among other factors (Dudley & Gillespie, 1992). Dudley (2000) argues that personal prayer should be strongly encouraged among teenagers since those who participate are more likely to remain in the church. He found that 68% of teenagers who remained as members of the church prayed on a daily basis whereas only 49% of non-members did. Also, 7% of teenagers who dropped out of church never prayed whereas only 3% of those who remained never did. Frequency of prayer is also positively related to perceived purpose of life (Robbins & Francis, 2005; Francis & Evans, 1996), to quality of life and perceived quality of life (Poloma & Pendleton, 1989), and to cope with life's problems (Smith, 2003).

There is a positive relationship between prayer and purpose in life (Francis, 2005; Francis & Burton, 1994; Francis & Evans, 1996; Robbins & Francis, 2005). Robbins and Francis (2005) propose a hypothesis in which prayer implies both a cognitive and affective component. The cognitive component implies the reality of a transcendent power; this belief can communicate a sense of purpose to the individual. The affective component implies the reality that the transcendent power has a personal interest in the individual who prays; this belief can communicate a sense of value. Both of these components are able to develop a sense of purpose in life in the individual.

Several researchers studied prayer practices from a gender perspective and found that females have a more positive attitude and are more likely to engage in personal prayer than males (Beit-Hallahmi & Argyle, 1997; Francis & Craig, 2006; Robbins & Francis, 2005). From an ethnic perspective, Smith (2005) found differences in religious

practices among diverse ethnic groups. In respect to prayer practices, he found that Hispanic teenagers are more likely to engage in personal prayer than are Whites.

Studies that have been reviewed in this section have shown that Seventh-day Adventist youth are more likely to pray than other youth populations. Also, Hispanic youth are more likely to pray than other ethnic groups. Other researchers were able to demonstrate that prayer is a function of social learning; parents influence the predisposition of adolescents to pray. Also, it was demonstrated that parental influence decreased as youth age increased. Researchers also reported benefits of prayer practices among youth populations. Youth who pray, reported better scores of faith maturity, frequency of church attendance, church membership retention, purpose in life, and quality of life.

Youth Bible Study

While teenagers seem to hold the Bible in high regard, their actual practice is contradictory. Six out of every 10 teenagers believe in the accuracy of the Bible and the same proportion believe that the Bible is a source of moral truth, but only 35% of teenagers read their Bible on a weekly basis (Barna, 2001).

Studies among Adventist youth have reported their findings in relation to Bible reading habits on a daily basis. *Valuegenesis*[1] data (Dudley & Gillespie, 1992) and Dudley's 10-year longitudinal study (Dudley, 2000) report that 13% of youth read their Bibles on a daily basis. *Valuegenesis*[2] data (Gillespie et al., 2004) indicate an increase in daily Bible reading (29%) from the *Valuegenesis*[1] study (Dudley & Gillespie, 1992). Among Adventist Hispanic youth, *Avance* data indicate that 33% read their Bible once a day or more (Ramírez-Johnson & Hernández, 2003). Hispanic Adventist youth seem to

read their Bibles more frequently, on a daily basis, than the general youth Adventist population.

Other studies have reported youth Bible reading habits on a weekly basis. Among non-Adventist teenagers, Barna (2001) found that 35% of teenagers read their Bible on a weekly basis, and Hernández (2007) found that half (50%) of Hispanic youth indicated reading the Bible on their own once a week or more. Dudley (2000) reports that 30% of Adventist youth read their Bible on a weekly basis, whereas *Valuegenesis*[1] data report that 38% do so (Dudley & Gillespie, 1992). Among Adventist Hispanic youth, 28% read the Bible several times a week (Ramírez-Johnson & Hernández, 2003). *Valuegenesis*[1] data demonstrate that Bible reading declines with age; 52% of 6th-grade students and 38% of 12th-grade students report Bible reading on a weekly basis (Dudley & Gillespie, 1992). Hispanic Adventist youth are less likely to read their Bibles on a weekly basis than non-Adventist and other Adventist youth surveyed.

Studies have also reported findings in relation to youth Bible reading habits on a monthly basis. Among Adventist youth, Dudley (2000) found that 30% of youth read their Bible on a monthly basis; *Valuegenesis*[1] data report 44% (Dudley & Gillespie, 1992). Among Adventist Hispanic youth, *Avance* reports that 28% read the Bible less than three times in a month (Ramírez-Johnson & Hernández, 2003).

Also, among Adventist youth, Dudley (2000) found that 36% rarely or never read their Bible. *Valuegenesis*[1] data show that 14% never read their Bible (Dudley & Gillespie, 1992). Among Adventist Hispanic youth, *Avance* data show that 10% never read their Bible (Ramírez-Johnson & Hernández, 2003). The majority of young adults, in their 20s and 30s, do not read their Bible (Wuthnow, 2007). Hispanic Adventist youth

had lower scores in reading their Bibles–less than three times in a month–than American Adventist youth.

Teenagers have rated the degree of influence that the Bible has on their lives and how they regard its moral teachings and principles. Forty-four percent of teenagers responded that the Bible had a lot of influence in their lives whereas 15% reported no influence (Barna, 2001). Researchers of the *Valuegenesis*[2] study asked teenagers to rate their interests in relation to church matters. Sixty-seven percent rated the Bible as their second most important interest after "gaining a closer relationship with God" (81%) (Gillespie et al., 2004). Conversely, only 8% of teenagers rate the Bible as a source of moral truth (Barna, 2001). Six out of 10 teenagers believe that the Bible is accurate, but a larger number of them reject many of its core teachings. Barna (2001) continues, saying:

> Seven out of 10 teens say there is no absolute moral truth, and 8 out of 10 claim that all truth is relative to the individual and his or her circumstances. Yet most of those same individuals─6 out of 10 of the total teen population─say that the Bible provides a clear and totally accurate description of moral truth. (p. 92)

Teenagers are either ignorant of biblical principles or consciously reject those biblical principles; their views of what the Bible provides in terms of moral truth are contradictory and consistently inconsistent.

Bible reading is associated with church retention. Dudley (2000), in his 10-year longitudinal study, found that 52% of the adults who remained as members of the church studied their Bibles on a weekly basis during their teenage years whereas only 35% of the nonmembers did so. Bible reading marks and structures the lives of teenagers and is "clearly associated with stronger and deeper faith commitment" (Smith, 2005, p. 269).

Youth Meditation

A careful search of the literature revealed that there is a lack of interest among researchers to study the practice of meditation among youth populations. Adventist youth researchers have not studied the practice of Christian meditation as a unique discipline, but asked youth to report their meditation practices in conjunction with prayer. However, research has been conducted to study meditation practices among non-Adventist youth. Twelve percent of teenagers engage in meditation on a monthly basis (Barna, 2001). An average of 10% of American adolescents practice religious or spiritual meditation (Smith, 2005), and only 8% of young adults in their 20s meditate nearly every day (Wuthnow, 2007).

Christian meditation is a spiritual practice based on biblical principles. Research supports the idea that Christian meditation is not a common practice among this present youth generation.

Youth Church Attendance

Contrary to general prejudice the majority of teens who attend religious services tend to be positive about the environment of their congregations. A large majority of Hispanic Protestant youth (74%) have positive views about their church and said that their church was a warm and welcoming place (Hernández, 2007). Instead of thinking that their congregations are usually boring, the majority of teenagers think that their congregations are only sometimes boring.

There is no evidence to believe that teens are attending religious services because their parents are forcing them to attend. Among non-Adventist teenagers, research found that the opposite is true; the majority of teens report a desire to attend religious services

more than they currently do (Smith, 2005). Barna (2001, p. 133) reports similar findings: "Teenagers have higher levels of participation in organized religious activity than do adults," and a large majority of teenagers engage in organized religious activities out of personal choice rather than as a result of parental pressure. Moreover, Hispanic Protestant youth who participated in the second wave of the *NSYR* study reported that 53% attend church once a week or more, but if they had to decide whether to attend or not without their parents, the number would increase to 64% (Hernández, 2007).

Several studies report their findings in relation to frequency of church attendance practices among teenage populations. Surveyed American teens (40%) reported attending church services once a week or more, 19% reported attending one to three times per month, 22% reported attending a few or many times a year, and 18% reported never attending religious services (Smith, 2005). Among adolescents 11-18 years old in Norway, 4% attended regularly, 3% monthly, 18% sometimes, 51% once or twice a year, and 24% never attended (Lewis et al., 2004). Francis and Craig (2006) studied 16-18-year-olds in Northern Ireland and found that church attendance was practiced by 59% of the pupils weekly, 7% monthly, 26% occasionally, and 8% never attended. Barna (2001) asked teenagers to report their religious activity in the past 7 days and found that 52% attended a church service, 36% attended a church youth group activity or event, 40% attended a Sunday school class, and 28% participated in a small group to study the Bible and pray.

Among Adventist youth, over 80% of teenagers attend church on a weekly basis; this percentage is better than the average adult rate of attendance in the Seventh-day Adventist church in North America (Dudley & Gillespie, 1992). *Valuegenesis*[1] found

that 17% of teenagers attend church several times a week, 64% about once a week, 10% two or three times a month, 3% about once a month, 4% less than once a month, and 2% never attended (Dudley & Gillespie, 1992). Adventist youth who participated in Dudley's 10-year longitudinal study had very similar patterns of church attendance. Fifty-six percent of youth report attending church nearly every week, 16% attend at least monthly, 18% attend less than once a month, and 10% of youth say they never attend (Dudley, 2000). *Valuegenesis*[2] found that 18% of teenagers attend church several times a week, 62% about once a week, 11% two or three times a month, 4% about once a month, 4% less than once a month, and 2% never attended (Gillepsie et al., 2004).

Of the Hispanic youth who participated in the *NSYR* study, 53% reported attending church once a week or more (Hernández, 2007). Among Hispanic Adventist youth, *Avance* data showed that 53% of youth attend church several times a week, 38% attend about once a week, 6% two or three times a month, less than 1% about once a month, less than 1% less than a month, and less than 1% never attended (Jiménez, 2008). Hispanic Adventist youth had a higher percentage of attendance in comparison with other Adventist youth and non-Adventist youth.

Researchers studying the degree of parental influence in relation to church attendance patterns of their children found that attendance and participation were mostly influenced, among other factors, by parental attendance and parental religiosity (Dudley, 2000; Francis & Craig, 2006; Hoge & Petrillo, 1978; Smith, 2005). Gillespie et al. (2004) add: "The principal determinant for church attendance is parental attendance and parental religious values" (p. 64). Roozen (1980) found that church participation dropout peaked during the teenage years; one of the probable causes were "lessening of parental

influence because of the emancipation process" (p. 497). Mother's church attendance has a higher degree of influence than father's church attendance on youth church attendance, and the influence of both parents is stronger than the influence of either mother or father alone (Francis & Brown, 1991). Also, parental influence is strong among 11- and 16-year-olds in determining church attendance.

Researchers have found differences in gender in relation to church attendance. Studies report that females are significantly more likely to attend church than males (Francis & Craig, 2006; Robbins & Francis, 2005). Also, researchers have reported benefits of church attendance among the teenage population. Lewis et al. (2004) found that higher frequency of church attendance is significantly associated with lower psychoticism scores. The academic performance of youth who live in low–income neighborhoods improves when they attend church (Regnerus & Elder, 2003).

Spiritual practices are an important factor in strengthening the spiritual lives of youth. In this respect, parents play an important role in fostering a home environment that encourages their children's engagement in spiritual practices.

Parental Influence

Although the teenage years may be described as "cataclysmic" and filled with conflict and struggle, Tripp (2001) believes that these struggles and conflicts produce "wonderful parental opportunities" (p. 20). On a daily basis, directly and indirectly, parents are given the opportunity to shape and influence the spiritual lives of their children. Seventy-eight percent of teenagers acknowledge that their parents have a lot of influence on the way they think and act (Barna, 1999). "Research in the sociology of religion suggests that the most important social influence in shaping young people's

religious lives is the religious life modeled and taught to them by their parents" (Smith, 2005, p. 56). As evidence to this fact, "only 6 percent of teens consider their religious beliefs very different from that of their mother and 11 percent very different from that of their father" (Smith, 2005, p. 34).

Teenagers have validated the degree of influence that their parents have in their spiritual lives, but parents, in a general sense, believe that teenagers don't want to maintain a close relationship with them. In this respect, The State of Our Nation's Youth 2005-2006 report found that when high-school students were asked what were their wishes for a better life, some (27%) said they wanted more money to buy things; a minority (14 %) wanted a bigger house; and the majority (46%) of students wished for more time spent together as a family (Horatio Alger Association of Distinguished Americans, 2006). Moreover, Barna (2001) found that teenagers strive to have a close connection with family and friends on a daily basis.

These studies offer evidence of the high regard that teenagers place in family interactions for the betterment of their lives. Although parents exert the most significant influence on the spiritual lives of their children, and teenagers are striving for a closer and meaningful relationship with their parents, several elements and conditions pose a threat to the transmission of spiritual values from one generation to another. Other conditions serve as catalysts to foster the transmission of Christian values and principles to this young generation. In the research literature there is a lack of studies that identify specific factors that help parents transmit Christian values and principles to their children. This study will identify factors that will help parents foster the spiritual growth and development of their children.

Parental Status

Researchers have investigated how family composition influences the personal development and growth of children. Today's children are exposed to a myriad of family compositions: some live in intact families, others in single-parent homes, others live with relatives or foster homes. Their parents' marital status and family composition may have an influence in the formation of their personal worldview, and their economic and educational status, and may enhance or hinder the opportunities for personal development. This study will focus on how parental marital status influences the transmission of spiritual values and principles into children.

A series of factors poses a threat to traditional family composition and structures. This shift in family patterns creates stress, confusion, heartache, pain, and difficulty. We are "living in a period of unprecedented change in family composition, family life, and family experience" (Mueller, 2007, p. 41). Every year, over 1 million children will be affected by the negative experience of their parents' divorce (Mueller, 2007). This fact may explain why 90% of teens reject the notion that married people should expect to get divorced (Barna, 2001). The Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics reports that in 2004 almost 19 million children younger than 17 years of age were living with a single parent (as cited in Mueller, 2007). Also, 4.2 million children under 17 years of age were living with unmarried parents, and about 2.9 million children were living in households without their parents. In 2005, 37% of all births were of unmarried women. According to the National Fatherhood Initiative, 34% of teenagers live in a fatherless home (as cited in Mueller, 2007). Also, today's family's economical strains obligate a large number of mothers to work outside of the home. The Maternal and Child Health

Bureau reports that 78% of school-age mothers were part of the labor force (as cited in Mueller, 2007).

Various studies among Seventh-day Adventists reveal what youth report concerning their parents' marital status. The results of these studies will allow a comparison between Adventist Hispanic youth parents' marital status in relation to other American Adventist youth parents' marital status. *Valuegenesis*[1] youth said that 77% of their parents were not divorced or separated, 20% were divorced, 2% were never married, and 1% were not sure about their parents' marital status (Dudley & Gillespie, 1992). *Valuegenesis*[2] youth said that 80% came from intact families, 20% came from single-parent households, and 20% from divorced parents (Gillespie et al., 2004). Information provided by adults in the *Avance* study indicated that 65.4% were married, 9.2% were divorced and remarried, 11.6% were single, 3.8% were separated, and 5% were divorced (Ramírez-Johnson & Hernández, 2003). Twenty-six percent of Adventist Hispanic youth indicated they lived in single-parent homes; more than 20% of young Hispanic Adventists came from single-parent or non-traditional homes (Ramírez-Johnson & Hernández, 2003). Ramírez-Johnson and Hernández (2003) describe the typical Hispanic household: "Many Hispanics live in poverty due to low levels of education, growing numbers of one-parent households (usually single mothers), and large numbers of young parents with low levels of education and high levels of underemployment and unemployment" (p. 41). Although Hispanic adults report a lesser percentage of divorce, they also report a lesser percentage of intact families, thus fewer Hispanic youth live in intact households in comparison to non-Hispanic Adventist youth.

Divorce typically reduces religious involvement of parents and teens (Smith, 2005). Conversely, teenagers who live in intact families are most likely to be more religious than teenagers who do not live in intact families. Smith (2005) declares: "Higher levels of teen religiosity are positively associated with growing up in married parent households. . . . Teens whose parents are not married tend to be personally less religious themselves" (p. 290). In this respect, Dudley (2000) also found that a stable marriage was a predictor of Adventist youth remaining in church. More than 87% of youth who remained in the church had biological parents who were married and still together, whereas 66% of youth who drop out of church did so. Also, only 10% of youth who remained in the church had divorced parents, whereas 28% of youth who drop out of church did so. Researchers have been able to demonstrate that children who live in intact households have a greater probability of being more religious and are less likely to drop out of church. Because fewer Hispanic youth live in intact households they are at greater risk of being disengaged from the religious life of their faith communities and more likely to drop out of church. This study will help researchers understand how family composition and structure among Adventists living in Puerto Rico may influence the spiritual development of their children.

Family Climate

Family is an institution that provides the environment where parents and children can love each other and help each other grow spiritually, mentally, and physically through healthy interactions. Family is a social unit where personal growth is based on interpersonal relationships. Parents are the primary source of relationships for teenagers. Experts use the term "relational depravation" to describe this generation in terms of the

decomposition of family structure and family relationships (Mueller, 2007). "Today's teenagers desire real relationships that are characterized by depth, vulnerability, openness, listening, and love-connectedness in their disconnected, confusing, and alienated world" (Mueller, 2007, p. 48). Dudley and Gillespie (1992) describe the importance of a healthy family climate:

> While conversation about faith may be important in helping youth to develop a value system, the climate or atmosphere of the home is even more vital. No matter how noble our profession if our children do not experience our families as happy and fulfilling, they will not want our values. (p. 193)

Studies among Adventist youth have been conducted to understand their respective family climates. Youth (72%) who participated in the *Valuegenesis*[1] study reported that their family life is happy; nearly 78% agreed that there is a lot of love in their families, and only 11% disagreed with the latter statement (Dudley & Gillespie, 1992). Youth (73%) who participated in the *Valuegenesis*[2] study reported that their family life is happy, and 81% see lots of love in their homes (Gillespie et al., 2004). Among Hispanic Adventists, 68% of teenagers declared that their family had a strong sense of unity and that they liked to spend time together (Ramírez-Johnson & Hernández, 2003). In 2003, Adventist Hispanic youth had a somewhat lower score of family unity than other Adventist youth who participated in the *Valuegenesis*[1] and *Valuegenesis*[2] studies.

The fact that Hispanic youth had somewhat lower scores of family unity merits careful consideration. Researchers agree that one idiosyncrasy of the Hispanic family is its sense of unity. Ramírez-Johnson and Hernández (2003) explain:

> Perhaps one of the Hispanic Adventist family's greatest strengths is its sense of unity. The emphasis on family solidarity and the individual's sense of obligation to the family help protect the family's continuity and preserve its culture. Family unity

> provides the cohesiveness, support, and dependability that enable family members to feel secure. Unified families feel they have a happy family life; they look forward to and cherish family gatherings. (p. 44)

The Hispanic culture values a deep sense of familialism and family member interdependence (Ramírez-Johnson & Hernández, 2003), and sociological research confirms the centrality of family in the Hispanic American culture (Smith, 2005). Ramírez-Johnson and Hernández (2003) report that there was a relatively low rate of family separation and divorce among Hispanic Adventists. But, 51.9% of youth who participated in *Avance* reported that they were worried about the possibility of divorce. This fact may suggest that not all marriages of this study were stable. "Apparently, the majority of families, while remaining intact, still experienced conflict and discord" (p. 51). Parental discord "is at least twenty times more powerful a predictor of family disunity than the fact of divorce" (Strommen, 1974, p. 44). This fact could possibly explain the somewhat lower scores of family unity reported by Hispanic youth in the *Avance* study.

Family unity has been associated as a strong predictor of faith maturity, denominational loyalty, and moral reasoning (Dudley & Gillespie, 1992; Dudley, 2000; Ramírez-Johnson & Hernández, 2003; Speicher, 1992). A supportive family environment is one of the most important predictors of a lifetime commitment to Adventism (Dudley & Gillespie, 1992). Ramírez-Johnson and Hernández (2003) found a relationship between high faith maturity and family unity among youth. Hispanic youth who had a high level of faith maturity more often had a high level of family unity, whereas youth who had a low level of faith maturity had a lower level of family unity. Speicher (1992) submitted Kohlberg's Moral Judgment Interviews to a group of

adolescents and found that adolescent moral judgment was most consistently related to positive intra-familial relationships, cognitive stimulation of moral reasoning, and perceived family environment. Ramírez-Johnson and Hernández (2003) state that "positive affective relationships between a child and her or his parents, as well as parental understanding and support, have been found to promote the development of adolescent moral reasoning" (p. 82).

Although the majority of Hispanic youth report living in a happy family climate, there is still a concern for those who report worries in relation to the possibility of parental divorce. This fact could be an indication of a certain degree of unstableness in the Hispanic family context. Researchers have also found that family unity is one of the most important factors in the transmission of faith and religious values from one generation to another. Family unity is a strong predictor of faith maturity, denominational loyalty, and moral reasoning. This study will help researchers understand how family climate may influence the spiritual development of children.

Family Worship

Family worship is one of the most important means through which parents can transmit spiritual values and principles to their children (Dudley, 1986). Family worship offers the opportunity to explore the reasons behind the Christian values that the family upholds (Ramírez-Johnson & Hernández, 2003). Among Adventist youth in the *Valuegenesis*[1] study, less than one-fourth of the homes had daily family worship and less than 10% had both morning and evening worship (Dudley & Gillespie, 1992). About 34% of the homes had family worship more than once a week, 15% once a week, about 14% once a month or more, 11% less than once a month, and 26% never had family

worship. Ten years later, *Valuegenesis*[2] respondents reported that 19% had family worship more than once a week, 13% once a week, 35% monthly, 22% less than once a month, and 13% never (Gillepsie et al., 2004). Hispanic Adventist youth in the *Avance* study said that 16.6% had worship several times a week, 21.4% once a week, 26% one to three times a month, and 28.1% never had worship at home (Ramírez-Johnson & Hernández, 2003).

Frequency of family worship is diminishing among Seventh-day Adventist families (Gillepsie et al., 2004). Hispanic Adventist youth had less frequency of family worship in all categories (daily, more than once a week, once a week, less than once a month, monthly, and never) than other Adventist youth in the *Valuegenesis*[1] and *Valuegenesis*[2] studies.

Researchers have paid attention not only to frequency of family worship but also to the quality of family worship. Among Adventist youth who had family worship, 80% of *Valuegenesis*[1] respondents found family worship to be meaningful and 13% found it to be a waste of time (Dudley & Gillespie, 1992). Eighty-two percent of *Valuegenesis*[2] respondents who had family worship found it to be meaningful and 14% found it to be a waste of time (Gillespie et al., 2004). Among Hispanic Adventist youth who had family worship, 62% of *Avance* (Ramírez-Johnson & Hernández, 2003) respondents rated family worship as meaningful and 6% said it was a waste of time. Hispanic youth had lower scores for family worship as meaningful and lower scores for family worship as a waste of time.

Family worship was the strongest family-related predictor of faith maturity and denominational loyalty for the *Valuegenesis*[1] study (Dudley & Gillespie, 1992). Among

Hispanic Adventist youth, a positive relationship between meaningful family worship and spiritual growth was reported by Ramírez-Johnson and Hernández (2003). Fifty-five percent of the Hispanic youth who reported that family worship was meaningful were also more likely to indicate high levels of faith maturity; 92% of these same youth responded that they were loyal to the Adventist Church, and 64% engaged in personal devotions several times a week or more. Conversely, of Hispanic youth who reported family worship as a waste of time, only 30% were likely to have a mature faith; however, of these same youth, 60% consider themselves to be loyal to the church and 39% had devotions several times a week or more. Lee, Rice, and Gillespie (1997) found that among Adventist youth, active faith is highest among youth who participate in family worship patterns where youth are actively involved.

Frequency and quality of family worship are not only related to faith maturity and denominational loyalty, but also to other areas of youth development. Adventist youth who participated in family worship had the strongest relationship to abstinence from drug-related behaviors (Dudley, Mutch, & Cruise, 1987). Strahan (1994) studied Australian adolescents and found that family worship is important in the transmission of the family belief system. He warns that frequency of family worship should be done with a perspective of family relational process and not as a mere repetition of rituals.

Less than half of Adventist youth indicated that their families have worship on a daily or on a weekly basis. The quality of family worship is undergoing a slight improvement and the majority of Adventist youth report that it is meaningful. Hispanic Adventist youth had less frequency and quality of family worship than the rest of the Adventist youth population. These findings should be a matter of concern since

researchers have demonstrated that family worship is the strongest predictor of faith maturity and denominational loyalty among Adventist youth populations. Family worship is one of the most important factors in the transmission of Christian values and principles to younger generations. This study will provide information in respect to family worship patterns among Adventist families located in Puerto Rico and their relationship to the spiritual development of their children.

Parental Role Model

Parents play a critical role in the spiritual formation of their children. They serve as role models through their attitudes, verbal expressions, and behaviors. "Research in the sociology of religion suggests that the most important social influence in shaping young people's religious lives is the religious life modeled and taught to them by their parents" (Smith, 2005, p. 56). Smith concludes that the religion of teenagers often looks like the religion of their parents.

The importance of social modeling is stressed since children and adolescents involve themselves in spiritual practices more as a result of "explicit teaching or implicit example" from their family rather than as a "spontaneous consequence of developmental dynamics or needs" (Francis & Brown, 1991, p. 120). Ramírez-Johnson and Hernández (2003) support to the idea of social modeling when they cite Havemann and Lehtinen (1990) saying: "The family socialization process tends to shape the beliefs and practices of children in the same pattern as their parents through mechanisms such as modeling" (p. 80). Also, having parents who modeled discipleship in the home was significantly associated with a more positive attitude toward church among youth, and "the maintenance of a positive attitude toward church during the 'tweenage' (10 - 12 years

old) years is associated with having parents who support the faith in conversation and example at home" (Francis & Craig, 2006, p. 108).

Parents who model that religion is important in their lives "tend to rear children with stronger religious values" (Dudley & Gillespie, 1992, p. 207). Teenagers ask questions and they receive answers not only through their parents' verbal expressions but through their attitudes and actions (Barna, 2001). Dudley and Gillespie (1992) warn that parents who are "quick to judge, argumentative, frustrated, partial in the way they love provide an interesting model of the love of God for their children" (p. 214). Smith (2005) adds in relation to adult religious hypocrisy: "Youth can view religion as a source of hypocrisy when adults fail to live up to the standards professed by religion. In this and other ways, religion can become for some youth a symbolic field of resistance or rebellion" (p. 189).

Respondents were asked how they would rate the degree of parental influence in their spiritual development (Dudley, 2000). Eighty percent of the respondents said that mother was helpful; 13% said neutral, and 6% said negative. Sixty-two percent of the respondents said father was helpful; 20% said neutral, and 10% said negative. Although fathers are influential in the spiritual development of their children, these results demonstrate that mothers exert a greater degree of influence in the spiritual life of their children than do fathers.

Dudley (2000) was also able to measure the degree of parental influence on youth denominational loyalty through adulthood. Of the teenagers who were still members of the church, 73% had fathers who were members of the church when they were teenagers, whereas 60% of those who are not members had fathers who were members when they

were teenagers. Ninety-three percent of those who are still members had mothers who were members when they were teenagers compared to 86% for those who are not members. Concerning how often parents attend church, for those who are still members, 70% reported that their fathers and 87% that their mothers attended church nearly every week. For those who are no longer members, 48% percent of their fathers and 71% of their mothers attended church every week. Dudley's longitudinal study provides one indication of the degree of spiritual influence that parents exert even during their children's adulthood life stage.

Avance research revealed that 63% of the youth perceived that their parents were active in the church and lived up to the church's standards (Ramírez-Johnson & Hernández, 2003), which demonstrates that youth are aware of the degree of spiritual commitment, saliency, and denominational loyalty of their parents.

Parents influence the spiritual life of their children by serving as role models of how Christian values and principles are integrated into daily living. Children observe, absorb, and imitate their parents' feelings, attitudes, commitments, and behaviors in respect to their spiritual lives. By their example, parents influence their children's spiritual beliefs and practices, even through their adulthood years. This study will provide information in respect to how Adventist parents who live in Puerto Rico model and influence the spiritual life of their children.

Parental Understanding

"Christian nurture in the home intentionally weaves changeless truth with changing times," says Habermas (1998, p. 284), expressing the core challenge that Christian parents face in their role of understanding their children. In order to correctly

nurture their children, parents need to recognize that truth is based in unchanging principles and that culture is dynamic and constantly changing. This parental role of nurturing children requires understanding of how culture influences them. Teenagers need their parents' help and attention; parents need to understand their teenager's world (Clark, 2004).

When the generational gap widens, parent-youth relationships become strained as mutual understanding is not reached (Mueller, 2007). As a result, communication breaks down and parents begin to lose influence on their teenagers. The end result is that teenagers may look elsewhere for love and understanding. Parents need to bridge the generational gap between them and their teenagers by intentional and strategic effort; parents need to unconditionally accept their teenagers and assert their love towards them regardless of their behavior or values (Barna, 2001). Barna (2001) found that "parents spend surprisingly little time in meaningful dialogue with their teens that is designed to build relational bridges and to work through conflict and mistrust." The solution to close the generetanional gap between parents and their children is not more programs, but more "time, communication and understanding" (p. 57).

Parental understanding has a direct effect on the religiosity and spirituality of their children. Several studies have been able to compare how parents' understanding and support influence their children's beliefs and practices. Research in the social sciences has found that religiousness is associated with higher levels of commitment to orthodox beliefs and church attendance whereas spirituality is associated with higher levels of mysticism, unorthodox beliefs and practices, and negative feelings towards clergy and churches (Fuller, 2001). Teenagers who report that their parents do not understand, love,

or pay attention to them are more likely to be spiritual but not religious, incorporate other spiritual practices, and attend religious services rarely or never (Smith, 2005). In contrast, teenagers who report that their parents understand, love, and pay attention to them are more likely to be religiously devoted. Religiously devoted teens maintain better family relationships than religiously disengaged teens; they feel close to, get along, hang out, and have fun with both of their parents. Parental understanding and support also foster the development of moral reasoning among adolescents (Dudley, 1986; Larson & Larson, 1992). *Avance* found that parents who had an understanding attitude tended to develop loyalty to church standards among youth; youth who reported parental understanding (42%) were more likely to be loyal to the church than youth who reported parental misunderstanding (31%) (Ramírez-Johnson & Hernández, 2003).

Although 82% of Hispanic youth who participated in the second wave of the *NSYR* study indicated that their parents understand them (Hernández, 2007), only 45% percent of Hispanic Adventist youth indicated having parents who understood their problems (Ramírez-Johnson & Hernández, 2003). There is a significant difference between Hispanic Protestant youth and Hispanic Adventist youth in terms of their perception of parental understanding.

These studies indicate the degree of influence that parental understanding has on the religious and spiritual life of teenagers. Parents who project an understanding attitude toward their children raise teenagers who are more religiously devoted, get along better with other family members, develop moral reasoning skills, and are more loyal and committed to their church standards. This study will provide information in respect to

parental understanding attitudes of Adventist parents living in Puerto Rico and their effect on the spiritual development of their children.

Parental Authoritarianism

Researchers have paid considerable attention to parental styles and their influence on developmental outcomes of the general adolescent population. However, few researchers have paid attention to distinct parenting styles in Hispanic families and their adolescent developmental outcomes. Researchers have found that Hispanic parents tend to be more authoritarian than authoritative in their parenting styles (Dornbusch, Ritter, Leiderman, Roberts, & Fraleigh, 1987; Steinberg, Dornbusch, & Brown, 1992; Zayas & Solari, 1994). Pong, Hao, and Gardner (2005) explain the difference between the authoritarian and the authoritative parental styles:

> The authoritarian style is high on demandingness and low on responsiveness. It manifests in high parental control and supervision, with emphasis on obedience and respect for authority. Authoritative parenting is high on both demandingness and responsiveness. Parents who are authoritative set clear standards for mature behavior for their children. They firmly enforce rules and standards, while encouraging their children to be independent and to have open communication with parents. (p. 932)

Further research demonstrates the benefits of the authoritative parental style versus the impediments that an authoritarian parental style may impose in the healthy development of adolescents. Authoritative parents motivate their children to share their ideas and perspectives in order to engage in conversations (Ramírez-Johnson & Hernández, 2003). Parents who demonstrated an authoritarian style were less likely to address their children's questions from their point of view. Dudley and Gillespie (1992) suggest that this "dialogical relationship" is very important in developing faith maturity among youngsters.

Parents who manifest an authoritarian style exert a negative influence in the socialization process and character development of their children (Baumrind, 1971; Steinberg et al., 1992). Gillespie et al. (2004) found that among the fathers of Adventist high-school students, 60% manifested a controlling style, 13% had "absent or weak bonding," and only 7% had "optimal bonding" (p. 259). Parents who exert an authoritarian style hamper their relationship with their children (Baumrind, 1971).

Avance researchers found that 47% of respondents did not perceive their parents as authoritarians. Fifteen percent of youth indicated having authoritarian parents who were "harsh and unfair when administering discipline, 'pushed' religious convictions on them, and did not allow them much participation in home decision-making" (Ramírez-Johnson & Hernández, 2003, p. 49). Youth who perceived their parents as authoritarian were more likely to engage in at-risk behaviors; almost 42% of those who perceived their parents as authoritarian engaged in some form of at-risk behavior in contrast to only 29% of those who did not perceive their parents as authoritarian. Youth who indicated having authoritarian parents were 5% lower on the faith-maturity scale and 15% lower on the church loyalty scale than their peers; also, an authoritarian parenting style tended to be associated with a legalistic view of salvation.

Authoritarian parents tend to exert a negative influence in the spiritual development of their children. Youth with authoritarian parents report a tendency to engage in at-risk behaviors, and report lower scores on faith maturity and denominational loyalty. This study will explore the preferred parental style of Adventist parents living in Puerto Rico and how it will influence the spiritual development of their children.

Parental Limits

Research that addresses parental limits (parental monitoring) is geared more towards psychological studies in relation to adolescent at-risk behaviors. Very few studies address the role of parental limits in relation to the spiritual development of adolescents. Parental limits have been studied from a character-development perspective among Adventist respondents. Dudley and Gillespie (1992) state: "Character development takes place best in a climate where reasonable limits are firmly but lovingly enforced" (p. 196). After analyzing *Valuegenesis*[1] study results they concluded that parental limits in Adventist families "seemed fairly elastic" (p. 198). Another study also concluded that "a loving family with guidelines and constraints seems to be the optimum" (Gillespie et al., 2004, p. 263). Research among Hispanic families has found that parental limits pose a possible dissonance; limits can be "protective factors" that may prevent danger in children, but they can also be "suffocating restrictions that lead to rebellion" (Ramírez-Johnson & Hernández, 2003, p. 47).

Several studies have researched how parents pose limits to their children and its relationship to spiritual development. Sixty-five percent of youth who participated in the *Valuegenesis*[2] study reported that their parents place limits on them (Gillespie et al., 2004). Of youth who participated in the *Avance* study, 23% reported that their parents pose limits often or very often, whereas 33% reported that parents limited their time and activities sometimes (Ramírez-Johnson & Hernández, 2003). Perhaps research that has proposed that Hispanic parents tend to exert authoritarian styles cannot be sustained in this specific aspect of parental limits.

Parents who limit their children's time and activities may influence in a positive way their spiritual development. Teenagers are more likely to report higher scores on church attendance and importance of faith when their parents monitor their lives more closely (Smith, 2005). *Valuegenesis*[1] and *Valuegenesis*[2] data demonstrated that parental limits are positively related to faith maturity and denominational loyalty (Dudley & Gillespie, 1992; Gillespie et al., 2004). Ramírez-Johnson and Hernández (2003) also found a positive relationship between parental limits and a decrease in at-risk behaviors. They explain:

> This study showed that youth who reported that their parents never limited their time were slightly more likely to report being involved in at-risk behaviors (e.g., criminal activities, drug use, or sexual relations) than were those whose parents limited their time often or very often. (p. 47)

Thus, they conclude that appropriate restrictions are essential to adolescent healthy development.

Parents' role of placing appropriate restrictions on their children is associated with knowledge of their children's activities. Over 75% of Adventist parents most of the time inquire about the whereabouts of their children. Forty-six percent of youth indicated that their parents always knew about their whereabouts; 30% said most of the time; 14% said sometimes; 7% seldom; and only 3% reported never (Dudley & Gillespie, 1992).

Most Hispanic Adventist youth said that their parents knew a lot about their activities after school and about where they went at night. Ninety-four percent of Hispanic Adventist parents were somewhat or completely aware of the identity of their children's friends. Only 6% of Hispanic youth said that their parents did not know who their friends were (Ramírez-Johnson & Hernández, 2003). Hispanic youth had a higher score of parental knowledge of youth activities than respondents of the *Valuegenesis*[1]

study. This fact is consonant with other research findings (Dornbusch et al., 1987; Steinberg et al., 1992; Zayas & Solari, 1994) that Hispanic parents tend to exert a parental authoritarian style.

A relationship between parental knowledge of youth activities and youth involvement in at-risk behaviors was found by researchers. Hispanic youth who report that their parents have knowledge of their activities are less likely to get involved in at-risk behaviors (Hernández, 2007; Ramírez-Johnson & Hernández, 2003). Those who indicated low levels of parental knowledge of their activities also indicated higher levels of deviant behavior; whereas youth who said that their parents knew a lot about who their friends were also had lower levels of deviant behavior. Ramírez-Johnson and Hernández (2003) also found that "a higher proportion of males (9%) than females (3%) reported unaware or uninvolved parents" (p. 48).

Researchers who have studied the relationship between parental limits and youth spirituality have found that parents who place a reasonable amount of limits have children who report higher scores on church attendance and importance of faith. Also, parental limits have been associated with youth reporting higher scores of faith maturity and denominational loyalty and a decrease in at-risk behaviors. Youth who report that their parents have knowledge of their activities also reported lower scores of at-risk behaviors. Research has demonstrated that appropriate placement of limits benefits character development and spirituality among youth. This study will explore how Puerto Rican Adventist parents pose limits to their children's time and activities and if those limits show a relationship with their spiritual development.

Parental Enforcement of Standards

Parents play an important role in helping their children integrate Seventh-day Adventist standards into their lives. There are ethnic differences on how parents enforce Adventist standards (Gillespie et al., 2004). African American and Asian parents were the highest (65%) in enforcing Adventist standards. Hispanic parents came in second place with 63%, and the North American parents came in last place with 58%. Because research (Dornbusch et al., 1987; Steinberg et al., 1992; Zayas & Solari, 1994) has confirmed that Hispanic parents tend to use an authoritarian parental style, it is expected that a higher percentage of Hispanic parents would enforce Adventist standards on their children.

Acceptance of Adventist standards is positively related to orthodoxy, faith maturity, and denominational loyalty among youth (Dudley & Gillespie, 1992; Gillespie et al., 2004; Ramírez-Johnson & Hernández, 2003). Among Hispanic youth there was a positive correlation between mature faith and Adventist standards (Ramírez-Johnson & Hernández, 2003): 70% of the respondents who had a high level of mature faith followed Adventist standards whereas only 49% of respondents who had a somewhat mature faith and 38% who were low in mature faith followed Adventist standards. There was also a positive correlation between denominational loyalty and Adventist standards: 63% of the youth who reported denominational loyalty followed Adventist standards whereas only 50% of those unsure about their denominational loyalty and 31% of those who were not committed to the church followed Adventist standards.

Enforcement of standards is associated positively or negatively with religious commitment (Dudley & Gillespie, 1992). Strong enforcement of standards in school or

church was not positively associated with an increase in faith maturity, denominational loyalty, or values attached to Adventism. Strong enforcement in school or church can be counterproductive; "as enforcement increases, so does a law orientation to salvation" (p. 162). Contrary to these findings, they found that enforcement in the family context is more productive. "As enforcement increases, so does faith maturity, denominational loyalty, and other measures of commitment to Adventism. And it does not increase a law orientation" (p. 162). They conclude that although strong enforcement in schools and churches does not produce positive results, strong enforcement in families does report positive results.

A possible explanation for this apparent contradiction is that youth rate their families high on warmth while they rate their congregations low in warmth. Also, research (Dudley & Gillespie, 1992) has confirmed that students in Adventist schools are more likely than students in public schools to feel that they are being put down by their teachers. This suggests that "rules taught in a loving and accepting environment have positive benefits, but rules taught in a less accepting environment often lead to less positive or even destructive consequences" (Dudley & Gillespie, 1992, p. 163).

Parents can provide the loving and accepting environment that fosters the integration of Adventist standards in the lives of their young children. As youth feel loved and accepted by their parents, they are more willing to integrate Adventist standards into their lives and understand how these standards benefit their lives in various ways. There is a lack of research that explores the relationship between enforcement of Adventist standards and spiritual development among youth. This study will provide

information on how Puerto Rican Adventist parents enforce Adventist standards and its effect on the spiritual development of their children.

Parental Educational Involvement

Hispanics are one of the most undereducated ethnic minority groups in the United States and have the highest rate of high-school dropout in the country (Ramírez-Johnson & Hernández, 2003). Based on the U.S. Census Bureau statistics for March 1999 and March 2000, and *Avance* findings, Ramírez-Johnson and Hernández (2003) reported that although 85% of the population of the United States finish high school, only 56% of the Hispanic population and 32% of the Hispanic Adventist population do so. Although 52% of the United States population has some college education, only 29% of the Hispanic population and 24% of the Hispanic Adventist population do so. Although almost 27% of the population of the United States graduate from college or more, only 11% of the Hispanic population and 20% of the Hispanic Adventist population do so. There is a remarkable difference between Hispanic Adventists and the rest of the United States and the Hispanic general population in their educational attainment in respect to finishing their high school and college education. Hispanic Adventists are worse off in their educational attainment in graduating from high school than the rest of the United States and the Hispanic general population; but they are better off in their educational attainment in graduating from college or graduate school than the general Hispanic population, but not better off than the population of the United States.

Parental involvement is very important in children's educational attainment (Steinberg et al., 1992). *Avance* found that 58.4% of youth said that their parents were highly involved with their educational plans; parental involvement increased academic

aspirations among youth (Ramírez-Johnson & Hernández, 2003). Seventy-two percent of *Avance* youth responded that they wanted to obtain a college education. Most of those who expected to complete 2 years of college or more said that their parents were heavily involved in their education. Among Hispanic youth who intended to earn a graduate degree, 69% said that their parents were highly involved in their education. Only 40% of Hispanic Adventist youth who expected to drop out of school said that their parents were highly involved in their education whereas the majority of those expecting only to complete high school or less said that their parents were generally uninvolved in their education.

Avance also found that Adventist Hispanic parents have high educational expectations for their children (Ramírez-Johnson & Hernández, 2003). Hispanic youth indicated that their parents expected them to finish at least a college education (83%) and even a graduate degree (37%). Although Adventist Hispanic parents have high educational expectations for their children, *Avance* found that only 16.7% felt there was an excellent chance that their children would attend an Adventist college or university. Most Hispanic Adventists did not enroll their children in Adventist institutions, and the majority of Hispanic Adventist youth were enrolled in public schools. Financial concerns were a major factor for not enrolling their children in Adventist schools although almost 43% felt that the spiritual value of Adventist schools justified the cost. Moreover, 61% of Hispanic Adventist youth would select an Adventist school over a public school, and 61% of Hispanic Adventist adults felt that it is important that their children attend an Adventist college.

Avance research found that there is a relationship between Adventist education and achievement. Respondents with some Adventist education were six times more likely to attend graduate school than those who had never attended an Adventist school, and more than half (56.3%) who had been Adventists since their childhood finished a graduate degree (Ramírez-Johnson & Hernández, 2003).

These findings suggest that Hispanic Adventist youth are worse off in graduating from high school than the rest of the United States and the Hispanic general population. Hispanic Adventist youth are better off than the Hispanic population in graduating from college, but worse off than the United States general population. Also, the *Avance* study was able to demonstrate that parental involvement increases academic aspirations in children (Ramírez-Johnson & Hernández, 2003). There is a need to develop strategies to enhance Hispanic Adventist youth's access to Adventist education. This study will explore if there is any relationship between parents' educational involvement and their children's spiritual development.

Parental Abuse

A lack of studies in verbal or emotional abuse and physical abuse of children has been attributed to the confusion in the professional literature about adequate definitions and assessment of these forms of maltreatment. Despite these difficulties, research has found that physical abuse has a negative effect on religiosity (Lawson, Drebing, Berg, Vincellette, & Penk, 1998; Reinert & Smith, 1997). Webb and Whitmer (2003) studied the effects of emotional and physical abuse on young adults' maintenance of beliefs taught in the family. They found that emotional and physical abuse is related to the loss or rejection of belief systems taught in the family and that "parental religiosity was

inversely related to increased report of physical and emotional abuse" (p. 236). The authors hypothesize that victims of abuse learn to associate their parental belief system with the abusive environment they are experiencing, thus they will tend to reject both. In a previous study they also found that emotional and physical abuse may impact young adults' worldviews and religiosity (Webb & Whitmer, 2001).

Other studies have also confirmed similar findings in respect to the effect of emotional and physical abuse on religiosity. Maltreatment from mothers or from outsiders of the family context had a negative effect on religiosity. Abuse committed by fathers was related to decreases in religiosity, and the image of God as father may lead victims of abusive fathers to distance themselves from religion (Bierman, 2005). Bottoms, Nielsen, Murray, and Filipas (2003) conducted a study to compare religion-related child physical abuse with non-religion related physical abuse. Although the basic characteristics of religion- and non-religion-related physical abuse were similar, religion-related physical abuse had significantly more negative effects on the long-term psychological health of the victims.

Ducharme (1988), who was one of the earliest researchers to investigate the relationship between child sexual abuse and the formation of the concept of God in adulthood, found that respondents who were victims of incest were more likely to view God as punitive, than those who were not victims of incest. Imbems and Jonker (1992) found that victims of incest expressed feelings of anger toward God for not preventing the incest, and experienced guilt and alienation toward God and their religious community. Other research has confirmed that victims felt that God had neglected them (Kane, Cheston, & Greer, 1993; Pritt, 1998).

Women who were sexually abused as children had difficulty trusting in God's plan and provision for them and had difficulty finding meaning and purpose for their lives (Hall, 1995). Also, sexual abuse victims were less likely to feel that they were loved by God and that they were part of a community of believers. Abuse victims also have a tendency to change religious faiths, adopt religious practices that are not traditional, or reject organized religion (Ryan, 1998). Pritt (1998) studied sexually abused Mormon women and found that they tended to feel more empty, worthless, disconnected, and undeserving of God's love than those not abused. Some even felt that religion was allied with the abuser. Abused victims also indicated less involvement in religious worship (Finkelhor, Hotaling, Lewis, & Smith, 1989).

On the other hand, some studies suggest that victims of sexual abuse can find support, strength, meaning, and hope in religious faith (Elliot, 1994; Reinert & Smith, 1997; Ryan, 1998). Reinert and Bloomingdale (1999) explain:

> Clearly, our findings indicate that childhood traumas can have a negative impact on spiritual development and maturing. However, we found that nearly one fourth (23%) of the traumatized group were in the spiritually mature category. This seems to suggest that the experience of a trauma does not doom a person to truncated spiritual development. It does, however, give credence to the clinical literature on resilience that suggests many traumatized individuals develop effective coping strategies. Some of these strategies involve their religious beliefs and spiritual practices. (p. 211)

Although sexual abuse seems to be related to spiritual injury and distress, it is also related to higher levels of spiritual activities and experiences that are usually associated with positive spirituality (Lawson et al., 1998). Chandy, Blum, and Resnick (1996) studied a group of male and female teenagers who self-reported a history of sexual abuse. They were able to identify several protective factors against destructive behaviors correlated with sexual abuse. Among the female subjects, they found that a higher

emotional attachment to family, being religious or spiritual, presence of both parents at home, and a perception of overall health seemed to be protective factors. For male subjects, maternal education and parental concern appeared to be protective factors. More specifically, Elliot (1994) found that subjects who were victims of abuse in religious homes were more likely to reject religious faith whereas subjects who were abused in non-religious homes were more likely to find strength in religious faith.

Diverse forms of parental abuse can lead to the loss or rejection of belief systems taught in the family. Parental abuse has a detrimental effect on youth religiosity, especially if it is perpetrated in religious families. Research has found that children who are victims of incest tend to develop a distorted conception of God, and sexually abused victims also tend to be less involved in religious worship. There is a relationship between diverse forms of abuse committed in family contexts and a decrease in youth religiosity and spirituality. Because several studies have reported contradictory conclusions in respect to the relationship of diverse forms of abuse and religiosity, there is a need to conduct further research. This study will contribute to the understanding of parental abuse among Hispanic youth and its relationship to their spiritual development.

Intergenerational Transmission of Religious Faith

There are deep concerns in the academic community with respect to the decomposition of the traditional family structure. Clark (2004) uses the term “systematic abandonment” to describe how adults have left this young generation to figure out life on their own. Experts are now talking about "relational depravation" to describe this generation of teenagers in terms of their family socialization process (Mueller, 2007). One of the cries of youth is an inner desire to be part of a family where everyone is loved,

accepted, and cared (Strommen, 1974). "Today's teenagers desire real relationships that are characterized by depth, vulnerability, openness, listening, and love-connectedness in their disconnected, confusing, and alienated world" (Mueller, 2007, p. 48). Barna (2001) says:

> Bridging the emotional gap between the young and old is not impossible, but it demands intentional and strategic effort to do so. A starting point is for adults to unconditionally accept young people because of their existence and potential, regardless of their behavior and values. The first step toward healing the generational cold war may be for parents to assert their love for their teens and to honestly reassess their view about young people. The solution to the perceptual gap is not more programs, more events or more materials but more time, communication and understanding. (p. 57)

Experts in the field of youth spirituality have identified conditions that may threaten parent-youth relationships and, as a result, diminish the spiritual influence of parents over their teens. Mueller (2007) explains that when the "cultural-generational gap" widens, understanding and communication between parents and youth break down, decreasing the effectiveness of parental influence. As a result, teenagers look elsewhere for understanding, love, and guidance. "Parents spend surprisingly little time in meaningful dialogue with their teens that is designed to build relational bridges and to work through conflict and mistrust" (Bierman, 2005, p. 57). Despite the importance of healthy parent-youth relationships, in our day, youth have fewer opportunities to interact, relate, and communicate with parents or adults. Either family members are busy with meetings, activities, sports, or members of the family are at home but everyone is alone interacting with the TV, computers, or other media devices (Mueller, 2007).

Social learning plays a significant role in the process of transmitting religious faith from parents to their adolescent children. Thomas and Cornwall (1991) (as cited in Reyes, 1998) argue that: "religion provides a belief system that produces a moral base"

(p. 268) from which children learn about their parents' expectations through the process of socialization. Yinger (1970) (as cited in Cornwall, 1988, p. 209) concluded that religiosity is a learned behavior and children learn their religion from those who surround them. Cornwall (1988) argues that family socialization influences children's religiosity by providing the foundation for a religious worldview. Parents influence religious identity by supplying their children with symbols that help them understand and interpret their religious experiences. Symbols take the form of stories that help children understand their world and clarify reality for them. Parents also model religious behavior and channel their children into networks of relationships with peers who share their same beliefs and commitments.

Cognition is another important element in the transmission of religious faith. Berger (1967) (as cited in Reyes, 1998) argues that: "individuals *internalize* information they transform that which has been perceived from the objective world into structures of the subjective consciousness" (p. 4). Reyes (1998) explains: "The organizing structures do not develop in isolation but as a result of an ongoing 'conversation' between the individual and his or her significant others (i.e., parents, peers, and teachers)" (p. 6). Berger's (1967) proposition helps us understand how information is processed, internalized, and communicated to transmit religious faith in the family context.

Dudley and Dudley (1986) researched *social learning theory* (Gage & Berliner, 1979) and *emancipation theory* to understand how children accept and reject their parent's religious faith. They explain that the *emancipation* process takes hold when: "The teenager, torn between the task of emancipation and the inability to assume responsibilities of adulthood, seeks subconsciously to make some other statement of

independence-which may well involve rejection of parental values" (p. 5). In correspondence with the *emancipation theory* there was a generational gap between parent's and children's values. Adolescents were less traditional than their parents in relation to their religious values. In respect to *social learning theory*, they found that in spite of the generational gap, the religious values were not completely obliterated. That is, "more traditional parents tend to have youth who are more traditional than their peers, although less traditional than their parents. Less traditional parents tend to have youth who are less traditional then their peers and also even less traditional than their parents" (p. 13). The influences of *social learning theory* and *emancipation theory* need to be taken into account to better understand the process of parent-child transmission of religious faith.

Schwartz (2006) encompasses the parent-child transmission of religious values process into three overreaching models: the *transmission model*, the *transactional model*, and the *transformational model*. The *transmission model* depicts the religious socialization process as unilateral, where the child is a passive recipient of religious faith. The *transactional model* states that parents and children are active agents in the interaction and internalization process of religious beliefs. She argues that parents are not the only influence in the religious socialization process of adolescents, peers and friends also pose a strong influence; thus, the *transformational model* proposes that friends mediate how parents influence the religious faith of their children. In her study she found that both the *transmission* and the *transactional model* were significantly and positively correlated with religious faith. The *transformation model* was also found to be significantly and positively correlated with religious faith as the "perceived faith support

of friends mediated the influence of similar parental support on adolescent's religious belief and commitment" (p. 320). Schwartz (2006) states that peers do not completely surpass the influence of parents in the religious faith of their children, but rather that parent-adolescents relationships are influenced by the role that friends and peers play.

Reyes (1998) contextualizes family religious socialization process among Latino communities. Historically the Catholic Church in Latin America has been a source of social control with its influence and union with the state. As a result, Latinos adopted a more fatalistic world view. More specifically, in the case of Puerto Rico, Reyes (1998) argues that the Spanish American War "brought about a period not only of political transition….but also of cultural and religious transition" (p. 10). As individuals had direct access to the Bible they started questioning "Catholic teachings and practices that were rooted in tradition" (p. 11). This process of questioning developed a sense of individualism that resulted in understanding life events to be influenced by individual actions. He states: "The interaction of these social, religious and political factors influenced the development of a new sense of individualism among the Puerto Rican family" (p. 10). There was a shift in focus from a communal, hierarchical, and traditional religious experience to a more individualized religious experience. Protestant families have emphasized that religious experience should be based on biblical teachings more than on hierarchical or traditional forms of religious expression.

Parental communication is an important element in the transmission of values and principles to younger generations (Grusec & Kuczynski, 1997) and in the moral and spiritual development of children (Barna, 2001; Dudley, 2000; Dudley & Gillespie, 1992; Ramírez-Johnson & Hernández, 2003; Smith, 2005). Dudley and Gillespie (1992) found

that 47% of *Valuegenesis*[1] respondents indicated having four or more good conversations that lasted more than 10 minutes every month with their parents; only 10% indicated no substantive talks in the past month. They also found that communication increased with age, 39% in the 6th grade to 51% in the 12th grade.

Ninety-six percent of teens spend their free time with their friends and are more likely to have a meaningful conversation with their friends than with their mother or their father. Only 70% indicated having a meaningful conversation with their mothers and 43% with their fathers. When asked what they would change in their relationship with their mothers, 33% responded with improvement in communication and 10% responded with spending more time together. When asked the same question in relation to their fathers, 19% wanted to spend more time together, 13% wanted better communication, 7% wanted to discuss personal issues, and 6% wanted to engage in less arguing and fighting (Barna, 2001).

Parents who are open and engaging manifest an interest in eliciting from their children their ideas and perspectives. Engaging parents, rather than authoritarians, are more successful in communicating values and in promoting moral development in their children. "At its best, authoritarian parenting may produce outward compliance; but it is not the most effective way to communicate values" (Ramírez-Johnson & Hernández, 2003, p. 80). Since research has confirmed that Hispanic parents tend to be authoritarians (Dornbusch et al., 1987; Steinberg et al., 1992; Zayas & Solari, 1994), Hispanic Adventist parents need to understand that an authoritarian parental style may be contradictory to their intentions to transmit values and principles to their younger generations.

Parents spend very little time discussing spirituality with their teens (Barna, 2001). Among Adventist parents, only 22% of the fathers and 30% of the mothers were communicating personal religion to their children even as often as once a week. Large percentages of parents did so seldom or never (Dudley & Gillespie, 1992). Less than one in three parents spends time talking to their children about faith or religion once a week or more (Gillespie et al., 2004). When asked how often their parents talked to them about their faith or religious experience, 29% of youth responded that their fathers talked to them once a week or more, and 37% said that their mothers did so. Also, 53% of respondents from Grades 6-12 did talk with their parents about faith four or more times per month. Sixty-one percent of adolescents from Grades 11-12 indicated having conversations related to faith with their parents. They also found that there is a tendency to increase faith talk with age rising from 49% in 6th grade to 61% in 12th grade. Only 8% of the respondents indicated no substantive talks with their parents.

The *Avance* study found that parental communication about spiritual matters may occur no more than once a week (Ramírez-Johnson & Hernández, 2003). Hispanic Adventist parents are somewhat similar to other Adventist parents in how they engage in faith talk with their children. In this respect, Dudley and Gillespie (1992) conclude:

> Over three-fourths of the fathers and nearly nine out of ten mothers were seen as being comfortable or very comfortable in discussing their faith. This suggests that the lack of sharing within the family results from oversight or busyness. Parents might well decide to be more intentional (but still natural and spontaneous) in talking about faith to their adolescents. (p. 192)

Parent-youth communication and relationships exert a degree of influence in shaping the spiritual lives of youth. When parents are comfortable talking about their faith and often share their faith with their children, youth are more likely to mature in

their faith and demonstrate denominational commitment to the church (Dudley & Gillespie, 1992). Dudley (2000), in his 10-year longitudinal study, found that parent-youth's close or distant relationship was an important predictor of church dropout among the youth population. Of those who dropped out of the church, 45% were very close to their mother whereas 60% were distant from their mother. Similarly, of those who dropped out of the church, 42% were very close to their father and 63% had a distant relationship with their father. Subjects who had a close relationship with either their mother or father were less likely to drop out of the church than subjects who had a distant relationship with either their mother or father.

Parents, who are interested in transmitting their religious and spiritual principles to their children need to maintain healthy relationships and intentional and meaningful conversations about religious and spiritual matters with their children. They need to engage their children in conversations where they are able to express, in an open and sincere way, their ideas, concerns, conflicts, and problems. Youth need to perceive that their parents are not imposing upon them a set of values, standards, or principles, but rather that their parents are honestly interested in their well-being and happiness. They need to comprehend that their spiritual development is an important aspect in their lives that merits their attention and intentional development.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

In 1989 the North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists embarked in probably the most important study on church youth done by any religious denomination in North America, the *Valuegenesis* study (Dudley & Gillespie, 1992). This study was conducted by Search Institute of Minneapolis in consultation with researchers from Adventist and non-Adventist educational institutions. The *Valuegenesis* survey instrument is based on a similar questionnaire used by Search Institute to study adolescents and adults from six major Protestant denominations.

Avance was conducted as a follow-up to the *Valuegenesis* study; thus it included questions and scales that were used and validated by Search Institute for the *Valuegenesis* study. *Avance* is the largest denominational study of the Hispanic population in the United States (Ramírez-Johnson & Hernández, 2003). Although *Avance* followed a survey approach similar to *Valuegenesis,* researchers added questions that were relevant to Hispanic individuals (Hernández, 1995). The *Avance* research team was composed of eight members that included Seventh-day Adventist academicians, teachers, researchers, educational administrators, and church administrators. Edwin I. Hernández was the principal investigator (Ramírez-Johnson & Hernández, 2003).

Avance PR, which was conducted in Puerto Rico during the months of March and October 1995, is a continuation of the *Avance* study. This present study used data that came from the *Avance PR* study.

Sampling and Data Collection Procedures

The population for this study was high-school students enrolled in Adventist academies, college students enrolled in Antillean Adventist University, and youth who attended Adventist churches in Puerto Rico at the time the sample was drawn in 1995.

When the *Avance PR* study was conducted, the Adventist church in Puerto Rico was organized into two conferences: the Western Puerto Rican Conference and the Eastern Puerto Rican Conference. Although both conferences were invited to participate, only churches in the Western Conference and all high schools of the Western and Eastern Conference participated in the study. Churches in the Eastern Conference did not participate in the study.

Data were collected in churches and educational institutions of the Adventist denomination in Puerto Rico. To achieve an adequate representation for the sample, churches were first stratified by region and by size and then locations were randomly selected. An adequate representation of large versus small churches and rural versus urban churches was selected. A total of 36 churches in the Western Puerto Rican Conference were selected. Data were also collected in all six high schools in the Western Puerto Rican Conference, all three high schools in the Eastern Puerto Rican Conference, and at Antillean Adventist University in Mayagüez, Puerto Rico.

Surveys were administered in churches during a weekly youth meeting called *Sociedad de Jóvenes*. Youth meetings are organized by the church youth ministry

department and are held on Friday nights. Youth meetings are attended by both youth and adults, and are, normally, the second-best attended weekly church meeting. Pastors from the selected churches coordinated and promoted the project at their respective sites. A survey administrator was properly trained by the lead researcher. The survey administrator visited the designated churches and proctored the administration of the survey to all the youths and adults who consented to participate. Two different questionnaires were administered to participants in the study. One questionnaire was administered to single youths from 13 to 25 years old. Another questionnaire was administered to married youth and adults 26 years or older, and/or less than 26 years old, but married. Participants were divided into these two groups and completed the appropriate questionnaire. Participants of the *Avance PR* study were assured of the anonymity and confidentiality of their responses.

Similar procedures were followed in the schools and university settings. The School Superintendent for the Western Puerto Rican Conference coordinated the survey project for all the schools that participated in the *Avance PR* study. School administrators and teachers were trained in respect to the administration of the survey. All students attending the selected high schools from Grades 7–12 participated in the study.

In 1993, the Western Puerto Rican Conference had a total of 13,553 members. The *Avance PR* study has a total sample of 2,064 subjects. The total sample included youth (n = 1,406) and adults (n = 658). This study used the youth sample (n=1,406). From the youth sample (age 13-25), single never-married subjects were selected for a total of 1,377 subjects; 586 were males and 775 were females.

Instrumentation

The instrument used in this study is the *Avance PR* survey. This survey is an adapted version of the *Avance* survey used in the United States. Participants of the *Avance PR* study received a list of changes along with the surveys (see Appendix B). The *Avance PR* survey items were written in English and in Spanish (see Appendix A). Answering the questionnaire took between 30 to 90 minutes. The questionnaire included items and scales developed by the *Avance* research team, the *Valuegenesis* research team, and Search Institute of Minneapolis, Minnesota (Dudley & Gillespie, 1992; Ramírez-Johnson & Hernández, 2003) (see Appendix C). The *Avance* study focused on particular needs and challenges that the Hispanic community confronts in the United States (i.e., ethnic, cultural, and language issues). Most of the questions followed a Likert scale design and the options range from *strongly agree* to *strongly disagree*.

Research Variables

Avance PR has a total of 292 items of which 66 are used in this study, either as single items or scales. This study analyzed the relationships between 27 independent variables, 2 dependent variables, and 2 control variables. Thirteen of the variables were scales and 18 were single items. There were four variables in which one of the responses was "does not apply." The response for these variables was recoded to "missing." A complete list of the single items and the items that comprise the scales is provided in Appendix C.

All single items and all independent variables scales found in *Avance PR* that were related to the topic of this study were analyzed in relation to the literature review. A factor analysis was conducted on all of these items (single items and items in scales).

The factor analysis was principal component analysis and varimax rotation. Scales that were maintained in their original form were formed as a single factor in factor analysis and showed good reliability. *Avance PR* scales were modified if they were not a single factor in factor analysis, if reliability could be increased by removing items from the *Avance PR* scale, or if factor analysis indicated that another item should be added to the *Avance PR* scale. Newly formed scales were those that showed good reliability in factor analysis but were not in the *Avance PR* scales.

Throughout this document a coded system developed by the researchers of *Avance* will be used to identify the questions of the respective survey questionnaire. The system code is: CC = Common Core; AS = Adult Survey; and YS = Youth Survey. Thus YS Q123 will mean that question 123 of the youth survey is being referenced.

Dependent Variables

The dependent variables of this study measure youth behavior related to Christian spiritual disciplines found in the *Avance PR* study. This study used two dependent variables; one variable is a single item variable and one variable is a scale.

The single item variable measures frequency of church attendance. This variable is called Church Attendance, and it was created from item CC Q86 which reads: "How often do you attend church?" Possible answers for this item ranged from 1 = "Never" to 6 = "Several times a week or more." (See Appendix C for a complete list of possible answers.)

The scale variable measures frequency of devotional practices. This variable is called Devotional Practices. The Devotional Practices scale is a modified scale from the *Avance PR* study. The *Avance PR* scale contained five items with possible answers

ranging from 1 = "Never" to 5 = "More than once a day." Item CC Q2, which reads: "I seek opportunities to grow me spiritually," was added to the scale. As a result, the reliability of the scale increased from .748 to .777. To be included in the test, respondents were required to answer a minimum of five of the six items. (See Appendix C for the complete scale.)

Independent Variables

The independent variables of this study measure the degree of parental influence on youth behavior in relation to Christian spiritual practices. This study used a total of 27 independent variables that were divided into two categories: numerical variables that were quantitative in nature and categorical variables that were descriptive in nature. Also, 18 variables were single item variables, and 13 variables were scales.

The 7 categorical variables included: parental status, family worship quality, parental religious affiliation, parental educational expectations, verbal abuser, physical abuser, and sexual abuser.

The 20 numerical variables included: family income, family recreation, family worship quantity, parental punishment, parents encourage decisions, parental verbal abuse, parental physical abuse, parental sexual abuse, family unity, family worship impact, family risk behavior standards, family Adventist standards, parental education, parental educational involvement, parental role model, parental authoritarianism, parental misunderstanding, parental limits, parental knowledge of youth activities, and parental worries.

In order to use categorical variables for Hypotheses 2, 4, and 5, some variables were converted to dummy variables. Dummy variables are used to represent a subgroup

of the sample; they are variables that use "yes" or "no" as possible answers. Parental status was converted to parents separated. Parental religious affiliation was converted to mother SDA, father SDA, and both parents SDA. Parental educational expectation was converted to parental college expectation.

The independent single item variables were: parental status, family worship quality, parental religious affiliation, parental educational expectations, verbal abuser, physical abuser, sexual abuser, family income, family recreation, family worship quantity, parental punishment, parents encourage decisions, parental verbal abuse, parental physical abuse, parental sexual abuse, parents separated, parental college expectation, mother SDA, father SDA, and both parents SDA.

The independent variable scales were: family unity, family worship impact, family risk behavior standards, family Adventist standards, parental education, parental educational involvement, parental role model, parental authoritarianism, parental misunderstanding, parental limits, parental knowledge of youth activities, and parental worries.

Single Item Variables

Parental Status was measured by item YS Q187 which reads: "What is your family status?" Possible responses for this item were 1 = "Both parents live together," 2 = "My parents are separated," and 3 = "My parents are divorced."

Family Worship Quality was measured by item YS Q214 which reads: "How would you evaluate your family worship?" Possible responses for this item were 1 = "A waste of time," 2 = "No worship," and 3 = "Meaningful/spiritual."

Parental Religious Affiliation was measured by item CC Q88 and reads: "Are or were your parents Seventh-day Adventists?" Recoded responses for this item were: 2 = "Neither SDA," 3 = "Father SDA," 4 = "Mother SDA," 5 = "Both SDA." (See Appendix C for the original response format.)

Parental Educational Expectations was measured by item YS Q232 and reads: "How far in school do you think your parents want you to go?" Possible responses for this item ranged from 1 = "High school" to 6 = "Postgraduate." (See Appendix C for the complete range.)

Verbal Abuser was measured by item CC Q165 and reads: "If you have experienced verbal or emotional abuse, by whom?" Recoded responses for this item were 1 = "Parent only," 2 = "No abuse," 3 = "Other only." (See Appendix C for the original response format.)

Physical Abuser was measured by item CC Q166 and reads: "If you have experienced physical abuse, by whom?" Recoded responses for this item were 1 = "Parent only," 2 = "No abuse," 3 = "Other only." (See Appendix C for the original response format.)

Sexual Abuser was measured by item CC Q167 and reads: "If you have experienced sexual abuse, by whom?" Recoded responses for this item were 1 = "Parent only," 2 = "No abuse," 3 = "Other only." (See Appendix C for the original response format.)

Family Income was measured by item CC Q99 and reads: "About how much money did your family or household earn last year?" Possible responses for this item

ranged from 1 = “Less than $5,000” to 8 = “$75,000 or more.” (See Appendix C for the complete range.)

Family Recreation was measured by item YS Q210 and reads: “Go out together as a family (camping, vacation, going to a park).” Recoded responses for this item ranged from 2 = “Never” to 5 = “Very often.” (See Appendix C for the complete range.)

Family Worship Quantity was measured by item YS Q213 and reads: “How often does your family have family worship? Possible responses for this item ranged from 1 = “Never” to 7 = “More than once a day.” (See Appendix C for the complete range.)

Parental Punishment was measured by item YS Q194 and reads: “If I break one of the rules set by my parents, I usually get punished.” Possible responses for this item ranged from 1 = “Strongly disagree” to 5 = “Strongly agree.” (See Appendix C for the complete range.)

Parents Encourage Decision Making was measured by item YS Q198 and reads: “My parents encourage me to make my own decisions.” Possible responses for this item ranged from 1 = “Strongly disagree” to 5 = “Strongly agree.” (See Appendix C for the complete range.)

Parental Verbal Abuse was measured by item CC Q165 and reads: “Have you ever experienced verbal or emotional abuse?” Recoded responses for this item were: 1 = “Never,” 2 = “Rarely,” 3 = “Some of the time,” 4 = “Very often,” and 5 = “Almost all the time.” (See Appendix C for the original response format.)

Parental Physical Abuse was measured by item CC Q166 and reads: “Have you ever experienced physical abuse?” Recoded responses for this item were: 1 = “Never,”

2 = “Rarely,” 3 = “Some of the time,” 4 = “Very often,” and 5 = “Almost all the time.” (See Appendix C for the original response format.)

Parental Sexual Abuse was measured by item CC Q167 and reads: “Have you ever experienced sexual abuse?” Recoded responses for this item were: 1 = “Never,” 2 = “Rarely,” 3 = “Some of the time,” 4 = “Very often,” and 5 = “Almost all the time.” (See Appendix C for the original response format.)

Parents Separated was measured by item YS Q187 which reads: “What is your family status?” Possible responses for this item were: 1 = “Both parents live together,” 2 = “My parents are separated,” and 3 = “My parents are divorced.” Recoded responses for this item were: 1 = “Together” and 2 = “Separated or Divorced.”

Parental College Expectation was measured by item YS Q232 which reads: “How far in school do you think your parents want you to go?” Possible responses for this item ranged from 1 = “High school” to 6 = “Postgraduate.” Recoded responses for this item were: 1 = “Less than college” and 2 = “College or more.” (See Appendix C for the original response format.)

Mother SDA, Father SDA, and Both Parents SDA were measured by item YS Q88 which reads: “Are or were your parents Seventh-day Adventists?” Possible responses for this item were: 1 = “Neither SDA,” 2 = “Mother SDA,” 3 = “Father SDA,” and 4 = “Both SDA.” This item was recoded to “Is your mother Seventh-day Adventist?,” “Is your father Seventh-day Adventist?,” and “Are or were both parents Seventh-day Adventist?” Possible responses for this item were: 1 = “Yes” and 2 = “No.”

Scale Variables

Independent variable scales were organized into three categories: scales that were taken in their original form from *Avance PR,* scales that were modified from *Avance PR,* and scales that were created from *Avance PR*.

Original scales

The Family Unity scale measures the degree of cohesiveness among family members as perceived by youth. This scale has six items using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = "Strongly disagree" to 5 = "Strongly agree." Since all of the items were stated positively, high numbers indicated higher levels of family unity, whereas lower numbers indicated lower levels of family unity. One of the items reads: "There is a lot of love in my family." Respondents were required to answer a minimum of five of the six items. This scale has a Cronbach's Alpha measure of .885. (A complete list of the items that comprise this scale is provided in Appendix C.)

The Parental Role Model scale measures the degree to which parents exemplify Christian living as perceived by their children. This scale is composed of three items using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = "Strongly disagree" to 5 = "Strongly agree." One of the items reads: "My parents are good examples of the Christian life." Respondents were required to answer a minimum of two of the three items. This scale has a Cronbach's Alpha measure of .851. (See Appendix C for the complete scale.)

The Parental Misunderstanding scale measures the degree to which the subjects are misunderstood by their parents. This scale was formed by two items using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = "Strongly disagree" to 5 = "Strongly agree." The two items read: "My parents don't understand my problems" (YS Q200) and "Sometimes I feel that

my parents have forgotten what it means to be young" (YS Q201). These items were reverse-coded. Higher numbers indicated higher levels of parental understanding, whereas lower numbers indicated lower levels of parental understanding. This scale has a Cronbach's Alpha measure of .656.

The Parental Knowledge of Youth Activities scale is measured by six items (YS Q212a-YS Q212f). The items started with the statement: "How much do your parents REALLY know . . ." One of the items (YS212b) reads: ". . . where you go at night?" The possible responses where: 1 = "Don't know," 2 = "Know a Little," and 3 = "Know a Lot." Higher numbers indicated higher levels of parental knowledge of youth activities, whereas lower numbers indicated lower levels of parental knowledge of youth activities. Respondents were required to answer a minimum of four of the six items. This scale has a Cronbach's Alpha measure of .835. (See Appendix C for the complete scale.)

Modified scales

The Parental Authoritarianism scale measures the authoritarianism style of parenting as perceived by the respondent. The Parental Authoritarianism scale, in its original form, contained six items using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = "Strongly disagree" to 5 = "Strongly agree." A reliability test of the scale revealed that item YS Q198, which reads: "My parents encourage me to make my own decisions," was negatively correlated with the scale. Also, item YS Q194, which reads: "If I break one of the rules set by my parents, I usually get punished," significantly decreased the reliability coefficient of the scale. Therefore both items were removed from the scale. One of the items (YS Q199) reads: "My parents push their religious convictions on me." Respondents were required to answer a minimum of three of the four items. As a result,

the reliability coefficient of the scale increased from .544 to .706. (See Appendix C for a complete list of items.)

The Parental Limits scale measures the degree of parental control over time and media exposure of the respondent. The Parental Limits scale, in its original form, contained four items using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 2 = "Never" to 5 = "Very often." The items were preceded by the following statement: "How often do your parents do the following?" One of the items (YS Q209) reads: "Limit the types of music you listen to." Item YS Q207, which reads: "Talk about your educational goals," was not considered to be an actual parental limitation. Therefore item YS Q207 was removed from the scale. As a result, the reliability coefficient of the scale increased from .684 to .710. Respondents were required to answer a minimum of two of the three items. (See Appendix C for the complete scale.)

Created scales

The Parental Education scale measures level of education attained by parents as indicated by the respondent. This scale is composed of item CC Q16b "Mother's level of education" and item CC Q16c "Father's level of education." The items started with a statement that reads: "Indicate the HIGHEST level of education completed by each person." The items have three columns that include: "You," "Your Mother," and "Your Father." Only the "Your Mother" and "Your Father" columns were included in the scale. Possible responses ranged from: 1 = "No formal schooling" to 7 = "Postgraduate (Ph.D., M.D., Ed.D., etc.)." This scale has a Cronbach's Alpha measure of .688. (See Appendix C for the complete scale.)

The Family Worship Impact scale measures the degree of influence that family worship has on youth. The Family Worship Impact scale is measured by two items. Item YS Q213 reads: "How often does your family have family worship (prayers or religious devotions away from church services)?" and possible responses were recoded to range from 1 = "Never" to 4 = "Daily." This item measures frequency of family worship. Item YS Q214 reads: "How would you evaluate family worship?" and possible responses included: 2 = "A waste of time," and 3 = "Meaningful/spiritual." This item measured family worship quality. Through a combination of these two items it was possible to attain a measure of family impact. Measures of family worship impact ranged from 1 = "Worst negative impact," to 4 = "No impact," to 7 = "Most positive impact." Subjects who had "Daily" family worship and "A waste of time" family worship were rated as 1 = "Worst negative impact." Subjects who indicated "Never" family worship and "Does not apply" family worship were rated as 4 = "No impact." Subjects who had "Daily" family worship and "Meaningful/spiritual" family worship were rated as 7 = "Most positive impact." Since the scale included items that would not necessarily correlate with each other, the Cronbach's Alpha measure was not computed. (See Appendix C for the complete scale.)

The Family Risk Behavior Standards scale measures the degree of family enforcement of standards that pertain to at-risk behaviors as perceived by the respondent. The Family Risk Behavior Standards scale items are preceded by a statement that reads: "For each of the following standards, indicate how strictly they are enforced by your family." The Family Risk Behavior Standards scale is measured by five items using a 5-point Likert scale that ranges from: 1 = "Not at all strictly enforced" to 5 = "Very strictly

enforced." One of the items read: "One should not use illegal drugs" (CC Q132). Subjects were required to respond to a minimum of four of the five items. This scale has a Cronbach's Alpha measurement of .788. (See Appendix C for the complete scale.)

The Family Adventist Standards scale measures the degree of family enforcement of standards that are particular to the Adventist church as perceived by the respondent. The Family Adventist Standards scale items are preceded by a statement that reads: "For each of the following standards, indicate how strictly they are enforced by your family." The Family Adventist Standards scale is measured by nine items using a 5-point Likert scale that ranges from: 1 = "Not at all strictly enforced" to 5 = "Very strictly enforced." One of the items reads: "One should not eat 'unclean' meats" (CC Q134). Subjects were required to respond to a minimum of seven of the nine items. This scale has a Cronbach's Alpha measurement of .918. (See Appendix C for the complete scale.)

The Parental Worries scale measures the degree of worry in relation to parental issues such as love, abuse, divorce, and death, indicated by the respondent. The Parental Worries scale is measured by four items using a 5-point Likert scale that ranges from: 1 = "Not at all" to 5 = "Very much." The Parental Worries scale is preceded by a statement that reads: "This section asks you to tell how much you worry about different things in your life. I worry . . ." One of the items reads: ". . . That my parents might get a divorce" (YS Q275). Subjects were required to respond to a minimum of three of the four items. This scale has a Cronbach's Alpha measurement of .766. (See Appendix C for the complete scale.)

The Parental Educational Involvement scale measures the degree of parental involvement in the education of their children as reported by the respondent. The

Parental Educational Involvement scale is measured by two items using a 5-point Likert scale with the following optional responses: 2 = "Never," 3 = "Sometimes," 4 = "Often," and 5 = "Very often." The Parental Educational Involvement scale is preceded by a statement that reads: "How often do your parents do the following?" Item YS Q205 reads: "Keep pressing me to do my best work at school." Item YS Q207 reads: "Talk about your educational goals." This scale has a Cronbach's Alpha measurement of .666.

Control Variables

This study used two single item control variables: age and gender.

Age was measured by item CC Q77 which reads: "How old are you?" The original possible responses from the *Avance* survey ranged from: 1 = "13 or younger" to 15 = "66 and over." The possible responses for this item were recoded to fit the purpose of this study. Subjects were selected based on their reported age from "13 or younger" to "25" years old. Recoded responses for this item were: 1 = "Adolescents (13-17)" and 2 = "Young adults (18-25)." (See Appendix C for the original response format.)

Gender was measured by item CC Q13 which reads: "Are you male or female?" Possible responses for this item were: 1 = "Male" and 2 = "Female."

Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: There is no relationship between each parental influence variable individually and youth spiritual practices.

Hypothesis 2: There is no relationship between a combination of parental influence variables together and youth spiritual practices.

Hypothesis 3: There is no relationship between each parental influence variable individually and youth spiritual practices when controlling for age and gender.

Hypothesis 4: There is no relationship between a combination of parental influence variables together and youth spiritual practices when controlling for age and gender.

Hypothesis 5: There is no relationship between subsets of parental influence variables and youth spiritual practices.

Summary

This chapter presented the development of the *Avance PR* survey, description of the population and sampling procedures, data collection procedures, instrumentation, research variables, and research hypotheses.

CHAPTER IV

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

The purpose of this study was to determine if parental influence factors were related to devotional practices and church attendance as reported by youth in Puerto Rico. The first three chapters described the rationale and purpose of this study, the theoretical framework on which it is based, some findings of major studies that are related to this research, and the methodology for looking at the research questions. This chapter presents a description of the youth sample of the *Avance PR* study and the results of testing the null hypotheses.

Descriptive Analysis of the Sample

The *Avance PR* study has a total sample of 2,064 subjects. The total sample included youth (n = 1,406) and adults (n = 658). Subjects were selected from the *Avance PR* youth sample. Single never-married subjects were selected for a total of 1,377 subjects. Table 1 provides information of the breakdown of the subjects by age. The youth sample was divided into two age groups: 71.7% (n = 987) were adolescents (13-17 years old) and 28.2% (n = 388) were young adults (18-25 years old). Two subjects did not indicate their age. Table 2 provides information of the breakdown of the subjects by gender. Of the subjects selected for this study, 42.6% (n = 586) were male and 56.3% (n = 775) were female. Sixteen subjects did not indicate their gender.

Table 1

Distribution of Sample by Age

Age (n = 1,377)	*N*	%
Adolescents (13-17 years old)	987	71.70
Young Adults (18-25 years old)	388	28.20
Total	1,375	99.90

Table 2

Distribution of Sample by Gender

Gender (n = 1,377)	*N*	%
Male	586	42.60
Female	775	56.30
Total	1,361	98.90

Statistical Analyses for Hypothesis Testing

Five null hypotheses were tested in this study. Hypothesis 1 was tested by using two different procedures, ANOVA and the Pearson correlation coefficient. The categorical variables were tested using ANOVA and the numerical variables were tested using the Pearson correlation coefficient. Hypothesis 2 was tested using multiple regression. Hypothesis 3 was tested using two-way ANOVA and multiple regression. Hypothesis 4 was tested using multiple regression. Hypothesis 5 was tested using forward and backward stepwise regression. All the hypotheses were tested at the .05 level of significance.

When trying to test Hypotheses 2, 4, and 5 to predict devotional practices and church attendance using all variables, it was found that there were only 136 cases that included all of the variables, which was unacceptable. Some variables had many missing cases, and some variables had little variability so they had to be removed from the analysis to maximize the number of cases and still include as many important variables as possible. The following variables were removed from these analyses: parental verbal abuse, parental physical abuse, parental sexual abuse, parental education, and parental limits.

To interpret the difference in means, the effect sizes were computed by subtracting the highest mean from the lowest mean and dividing the result by the total standard deviation. Means differences were interpreted according to Cohen's (1988) effect size definitions which are: .2 = small, .5 = medium, and .8 = large.

Hypothesis 1

Hypothesis 1: There is no relationship between each of the 27 parental influence variables individually and each of the two youth spiritual practices variables.

Hypothesis 1 was tested by using two different procedures: the categorical variables were tested using ANOVA and the numerical variables were tested using the Pearson correlation coefficient.

Categorical Variables and Devotional Practices

A one-way ANOVA was conducted to test the relationship between categorical parental influence variables individually and devotional practices. Of the seven variables tested, three were significantly ($p < .05$) related to devotional practices. Tables 3 and 4

present the results of the ANOVA tests for each variable. Based on these results the null hypothesis was rejected for three of the seven categorical parental influence variables. There was a significant difference between two groups of family worship quality on devotional practices, $F(1, 673) = 37.576$, $p = .000$. Youth who rated family worship quality as meaningful were higher (3.06) on devotional practices than youth who rated family worship quality as a waste of time (2.52). The sample size for this ANOVA test is lower than for the rest of the ANOVA tests because subjects who reported no family worship were omitted. The difference was a medium effect size of 0.72.

There was a significant difference between four groups of parental religious affiliation on devotional practices, $F(3, 1273) = 35.087$, $p = .000$. Youth were highest (2.99) on devotional practices when both of their parents were Adventist and lowest (2.50) when both of their parents were not Adventist. The difference was a medium effect size of 0.62.

There was a significant difference between six groups of parental educational expectations on devotional practices, $F(5, 1229) = 2.227$, $p = .049$. Youth were highest (2.81) on devotional practices when parents expect them to graduate from college and lowest (2.49) when parents expect them to go to a vocational or trade school after high school. The difference was a small effect size of .41.

The following parental influence variables related to devotional practices were not significant: parental status, verbal abuser, physical abuser, and sexual abuser.

Categorical Variables and Church Attendance

A one-way ANOVA was conducted to test the relationship between categorical parental influence variables individually and church attendance. Of the seven variables tested,

Table 3

Analysis of Variance (One-way ANOVAS) of Devotional Practices: Hypothesis 1

Variable	Sum of Squares	*df*	Mean Square	*F*	Sig.
Parental Status					
Between Groups	1.48	2	.74	1.150	.317
Within Groups	807.11	1258	.64		
Total	808.59	1260			
Family Worship Quality					
Between Groups	19.79	1	19.79	37.576	.000*
Within Groups	354.38	673	.53		
Total	374.17	674			
Parental Religious Affiliation					
Between Groups	62.16	3	20.72	35.087	.000*
Within Groups	751.75	1273	.59		
Total	813.91	1276			
Parental Educational Expectation					
Between Groups	7.12	5	1.42	2.227	.049*
Within Groups	786.44	1229	.64		
Total	793.17	1234			
Verbal Abuser					
Between Groups	.09	2	4.25	.065	.937
Within Groups	780.84	1199	.65		
Total	780.93	1201			
Physical Abuser					
Between Groups	3.85	2	1.92	2.971	.052
Within Groups	835.76	1291	.65		
Total	839.61	1293			
Sexual Abuser					
Between Groups	1.57	2	.78	1.225	.294
Within Groups	825.06	1289	.64		
Total	826.62	1291			

*$p < .05$.

Table 4

Means and Standard Deviations of Devotional Practices: Hypothesis 1

Variable	*n*	*M*	*SD*	Effect Size
Parental Status				
Together	911	2.79	.79	
Separated	101	2.70	.82	
Divorced	249	2.72	.84	
Total	1,261	2.77	.80	.12
Family Worship Quality				
Meaningful	597	3.05	.72	
Waste of time	78	2.52	.74	
Total	675	2.99	.75	.72
Parental Religious Affiliation				
Both SDA	553	2.99	.74	
Mother SDA	228	2.80	.79	
Father SDA	33	2.76	.74	
Neither SDA	463	2.49	.79	
Total	1,277	2.77	.80	.62
Parental Educational Expectation				
High school	31	2.67	.91	
Trade school	42	2.48	.77	
Two years of college	73	2.58	.77	
College	431	2.81	.78	
Masters	230	2.79	.80	
Postgraduate	428	2.77	.82	
Total	1,235	2.76	.80	.41
Verbal Abuser				
Parent-only	156	2.77	.80	
Other-only	598	2.76	.80	
No abuse	448	2.75	.82	
Total	1,202	2.75	.81	.03
Physical Abuser				
Parent-only	154	2.68	.82	
Other-only	336	2.71	.82	
No abuse	804	2.81	.80	
Total	1,294	2.77	.81	.16

Table 4 – *Continued.*

Variable	*n*	*M*	*SD*	Effect Size
Sexual Abuser				
Parent-only	23	2.85	.88	
Other-only	305	2.71	.81	
No abuse	964	2.79	.79	
Total	1,292	2.77	.80	.17

five were significantly ($p < .05$) related to church attendance. Tables 5 and 6 present the results of the ANOVA tests for each variable. Based on these results the null hypothesis was rejected for five of the seven categorical parental influence variables.

There was a significant difference between three groups of parental status on church attendance, $F(2, 1251) = 8.973$, $p = .000$. Youth were highest (5.05) on church attendance when their parents were together and lowest (4.60) when their parents were divorced. The difference was a small effect size of 0.30.

There was a significant difference between two groups of family worship quality on church attendance, $F(1, 673) = 15.190$, $p = .000$. Youth who rated family worship quality as meaningful were higher (5.47) on church attendance than youth who rated family worship quality as a waste of time (4.96). The difference was a small effect size of 0.47.

There was a significant difference between four groups of parental religious affiliation on church attendance, $F(3, 1269) = 134.677$, $p = .000$. Youth were highest

Table 5

Analysis of Variance (One-way ANOVAS) of Church Attendance: Hypothesis 1

Variable	Sum of Squares	*df*	Mean Square	*F*	Sig.
Parental Status					
Between Groups	40.45	2	20.22	8.973	.000*
Within Groups	2819.39	1251	2.25		
Total	2859.84	1253			
Family Worship Quality					
Between Groups	17.79	1	17.79	15.190	.000*
Within Groups	788.23	673	1.17		
Total	806.02	674			
Parental Religious Affiliation					
Between Groups	707.59	3	235.72	134.677	.000*
Within Groups	2222.44	1269	1.75		
Total	2930.04	1272			
Parental Educational Expectation					
Between Groups	44.42	5	8.88	3.835	.002*
Within Groups	2835.29	1224	2.32		
Total	2879.70	1229			
Verbal Abuser					
Between Groups	6.84	2	3.42	1.406	.246
Within Groups	2907.41	1196	2.43		
Total	2914.25	1198			
Physical Abuser					
Between Groups	44.83	2	22.41	9.659	.000*
Within Groups	2981.76	1285	2.32		
Total	3026.54	1287			
Sexual Abuser					
Between Groups	4.59	2	2.29	.993	.371
Within Groups	2966.92	1284	2.31		
Total	2971.51	1286			

*$p < .05$.

Table 6

Means and Standard Deviations of Church Attendance: Hypothesis 1

Variable	*n*	*M*	*SD*	Effect Size
Parental Status				
Together	906	5.05	1.44	
Separated	102	4.86	1.53	
Divorced	246	4.60	1.69	
Total	1,254	4.95	1.51	.30
Family Worship Quality				
Meaningful	599	5.47	1.02	
Waste of time	76	4.96	1.51	
Total	675	5.42	1.09	.47
Parental Religious Affiliation				
Both SDA	551	5.66	.74	
Mother SDA	223	5.24	1.18	
Father SDA	33	4.76	1.64	
Neither	466	4.01	1.81	
Total	1,273	4.96	1.52	1.09
Parental Educational Expectation				
High school	27	4.30	1.81	
Trade school	43	4.65	1.76	
Two years of college	72	4.33	1.67	
College	433	4.99	1.49	
Masters	227	4.99	1.55	
Postgraduate	428	5.00	1.47	
Total	1,230	4.93	1.53	.46
Verbal Abuser				
Parent-only	156	4.85	1.57	
Other-only	597	4.83	1.62	
No abuse	446	4.99	1.47	
Total	1,199	4.89	1.56	.10
Physical Abuser				
Parent-only	152	4.80	1.62	
Other-only	335	4.64	1.69	
No abuse	801	5.06	1.43	
Total	1,288	4.92	1.53	.27

Table 6 – *Continued.*

Variable	*n*	*M*	*SD*	Effect Size
Sexual Abuser				
Parent-only	22	4.77	1.85	
No abuse	960	4.98	1.49	
Other-only	305	4.85	1.58	
Total	1,287	4.95	1.52	.14

(5.66) on church attendance when both parents were Adventist and lowest (4.01) when both parents were not Adventist. The difference was a large effect size of 1.09.

There was a significant difference between six groups of parental educational expectations on church attendance, $F(5, 1224) = 3.835$, $p = .002$. Youth were highest (5.00) on church attendance when parents expect them to finish a postgraduate degree and lowest (4.30) when parents expect them to finish high school only. The difference was a small effect size of .46.

There was a significant difference between three groups of physical abuser on church attendance, $F(2, 1285) = 9.659$, $p = .000$. Youth who had no physical abuse were highest (5.06) on church attendance whereas youth who had other-only physical abuse were lowest (4.64). The difference was a small effect size of 0.27.

The following parental influence variables related to church attendance were not significant: verbal abuser and sexual abuser.

Table 7

Correlations Between Parental Influence and Devotional Practices: Hypothesis 1

Variables	Devotional Practices	*N*
Family Income	-.090*	1,202
Family Recreation	.127*	1,252
Family Worship Quantity	.380*	1,321
Family Unity	.173*	1,352
Family Risk Behavior Standards	.219*	1,353
Family Adventist Standards	.377*	1,353
Family Worship Impact	.026	1,321
Parental Verbal Abuse	.029	587
Parental Physical Abuse	-.044	935
Parental Sexual Abuse	.020	973
Parental Punishment	.056*	1,347
Parents Encourage Decisions	.137*	1,330
Parental Role Model	.231*	1,341
Parental Authoritarianism	-.154*	1,347
Parental Misunderstanding	-.107*	1,327
Parental Limits	.166*	1,165
Parental Knowledge of Youth Activities	.188*	1,266
Parental Educational Involvement	.158*	1,281
Parental Education	-.101*	1,008
Parental Worries	.057*	1,266

*$p < .05$.

Numerical Variables and Devotional Practices

A Pearson correlation coefficient was calculated between numerical parental influence variables individually and devotional practices. Table 7 shows the results. The null hypothesis was rejected for 16 of the 20 numerical parental influence variables.

Of the 20 independent variables, 16 were significant at the 0.05 level, and 4 were not significantly related to devotional practices. The significant correlation coefficients were low to medium (r = .056 to .380) (Correlation definitions: low = 0.10 to 0.29; medium = 0.30 to 0.49; high = 0.50 to 1.00). Four variables showed the highest

correlation coefficients with devotional practices (r = .219 to .380): family risk behavior standards, parental role model, family Adventist standards, and family worship quantity. Four variables were significantly negatively correlated with devotional practices (r = -.090 to -.154): family income, parental authoritarianism, parental misunderstanding, and parental education.

Numerical Variables and Church Attendance

A Pearson correlation coefficient was calculated between numerical parental influence variables individually and church attendance. Table 8 shows the results. The null hypothesis was rejected for 15 of the 20 numerical parental influence variables.

Of the 20 independent variables, 15 were significant at the 0.05 level, and 5 were not significantly related to church attendance. The significant correlation coefficients were low to medium (r = .059 to .462). Four variables showed the highest correlation coefficients with church attendance (r = .343 to .462): family risk behavior standards, family worship quantity, parental role model, and family Adventist standards. Four variables were significantly negatively correlated with church attendance (r = -.088 to -.118): family income, parental authoritarianism, parental misunderstanding, and parental education.

Hypothesis 2

Hypothesis 2: There is no relationship between a combination of parental influence variables together and two youth spiritual practices variables.

The variables that had a large number of missing values were eliminated from the analyses of this hypothesis as explained in the beginning of this chapter.

Table 8

Correlations Between Parental Influence Variables and Church Attendance: Hypothesis 1

Variables	Church Attendance	*N*
Family Income	-.089*	1,198
Family Recreation	.099*	1,251
Family Worship Quantity	.360*	1,318
Family Unity	.147*	1,346
Family Risk Behavior Standards	.343*	1,348
Family Adventist Standards	.462*	1,348
Family Worship Impact	.059*	1,318
Parental Verbal Abuse	-.020	585
Parental Physical Abuse	-.051	931
Parental Sexual Abuse	.034	969
Parental Punishment	.019	1,342
Parents Encourage Decisions	.103*	1,325
Parental Role Model	.361*	1,337
Parental Authoritarianism	-.116*	1,342
Parental Misunderstanding	-.088*	1,323
Parental Limits	.120*	1,163
Parental Knowledge of Youth Activities	.130*	1,261
Parental Educational Involvement	.072*	1,279
Parental Education	-.118*	1,005
Parental Worries	.034	1,261

*$p < .05$.

Numerical Variables and Devotional Practices

A multiple regression analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between numerical parental influence variables together and devotional practices. The numerical variables combined are significantly related to devotional practices ($F(20, 818) = 12.703$, $p = .000$) and explain 24% of the variance ($r^2 = .237$). Table 9 shows the results of the regression analysis. Based on these results the null hypothesis was rejected.

Family worship quantity, parental authoritarianism, parental knowledge of youth activities, and family Adventist standards were significant predictors in the model containing all 20 variables. Family worship quantity and family Adventist standards each explained uniquely 3% of the variance. Parental authoritarianism and parental knowledge of youth activities each explained uniquely 1% or less of the variance.

Table 9

Regression Analysis Results on Devotional Practices: Hypothesis 2

	Coefficients				Correlations	
Variable	*B*	ß	*t*	Sig.	*r*	Part
Family Income	-.019	-.054	-1.651	.099	-.098	-.050
Family Recreation	-.004	-.006	-.161	.872	.106	-.005
Family Worship Quantity	.083	.237	6.109	.000*	.373	.187
Parental Punishment	-.016	-.026	-.777	.438	.038	-.024
Parents Encourage Decisions	.003	.004	.120	.904	.094	.004
Family Unity	.000	.000	.002	.999	.147	.000
Family Worship Impact	.004	.006	.193	.847	.028	.006
Family Risk Behavior Standards	8.585	.011	.288	.774	.258	.009
Family Adventist Standards	.161	.271	5.742	.000*	.402	.175
Parental Educational Involvement	.025	.025	.637	.524	.128	.019
Parental Role Model	-.034	-.051	-1.192	.233	.241	-.036
Parental Authoritarianism	-.101	-.126	-3.283	.001*	-.181	-.100
Parental Misunderstanding	.012	.019	.504	.614	-.120	.015
Parental Knowledge Youth Activ.	.141	.080	2.287	.022*	.190	.070
Parental Worries	.022	.039	1.332	.183	.019	.034
Parents Separated	.008	.004	.131	.896	-.076	.004
Parental College Expectation	.093	.037	1.138	.256	.094	.035
Mother SDA	.005	.002	.061	.951	.017	.002
Father SDA	-.046	-.011	-.335	.738	-.035	-.010
Both Parents SDA	.011	.007	.143	.887	.261	.004
Constant		1.694		5.388	.000	

Note. $R^2 = .237$. $F(20, 838) = 12.703$, $p = .000$.
*$p < .05$.

Numerical Variables and Church Attendance

A multiple regression analysis was conducted to test the relationship between numerical parental influence variables together and church attendance. The numerical variables combined are significantly related to church attendance ($F(20, 816) = 22.478$, $p = .000$) and explain 36% of the variance ($r^2 = .355$). Table 10 shows the results of the regression analysis. Based on these results the null hypothesis was rejected.

Table 10

Regression Analysis Results on Church Attendance: Hypothesis 2

	Coefficients				Correlations	
Variable	*B*	ß	*t*	Sig.	*r*	Part
Family Income	-.015	-.021	-.708	.479	-.086	-.020
Family Recreation	.018	.013	.368	.713	.118	.010
Family Worship Quantity	.031	.045	1.269	.205	.355	.036
Parental Punishment	-.034	-.029	-.943	.346	.040	-.027
Parents Encourage Decisions	-.019	-.014	-.425	.671	.076	-.012
Family Unity	-.033	-.017	-.407	.648	.145	-.011
Family Worship Impact	.061	.044	1.522	.128	.064	.043
Family Risk Behavior Standards	.085	.056	1.606	.109	.353	.045
Family Adventist Standards	.238	.205	4.700	.000*	.501	.132
Parental Educational Involvement	-.112	-.057	-1.618	.106	.069	-.045
Parental Role Model	.225	.172	4.338	.000*	.406	.122
Parental Authoritarianism	-.071	-.045	-1.287	.198	-.125	-.036
Parental Misunderstanding	-.001	-.001	-.031	.976	-.104	-.001
Parental Knowledge Youth Activ.	.214	.062	1.933	.054	.175	.054
Parental Worries	-.000	-.001	-.023	.982	.005	-.001
Parents Separated	-.072	-.021	-.689	.491	-.156	-.019
Parental College Expectation	.272	.055	1.842	.066	.132	.052
Mother SDA	.830	.204	5.865	.000*	.098	.165
Father SDA	.292	.034	1.163	.245	-.058	.033
Both Parents SDA	.766	.253	5.688	.000*	.412	.160
Constant		1.694		5.388	.000	

Note. $R^2 = .355$. $F(20, 816) = 22.478$, $p = .000$.
*$p < .05$.

Family Adventist standards, parental role model, mother SDA, and both parents SDA were significant predictors in the model containing all 20 variables. Mother SDA and Both Parents SDA each explain uniquely 3% of the variance. Family Adventist standards and parental role model each explain uniquely 2% or less of the variance.

Hypothesis 3

Hypothesis 3: There is no relationship between each of the 27 parental influence variables individually and the two youth spiritual practices variables when controlling for age and gender.

This hypothesis was tested using a two-way Analysis of Variance and a multiple regression analysis. A two-way Analysis of Variance was used for the categorical variables and a multiple regression analysis was used for the numerical variables.

Categorical Variables and Devotional Practices Controlling for Age

A two-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was conducted to examine the relationship between categorical parental influence variables individually and devotional practices after controlling for age. Two of the seven parental influence variables had a significant relationship ($p < .05$) with devotional practices after controlling for age: family worship quality and parental religious affiliation.

Age showed a significant ($p < .05$) interaction with three of the seven parental influence variables tested: family worship quality, physical abuser, and sexual abuser. The result of this analysis is shown in Table 11. Mean distributions are shown in Table 12. Based on these results the null hypothesis was rejected for age in four of the seven categorical parental influence variables. The following parental influence variables were

Table 11

Two-Way ANOVA Tables of Devotional Practices and Age: Hypothesis 3

Variables	Sum of Squares	*df*	Mean Square	*F*	Sig.
		Parental Status			
AGE	14.26	1	14.26	22.634	.000*
PARSTATS	.18	2	9.01	.143	.867
AGE*PARSTATS	1.40	2	.70	1.107	.331
Error	833.00	1322	.63		
Total	11030.50	1328			
		Family Worship Quality			
AGE	9.29	1	9.29	17.965	.000*
FAMWQUAL	9.11	1	9.11	17.634	.000*
AGE*FAMQUAL	3.47	1	3.47	6.712	.010*
Error	363.35	703	.52		
Total	6709.29	707			
		Parental Religious Affiliation			
AGE	1.96	1	1.96	3.356	.067
PARRELAF	31.17	3	10.39	17.771	.000*
AGE*PARRELAF	2.57	3	.86	1.463	.223
Error	780.59	1335	.59		
Total	11139.14	1343			
		Parental Educational Expectation			
AGE	.79	1	.79	1.253	.263
PAREXPEC	6.89	5	1.38	2.200	.052
AGE*PAREXPEC	3.41	5	.68	1.089	.365
Error	805.86	1286	.63		
Total	10740.59	1298			

Table 11 – *Continued.*

Variables	Sum of Squares	*df*	Mean Square	*F*	Sig.
		Verbal Abuser			
AGE	18.73	1	18.73	29.564	.000*
VABUSER	.85	2	.43	.672	.511
AGE*VABUSER	1.07	2	.54	.846	.429
Error	757.00	1195	.63		
Total	9888.11	1201			
		Physical Abuser			
AGE	24.90	1	24.90	39.628	.000*
PABUSER	.32	2	.16	.254	.776
AGE*PABUSER	4.91	2	2.45	3.903	.020*
Error	808.80	1287	.63		
Total	10758.91	1293			
		Sexual Abuser			
AGE	5.20	1	5.20	8.373	.004*
SABUSER	.30	2	.15	.245	.783
AGE*SABUSER	5.00	2	2.50	4.029	.018*
Error	797.00	1284	.62		
Total	10736.02	1290			

*$p < .05$.

not significantly related to devotional practices when controlling for age: parental status, parental educational expectation, and verbal abuser.

Family worship quality had a significant relationship ($p = .000$) with devotional practices after controlling for age. Youth who rated family worship as meaningful scored higher (3.09) on devotional practices than youth who rated family worship as a waste of

Table 12

Means and Standard Deviations for Devotional Practices and Age: Hypothesis 3

		Adolescents		Young adults		Total
		Mean	*SD*	Mean	*SD*	Mean
			Parental Status			
	Together	2.72	.80	2.96	.74	2.84
	Separated	2.61	.80	2.97	.79	2.79
	Divorced	2.62	.80	3.05	.90	2.84
Total		2.65		3.00		
			Family Worship Quality			
	Meaningful	3.01	.75	3.17	.67	3.09
	Waste of time	2.34	.69	3.01	.66	2.68
Total		2.67		3.09		
			Parental Religious Affiliation			
	Both SDA	2.94	.76	3.08	.71	3.01
	Mother SDA	2.75	.80	2.92	.76	2.84
	Father SDA	2.71	.76	2.71	.64	2.71
	Neither SDA	2.43	.76	2.78	.88	2.61
Total		2.71		2.87		
			Parental Educ. Expectation			
	High school	2.74	.96	2.00	.00	2.37
	Trade school	2.41	.78	2.72	.74	2.56
	2 year college	2.49	.77	2.75	.70	2.62
	College	2.74	.79	2.95	.76	2.84
	Masters	2.66	.77	3.04	.81	2.85
	Postgraduate	2.69	.80	3.05	.80	2.87
Total		2.62		2.75		

Table 12 – *Continued.*

		Adolescents		Young adults		Total
		Mean	*SD*	Mean	*SD*	Mean
			Verbal Abuser			
	Parent only	2.66	.81	3.04	.71	2.85
	Other only	2.67	.79	3.03	.76	2.85
	No abuse	2.67	.82	2.90	.82	2.79
Total		2.67		2.98		
			Physical Abuser			
	Parent only	2.51	.76	3.09	.81	2.80
	Other only	2.64	.80	3.08	.85	2.86
	No abuse	2.74	.80	2.95	.76	2.85
Total		2.63		3.04		
			Sexual Abuser			
	Parent only	2.76	.99	3.11	.47	2.93
	Other only	2.58	.76	3.14	.83	2.86
	No abuse	2.72	.80	2.94	.75	2.83
Total		2.69		3.07		

time (2.68). The difference is a medium effect size of .50. There was significant interaction between family worship quality and age on devotional practices, $F(1, 703) = 6.712$, $p = .010$. Differences in devotional practices between youth varying in family worship quality were larger for adolescents than for young adults. Adolescents who rated family worship as meaningful scored higher (3.01) on devotional practices than adolescents who rated family worship as a waste of time (2.34). The difference for adolescents was a large effect size of .88. Young adults who rated family worship as

meaningful scored higher (3.17) on devotional practices than young adults who rated family worship as a waste of time (3.01). The difference for young adults was a small effect size of .21.Parental religious affiliation had a significant relationship (p = .000) with devotional practices after controlling for age. Youth scored highest (3.01) on devotional practices when both parents were Adventist and scored lowest (2.61) when both parents were not Adventist. The difference was a medium effect size of .50. There was no significant interaction between parental religious affiliation and age on devotional practices, $F(3, 1335) = 1.463$, p = .223.

There was no significant relationship (p = .776) between physical abuser and devotional practices after controlling for age. However, there was significant interaction between physical abuser and age on devotional practices ($F(2, 1287) = 3.903$, p = .020). Young adults who had parent-only physical abuse scored higher (3.09) on devotional practices than those who had no physical abuse (2.95). The difference for young adults is a small effect of .17. There was no difference between those who had parent-only physical abuse and those who had other-only physical abuse on devotional practices after controlling for age. Adolescents who had parent-only physical abuse scored lower (2.51) on devotional practices than those who had no physical abuse (2.74). The difference between adolescents is a small effect size of .29.

There was no significant relationship (p = .783) between sexual abuser and devotional practices after controlling for age. However, there was significant interaction between sexual abuser and age on devotional practices ($F(2, 1284) = 4.029$, p = .018). Young adults who had other-only sexual abuse scored higher (3.14) on devotional practices than those who had no sexual abuse (2.72). The difference was a small effect

size of .25. Adolescents who had other-only sexual abuse scored lower (2.58) on devotional practices than those who had parent-only sexual abuse (2.76). The difference was a small effect size of .22.

Categorical Variables and Devotional Practices Controlling for Gender

A two-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was conducted to examine the relationship between categorical parental influence variables individually and devotional practices after controlling for gender. Two of the seven parental influence variables had a significant relationship ($p < .05$) with devotional practices after controlling for gender: family worship quality and parental religious affiliation. Gender showed a significant ($p < .05$) interaction with two of the seven parental influence variables tested: physical abuser and sexual abuser. The result of this analysis is shown in Table 13. Mean distributions are shown in Table 14. Based on these results, the null hypothesis was rejected for gender in four of the seven categorical parental influence variables. The following parental influence variables were not significantly related to devotional practices when controlling for gender: parental status, parental educational expectation, and verbal abuser.

Family worship quality had a significant relationship ($p = .000$) with devotional practices after controlling for gender. Youth who rated family worship as meaningful scored higher (3.05) on devotional practices than youth who rated family worship as a waste of time (2.50). The difference is a medium effect size of .74. There was no significant interaction between family worship quality and gender on devotional practices, $F(1, 662) = 1.798$, $p = .180$.

Table 13

Two-Way ANOVA Tables of Devotional Practices and Gender: Hypothesis 3

Variables	Sum of Squares	*df*	Mean Square	*F*	Sig.
		Parental Status			
GENDER	.37	1	.37	.577	.448
PARSTATS	1.88	2	.94	1.469	.231
GENDER*PARSTATS	2.10	2	1.05	1.640	.194
Error	795.07	1241	.64		
Total	10409.66	1247			
		Family Worship Quality			
GENDER	.005	1	.005	.009	.923
FAMWQUAL	19.77	1	19.77	37.547	.000*
GENDER*FAMQUAL	.95	1	.95	1.798	.180
Error	348.49	662	.53		
Total	6347.58	666			
		Parental Religious Affiliation			
GENDER	.13	1	.13	.216	.642
PARRELAF	61.30	3	20.43	34.601	.000*
GENDER*PARRELAF	3.60	3	1.20	2.030	.108
Error	741.09	1255	.59		
Total	10519.33	1263			
		Parental Educational Expectation			
GENDER	1.15	1	1.15	1.798	.180
PAREXPEC	6.69	5	1.34	2.089	.064
GENDER*PAREXPEC	.82	5	.17	.257	.936
Error	775.38	1210	.64		
Total	10154.21	1222			

Table 13 – *Continued.*

Variables	Sum of Squares	*df*	Mean Square	*F*	Sig.
		Verbal Abuser			
GENDER	.86	1	.86	1.322	.251
VABUSER	.14	2	.07	.108	.898
GENDER*VABUSER	.80	2	.40	.611	.543
Error	769.58	1181	.65		
Total	9780.49	1187			
		Physical Abuser			
GENDER	.06	1	.06	.093	.760
PABUSER	2.35	2	1.18	1.826	.161
GENDER*PABUSER	6.45	2	3.23	5.015	.007*
Error	818.81	1273	.64		
Total	10646.30	1279			
		Sexual Abuser			
GENDER	1.20	1	1.20	1.883	.170
SABUSER	2.48	2	1.24	1.942	.144
GENDER*SABUSER	4.13	2	2.07	3.242	.039*
Error	810.51	1272	.64		
Total	10632.99	1278			

*$p < .05$.

Parental religious affiliation had a significant relationship ($p = .000$) with devotional practices after controlling for gender. Youth scored highest (2.99) on devotional practices when both parents were Adventist and lowest (2.49) when both parents were not Adventist. The difference is a medium effect size of .63. There was no significant interaction between parental religious affiliation and gender on devotional practices, $F(3, 1255) = 2.030$, $p = .108$.

Table 14

Means and Standard Deviations for Devotional Practices and Gender: Hypothesis 3

		Male		Female		Total
		Mean	*SD*	Mean	*SD*	Mean
			Parental Status			
	Together	2.76	.82	2.83	.76	2.79
	Separated	2.76	.83	2.64	.81	2.70
	Divorced	2.60	.94	2.81	.76	2.71
Total		2.71		2.76		
			Family Worship Quality			
	Meaningful	2.99	.76	3.10	.70	3.05
	Waste of time	2.57	.78	2.44	.69	2.50
Total		2.78		2.77		
			Parental Religious Affiliation			
	Both SDA	3.00	.74	2.99	.75	2.99
	Mother SDA	2.84	.84	2.78	.77	2.81
	Father SDA	2.76	.66	2.77	.79	2.77
	Neither SDA	2.39	.86	2.59	.72	2.49
Total		2.75		2.78		
			Parental Educ. Expectations			
	High school	2.63	1.11	2.74	.80	2.68
	Trade school	2.39	.75	2.56	.79	2.48
	2 year college	2.51	.85	2.70	.66	2.58
	College	2.78	.76	2.84	.79	2.81
	Masters	2.71	.88	2.84	.75	2.78
	Postgraduate	2.78	.90	2.78	.76	2.78
Total		2.63		2.74		

Table 14 – C*ontinued.*

		Male		Female		Total
		Mean	*SD*	Mean	*SD*	Mean
			Verbal Abuser			
	Parent only	2.79	.88	2.75	.75	2.74
	Other only	2.70	.85	2.80	.75	2.75
	No abuse	2.68	.84	2.80	.80	2.74
Total		2.72		2.79		
			Physical Abuser			
	Parent only	2.86	.94	2.56	.71	2.71
	Other only	2.67	.90	2.75	.75	2.71
	No abuse	2.72	.82	2.88	.77	2.80
Total		2.75		2.73		
			Sexual Abuser			
	Parent only	3.28	1.09	2.52	.63	2.90
	Other only	2.60	.85	2.77	.78	2.69
	No abuse	2.75	.83	2.82	.76	2.79
Total		2.88		2.70		

Physical abuser had no significant relationship ($p = .161$) with devotional practices after controlling for gender. However, there was significant interaction between physical abuser and gender on devotional practices, $F(2, 1273) = 5.015$, $p = .007$. Females who had no physical abuse scored higher (2.88) on devotional practices than females who had parent-only physical abuse (2.56). The difference for females is a small

effect size of .40. Males who had parent-only physical abuse scored higher (2.86) on devotional practices than males who had other-only physical abuse (2.67). The difference for males is a small effect size of .24.

Sexual abuser had no significant relationship ($p = .144$) with devotional practices after controlling for gender. However, there was significant interaction between sexual abuser and gender on devotional practices, $F(2, 1272) = 3.242$, $p = .039$. Differences in devotional practices between youth varying in sexual abuser were larger for males than for females. Females who had no sexual abuse scored higher (2.82) on devotional practices than females who had parent-only sexual abuse (2.52). The difference for females is a small effect size of .37. Males who had parent-only sexual abuse scored higher (3.28) on devotional practices than males who had other-only sexual abuse (2.60). The difference for males is a large effect size of .85.

Categorical Variables and Church Attendance Controlling for Age

A two-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was conducted to examine the relationship between categorical parental influence variables individually and church attendance after controlling for age. Four of the seven parental influence variables had a significant relationship ($p < .05$) with church attendance after controlling for age: parental status, family worship quality, parental religious affiliation, and physical abuser. Age showed a significant ($p < .05$) interaction with one of the seven parental influence variables tested: family worship quality. The results of this analysis are shown in Table 15. Mean distributions are shown in Table 16. Based on these results the null hypothesis was rejected for age in four of the seven categorical parental influence variables.

Table 15

Two-Way ANOVA Tables of Church Attendance and Age: Hypothesis 3

Variables	Sum of Squares	*df*	Mean Square	*F*	Sig.
		Parental Status			
AGE	43.42	1	43.42	19.877	.000*
PARSTATS	18.32	2	9.16	4.193	.015*
AGE*PARSTATS	2.28	2	1.14	.522	.593
Error	2722.05	1246	2.19		
Total	33531.00	1252			
		Family Worship Quality			
AGE	24.27	1	24.27	21.465	.000*
FAMWQUAL	4.42	1	4.42	3.909	.048*
AGE*FAMQUAL	6.82	1	6.82	6.027	.014*
Error	756.41	669	.52		
Total	20556.00	673			
		Parental Religious Affiliation			
AGE	5.42	1	5.42	3.122	.077
PARRELAF	404.87	3	134.96	77.707	.000*
AGE*PARRELAF	5.37	3	1.79	1.031	.378
Error	2195.23	1264	1.74		
Total	34221.00	1272			
		Parental Educational Expectation			
AGE	27.57	1	27.57	12.297	.000*
PAREXPEC	15.76	5	3.15	1.406	.219
AGE*PAREXPEC	8.55	5	1.71	.763	.577
Error	2728.42	1217	.63		
Total	32720.00	1229			

Table 15 – *Continued.*

Variables	Sum of Squares	*df*	Mean Square	*F*	Sig.
		Verbal Abuser			
AGE	99.10	1	99.10	42.235	.000*
VABUSER	1.55	2	.77	.330	.719
AGE*VABUSER	5.83	2	2.92	1.243	.289
Error	2796.98	1192	2.35		
Total	31538.00	1198			
		Physical Abuser			
AGE	72.44	1	72.44	32.260	.000*
PABUSER	13.92	2	6.96	3.099	.045*
AGE*PABUSER	1.28	2	.64	.285	.752
Error	2876.35	1281	2.25		
Total	34238.00	1287			
		Sexual Abuser			
AGE	37.29	1	37.29	16.713	.000*
SABUSER	.11	2	.05	.024	.976
AGE*SABUSER	8.08	2	4.04	1.811	.164
Error	2853.64	1279	.62		
Total	34428.00	1285			

*$p < .05$.

The following parental influence variables were not significantly related to church attendance when controlling for age: parental educational expectation, verbal abuser, and sexual abuser.

Parental status had a significant relationship ($p = .015$) with church attendance after controlling for age. Youth who indicated that their parents lived together scored highest (5.17) on church attendance whereas youth who indicated that their parents were divorced scored lowest (4.82). The difference is a small effect size of .23. There was no

significant interaction between parental status and age on church attendance, $F(2, 1246) = .522$, $p = .593$.

Family worship quality had a significant relationship ($p = .048$) with church attendance after controlling for age. Youth who rated family worship quality as meaningful scored higher (5.54) on church attendance than youth who rated family worship quality as a waste of time (5.24). The difference is a small effect size of .28.

There was a significant interaction between family worship quality and age on church attendance, $F(1, 669) = 6.027$, $p = .014$. Adolescents who rated family worship as meaningful scored higher (5.38) on church attendance than adolescents who rated family worship as a waste of time (4.71). The difference for adolescents is a medium effect size of .61. Young adults who rated family worship as a waste of time scored higher (5.78) on church attendance than young adults who rated family worship as meaningful (5.71). The difference for young adults is a very small effect size of .06.

Parental religious affiliation had a significant relationship ($p = .000$) with church attendance after controlling for age. Youth scored highest (5.68) on church attendance when both parents were Adventist and lowest (4.18) when their parents were not Adventist. The difference is a large effect size of .99. There was no significant interaction between parental religious affiliation and age on church attendance, $F(3, 1264) = 1.031$, $p = .378$.

Physical abuser had a significant relationship ($p = .045$) with church attendance after controlling for age. Youth who had no physical abuse scored highest (5.17) on church attendance whereas youth who had other-only physical abuse scored lowest

Table 16

Means and Standard Deviations for Church Attendance and Age: Hypothesis 3

		Adolescents		Young adults		Total
		Mean	*SD*	Mean	*SD*	Mean
			Parental Status			
	Together	4.88	1.54	5.45	1.08	5.17
	Separated	4.74	1.53	5.25	1.48	5.00
	Divorced	4.41	1.79	5.22	1.14	4.82
Total		4.68		5.31		
			Family Worship Quality			
	Waste of time	4.71	1.63	5.78	.43	5.24
	Meaningful	5.38	1.12	5.71	.65	5.54
Total		5.04		5.74		
			Parental Religious Affiliation			
	Both SDA	5.59	.83	5.76	.55	5.68
	Mother SDA	5.14	1.27	5.55	.77	5.34
	Father SDA	4.74	1.70	4.83	1.47	4.79
	Neither SDA	3.93	1.83	4.42	1.67	4.18
Total		4.85		5.14		
			Parental Educ. Expectations			
	High school	4.24	1.88	5.00	.00	4.62
	Trade school	4.32	1.94	5.50	.67	4.91
	2 year college	4.19	1.72	5.00	1.29	4.59
	College	4.83	1.55	5.29	1.33	5.06
	Masters	4.68	1.77	5.53	.82	5.11
	Postgraduate	4.87	1.53	5.49	1.10	5.18
Total		4.52		5.31		

Table 16 – *Continued.*

		Adolescents		Young adults		Total
		Mean	*SD*	Mean	*SD*	Mean
			Verbal Abuser			
	Parent only	4.54	1.67	5.56	1.03	5.05
	Other only	4.67	1.68	5.32	1.29	5.00
	No abuse	4.81	1.59	5.35	1.09	5.08
Total		4.67		5.41		
			Physical Abuser			
	Parent only	4.57	1.68	5.38	1.35	4.97
	Other only	4.55	1.74	5.21	1.29	4.87
	No abuse	4.87	1.55	5.46	1.03	5.17
Total		4.66		5.35		
			Sexual Abuser			
	Parent only	4.31	1.99	6.00	.00	5.16
	Other only	4.67	1.69	5.49	.87	5.08
	No abuse	4.82	1.58	5.37	1.19	5.09
Total		4.60		5.62		

(4.87). The difference was a small effect size of .19. There was no significant interaction between physical abuser and age on church attendance, $F(2, 1281) = .285$, $p = .752$.

Categorical Variables and Church Attendance Controlling for Gender

A two-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was conducted to examine the relationship between categorical parental influence variables individually and church attendance after controlling for gender. Five of the seven parental influence variables had a significant relationship ($p < .05$) with church attendance after controlling for gender:

parental status, family worship quality, parental religious affiliation, parental educational expectation, and physical abuser. Gender showed a significant ($p < .05$) interaction with two of the seven parental influence variables tested: family worship quality and parental religious affiliation. The result of this analysis is shown in Table 17. Mean distributions are shown in Table 18. Based on these results the null hypothesis was rejected for gender in five of the seven categorical parental influence variables. The following parental influence variables were not significantly related to church attendance when controlling for gender: verbal abuser and sexual abuser.

Parental status had a significant relationship ($p = .000$) with church attendance after controlling for gender. Youth who indicated that their parents lived together scored highest (5.04) on church attendance whereas youth who indicated that their parents were divorced scored lowest (4.57). The difference is a small effect size of .31. There was no significant interaction between parental status and gender on church attendance, $F(2, 1234) = .109$, $p = .896$.

Family worship quality had a significant relationship ($p = .000$) with church attendance after controlling for gender. Youth who rated family worship quality as meaningful scored higher (5.46) on church attendance than youth who rated family worship quality as a waste of time (4.96). The difference is a small effect size of .46.

There was significant interaction between family worship quality and gender on church attendance, $F(1, 662) = 4.410$, $p = .036$. Differences in church attendance between youth varying in family worship quality were larger for males than for females.

Table 17

Two-Way ANOVA Tables of Church Attendance and Gender: Hypothesis 3

Variables	Sum of Squares	*df*	Mean Square	*F*	Sig.
		Parental Status			
GENDER	5.91	1	5.91	2.630	.105
PARSTATS	40.22	2	20.11	8.949	.000*
GENDER*PARSTATS	.49	2	.25	.109	.896
Error	2772.62	1234	2.25		
Total	33199.00	1240			
		Family Worship Quality			
GENDER	9.34	1	9.34	8.064	.005*
FAMWQUAL	16.45	1	16.45	14.212	.000*
GENDER*FAMQUAL	5.11	1	5.11	4.410	.036*
Error	766.37	662	1.16		
Total	20338.00	666			
		Parental Religious Affiliation			
GENDER	1.10	1	1.10	.632	.427
PARRELAF	701.92	3	233.97	134.245	.000*
GENDER*PARRELAF	16.86	3	5.62	3.224	.022*
Error	2180.34	1251	1.74		
Total	33873.00	1259			
		Parental Educational Expectation			
GENDER	23.80	1	23.80	10.368	.001*
PAREXPEC	38.59	5	7.72	3.362	.005*
GENDER*PAREXPEC	23.79	5	4.76	2.073	.066
Error	2766.19	1205	2.30		
Total	32408.00	1217			

Table 17 – *Continued*.

Variables	Sum of Squares	*df*	Mean Square	*F*	Sig.
		Verbal Abuser			
GENDER	10.03	1	10.03	4.146	.042*
VABUSER	4.58	2	2.29	.947	.388
GENDER*VABUSER	6.33	2	3.17	1.308	.271
Error	2850.07	1178	2.42		
Total	31201.00	1184			
		Physical Abuser			
GENDER	2.33	1	2.33	1.006	.316
PABUSER	41.39	2	20.69	8.943	.000*
GENDER*PABUSER	2.22	2	1.11	.479	.619
Error	2931.84	1267	2.31		
Total	33881.00	1273			
		Sexual Abuser			
GENDER	.28	1	.28	.122	.727
SABUSER	6.09	2	3.04	1.322	.267
GENDER*SABUSER	.72	2	.36	.156	.855
Error	2917.35	1267	2.30		
Total	34096.00	1273			

*$p < .05$.

Males who rated family worship as meaningful scored higher (5.41) on church attendance than males who rated family worship as a waste of time (4.63). The difference for males was a medium effect size of .72. Females who rated family worship as meaningful were higher (5.51) on church attendance than females who rated family worship as a waste of time (5.29). The difference for females was a small effect size of .20.

Table 18

Means and Standard Deviations for Church Attendance and Gender: Hypothesis 3.

		Male		Female		Total
		Mean	*SD*	Mean	*SD*	Mean
			Parental Status			
	Together	4.94	1.56	5.13	1.36	5.04
	Separated	4.83	1.58	4.96	1.40	4.89
	Divorced	4.43	1.75	4.71	1.64	4.57
Total		4.73		4.93		
			Family Worship Quality			
	Meaningful	5.41	1.14	5.51	.93	5.46
	Waste of time	4.63	1.77	5.29	1.11	4.96
Total		5.02		5.40		
			Parental Religious Affiliation			
	Both SDA	5.71	.66	5.62	.79	5.67
	Mother SDA	5.26	1.24	5.22	1.16	5.24
	Father SDA	4.67	1.83	4.81	1.57	4.74
	Neither SDA	3.80	1.85	4.21	1.77	4.00
Total		4.86		4.97		
			Parental Educational Expec.			
	High school	3.50	1.87	5.15	1.34	4.33
	Trade school	4.54	1.84	4.75	1.69	4.64
	2 year college	4.07	1.73	4.63	1.60	4.35
	College	4.99	1.51	4.98	1.48	4.99
	Masters	4.75	1.78	5.13	1.39	4.94
	Postgraduate	4.96	1.52	5.04	1.42	5.00
Total		4.47		4.95		

Table 18 – *Continued.*

		Male		Female		Total
		Mean	*SD*	Mean	*SD*	Mean
			Verbal Abuse			
	Parent only	4.75	1.76	4.91	1.44	4.83
	Other only	4.78	1.68	4.87	1.57	4.83
	No abuse	4.75	1.61	5.16	1.33	4.96
Total		4.76		4.98		
			Physical Abuse			
	Parent only	4.83	1.75	4.78	1.55	4.80
	Other only	4.56	1.76	4.71	1.65	4.64
	No abuse	4.94	1.54	5.16	1.33	5.05
Total		4.77		4.88		
			Sexual Abuse			
	Parent only	4.78	1.92	4.60	2.12	4.69
	Other only	4.71	1.71	4.93	1.50	4.82
	No abuse	4.86	1.59	5.08	1.40	4.97
Total		4.78		4.87		

Parental religious affiliation had a significant relationship (p = .000) with church attendance after controlling for gender. Youth who indicated that their parents were Adventist scored highest (5.67) on church attendance whereas youth who indicated that their parents were not Adventist scored lowest (4.00). The difference is a large effect size of 1.10. There was significant interaction between parental religious affiliation and gender on church attendance, $F(3, 1251) = 3.224$, $p = .022$. Differences in church attendance between youth varying in parental religious affiliation were larger for males

than for females. Males who indicated that their parents were Adventist scored highest (5.71) on church attendance whereas males who indicated that their parents were not Adventist scored lowest (3.80). The difference for males was a large effect size of 1.26. Females who indicated that their parents were Adventist scored highest (5.62) on church attendance whereas females who indicated that their parents were not Adventist scored lowest (4.21). The difference for females was a large effect size of .93.

Parental educational expectation had a significant relationship ($p = .005$) with church attendance after controlling for gender. Youth scored highest (5.00) on church attendance when parents expect them to finish a postgraduate degree and lowest (4.33) when parents expect them to finish high school only. The difference was a small effect size of .44. There was no significant interaction between parental educational expectation and gender on church attendance, $F(5, 1205) = 2.073$, $p = .066$.

Physical abuser had a significant relationship ($p = .000$) with church attendance after controlling for gender. Youth who had no physical abuse scored highest (5.05) on church attendance whereas youth who had other-only physical abuse scored lowest (4.64). The difference was a small effect size of .27. There was no significant interaction between physical abuser and gender on church attendance, $F(2, 1267) = .479$, $p = .619$.

Numerical Variables and Devotional Practices Controlling for Age and Gender

A multiple regression analysis was conducted to test the relationship between each parental influence numerical variable individually and devotional practices after controlling for age and gender. Age and gender explain from 2% to 4% of the variance on devotional practices. The variance explained by each parental influence numerical

Table 19

Regression Analysis on Devotional Practices After Controlling for Age and Gender: Hypothesis 3

Variable	*df*	R^2 Change	Sig. *F* Change
Family Income	1, 1180	.004	.022*
Family Recreation	1, 1235	.022	.000*
Family Worship Quantity	1, 1301	.135	.000*
Parental Punishment	1, 1325	.006	.005*
Parents Encourage Decisions	1, 1308	.018	.000*
Parental Verbal Abuse	1, 580	.001	.499
Parental Physical Abuse	1, 924	.002	.145
Parental Sexual Abuse	1, 959	.000	.791
Family Unity	1, 1330	.030	.000*
Family Worship Impact	1, 1301	.002	.156
Family Risk Behavior Standards	1, 1332	.037	.000*
Family Adventist Standards	1, 1332	.126	.000*
Parental Education	1, 995	.003	.069
Parental Educational Involvement	1, 1262	.024	.000*
Parental Role Model	1, 1319	.045	.000*
Parental Authoritarianism	1, 1325	.016	.000*
Parental Misunderstanding	1, 1306	.008	.001*
Parental Limits	1, 1144	.038	.000*
Parental Knowledge of Youth Activities	1, 1245	.034	.000*
Parental Worries	1, 1246	.004	.031*

*$p < .05$.

variable, in addition to age and gender, is reported in the tables as R^2 Change. The result of this analysis is shown in Table 19.

Fifteen numerical parental influence variables were significantly ($p < .05$) related to devotional practices individually after controlling for age and gender: family income, family recreation, family worship quantity, parental punishment, parents encourage decisions, family unity, family risk behavior standards, family Adventist standards, parental educational involvement, parental role model, parental authoritarianism, parental

misunderstanding, parental limits, parental knowledge of youth activities, and parental worries.

Two variables explain uniquely more than 13% of the variance in addition to age and gender: family worship quantity and family Adventist standards. Nine variables explain uniquely 2%–5% of the variance in addition to age and gender: family recreation, parents encourage decisions, family unity, family standards, parental educational involvement, parental role model, parental authoritarianism, parental limits, and parental knowledge of youth activities. Four variables explain uniquely 1% or less of the variance in addition to age and gender: family income, parental punishment, parental misunderstanding, and parental worries. Based on these results, the null hypothesis was rejected for age and gender in 15 of the 20 numerical parental influence variables.

Numerical Variables and Church Attendance Controlling for Age and Gender

A multiple regression analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between each parental influence numerical variable individually and church attendance after controlling for age and gender. Age and gender explain 3% to 5% of the variance on church attendance. The variance explained by each parental influence numerical variable, in addition to age and gender, is reported in the tables as R^2 Change. The result of this analysis is shown in Table 20.

Fifteen numerical parental influence variables were significantly ($p < .05$) related to church attendance individually after controlling for age and gender: family income, family recreation, family worship quantity, parents encourage decisions, family unity,

Table 20

Regression Analysis on Church Attendance After Controlling for Age and Gender: Hypothesis 3

Variable	*df*	R^2 Change	Sig. *F* Change
Family Income	1, 1176	.004	.030*
Family Recreation	1, 1234	.015	.000*
Family Worship Quantity	1, 1298	.119	.000*
Parental Punishment	1, 1320	.002	.136
Parents Encourage Decisions	1, 1303	.009	.000*
Parental Verbal Abuse	1, 578	.000	.604
Parental Physical Abuse	1, 920	.003	.083
Parental Sexual Abuse	1, 955	.000	.571
Family Unity	1, 1324	.020	.000*
Family Worship Impact	1, 1298	.005	.008*
Family Risk Behavior Standards	1, 1327	.100	.000*
Family Adventist Standards	1, 1327	.188	.000*
Parental Education	1, 992	.005	.024*
Parental Educational Involvement	1, 1260	.004	.018*
Parental Role Model	1, 1315	.116	.000*
Parental Authoritarianism	1, 1320	.007	.003*
Parental Misunderstanding	1, 1302	.004	.017*
Parental Limits	1, 1142	.023	.000*
Parental Knowledge of Youth Activities	1, 1240	.015	.000*
Parental Worries	1, 1241	.002	.147

*$p < .05$.

family worship impact, family risk behavior standards, family Adventist standards, parental education, parental educational involvement, parental role model, parental authoritarianism, parental misunderstanding, parental limits, and parental knowledge of youth activities.

Four variables explain uniquely 10%-19% of the variance in addition to age and gender: family worship quantity, family risk behavior standards, family Adventist standards, and parental role model. Four variables explain uniquely an additional 2% of the variance in addition to age and gender: family recreation, family unity, parental

limits, and parental knowledge of youth activities. Seven variables explain uniquely 1% or less of the variance after controlling for age and gender: family income, parents encourage decisions, family worship impact, parental education, parental educational involvement, parental authoritarianism, and parental misunderstanding. Based on these results the null hypothesis was rejected for age and gender in 15 of the 20 numerical parental influence variables.

Hypothesis 4

Hypothesis 4: There is no relationship between a combination of parental influence variables together and the two youth spiritual practices variables when controlling for age and gender.

The variables that had a large number of missing values were eliminated from the analyses of this hypothesis as explained in the beginning of this chapter.

Numerical Variables and Devotional Practices Controlling for Age and Gender

A multiple regression analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between numerical parental influence variables together and devotional practices after controlling for age and gender. Age and gender explain 3% of the variance on devotional practices. The numerical variables combined had a significant relationship with devotional practices when controlling for age and gender, $F(20, 809) = 11.535$, $p = .000$. Together, the numerical variables explain an additional 22% of the variance of devotional practices. Based on the results presented, the null hypothesis was rejected. Table 21 shows the results of the regression analysis.

Family worship quantity, family Adventist standards, parental authoritarianism, and parental knowledge of youth activities were significant predictors ($p < .05$). Parental authoritarianism had a negative relationship with devotional practices. Two variables explain 3% to 4% of the variance uniquely after controlling for age, gender, and the other independent variables: family worship quantity and family Adventist standards.

Table 21

Regression Analysis Results on Devotional Practices Controlling for Age and Gender: Hypothesis 4

	Coefficients				Correlations	
Variable	*B*	ß	*t*	Sig.	*r*	Part
Family Income	-.017	-.048	-1.475	.141	-.099	-.045
Family Recreation	.008	.011	.280	.780	.109	.009
Family Worship Quantity	.087	.248	6.319	.000*	.371	.193
Parental Punishment	-.017	-.028	-.856	.392	.032	-.026
Parents Encourage Decisions	.001	.002	.049	.961	.096	.002
Family Unity	.008	.008	.187	.852	.149	.006
Family Worship Impact	.011	.016	.502	.616	.029	.015
Family Risk Behavior Standards	.005	.007	.180	.857	.254	.005
Family Adventist Standards	.163	.274	5.676	.000*	.407	.173
Parental Educational Involvement	.028	.027	.704	.482	.134	.021
Parental Role Model	-.049	-.072	-1.676	.094	.236	-.051
Parental Authoritarianism	-.085	-.106	-2.708	.007*	-.184	-.083
Parental Misunderstanding	.009	.014	.362	.718	-.125	.011
Parental Knowledge Youth Activ.	.134	.076	2.138	.033	.186	.065
Parental Worries	.022	.035	1.084	.279	.013	.033
Parents Separated	1.062	.006	.183	.855	-.079	.006
Parental College Expectation	8.977	.035	1.080	.280	.096	.033
Mother SDA	-7.991	-.004	-.102	.919	.016	-.003
Father SDA	-5.011	-.012	-.365	.715	-.036	-.011
Both Parents SDA	-2.496	-.016	-.333	.739	.259	-.010
Age	.157	.092	2.739	.006*	.175	.084
Gender	.011	.007	.212	.832	.049	.006
Constant	1.421		4.237	.000		

Note. Model R^2 Change = .247; R^2 Change = .215; $F(20, 809) = 11.535$, $p = .000$.
*$p < .05$.

Two variables explain less than 1% of the variance uniquely after controlling for age, gender, and other independent variables: parental authoritarianism and parental knowledge of youth activities.

Numerical Variables and Church Attendance Controlling for Age and Gender

A multiple regression analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between numerical parental influence variables together and church attendance after controlling for age and gender. Age and gender explain 5% of the variance on church attendance. The numerical variables combined had a significant relationship with church attendance when controlling for age and gender, $F(22, 807) = 20.676$, $p = .000$. Together, the numerical variables explain an additional 31% of the variance ($r^2 = .314$) of church attendance. Based on the results presented, the null hypothesis was rejected. Table 22 shows the results of the regression analysis.

Family Adventist standards, parental role model, mother SDA, and both parents SDA were significant predictors ($p < .05$). Two variables explain 2% to 3% of the variance uniquely after controlling for age, gender, and other independent variables: mother SDA and both parents SDA. Two variables explain less than 1% uniquely after controlling for age, gender, and other independent variables: family Adventist standards and parental role model.

Hypothesis 5

Hypothesis 5: There is no relationship between subsets of parental influence variables and youth spiritual practices variables.

Forward and backward stepwise procedures were used to determine whether a good prediction model could be found to predict devotional practices and church attendance with a small number of variables. Twenty numerical parental influence variables were used: family income, family recreation, family worship quantity,

Table 22

Regression Analysis Results on Church Attendance Controlling for Age and Gender: Hypothesis 4

	Coefficients				Correlations	
Variable	*B*	ß	*t*	Sig.	*r*	Part
Family Income	-.014	-.020	-.669	.504	-.088	-.019
Family Recreation	.034	.024	.695	.487	.117	.020
Family Worship Quantity	.037	.054	1.482	.139	.352	.042
Parental Punishment	-.030	-.025	-.814	.416	.033	-.023
Parents Encourage Decisions	-.016	-.012	-.350	.727	.077	-.010
Family Unity	-.021	-.011	-.262	.794	.142	-.007
Family Worship Impact	.074	.053	1.848	.065	.064	.052
Family Risk Behavior Standards	.086	.057	1.597	.111	.351	.045
Family Adventist Standards	.226	.194	4.344	.000*	.502	.122
Parental Educational Involveme	-.127	-.064	-1.803	.072	.072	-.051
Parental Role Model	.214	.163	4.086	.000*	.402	.115
Parental Authoritarianism	-.050	-.032	-.888	.375	-.126	-.025
Parental Misunderstanding	.002	.002	.044	.965	-.104	.001
Parental Knowledge Youth Activ.	.194	.056	1.715	.087	.171	.048
Parental Worries	.000	.001	.022	.982	.004	.001
Parents Separated	-.052	-.015	-.488	.625	-.155	-.014
Parental College Expectation	.262	.053	1.752	.080	.135	.049
Mother SDA	.825	.202	5.814	.000*	.095	.164
Father SDA	.296	.035	1.174	.241	-.059	.033
Both Parents SDA	.741	.245	5.445	.000*	.414	.153
Age	.235	.071	2.274	.023*	.206	.064
Gender	.110	.036	1.181	.238	.078	.033
Constant	3.781		17.291	.000*		

Note. Model R^2 Change = .360; R^2 Change = .314; $F(22, 807) = 20.676$, $p = .000$.
*$p < .05$.

parental punishment, parents encourage decisions, family unity, family worship impact, family risk behavior standards, family Adventist standards, parental educational involvement, parental role model, parental authoritarianism, parental misunderstanding, parental knowledge of youth activities, parental worries, parents separated, parental college expectation, mother SDA, father SDA, and both parents SDA. The variables that had a large number of missing values were eliminated from the analyses of this hypothesis as explained in the beginning of this chapter. The criteria used to select a satisfactory model were: (a) good overall R^2, (b) good unique R^2 for each variable in the model, (c) each beta in the model consistent with zero-order correlation, and (d) a good model found in both the forward and backward stepwise procedures.

Numerical Variables and Devotional Practices

The model that best met the criteria for devotional practices was composed of three predictors: family Adventist standards, family worship quantity, and parental authoritarianism. Together, these variables explain 22% of the variance of devotional practices. The model that included all variables explains 24% of the variance of devotional practices. There is only an increase in 2% in the explanation of the variance of devotional practices when all variables are included. Based on the results presented below, the null hypothesis was rejected. Table 23 shows the results for the regression analysis.

Numerical Variables and Church Attendance

The model that best met the criteria for church attendance was composed of four predictors: family Adventist standards, parental role model, mother SDA, and both

parents SDA. Together, these variables explain 33% of the variance of church attendance. The model that included all variables explains 35% of the variance of church attendance. There is only an increase in 2% in the explanation of the variance of church attendance when all variables are included. Based on the results presented below, the null hypothesis was rejected. Table 24 shows the results for the regression analysis.

Table 23

Regression Forward and Backward Stepwise Analysis Results on Devotional Practices: Hypothesis 5

	Coefficients				Correlations	
Variable	*B*	ß	*t*	Sig.	*r*	Part
Family Adventist Standards	.164	.276	7.805	.000*	.402	.238
Frequency of Family Worship	.080	.227	6.423	.000*	.373	.196
Parental Authoritarianism	-.116	-.145	-4.733	.000*	-.181	-.145

Note. $R^2 = .222$; F (3, 835) = 79.249; $p = .000$.
*$p < .05$.

Table 24

Regression Forward and Backward Stepwise Analysis Results on Church Attendance: Hypothesis 5

	Coefficients				Correlations	
Variable	*B*	ß	*t*	Sig.	*r*	Part
Family Adventist Standards	.291	.251	6.519	.000*	.501	.185
Parental Religious Role Model	.244	.186	5.593	.000*	.406	.158
Mother SDA	.879	.216	6.461	.000*	.098	.183
Both SDA	.815	.270	6.441	.000*	.412	.182

Note. $R^2 = .333$; $F(4, 832) = 104.017$; $p = .000$.
*$p < .05$.

Summary

All the null hypotheses were rejected in this study. Tables 25 and 26 present a visual summary of the findings by variable and level of significance.

Summary of Results for Devotional Practices

Twenty-seven independent variables were used in this study. All independent variables were analyzed using five statistical tests. Variables were tested individually (ANOVA and Pearson Correlation Coefficient), together (Multiple Regression), individually controlling for age and gender (Two-way ANOVA and Multiple Regression), together controlling for age and gender (Multiple Regression), and in subsets (Hierarchical Regression) to find a good predictive model.

Independent variables that were tested to find their relationship to devotional practices showed the following results:

Nineteen variables showed a significant relationship with devotional practices when tested individually. Eighteen variables showed a significant relationship with devotional practices when tested individually after controlling for age and gender. Seventeen variables showed a significant relationship with devotional practices when tested individually and when tested individually after controlling for age and gender. (Refer to Table 25 for specific variables.)

Parental educational expectation and parental education showed a significant relationship with devotional practices individually, but did not show a significant relationship when tested individually after controlling for age and gender. Physical abuser and sexual abuser did not show a significant relationship with devotional practices

when tested individually but did show a significant relationship when tested individually after controlling for age and gender.

Parental knowledge of youth activities showed a significant relationship with devotional practices in four tests but did not meet the criteria for a good predictive model. Family Adventist standards, family worship quantity, and parental authoritarianism met the criteria for a good predictive model and showed a significant relationship with devotional practices in all five tests. Seven variables showed no significant relationship with devotional practices in all tests. (Refer to Table 25 for specific variables.)

Summary of Results for Church Attendance

Twenty-seven independent variables were used in this study. All independent variables were analyzed using five statistical tests. Variables were tested individually (ANOVA and Pearson Correlation Coefficient), together (Multiple Regression), individually controlling for age and gender (Two-way ANOVA and Multiple Regression), together controlling for age and gender (Multiple Regression), and in subsets (Hierarchical Regression) to find a good predictive model.

Independent variables that were tested to find their relationship to church attendance showed the following results:

Twenty variables showed a significant relationship with church attendance when tested individually. Nineteen variables showed a significant relationship with church attendance when tested individually after controlling for age and gender. Nineteen variables showed a significant relationship with church attendance when tested individually and when tested individually after controlling for age and gender. (Refer to Table 26 for specific variables.)

Table 25

Summary of Findings: Devotional Practices

Variable	H1 Ind.	H2 Tog.	H3 Ind.	H4 Tog.	H5 Sub.
Categorical Variables					
Parental Status					
Parents Separated					
Family Worship Quality	*		*a/*g		
Parental Religious Affiliation	*		*a/*g		
Mother SDA					
Father SDA					
Both parents SDA					
Parental Educational Expectation	*				
Parental College Expectation					
Verbal Abuser					
Physical Abuser			*a/*g		
Sexual Abuser			*a/*g		
Numerical Variables					
Family Income	*		*a/*g		
Family Recreation	*		*a/*g		
Family Worship Quantity	*	*	*a/*g	*a/*g	*
Parental Punishment	*		*a/*g		
Parents Encourage Decisions	*		*a/*g		
Parental Verbal Abuse					
Parental Physical Abuse					
Parental Sexual Abuse					
Family Unity	*		*a/*g		
Family Worship Impact					
Family Risk Standards	*		*a/*g		
Family Adventist Standards	*	*	*a/*g	*a/*g	*
Parental Education	*				
Parental Educational Involvement	*		*a/*g		
Parental Role Model	*		*a/*g		
Parental Authoritarianism	*	*	*a/*g	*a/*g	*
Parental Misunderstanding	*		*a/*g		
Parental Limits	*		*a/*g		
Parental Knowledge of Youth Act.	*	*	*a/*g	*a/*g	
Parental Worries	*		*a/*g		

Note. * = significant for main effects and interaction. H = Hypothesis; Ind. = Individually; Tog. = Together; Sub. = Subset; a = controlling for age; g = controlling for gender.
*$p < .05$.

Table 26

Summary of Findings: Church Attendance

Variable	H1 Ind.	H2 Tog.	H3 Ind.	H4 Tog.	H5 Sub.
Categorical Variables					
Parental Status	*		*a/*g		
Parents Separated					
Family Worship Quality	*		*a/*g		
Parental Religious Affiliation	*		*a/*g		
Mother SDA		*		*a/*g	*
Father SDA					
Both parents SDA		*		*a/*g	*
Parental Educational Expectation	*		*g		
Parental College Expectation					
Verbal Abuser					
Physical Abuser	*		*a/*g		
Sexual Abuser					
Numerical Variables					
Family Income	*		*a/*g		
Family Recreation	*		*a/*g		
Family Worship Quantity	*		*a/*g		
Parental Punishment					
Parents Encourage Decisions	*		*a/*g		
Parental Verbal Abuse					
Parental Physical Abuse					
Parental Sexual Abuse					
Family Unity	*		*a/*g		
Family Worship Impact	*		*a/*g		
Family Risk Behavior Standards	*		*a/*g		
Family Adventist Standards	*	*	*a/*g	*a/*g	*
Parental Education	*		*a/*g		
Parental Educational Involvement	*		*a/*g		
Parental Role Model	*	*	*a/*g	*a/*g	*
Parental Authoritarianism	*		*a/*g		
Parental Misunderstanding	*		*a/*g		
Parental Limits	*		*a/*g		
Parental Knowledge of Youth Act.	*		*a/*g		
Parental Worries					

Note. * = significant for main effects and interaction. H = Hypothesis; Ind. = Individually; Tog. = Together; Sub. = Subsets; a = controlling for age; g = controlling for gender.
*$p < .05$.

Family Adventist standards, parental role model, mother SDA, and both parents SDA met the criteria for a good predictive model and showed a significant relationship with church attendance in all five tests. Seven variables showed no significant relationship with church attendance in all tests. (Refer to Table 26 for specific variables.)

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This final chapter presents a summary of the problem, purpose, methodology, and the results of the study. A discussion of the results of the study, the conclusions, and recommendations for further research are also included.

Summary of the Problem

Typically, parents are unaware of the degree of influence that they exert on the spiritual life of their children. Parents who know the key influential factors that motivate their children to practice spiritual disciplines such as prayer, Bible reading, meditation, and church attendance would be able to foster spiritual growth on their children.

Summary of the Purpose

The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between parental influence factors and youth spiritual practices.

Summary of the Methodology

This study used the data set gathered by the *Avance PR* study. These data were collected using the 292-item survey instrument that was distributed to youth in Adventist churches and schools in Puerto Rico. The *Avance PR* study was conducted during the

months of March and October, 1995. *Avance PR* used a youth sample of 1,406 subjects. After selecting single, never-married subjects, this study used a total of 1,377 subjects.

This study analyzed a total of 27 independent variables, 2 dependent variables, and 2 control variables. Scales related to parental influence factors and youth spirituality were developed; 13 of the variables were scales and 18 were single items. Reliability tests of the scales were undertaken.

Summary of Results

Five null hypotheses were tested using ANOVA, Pearson correlation coefficient, and multiple regression to determine if there was a relationship between parental influence factors and youth spirituality. The results of this study indicated that there is a significant relationship between parental influence and the spiritual practices of Adventist youth living in Puerto Rico. This section will be divided into two main sections pertaining to each dependent variable used in the study: devotional practices and church attendance.

Devotional Practices

Five null hypotheses were tested to determine if there was a relationship between parental influence factors and youth devotional practices. Seventeen variables were significantly ($p = .05$) related to devotional practices when tested individually and when tested individually after controlling for age and gender: family worship quality, parental religious affiliation, family income, family recreation, family worship quantity, parental punishment, parents encourage decisions, family unity, family risk standards, family Adventist standards, parental educational involvement, parental role model, parental

authoritarianism, parental misunderstanding, parental limits, parental knowledge, and parental worries. Two variables were significantly (p = .05) related to devotional practices when tested individually but not when tested individually after controlling for age and gender: parental educational expectation and parental education. Two variables were significantly (p = .05) related to devotional practices when tested individually after controlling for age and gender but not when tested individually: physical abuser and sexual abuser.

Some categorical parental influence variables showed significant interaction with age on devotional practices. Adolescents and young adults who rated family worship as meaningful scored higher on devotional practices than adolescents and young adults who rated family worship as a waste of time, but differences were larger for adolescents than for young adults. Young adults who were physically abused by a parent scored higher on devotional practices than those who were not physically abused, whereas adolescents who were physically abused by a parent scored lower than those who were not physically abused. Young adults who were sexually abused by someone who was not a parent scored higher on devotional practices than those who were not sexually abused, whereas adolescents who were sexually abused by someone who was not a parent scored lower on devotional practices than those who were sexually abused by a parent.

Some categorical parental influence variables showed significant interaction with gender on devotional practices. Females who were not physically abused scored higher on devotional practices than females who were physically abused by a parent, whereas males who were physically abused by a parent scored higher than males who were physically abused by someone who was not a parent. Females who were not sexually

abused scored higher on devotional practices than females who were sexually abused by a parent. Males who were sexually abused by a parent scored higher on devotional practices than males who were sexually abused by someone who was not a parent.

Four variables were significantly (p = .05) related to devotional practices when tested together and when tested together after controlling for age and gender: family Adventist standards, family worship quality, parental authoritarianism, and parental knowledge of youth activities.

Three variables met the criteria for a good prediction model for devotional practices and were significantly related to devotional practices in all tests: family Adventist standards, family worship quality, and parental authoritarianism. Family Adventist standards and family worship quality were positively related to devotional practices. Parental authoritarianism was negatively related to devotional practices. Parental knowledge of youth activities was significant in four tests but was not included in the subsets for a good predictive model. All parental influence variables that were significantly (p = .05) related to devotional practices showed medium to small effects. Variables that were significant in all tests will be discussed in greater detail in the discussion section.

Six variables were not significantly related to devotional practices in all tests: Parental status, verbal abuser, parental verbal abuse, parental physical abuse, parental sexual abuse, and family worship impact.

Church Attendance

Five null hypotheses were tested to determine if there was a relationship between parental influence factors and youth church attendance practices. Nineteen variables

were significantly (p = .05) related to church attendance when tested individually and when tested individually after controlling for age and gender: parental status, family worship quality, parental religious affiliation, physical abuser, family income, family recreation, family worship quantity, parents encourage decisions, family unity, family worship impact, family risk standards, family Adventist standards, parental education, parental educational involvement, parental role model, parental authoritarianism, parental misunderstanding, parental limits, and parental knowledge. Parental educational expectation was significantly (p = .05) related to church attendance when tested individually and when tested individually after controlling for gender only.

Some categorical parental influence variables showed significant interaction with age on church attendance. Adolescents who rated family worship as meaningful scored higher on church attendance than adolescents who rated family worship as a waste of time, whereas young adults who rated family worship as a waste of time scored higher on church attendance than young adults who rated family worship as meaningful.

Some categorical parental influence variables showed significant interaction with gender on church attendance. Males and females who rated family worship as meaningful scored higher on church attendance than males and females who rated family worship as a waste of time, but differences were larger for males than for females. Males and females who indicated that their parents were Adventist scored higher on church attendance than males and females who indicated that their parents were not Adventist, but differences were larger for males than for females.

Four variables were significantly (p = .05) related to church attendance when tested together and when tested together after controlling for age and gender: family Adventist standards, parental role model, mother SDA, and both parents SDA.

Family SDA standards, parental role model, mother SDA, and both parents SDA met the criteria for a good prediction model for church attendance and were significantly (p = .05) related to church attendance in all tests. All these four variables were positively related to church attendance. All parental influence variables that were significantly (p = .05) related to church attendance showed medium to small effects with the exception of parental religious affiliation, which showed large effects. Variables that were significant in all tests will be discussed in greater detail in the discussion section.

Seven variables were not significantly related to church attendance in all tests: verbal abuser, sexual abuser, parental punishment, parental verbal abuse, parental physical abuse, parental sexual abuse, and parental worries.

Discussion

This study identified significant parental influence factors with regard to the spiritual practices of their children. Two spiritual practices were the focus of this study: devotional practices and church attendance. In the following section only variables that were significantly related to devotional practices and church attendance practices in all tests will be discussed. Some variables that were expected to be related, but that were not significantly related, to devotional practices and church attendance practices in all tests will also be discussed.

Parents influence and shape the religious life of their children. A significant majority of teenagers consider their religious life to be very similar to that of their parents

(Smith, 2005). Although parents often believe that teenagers are not interested in maintaining a close relationship with them, researchers (Smith, 2005; Barna, 2001) have found that teenagers strive to have close connections and interactions with their family members. Through diverse family interactions parents transmit religious principles and values to their younger generations. Christian spiritual practices are an important component in the spiritual development of youth.

Devotional Practices

Moral values and principles guide youth's life choices and practices. Religious organizations provide moral values and principles and assert that the authority of these respective moral values and principles are drawn from "historical traditions and compelling narratives" (Smith, 2003, p. 21). The Christian faith teaches that the Bible is comprised of historical traditions and narratives that were inspired by God; thus it draws the authority for its particular moral values and principles from the Bible. It is of critical importance that youth engage in devotional practices such as prayer and Bible reading to integrate Christian moral values and principles into their lives that will result in positive life outcomes.

A significant number of youth are trying to satisfy their spiritual needs by integrating Christian devotional practices into their lives. Youth who engage in devotional practices are more committed to their faith (Barna, 2001; Smith, 2005); are more likely to attend church (Dudley & Gillespie, 1992); report a better perceived purpose of life (Francis & Evans, 1996; Robbins & Francis, 2005); and better perceived quality of life (Poloma & Pendleton, 1989). Parents exert a strong social influence in helping their children integrate devotional practices in their spiritual lives (Francis &

Brown, 1991; Ramírez-Johnson & Hernández, 2003; Smith, 2005). This study investigated which parental influence factors were related to devotional practices among youth.

Family worship quantity was positively related to devotional practices in all tests. Family worship was found to be an important factor in the transmission of religious values and principles to children. Children whose parents expose them to frequent experiences of family worship are more likely to pray, to read their Bibles, to meditate, and to read other religious literature. This study not only examined the quantity of family worship but also what youth said about how the quality of their family worship experiences was related to their devotional practices. Family worship quality was also found to be significantly related to devotional practices. Youth who said that family worship was meaningful were more likely to engage in devotional practices than youth who reported family worship as a waste of time. When testing to see if there was a difference in age in relation to the quality of family worship, adolescents showed a larger difference on devotional practices than young adults. Adolescents are more likely to practice their personal devotions, if they find their family worship to be meaningful, than are young adults. Parents need to make family worship a meaningful experience for their children; this is more important for adolescents than for young adults.

These results are consistent with similar findings reported in the literature. Youth who participate in family worship have reported higher levels of faith maturity and denominational loyalty (Dudley & Gillespie, 1992), spiritual growth (Ramírez-Johnson & Hernández, 2003), and abstinence from drug-related behaviors (Dudley et al., 1987). Also, family worship has been found to be important in the transmission of the family

belief system (Strahan, 1994). Despite the importance of family worship, researchers have found that frequency of family worship is diminishing among Seventh-day Adventist families (Gillepsie et al., 2004). Particularly, Hispanic youth indicated less frequency of family worship than Adventist youth who participated in the *Valuegenesis*[1] and *Valuegenesis*[2] studies (Ramírez-Johnson & Hernández, 2003). It should be of concern to parents and church leaders that while youth are reporting that family worship is a strong predictor of engaging in devotional practices there are fewer Adventist families, particularly Hispanic families, who practice family worship.

Smith (2003) has theorized that spiritual experiences are an important dimension in providing positive effects in the religious development of adolescents. Family worship comprises time for singing, Bible reading, and prayer together as a family. Christian songs, the Bible, and prayers contain narratives and histories that inform and form the moral orders that young people integrate or internalize in their lives. These spiritual experiences legitimize, reinforce, and "solidify youth's moral commitments and life practices" (p. 21). Youth's moral commitments shape their behavior, conduct, and, ultimately, their life outcomes.

Family Adventist standards was positively related to devotional practices in all tests. Youth who reported that their parents enforce Adventist standards were more likely to engage in devotional practices than youth who reported that their parents did not enforce Adventist standards. These standards are very distinctive of the Adventist lifestyle and cover an array of moral values and principles that are related to the mental, physical, and spiritual development of our children. Parents who enforce Adventist standards seem to communicate to their children a clear message about the values and

principles that they expect to see in their lives. They seem to foster in their children a clear sense of identity with the distinctive values and principles of the Adventist church. As a result, children are motivated to engage in devotional practices that will strengthen their faith and commitment with the Adventist message and that will benefit their spiritual growth and development.

These results are consistent with similar findings in the literature. Acceptance of Adventist standards is positively related to orthodoxy, faith maturity, and denominational loyalty among youth (Dudley & Gillespie, 1992; Gillespie et al., 2004; Ramírez-Johnson & Hernández, 2003). Enforcement of Adventist standards is associated positively or negatively with religious commitment dependent on the way that it is done (Dudley & Gillespie, 1992). When youth rate their home as a high-warmth environment, enforcement of Adventist standards in the home environment produces better results than enforcement in the school and church environments. Parents can provide a loving environment where their children can feel motivated to integrate Adventist standards into their lives. Children need to understand how these Adventist standards can benefit their lives in a wholesome way.

Parental authoritarianism was negatively related to devotional practices in all tests. Youth who reported that their parents exerted an authoritarian parental style were less likely to engage in devotional practices than youth who reported that their parents did not exert an authoritarian parental style. Youth tend to reject parental impositions of authority that lack logical and understandable reasons. It seems that a rejection of these parental impositions transfers into the spiritual life of young people as a rejection of engaging in devotional practices.

These results are consistent with similar findings in the literature. Hispanic parents tend to be more authoritarian than authoritative in their parenting styles (Dornbusch et al., 1987; Steinberg et al., 1992; Zayas & Solari, 1994). Parents who are authoritarians may impose constraints in the healthy development of their children. Parents who manifest an authoritarian style hamper their relationship with their children and exert a negative influence in the socialization process and character development of their children (Baumrind, 1971; Steinberg et al., 1992). Families provide a religious socialization framework that allow parents to communicate moral expectations to their children. Authoritarian parents hamper the religious socialization process when they impose religious values on their children. Parents need to perceive their children as active agents (Schwartz, 2006) in the religious socialization process with whom they can interact in open and sincere dialogue. Authoritarianism also collides with the emancipation process (Dudley & Dudley, 1986) that adolescents experience as they transition to the adult life stage. An authoritarian parental attitude would increase the probability that adolescents rebel against their parent's religious beliefs and values.

Authoritarian parents tend to exert a negative influence in the spiritual development of their children. Youth who perceived their parents as authoritarian were more likely to engage in at-risk behaviors, were 5% lower on the faith-maturity scale, and 15% lower on the church loyalty scale than their peers. Also, an authoritarian parenting style tended to be associated with a legalistic view of salvation (Ramírez-Johnson & Hernández, 2003). Due to the fact that researchers have found that Hispanic parents tend to demonstrate an authoritarian parental style, there is a need to educate Hispanic parents

on how to relate with their children in more positive ways so as to foster the transmission of Christian religious values and principles.

Parental knowledge of youth activities was positively related to devotional practices. Youth who reported high levels of their parents' knowing about their activities were more likely to engage in devotional practices than youth who reported low levels. Few studies have been conducted that measure the relationship between parents' knowledge of their children's activities and their children's spiritual development. Hispanic youth who participated in the *Avance* study (Ramírez-Johnson & Hernández, 2003) reported a higher score of their parents knowing about their children's activities than respondents of the *Valuegenesis*[1] study (Dudley & Gillespie, 1992). This fact is consistent with research findings that Hispanic parents tend to demonstrate an authoritarian parental style (Dornbusch et al., 1987; Steinberg et al., 1992; Zayas & Solari, 1994). Hispanic youth who reported low levels of parental knowledge of youth activities, also reported higher levels of deviant behavior; whereas youth who reported that their parents knew a lot about who their friends were, also reported lower levels of deviant behavior (Ramírez-Johnson & Hernández, 2003).

Youth also reap positive life outcomes when they are exposed to what researchers (Coleman, 1988; Smith, 2003) call "network closure." Youth who attend religious congregations are exposed to a higher density of social relationships where other adults can provide oversight, supervision, and monitoring of their activities. Fellow adult congregants can provide support to parental influence and oversight, reinforcing common moral values and principles in youth. This network closure is a joint effort between parents and adult congregants to produce positive life outcomes in youth.

When parents are knowledgeable about their children's activities, there is a higher probability that their children will engage in devotional practices. Parents need to develop a genuine interest in their children's activities and social relationships. Parents who get involved in their children's activities and who know their children's friends are more likely to develop better personal relationships with their children and get to influence the spiritual development of their children in a more effective way.

Parents' marital status was not significantly related to devotional practices. Unexpectedly, this research found that there was no significant difference between teenagers from intact and non-intact families in their engagement in devotional practices. These results are not consistent with the literature. Research has found that divorce is more likely to reduce religious involvement among teenagers, and teenagers who live in intact families are more likely to be highly religious (Smith, 2005). Also, a stable marriage was found to be a predictor of teenagers remaining in the church (Dudley, 2000). Because fewer Adventist Hispanic youth live in intact households in comparison to non-Hispanic Adventist youth (Ramírez-Johnson & Hernández, 2003), it was expected that there would be a significant relationship between parents' marital status and children's engagement in devotional practices.

Variables that measured the frequency of diverse forms of parental abuse (parental verbal abuse, parental physical abuse, and parental sexual abuse) were not significantly related to devotional practices in all tests. Contrary to normal expectations, youth who reported parental abuse were not significantly different from youth who reported no parental abuse in relation to their engagement in devotional practices.

Other abuse variables (verbal abuser, physical abuser, sexual abuser), that sought to identify the source of abuse, were significantly related to devotional practices in some tests. There were differences on the source of physical abuse and age on devotional practices. Adolescents who were physically abused by a parent scored lower on devotional practices than those who were not physically abused, whereas young adults who were physically abused by a parent scored higher on devotional practices than those who were not physically abused. Adolescents reported greater differences in devotional practices than young adults in relation to physical abuse. When adolescents are physically abused by a parent, they are less likely to engage in devotional practices than those who are not physically abused. Differences between the source of sexual abuse and age on devotional practices were also found. Young adults who were sexually abused by someone who was not a parent scored higher on devotional practices than those who were not sexually abused, whereas adolescents who were sexually abused by someone who was not a parent scored lower than those who were sexually abused by a parent. Young adults are more likely to engage in devotional practices if they are sexually abused by someone who is not a parent than if they were not sexually abused. In this case there is a possibility that young adults who are being sexually abused by a person who is not a parent are engaging in devotional practices to help them overcome the physical, mental, and spiritual turmoil that is typical of sexually abused victims. Adolescents are less likely to engage in devotional practices when they are sexually abused by someone who is not a parent than by a parent. Any situation of abuse is devastating for adolescents, but it seems that they are more negatively affected in their spiritual life when someone who is not a parent sexually abuses them.

There were differences between the source of physical and sexual abuse and gender on devotional practices. Females who were not physically abused scored higher on devotional practices than females who were physically abused by a parent, whereas males who were physically abused by a parent scored higher than males who were physically abused by someone who was not a parent. Females who were not sexually abused scored higher on devotional practices than females who were sexually abused by a parent. Males who were sexually abused by a parent scored higher on devotional practices than males who were sexually abused by someone who was not a parent. There is a pattern for males and females in relation to physical and sexual abuse and their engagement in devotional practices. Females are more likely to engage in devotional practices when they are not physically and sexually abused than if they were abused by a parent. Females are negatively affected in their personal devotions if they are physically or sexually abused by a parent. Males are negatively affected more in their personal devotions if they were physically or sexually abused by someone who is not a parent than if they are abused by a parent. There is a possibility that due to cultural connotations, males who are being sexually abused are struggling with a greater degree of turmoil in their lives than females. In addition, if the abuser is reported to be a non-parental figure, then this factor will add even more turmoil and complications to the abuse situation that males are confronting. It seems that males who are being sexually abused by a parental figure, who might be a step-mother or a step-father, are finding strength and support in their personal devotional practices.

Consonant with the results of this study, the research literature seems to be inconsistent in respect to diverse forms of parental abuse and their effect on the spiritual

and religious life of the victims. Diverse forms of parental abuse have a negative effect on religiosity (Lawson et al., 1998; Reinert & Smith, 1997), are related to the loss or rejection of belief systems taught in the family (Webb & Whitmer, 2003), and may contribute to a distorted image of God and alienation from religious communities (Imbems & Jonker, 1992). Women who were sexually abused as children had difficulty trusting in God's plan and provision for them and had difficulty finding meaning and purpose for their lives (Hall, 1995); were less likely to assert that they were loved by God and that they were part of a community of believers, have a tendency to change religious faiths, adopt religious practices that are not traditional, or reject organized religion (Ryan, 1998); tended to feel more empty, worthless, disconnected, and undeserving of God's love (Pritt, 1998); and reported less involvement in religious worship (Finkelhor et al., 1989). In contrast with these findings, researchers have also found that victims of sexual abuse can find support, strength, meaning, and hope in religious faith (Elliot, 1994; Reinert & Smith, 1997; Ryan, 1998); and that sexual abuse is also related to higher levels of spiritual activities and experiences which are usually associated with positive spirituality (Lawson et al., 1998).

A possible explanation for not finding a significant relationship with parental abuse and devotional practices, in some of the tests of this study, is that both abused and non-abused youth are reporting engagement in devotional practices. Abused youth might be reporting engagement in devotional practices because they are finding support and strength in their religious practices and respective faith communities.

Church Attendance

One of the tenets of the Christian faith is attendance to church services. Church members grow spiritually when they experience God's presence through the liturgy and when they are instructed in the knowledge of God through his Word. In contrast to general conceptions, the majority of youth who attend religious services tend to perceive their congregation as a "warm and welcoming place" (Smith, 2005, p. 61). Church attendance benefits youth in various ways: Higher frequency of church attendance is significantly associated with lower psychoticism scores (Lewis et al., 2004), and youth who live in low-income neighborhoods are more likely to improve their academic performance when they attend church (Regnerus & Elder, 2003). Youth who attend church are also exposed to an organizational context where they can develop community life skills and leadership skills (Smith, 2003). Youth can engage in community service programs, organize retreats, and participate in church committees which are experiences that will develop skills and capacities that ultimately may enhance their well-being and open up life opportunities.

Church attendance also enhances youth's cultural capital (Smith, 2003). Youth who attend church services may be exposed to an array of musical traditions, to world civilizations and empires, and to major religious and ethical traditions. Youth who are exposed to a broader cultural context may reap benefits such as enhancing their social skills, performing better at job interviews, or opening opportunities for better educational experiences. Also, youth are able to socialize and network with older members of their congregations who can be a source of guidance, opportunities, information, or contacts that can enhance youth's positive life outcomes.

Youth who attend church are typically members of national or transnational religious organizations. Youth may be exposed to regional, national, and international events such as teen conferences, mission trips, and denominational conventions. These experiences can "open up an adolescent's imaginable aspirations and horizons, encourage developmental maturity, and increase knowledge, confidence, and competencies" (Smith, 2003, p. 26).

Parents exert a strong social influence on youth church-attendance patterns. This study investigated which parental influence factors were related to church-attendance practices among youth.

Family Adventist standards were significantly related to church attendance in all tests. Youth whose parents enforced Adventist standards were more likely to attend church than youth whose parents did not enforce Adventist standards. These results are consistent with similar findings in the literature. Youth who accept Adventist standards report higher levels of orthodoxy, faith maturity, and denominational loyalty (Dudley & Gillespie, 1992; Gillespie et al., 2004; Ramírez-Johnson & Hernández, 2003). More specifically, Hispanic youth who followed Adventist standards reported higher levels of faith maturity and denominational loyalty than Hispanic youth who did not follow Adventist standards (Ramírez-Johnson & Hernández, 2003).

Youth need to know the biblical foundations that support Adventist standards and how these standards may help them grow spiritually and exert a positive influence in their lives. Parents who enforce Adventist standards in a warm and loving family environment have a higher probability that their children will attend church and will integrate into their respective communities of faith. If both the home and church enforce Adventist

standards in a warm and loving environment then there is a greater probability that youth will integrate these standards into their lives. Parents and church members can serve as role models as to how Adventist standards can benefit their lives.

Parental role modeling was significantly related to church attendance in all tests. Youth who agree that their parents are good role models of the Christian life are more likely to attend church than youth who disagree that their parents are good role models.

These results are consistent with similar findings in the literature. Smith (2005) states: "Research in the sociology of religion suggests that the most important social influence in shaping young people's religious lives is the religious life modeled and taught to them by their parents" (p. 56). Youth involve themselves in spiritual practices more as a result of "explicit teaching or implicit example" from their family (Francis & Brown, 1991, p. 120). Cornwall (1988) states that religiosity is a behavior learned from those who socialize with the individual. Church attendance among youth is related to the attitude that they have toward their church. In this respect, youth who developed a positive attitude toward church reported having parents who modeled discipleship in the home (Francis & Craig, 2006).

A study was conducted to determine the degree of spiritual influence that parents exert through the adulthood stage of their children (Dudley, 2000). Parental church attendance was measured among youth who were still members of the Adventist church and youth who did not remain members of the church. It was found that for youth who remain as members of the church, their fathers and mothers attended church nearly every week, whereas for those who did not remain as members of the church, only a small percentage of their fathers and mothers attended church every week. This present study

demonstrates the degree of influence that parents can exert with respect to how they model church-attending practices to their children.

Smith (2003) has theorized that role models "provide example of life practices that influence the lives of youth" (p. 22). These role models exemplify how life is shaped by religious moral values and principles; these moral orders are made "tangible" as youth are able to perceive their role model's life outcomes. Role models provide youth with an "ideological direction for growth and development" (p. 22).

Youth are aware of the spiritual commitment and denominational loyalty of their parents. Youth have clearly stated that their church-attending practices are influenced by the church-attending practices of their parents. Parents need to be aware about the degree of influence that they exert on the church-attending practices of their children. Parents serve as role models as to how the Christian life is practiced and lived.

Parental religious affiliation was significantly related to church attendance in all tests. Males and females who reported that both parents were Adventist were more likely to attend church than those who reported that both parents were not Adventist; but males reported larger differences in church attendance practices than did females. Females are generally more interested in religious practices than are males. The results of this study point out that the religious affiliation of parents, especially if both parents are Adventist, is more important for males than for females in their church-attending practices.

These results are consistent with similar findings in the research literature. Youth church attendance and participation practices are mostly influenced by parental church attendance and parental religiosity (Dudley, 2000; Francis & Craig, 2006; Hoge & Petrillo, 1978; Smith, 2005). More specifically, researchers have found that the influence

of both parents was stronger than the influence of either mother or father alone in youth church-attending practices (Francis & Brown, 1991). Adventist parents exert a strong influence in their children's church-attending practices. When both parents are Adventist they exert the most important influence in their children's church-attending practices. More than one in five Hispanic Adventist youth who participated in the *Avance* survey reported that they lived in single-parent homes (Ramírez-Johnson & Hernández, 2003). Hispanic Adventist youth who live in non-intact homes are less likely to attend church than Hispanic Adventist youth who live in intact homes where both parents are Adventist. Church leaders who work with Hispanic Adventist communities need to educate single parents about how can they exert a stronger spiritual influence in the lives of their children. Hispanic Adventist parents who are single need to be educated about how they can transmit their Adventist religious heritage to their future generations.

Youth who reported that their mother was Adventist were more likely to attend church than youth who reported that their mother was not Adventist. These results are consistent with similar findings in the research literature. Mothers exert an important influence in the spiritual life of their children. A study was conducted to rate the degree of parental influence in the spiritual life of children. A significant majority of youth who remained in the Adventist church throughout their adulthood reported that their mothers were members of the Adventist church (Dudley, 2000). Youth indicated that a higher percentage of mothers attended church nearly every week than did fathers. Also, a higher percentage of youth indicated that their mother was more helpful in their spiritual development than their father was. In another study, mother's church-attendance practices had a greater degree of influence than father's church-attendance practices on

youth church attendance (Francis & Brown, 1991). Children are more likely to follow their mother's church-attending practices than any other member of their family, school, or church setting.

Variables that measured the frequency of diverse forms of parental abuse (parental verbal abuse, parental physical abuse, and parental sexual abuse) were not significantly related to church attendance in all tests. Contrary to normal expectations, youth who reported parental abuse were not significantly different from youth who reported no parental abuse in relation to their church-attendance practices. Other abuse variables (verbal abuser, physical abuser, sexual abuser), that sought to identify the source of abuse, were significantly related to church-attendance practices in some tests. Physical abuser was significantly related to church attendance. Youth who reported no physical abuse were more likely to attend church than youth who reported physical abuse by someone who is not a parent. Physical abuser showed a negative relationship with church attendance. Youth who are physically abused, especially by someone who is not a parent, are less likely to attend church than youth who are not physically abused.

Earlier in this chapter the inconsistency of the research literature was noted in respect to diverse forms of parental abuse and their effect in the spiritual development of the victims. A possible explanation for not finding a significant relationship with parental abuse and church attendance is that both abused and non-abused youth are reporting church-attendance practices, but for different reasons. Abused youth might be reporting church attendance practices because they are finding support and strength in their religious practices and respective faith communities.

Parents need to be made aware of the devastating effects that diverse forms of abuse might have in the spiritual development of their children. Further research is suggested to better understand how youth cope with different forms of parental abuse in their family context and how it might have an effect on their spiritual growth.

Conclusions

Based on the above discussion, the following conclusions are drawn:

1. Parents exert a strong social influence in shaping the spiritual life of their children.

2. Parents exert a strong social influence in helping their children engage in devotional practices and church attendance.

3. Family worship is an important factor in fostering Christian spiritual practices to younger generations, especially for adolescents.

4. Youth who are exposed to higher frequency of family worship are more likely to engage in devotional practices.

5. Youth who rate family worship as meaningful are more likely to engage in devotional practices and church attendance. This is more important for males than for females on church attendance.

6. Frequency of family worship is diminishing among Adventist families. Particularly, Hispanic Adventist youth are reporting less frequency of family worship than the general Adventist youth population.

7. Youth who said that their parents enforce Adventist standards are more likely to engage on devotional practices and church attendance.

8. Authoritarian parents tend to exert a negative influence on the spiritual development of their children. Youth who perceived their parents as authoritarians were less likely to engage in devotional practices.

9. Youth whose parents know about their activities are more likely to engage in devotional practices.

10. Adolescents who are physically abused by a parent or by someone who is not a parent are less likely to engage in devotional practices.

11. Young adults who are physically abused by a parent or by someone who is not a parent are more likely to engage in devotional practices.

12. Females who are physically or sexually abused by a parent are less likely to engage in devotional practices.

13. Males who are physically or sexually abused by someone who is not a parent are less likely to engage in devotional practices.

14. Adolescents and young adults who rated family worship as meaningful were more likely to engage in devotional practices than adolescents and young adults who rated family worship as a waste of time. This is more important for adolescents than for young adults.

15. Quality of family worship has a different effect for adolescents than for young adults on church attendance; adolescents who rate family worship as meaningful are more likely to attend church whereas young adults who rate family worship as a waste of time are more likely to do so.

16. Youth are more likely to attend church when they state that their parents are good role models of the Christian life.

17. Youth whose both parents are Adventist are more likely to engage in devotional practices and church attendance. This is more important for males than for females on church attendance.

18. Mothers exert more influence in the church-attendance practices of their children than fathers.

19. Youth are better influenced when both parents are Adventist in their church-attendance practices, than either mother or father alone.

Recommendations

Based on the discussion and conclusions presented above, the following recommendations for parents, church leaders, and future researchers are made:

Recommendations for Parents

Parents need to:

1. Exert a positive influence on the spiritual development of their children, especially on their children's devotional and church-attending practices.
2. Make efforts to increase the frequency and quality of family worship, making sure that their children participate and find worship to be meaningful for their lives, especially for children in the adolescence life stage.
3. Enforce Adventist standards in a warm and loving home environment.
4. Explain to their children the biblical principles of Adventist standards and how these standards benefit their character and spiritual development.
5. Not use an authoritarian parental style since it exerts a negative influence on the spiritual development of their children.

6. Become involved and informed about their children's activities and friends.

7. Become good role models of the Christian life.

8. Fortify their spiritual experience to exert the most important influence on the spiritual development of their children.

9. Refrain from any form of abuse against their children.

Recommendations for Church Leaders

These recommendations are geared toward pastors, family life educators, and youth workers.

1. Church leaders need to educate parents in respect to:

    a. The critical role that they play in the spiritual development of their children

    b. The frequency and quality of family worship, its biblical foundations, and how to instruct them to evaluate if these worships are addressing the needs of their children

    c. The biblical foundations of Adventist standards, and how parents can enforce them in a warm and loving home environment

    d. The different parental styles and how authoritative parents exert a positive influence in the spiritual development of their children

    e. How parents can develop good communication skills to get involved in their children's lives by gaining knowledge about their children's activities and friends

    f. The devastating effects that diverse forms of abuse may have on the physical, mental, spiritual, and social development of their children.

g. The importance of modeling the Christian life to their children

h. The important role that Adventist mothers, especially single mothers and mothers whose husbands are not Adventist, play in transmitting Christian values and principles to their children

i. Their Christian faith so that both exert a positive influence in the spiritual development of their children

2. Church leaders need to:

a. Translate or develop programs, seminars, and resources that are more specifically geared to Hispanic parents to educate them in respect to positive family relationships and in intergenerational transmission of Christian principles and values

b. Devise plans and strategies to increase the number of Hispanic Adventist intact families, by evangelizing non-Adventist husbands to the Christian faith, so a greater amount of Hispanic Adventist youth are exposed to the positive spiritual influence that intact Adventist families provide to their children.

Recommendations for Future Research

Further research is needed to:

1. Clarify some of the findings of this study that were not consistent with the literature in relation to parental influence among the general population:

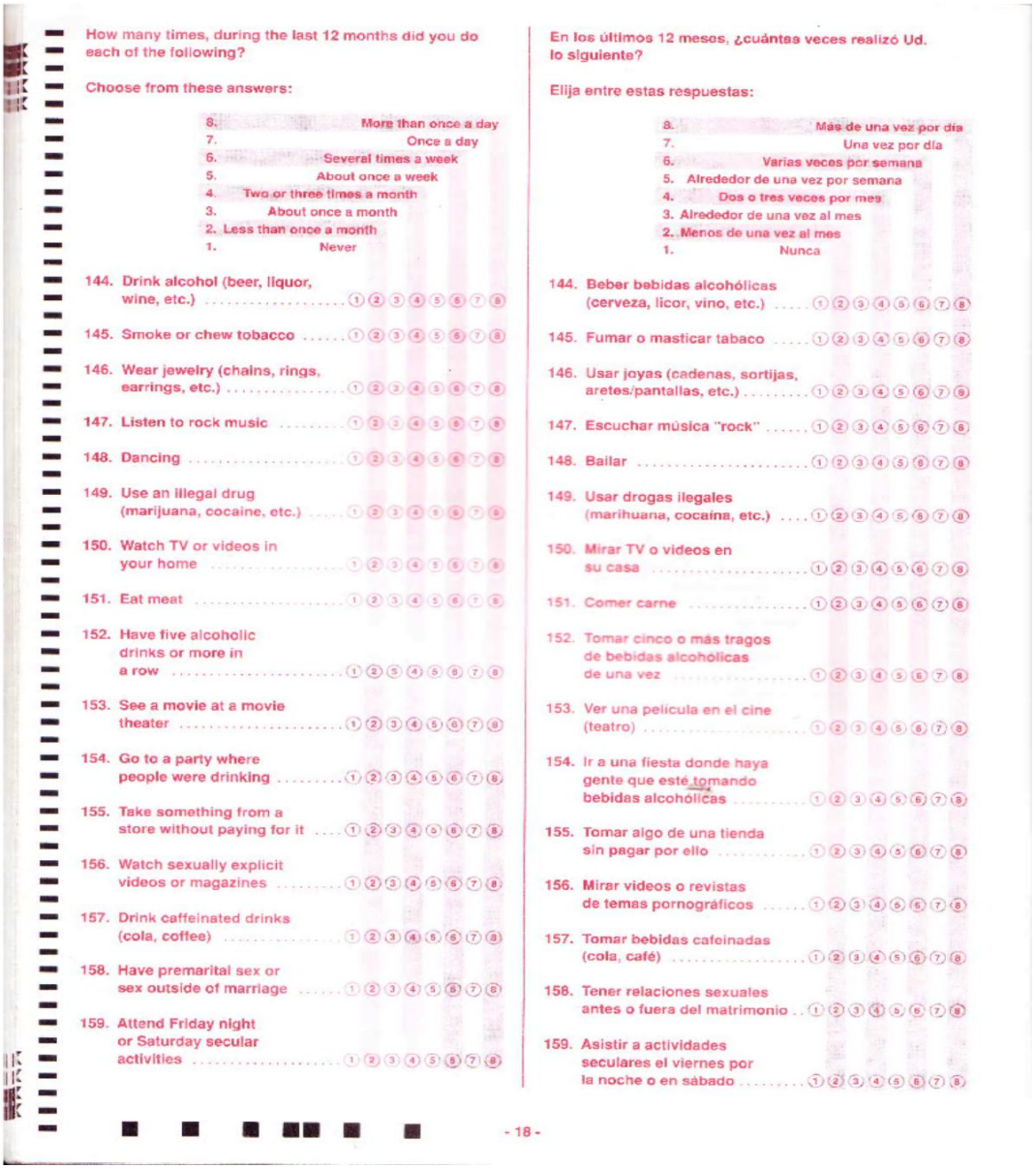
a. The relationship between parents' marital status and devotional practices

b. The relationship between parental verbal, parental physical, and parental sexual abuse variables and devotional practices

2. Understand how diverse forms of parental abuse may influence the spiritual life of children.
3. Understand the intergenerational transmission of Christian values and principles in the Hispanic Adventist community.
4. Make a distinction between the spiritual practice of prayer and meditation among youth.
5. Better understand Hispanic youth religiosity.
6. Study how other non-parental factors may influence youth engagement in Christian spiritual practices.
7. Understand how other institutions, such as church and school, influence youth to engage in Christian spiritual practices.
8. Replicate this study in the near future to be able to compare results.

APPENDIX A

SAMPLE PAGE OF THE *AVANCE* QUESTIONNAIRE



How many times, during the last 12 months did you do each of the following?

Choose from these answers:

8. More than once a day
7. Once a day
6. Several times a week
5. About once a week
4. Two or three times a month
3. About once a month
2. Less than once a month
1. Never

144. Drink alcohol (beer, liquor, wine, etc.) ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧
145. Smoke or chew tobacco ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧
146. Wear jewelry (chains, rings, earrings, etc.) ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧
147. Listen to rock music ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧
148. Dancing ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧
149. Use an illegal drug (marijuana, cocaine, etc.) ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧
150. Watch TV or videos in your home ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧
151. Eat meat ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧
152. Have five alcoholic drinks or more in a row ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧
153. See a movie at a movie theater ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧
154. Go to a party where people were drinking ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧
155. Take something from a store without paying for it ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧
156. Watch sexually explicit videos or magazines ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧
157. Drink caffeinated drinks (cola, coffee) ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧
158. Have premarital sex or sex outside of marriage ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧
159. Attend Friday night or Saturday secular activities ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧

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En los últimos 12 meses, ¿cuántas veces realizó Ud. lo siguiente?

Elija entre estas respuestas:

8. Más de una vez por día
7. Una vez por día
6. Varias veces por semana
5. Alrededor de una vez por semana
4. Dos o tres veces por mes
3. Alrededor de una vez al mes
2. Menos de una vez al mes
1. Nunca

144. Beber bebidas alcohólicas (cerveza, licor, vino, etc.) ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧
145. Fumar o masticar tabaco ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧
146. Usar joyas (cadenas, sortijas, aretes/pantallas, etc.) ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧
147. Escuchar música "rock" ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧
148. Bailar ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧
149. Usar drogas ilegales (marihuana, cocaína, etc.) ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧
150. Mirar TV o videos en su casa ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧
151. Comer carne ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧
152. Tomar cinco o más tragos de bebidas alcohólicas de una vez ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧
153. Ver una película en el cine (teatro) ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧
154. Ir a una fiesta donde haya gente que esté tomando bebidas alcohólicas ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧
155. Tomar algo de una tienda sin pagar por ello ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧
156. Mirar videos o revistas de temas pornográficos ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧
157. Tomar bebidas cafeinadas (cola, café) ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧
158. Tener relaciones sexuales antes o fuera del matrimonio ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧
159. Asistir a actividades seculares el viernes por la noche o en sábado ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧

APPENDIX B

LIST OF CHANGES MADE TO THE *AVANCE* QUESTIONNAIRE

FOR THE *AVANCE PR* STUDY

Hoja Errata para el Cuestionario de Jóvenes

Las siguientes preguntas corresponden a las preguntas en el cuestionario y deben sustituir las preguntas del mismo. Utilice las burbujas del cuestionario para indicar su respuesta.

#19. ¿Cuánto conoce usted de los siguientes colegios y universidades adventistas? (Marque todo lo que se aplique en su caso).

1. Estudié o estudio allí.
2. Pensé asistir o enviar a mi hijo/a.
3. Tengo conocimiento, pero nunca he considerado asistir o enviar a mis hijos.
4. No tengo conocimiento.

Andrews University	1	2	3	4
Atlantic Union College	1	2	3	4
Universidad Adventista de las Antillas	1	2	3	4
Columbia Union College	1	2	3	4
La Sierra Univesity	1	2	3	4
Loma Linda University	1	2	3	4
Universidad Adventista Dominicana	1	2	3	4
Pacific Union College	1	2	3	4
Southern College	1	2	3	4
Southwestern SDA College	1	2	3	4
Universidad de Montemorelos	1	2	3	4
Walla Walla College	1	2	3	4

#61. ¿Dónde fue bautizado? Marque una sola respuesta.
No se aplica, no soy bautizado.
En un país fuera de Puerto Rico.
En Puerto Rico.

#69. He sido menospreciado porque no hablo el inglés.

#73. La iglesia debiera proveer programas bilingües (escuela sabática, sermones) para aquellos miembros que no entienden el español.

#163. Los pastores necesitan recibir entrenamiento para tratar con los problemas sociales de Puerto Rico.

#164. Los pastores en Puerto Rico serían más efectivos si fueran completamente bilingües.
#226. ¡No conteste esta pregunta!

#228. ¡No conteste esta pregunta!

#229. Me han hecho sentir inferior por ser extranjero.

#253. Mi pastor promueve y participa de las costumbres culturales representadas en la congregación.

#256. (Eliminar “La Migra”)

#289. El asistir a la iglesia me ayuda a reafirmar mi fe.

#290. Me gusta adorar a Dios con gente de mi edad.

#291. ¡No conteste esta pregunta!

APPENDIX C

RESEARCH VARIABLES: SCALES AND SINGLE ITEMS

This appendix presents the scales and single items used in this study. This appendix is organized by types of variables: dependent variables, independent variables, control variables and dummy variables. Although the *Avance PR* survey was presented to the subjects in English and Spanish, only the English version of the items is presented in this appendix. The original number of each item in the *Avance PR* survey is included in front of each transcribed item. There were four variables in which one of the responses was "does not apply." This response for these variables was recoded to missing.

Dependent Variables

Devotional Practices Scale Alpha Coefficient: .777

How true are each of these statements for you?

2. I seek out opportunities to help me grow spiritually

1 = Never true
2 = Rarely true
3 = Sometimes true
4 = Often true
5 = Always true

How often do you do each of the following?

23. Pray or meditate, other than at church or before meals.
24. Watch religious programs on television or listen to religious radio programs.
25. Read the Bible on my own.
26. Read the writings of Ellen White.
27. Read religious magazines, newspapers, or books.

1 = Never
2 = Less than three times a month
3 = Several times a week
4 = Once a day
5 = More than once a day

Church Attendance

86. How often do you attend church?
    1 = Never
    2 = Less than once a month
    3 = About once a month
    4 = Two or three times a month
    5 = About once a week
    6 = Several times a week or more

Independent Variables

Categorical variables

Parental Status

187. What is your Family Status?
    1 = Both parents live together
    2 = My parents are separated
    3 = My parents are divorced

Family Worship Quality

214. How would you evaluate your family worship?
    1 = Does not apply (we don't have worship)
    2 = A waste of time
    3 = Meaningful/spiritual

Parental Educational Expectations

232. How far in school do you think your parents want you to go?
    1 = High school
    2 = Trade school
    3 = Two years of college
    4 = College
    5 = Masters
    6 = Postgraduate

Parental religious affiliation

88. Are or were your parents Seventh-day Adventists?
    2 = Neither SDA
    3 = Mother SDA
    4 = Father SDA
    5 = Both SDA

Verbal Abuser

165b. If you have experienced verbal or emotional abuse, by whom?
    1 = Parent only
    2 = No abuse
    3 = Other only

Physical Abuser

166. If you have experienced physical abuse, by whom?
    1 = Parent only
    2 = No abuse
    3 = Other only

Sexual Abuser

167. If you have experienced sexual abuse, by whom?
    1 = Parent only
    2 = No abuse
    3 = Other only

Quantitative variables

Family Income

99. About how much money did your family or household earn last year?
    1 = Less than 5,000.00
    2 = 5,000 - 9,999.00
    3 = 10,000 - 14,999
    4 = 15,000 - 24,999
    5 = 25,000 – 34,999
    6 = 35,000 – 49,999
    7 = 50,000 – 74,999
    8 = 75,000 or more

Family Recreation

How often do your parents do the following?

210. Go out together as a family (camping, vacation, going to a park)

1 = Does not apply
2 = Never
3 = Sometimes
4 = Often
5 = Very often

Family Worship Quantity

213. How often does your family have family worship (prayers or religious devotions away from church services)?

1 = Never
2 = Less than once a month
3 = About once a month
4 = About 2-3 times a month
5 = About once a week
6 = Once a day
7 = More than once a day

Parental Punishment

194. How much do you agree of disagree with each of the following? If I break one of the rules set by my parents, I usually get punished.

1 = Strongly disagree
2 = Disagree
3 = I'm not sure
4 = Agree
5 = Strongly agree

Parents Encourage Youth to Make Decisions

How much do you agree or disagree with each of the following?

198. My parents encourage me to make my own decisions.

1 = Strongly disagree
2 = Disagree
3 = I'm not sure
4 = Agree
5 = Strongly agree

Parental verbal abuse

165. Have you ever experienced verbal or emotional abuse?

1 = Never
2 = Rarely
3 = Some of the time
4 = Very often
5 = Almost all the time

Parental physical abuse

166. Have you ever experienced physical abuse?
    1 = Never
    2 = Rarely
    3 = Some of the time
    4 = Very often
    5 = Almost all the time

Parental sexual abuse

167. Have you ever experienced sexual abuse?
    1 = Never
    2 = Rarely
    3 = Some of the time
    4 = Very often
    5 = Almost all the time

Family Unity Scale Alpha Coefficient: .885

How much do you agree or disagree with each of the following?

188. My family life is happy.
189. There is a lot of love in my family.
190. I get along well with my parents.
191. My parents give me help and support when I need it.
192. My parents often tell me they love me.
193. I cherish the moments when my whole family (grandparents, cousins, aunts, uncles, brothers, sisters, parents) are together.
    1 = Strongly disagree
    2 = Disagree
    3 = I'm not sure
    4 = Agree
    5 = Strongly agree

Family Worship Impact Scale Alpha Coefficient: not computed

213. How often does your family have family worship (prayers or religious devotions away from church services)?
214. How would you evaluate your family worship?
    1 = Most negative impact
    2 = Somewhat negative impact
    3 = Least negative impact
    4 = No impact
    5 = Least positive impact
    6 = Somewhat positive impact
    7 = Most positive impact

Family Risk Behaviors Standards Scale Alpha Coefficient: .788

For each of the following standards, indicate how strictly they are enforced by your family.

One should:

126. Not use tobacco
127. Not drink alcohol
132. Not use illegal drugs
133. Sex should only occur in marriage
143. Not masturbate

1 = Not at all strictly enforced
2 = Somewhat strictly enforced
3 = I'm not sure
4 = Quite strictly enforced
5 = Very strictly enforced

Family Adventist Standards Scale Alpha Coefficient: .918

For each of the following standards, indicate how strictly they are enforced by your family.

One should:

128. Not wear jewelry
129. Not listen to rock music
130. Not dance
131. Not attend movie theaters
134. Not eat unclean meats
136. Should observe the Sabbath
137. Should wear modest clothes
141. One should not wear make-up
142. Not use drinks that contain caffeine

1 = Not at all strictly enforced
2 = Somewhat strictly enforced
3 = I'm not sure
4 = Quite strictly enforced
5 = Very strictly enforced

Parental Education Scale Alpha Coefficient: .688

Indicate the highest level of education completed by each person.

16b. Mother
16c. Father

1 = No formal schooling
2 = Grade school
3 = High school
4 = Some college
5 = Graduated from college
6 = Masters degree
7 = Postgraduate

Parental Educational Involvement Scale Alpha Coefficient: .666

How often do your parents do the following?

205. Keep pressing me to do my best work at school.
207. Talk about your educational goals.

1 = Does not apply
2 = Never
3 = Sometimes
4 = Often
5 = Very often

Parental Role Model Scale Alpha Coefficient: .851

202. My parents are good examples of the Christian life.
203. My parents live up to the standards of the church.
204. My parents actively participate in the life of the church.

1 = Strongly disagree
2 = Disagree
3 = I'm not sure
4 = Agree
5 = Strongly agree

Parental Authoritarianism Scale Alpha Coefficient: .706

195. I don't have much participation in the decisions of my home.
196. My parents are harsh and unfair when administering discipline.
197. It seems that what's more important at home is not what I think but what my parents think.
199. My parents push their religious convictions on me.

1 = Strongly disagree
2 = Disagree
3 = I'm not sure
4 = Agree
5 = Strongly agree

Parental Misunderstanding Scale Alpha Coefficient: .656

200. My parents don't understand my problems.
201. Sometimes I feel that my parents have forgotten what it means to be young.

1 = Strongly disagree
2 = Disagree
3 = I'm not sure
4 = Agree
5 = Strongly agree

Parental Limits scale Alpha Coefficient: .710

206. Limit the amount of time you can spend watching TV.
208. Limit the amount of time for going out with friends on school nights.
209. Limit the types of music you listen to.

1 = Does not apply
2 = Never
3 = Sometimes
4 = Often
5 = Very often

Parental Knowledge of Youth Activities Scale Alpha Coefficient: .835

212. How much do your parents really know…

Who your friends are?
Where you go at night?
How you spend your money?
What you do with your free time?
Where you are most afternoons after school?

1 = Don't know
2 = Know a little
3 = Know a lot

Youth Parental Worries Scale Alpha Coefficient: .766

I worry…

264. That one of my parents might die.
268. That my parents might stop loving me if I disappoint them.
275. That my parents might get a divorce.

1 = Not at all
2 = A little
3 = Somewhat
4 = Quite a bit
5 = Very much

Control Variables

Age

77. How old are you?

1 = 13 or younger
2 = 14 – 17
3 = 18 – 21
4 = 22 – 25
5 = 26 – 29
6 = 30 – 33
7 = 34 – 37
8 = 38 – 41
9 = 42 – 45

10 = 46 – 49
11 = 50 – 53
12 = 54 – 57
13 = 58 – 61
14 = 62 – 65
15 = 66 and over

Gender

13. Are you male or female?
1 = male
2 = female

Dummy Variables

Parental Status Dummy = Parents Separated

187. What is your Family Status?
1 = Together
2 = Separated or divorced

Parental Educational Expectation Dummy = Parental College Expectation

232. How far in school do you think your parents want you to go?
1 = Less than college
2 = College or more

Parental Religious Affiliation Dummy = Mother SDA

88. Is your mother Seventh-day Adventist?
1 = Yes
0 = No

Parental Religious Affiliation Dummy = Father SDA

88. Is your father Seventh-day Adventist?
1 = Yes
0 = No

Parental Religious Affiliation Dummy = Both parents SDA

88. Are or were both parents Seventh-day Adventist?
1 = Yes
0 = No

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