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AN INVESTIGATION OF DIFFERENCES BETWEEN CLERGY CHILDREN AND NON-CLERGY CHILDREN: MORAL-RELIGIOUS EMPHASIS, STRESSORS, AND SELF-ESTEEM

A Dissertation

Presented for the

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Degree

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Jenny Owensby Warren

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my adorable parents, Ronell and Ann Owensby, who have encouraged, uplifted, supported, and sustained me through my many years of schooling. For all their sacrifices and prayers, I thank them and honor them with the best of my abilities. Without their godly love and friendship, none of this would have been possible.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to determine if differences exists between clergy and non-clergy children in regard to family moral-religious emphasis, to stressors, and to self-esteem. The Moral-Religious Emphasis subscale of the Family Environment Scale (Moos, 1974) was used to measure the students' perceptions of their families' moral-religious emphasis.

The Family Environment Scale was administered to Carson-Newman College students along with Rosenberg's Self-Esteem Scale and the Stressors in Clergy Children and Couples Scale. It was hypothesized that there would be no significant differences between clergy children and non-clergy children on measures of family moral-religious emphasis, stressors, and self-esteem. In order to determine if there were significant differences between the two groups on the three given variables, *t* tests were used. The Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was also used to determine relationships among the three factors: moral-religious emphasis, stressors, and self-esteem.

Results were supportive of a difference between clergy and non-clergy children in moral-religious emphasis. No differences were found between the two groups in relation to stress and self-esteem. However, findings are supportive of a direct positive correlation between stress and self-esteem.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Problem Statement

According to Hatcher and Underwood (1990), when stresses are high among ministers, self-concepts are low. However, very little research has been conducted on how stresses of the ministry relate to ministers' families and to the self-esteem of ministers' children. There has also been a gap in literature concerning the differences between ministers' families and non-ministers' families in regards to the families' moral-religious emphasis (MRE). Therefore, the study was directed to discover more about the differences between clergy children and non-clergy children and the relationships between the families' moral-religious emphasis, stressors on children, self-esteem, and moral-religious emphasis as a possible buffer to stress and self-esteem.

Hypotheses

For students attending a private Southern Baptist liberal arts college, measuring factors of moral-religious emphasis, stress, and self-esteem were predicted to yield the following: (1) There would be no significant difference in family moral-

religious emphasis between clergy children and non-clergy children as measured by Moos's Family Environment Scale (Moos, Insel, & Humphrey, 1974).

(2) There would be no significant differences of measures of stressors between clergy children and non-clergy children as measured by the Stressors in Clergy Children and Couples Scale (Ostrander, Ceglian, & Fournier, 1993).

(3) There would be no significant difference between clergy and non-clergy children on scores of self-esteem as measured by Rosenberg's Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965).

Subhypotheses

In examining the three variables, additional hypotheses arose about the relationships between the factors that might imply additional rational for the findings:

(1) There would be no significant relationship between moral-religious emphasis and stressors.

(2) There would be no significant relationship between moral-religious emphasis and self-concept.

(3) There would be no significant relationship between stressors and self-esteem.

Assumption

The assumption of the dissertation was that stress and self-concept are related. Although some research has reported marginal support of a negative correlation between stressful life events to self-concept (Bennett, 1988), self-esteem and self-concept have been associated significantly with stress levels in most areas of life (Zuckerman, 1989). For instance, Zuckerman (1989) reported a strong correlation between self-esteem and stress in mental health. Self-esteem accounted for a 28% variance associated with men's stress in mental health and a 17% variance for women.

In Chandler's (1985) study of children and stress, the children's self-esteem was a determining factor in how they responded to stressful situations. In a study of ministers (Hatcher & Underwood, 1990), higher stress levels were related with lower self-concepts. Greater self-esteem coupled with interpersonal skills have been noted to reduce stress by using effective coping and utilizing social supports (Billings & Moos, 1982).

Also, self-report measures have revealed an association of stress and mental health (Zuckerman, 1989). For instance, women with low self-esteem report ongoing stress in several areas of their lives (*e.g.*, family, mental health, and health) (Makosky, 1982). In findings by Zuckerman (1989), "self-esteem, interpersonal self-confidence, and coping/self-

sufficiency were consistently associated with reactions to stress" (p. 441). In addition, Zuckerman (1989) has associated family stress with lower self-esteem. Women reported lower self-esteem with stress from intimate relationships and mental health, whereas men's lower self-esteem was related to their living conditions, health, and mental health (Zuckerman, 1989).

Additionally, "anxiety tends to generate low self-esteem...consistent with Horney's interpretation...however, ...low self-esteem may generate anxiety" (Rosenberg, 1965, p. 151). Four factors are associated with low self-esteem, instability of self-image, the "presenting self" (presenting a false front to others), vulnerability, and feelings of isolation, create anxiety (Rosenberg, 1965).

Rationale for the Study

Two important purposes were accomplished in this study. First, the study helped to further confirm that a relationship exists between self-concept and stress. Stress has been reported to be a major factor in mental health and life adjustment (Bennett, 1988; Billings & Moos, 1982; Chandler, 1985; Cohen, Burt, & Bjorck, 1987; Hatcher & Underwood, 1990; Makosky, 1982; Zuckerman, 1989). Also, the study supported the existence of this relationship within an exploration of a family moral-religious emphasis and life-style (Bergin,

Stinchfield, Gaskin, Masters, & Sullivan, 1988; Maton & Pargament, 1987; Ross, 1990). The association of stress to self-concept was expected to be influential in the individual's moral-religious emphasis.

Second, the results from this study did minimally support the research of stress of the minister's family. Family environment-adaptability and cohesion is a buffer against stress and other negative factors. Clergy children have higher stress exposure due to parental involvement in social issues and exposure to external expectations (Moy & Malony, 1987). Because of high levels of adaptation and better family cohesion, minister's children have higher levels of self-concept and lower levels of stress. Therefore, adaptation and family support buffer against stressful situations.

The field of ministerial research has established a relationship between the minister's family and high levels of stress (Blanton, 1992; Conway & Conway, 1984; Henry, Chertok, Keys, & Jegerski, 1991; Moy & Malony, 1987; Ostrander & Henry, 1989; Ostrander, Henry, & Hendrix, 1990; Richmond, Rayburn, & Rogers, 1985). Some of the stressors that have been noted to plague ministers' homes are both external (*i.e.*, family boundaries, mobility, and social support) and internal (*i.e.*, marital communication, parent-child relationships, and self-esteem) (Blanton, 1992). Conway and Conway (1984) define stressors as expectations of pastoral families from the community, the church, and the pastoral family. Whereas,

Ostrander *et al.* (1990) have classified the pressures of clergy children as church stressors, family stressors, and individual (self) stressors.

The minister and his/her family face multidimensional stresses in everyday life. For example, "the minister is swamped with the routine problems of keeping a good, competent staff and supervising their work" while "dealing with the multiple problems of the church membership" (Bailey & Bailey, 1979, p. 76). Even the minister's wife ends up with the overflow of frustrations from church members.

According to Jud, Mills, and Burch (as cited in Moy & Malony, 1987), ministers have left the ministry due to: a sense of personal and professional inadequacy, inability to relocate when necessary, and problems in relationships with wife or children. In fact, ministers rank third out of professionals who divorce each year (Richmond *et al.*, 1985). A 1982 survey of clergy couples disclosed that the most frequent mentioned disadvantage of being in a clergy marriage is their perception of unreasonable expectations from the congregations and communities in terms of their marital and a parental roles (Mace & Mace, 1980).

In 1971, Mills and Koval found in a study of almost 5000 ministers that three-fourths reported one or more periods of major stress. In addition, Blackmon (1984) found that a large number of the ministers polled depict the ministry to be more of a hazard than a benefit to his family. According to other

studies (Ellison & Mattilla, 1982; Jud *et al.*, 1970), some ministers seem to be ignorant to the possible problems with their marriages and children in relation to their jobs. In fact, Blackmon (1984) found that of the ministers studied only 14.7% indicated that their children experienced "significant pressure," however 54.7% said their children experienced "some pressure" in being the child of a minister and 30.6% said "no pressure." It is still possible that there is stress and pressure in ministers' homes whether acknowledged or not acknowledged.

According to Moy and Malony (1987), over the past decade there has been some growing concerns over the minister's family life (Blackmon, 1984; Peach, 1985) and minister's children (DeVries, 1984; Conway & Conway, 1984). More recent studies about minister's families have been undertaken by other researchers (ex., Ostrander & Henry, 1989; Ostrander *et al.*, 1990; Ostrander, Ceglian, & Fournier, 1993) to investigate stress among minister's children and to apply the results to developing appropriate instruments to measure stressors in this population.

From interviews with minister's families, Bouma (1979) found that minister's children often deal with double standards from congregational members, peers, and even family members. They have unfair expectations placed on them from others and are treated differently from their friends. For example, in a desire to "look like everyone else," ministers'

children try to take on the same clothing styles. Even though every teenager in the church has on the same style, the minister's child may be scrutinized for his/her lack of taste or respect for the place of worship (church) or for appearing in public with such tasteless attire. In addition, ministers' children often experience similar stressors that their parents experience: lack of privacy, finances, and time with family (Bailey & Bailey, 1979).

Moy and Malony (1987) point out that

> It is important to note that the minister's family and children have received relatively little attention. Yet, it is clear that the minister's family life and children are an important responsibility and a potential asset or deficit to the minister's work. Furthermore, it is likely that the multitude of stressors with which ministers and their wives must deal would also have negative effects on their children. (p. 54)

Inevitably, minister's children find themselves involved with issues of their own friends, "thinking that either they will have learned answers from their father or they can go to him and be anonymous help" (Bailey & Bailey, 1979, p. 78). Even further, "the real difficulty comes with the feeling that the parsonage is little more than a dumping ground for all the dirty laundry of the church and its extended family" (Bailey & Bailey, 1979, p.78).

Definition of Terms

Clergy Children. Clergy children defined by the present study, included students whose fathers serve or have served as the primary leader of a Southern Baptist church.

Non-Clergy Children. Non-clergy children defined by the present study, included children whose fathers and/or mothers have never served in any ministerial leadership role in a church in any denomination.

Moral-Religious Emphasis. Moos, Insel, and Humphrey (1974) determined a family's moral-religious emphasis by "the extent to which the family actively discusse[d] and emphasize[d] ethical and religious issues and values" (p. 4). Moral-religious emphasis was measured by the Moo's Family Environment Scale (Moos, Insel, & Humphrey, 1974). The scale is a self-report to objectively measure an individual's perception of his/her family environment (Robertson & Hyde, 1982).

Religiosity. Religiosity, as defined by the present study, refers to an individual's personal involvement in religious activities, such as church attendance and prayer.

Self-Esteem. Rosenberg (1965) measures self-esteem in the Rosenberg's Self-Esteem Scale (SES). He defined self-esteem as "a positive or negative attitude toward a particular object, namely, the self" (Rosenberg, 1965, p. 30). Self-esteem has two implications, either high or low self-esteem.

High self-esteem indicates that the individual feels that s/he has worth, and respects him/herself for what s/he is, and recognizes his/her limitations and expects to grow and improve. Low self-esteem insinuates "self-rejection, self-dissatisfaction, self-contempt" (Rosenberg, 1965, p. 31). High self-concept is representative of a positive life adjustment both internally and externally.

Stressors. Ostrander, Henry, & Hendrix (1990) determined stressors of the minister's child as related to church, family, and individual stressors. Positive life adjustment is characterized by few perceived stressors as measured by the Stressors in Clergy Children and Couples Scale. Selye (1974) determined that stress could be positive (eustress) or negative (distress). Stress in this dissertation is spoken of in terms of distress.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Self-Concept Literature

The importance of studying the self-concept "is illustrated by the fact that not only is the self the most prominent aspect of the individual's phenomenal world, but it also tends to be the most stable feature" (Fitts *et al.*, 1971, p. 3). As a result of research, progress has been made in the understanding of the self-concept. To illustrate, the self-concept will not always be directly revealed in one's overt actions. Instead, its impact will often be revealed in mood changes, in shifts in self-esteem, in social comparison, and in self-presentation (Markus & Wurf, 1987).

Self-concept is described as a frame of reference from which the individual interacts with his/her world and all actions are predicated (Fitts *et al.*, 1971; Rosenberg, 1979), and it is "the totality of the individual's thoughts and feeling having reference to himself as an object" (Rosenberg, 1979, p. 7). According to Rosenberg (1965), "the key elements in characterizing a person's self-concept are the properties of and the relations between the various self-images (or self-attitudes), including their stability, importance, and consistency" (Wells & Marwell, 1976, p. 47). Self-concept

"appears to provide a kind of gauge of how one is doing social-emotionally" (Parish & Parish, 1983, p. 649). And, "knowledge of a person's self-concept (which cuts across motives, needs, attitudes, and values) is a means for better understanding that person's behavior" (Stein, 1987, p. 78).

Further, "the evaluative, judgmental, or affective aspect of a person's self-conception involves the process commonly referred to as self-esteem" (Wells & Marwell, 1976, p. 59). Thus, self-esteem is the process in which a person distinguishes characteristics of him/herself and reacts to them emotionally or behaviorally (Wells & Marwell, 1976), and it is "the degree of correspondence between an individual's ideal and actual concepts of himself" (Cohen, 1959, p. 103). The incongruity between the real and ideal self has been noted in literature with such terms as self-acceptance, self-satisfaction and personal adjustment (Wells & Marwell, 1976). Hence, self-esteem is the "extent to which a person believes him/herself to be capable, significant, successful, and worthy" within terms of self-acceptance (Coopersmith, 1967, p. 5).

On a larger scale, "people desire a feeling of self-respect and acceptance and some assurance that they have some control over their lives" (Mechanic, 1983, p. 120). They are driven by the motive for higher self-esteem or avoidance of lower self-esteem (Pepitone, 1968), known as the self-esteem motive (Wells & Marwell, 1976). Self-esteem is fashioned

throughout the life span and depends on such things as sociocultural conditions, developmental experiences, and achievements of expectations (Mechanic, 1983). Ziller (as cited in Wells & Marwell, 1976) describes self-esteem as a mediator or buffer between the self and the real world outside the senses.

Discrepancies exist in the measurement of self-concept as parts or as a whole. Unanimity does not exist among self-concept researchers about whether attention should be focused on the parts - dispositions, identity elements, or physical characteristics - or on the whole - global self-attitudes (Rosenberg, 1979). These entities are not viewed as interchangeable by some: "Both exist within the individual's phenomenal field as separate and distinguishable entities" (Rosenberg, 1979, p. 20).

Global self-esteem is defined as "the individual's global positive or negative attitude toward himself" (Rosenberg, 1979, p. 85). In other words, someone with high self-esteem considers him/herself to have worth, not necessarily superiority to others. Increases in self-esteem produce more positive emotions, feelings of integration, available energy, and stronger feelings of freedom (Epstein, 1976). Individuals with low self-esteem regards to him/herself with self-rejection, self-dissatisfaction, or self-contempt (Rosenberg, 1979). These individuals have more neurotic tendencies, have difficulty with social interaction, and have lower aspirations

and expectations for success than individuals with high self-esteem (Wells & Marwell, 1976).

Present research has suggested that self-concept is multifaceted (Leung & Lau, 1989). There is increasing separation "of the self-concept into domains and roles as a child enters adolescence" (Harter, 1990, p.212). During self-concept development in adolescence, the attributes of intellectual ability and physical appearance are given great importance (Lau, 1990), due to the fact that these individuals begin to refer to themselves in abstract terms rather than in concrete terms (Montemayor & Eisen, 1977): "The content of the self-concept shifts from self-descriptions of the individual's behavioral and social exterior to his or her psychological interior" (Harter, 1990, p. 206). For example, social development in adolescence is thought to be related to their confidence in their physical image (Lau, 1990).

A state of self-concept disturbance or ego-disequilibrium is set off in puberty (Tierno, 1983). In nearly every theory of adolescence, changes in physique to changes in self-concept are attached to reports of sex drive, puberty, and the emergence of the reproductive capacity along with role changes (Dusek & Flaherty, 1981; Petersen, 1981). During early adolescence, a commotion of intra-psychic energy and a demanding social world must be confronted (Savin-Williams & Demo, 1984). Adolescence has also attracted more research on self-concept than any other developmental stage because of

these dramatic and rapid physiological and personality changes (Dusek & Flaherty, 1981).

Elliott (1984) also suggests that a close relationship exists between physical appearance and self-concept. For example, this relationship may effect food intake, especially among adolescent girls (Elliott, 1984). According to Lefcourt's and Maccoby's studies, the possession of high self-concepts of ability and appearance may also enhance the feeling of personal control (as cited in Lau, 1990).

In addition, the self-concepts of individuals in this stage are affected by family structure and child-rearing practices (Hoelter & Harper, 1987; Litovsky & Dusek, 1985; Parish & Parish, 1983; Parish & Nunn, 1988). Coopersmith (as cited in Well & Marwell, 1976) initiated the bases of these studies stating that there are no distinct family patterns that determine high or low self-esteem in children; however, there seems to be conditions that are contributory to the formation of high self-esteem. These conditions include: parental acceptance, parentally defined limits for the children, and parental respect for individual aspiration and independence within these limits (Coopersmith, 1967).

An optimal home atmosphere helps an adolescent to feel accepted and wanted and fosters feelings of self-worth (Litovsky & Dusek, 1985). Bowlby contends "that supportive social attachments in early childhood promote self-reliance and self-esteem" (Sarason, 1980, p. 90). If parents over-

regulate the adolescent's life, the results is lower self-esteem (Adams & Jones, 1983). Positive experiences in adolescents, however, serve as a protective function for self-esteem (Cohen, Burt, & Bjorck, 1987).

In order to extend the research of child-rearing practices and examine developmental trends, Litovsky and Dusek (1985) examined the relationship between perceptions of child-rearing and the adolescent development of self-concept. The researchers expected older adolescents to perceive their parents as less accepting and more controlling. Apparently, adolescents who perceive their parents as warm and accepting have higher self-concepts than those who perceive their parents as colder and rejecting (Litovsky & Dusek, 1985). Furthermore, higher self-concepts have been found among adolescents who view their parents as granting autonomy. Implications from the study reveal that parents who are perceived as not allowing autonomy have adolescents with lower self-concepts. On the contrary, Beaman, Whitbeck, and Simons (1992) found that older adolescents did perceive their parents as less accepting, yet the subjects (*i.e.*, ninth graders) with higher self-esteem reported their parents as higher in firm control.

Similar to findings from de Vaus (1983), Litovsky and Dusek (1985) found stronger relations for the mother than the father, suggesting that the mother's behavior towards the adolescent is of greater importance than the father's in

regard to self-concept development. Seemingly, adolescents who perceive their fathers as controlling have lower self-concepts. Likewise, Rosenberg's (1965) research revealed "that adolescents who report close relationships with fathers are much more likely to have higher self-esteem and stable self-images than those who describe these relationships as more distant" (p. 44).

In Parish & Parish's (1983) study, students from intact, reconstituted (*i.e.*, remarried), and divorced homes were studied. In regards to family-concepts, positive adjectives were chosen more often by children with high family-concepts and vice versa. Results from the research also report that children from divorced families chose strong, beautiful, friendly, healthy, and jolly as more descriptive of themselves and their families more often than the other two groups. But, in comparison to those from intact homes, they described themselves more as afraid, weak, and gloomy and described themselves less as cheerful (Parish & Parish, 1983).

On the other hand, children from reconstituted families are more likely to describe themselves as cruel and less likely to describe themselves as gentle and kind (*i.e.*, at a significant $p<.01$) (Parish & Parish, 1983). Finally, the only positive word divorced children used was "great" more than the other children to describe themselves and their families. Moreover, children's self-concepts are significantly associated with both their family structure and their family

concept (Parish & Parish, 1983). And, the analysis of individual adjectives provided into which "strengths" and/or "weaknesses" are associated with which groups of respondents.

In addition, significant positive relationships of social support to self-esteem have been found in several research studies (*e.g.*, Bennett, 1988). Social support implies interpersonal resources from family members, friends, or others, who express positive affect or love. This support includes "having one's behavior and beliefs affirmed by family, friends, or others," and having "the availability of material aid from family, friends, or others in times of need" (Bennett, 1988, p. 163). Further, Hoelter & Harper (1987) found a significant relationship between family support and self-concept. Their findings suggest that the family is critical for the development and maintenance of self-esteem. And, no differences between males and females were found with the effect of family support on self-esteem.

Stress Literature

When the demands of a situation exceed an individual's capacity to cope, stress results (Mechanic, 1983). Therefore, stress is the result of any demand on the body, whether it expresses itself mentally or physically (Selye, 1982). Situations that provide motivation, for example, are considered eustress; however, those that have deteriorative

effects are regarded as distress. Stressors contain and generate stressful situations (Hamilton, 1982). To some, "stressors are external events or conditions that affect the organism" (Breznitz & Goldberger, 1982, p. 3). Others, however, consider stressors to include more than just physical events, such as "emotions - love, hate, joy, anger, challenge, and fear" - and cognitions (Selye, 1982, p. 14).

Additionally, the stressor does not necessarily produce stress within the individual, instead the appraisal of the event may produce a response of stress (Selye, 1980). The environment in which stress exists is the psychological environment mentally created by individuals (Sarason, 1980). The situation may be classified as being benign, neutral, or stressful. These stressful appraisals have three classifications: harm-loss, threat, and challenge (Lazarus, Cohen, Folkman, Kanner, & Schaefer, 1980), and involve "appraisals of (a) situations or tasks confronting a person and (b) the person's ability to deal successfully with them" (Sarason, 1980, p. 74). Therefore, the challenged individual will cope more effectively and experience less stress than those who are threatened by a situation or task (Holroyd & Lazarus, 1982).

Stressful life events include incidents that involve change in routine activities of most individuals who experience them (Dohrenwend & Dohrenwend, 1980). According to several researchers, most stressful life events are

characterized with: changes in an individual's activities, undesirability, and upsettingness [*sic*] (Dohrenwend & Dohrenwend, 1980).

Stress and adaptional outcomes are regulated through coping strategies that either increase or decrease risk of disease, morale, and social functioning (Lazarus *et al.*, 1980). For example, "adaptation to one life crisis often influences success in adaptation later on" (Sarason, 1980, p. 82). Social relationships equip individuals with coping mechanisms, and "facilitate[] coping with crises and adaptation to change" (Sarason, 1980, p. 84). People are happier and more well adjusted when they are confident that there are reliable persons in their life who will attend to them if difficulties arise (Bowlby, 1973). Therefore, "people with problems cope with them better when other people are available to provide comfort, information, and encouragement" (Sarason, 1980, p.89). These helping individuals are termed as social supports: "people on whom we can rely, people who let us know that they care about, value, and love us" (Sarason, 1980, p. 84). Social resources can also reduce the likelihood that stressful events occur, and they can regulate the magnitude that a stressful event has on self-esteem and personal mastery (Lieberman, 1982).

The concept of social support as a buffer of stress has been the center of several research studies (*e.g.*, Cobb, 1976; Cohen & Wills, 1985; Jacobson, 1986; Lin, Ensel, Simeone, &

Kuo, 1979). Burt, Cohen, and Bjorck (1988) found that adolescents who have experienced more negative family environments, as measured by the Family Environment Scale (FES), are less stressed by negative life events than youth from positive family environments. They speculate that the disruptive family environments which these adolescents are accustomed buffer against stress caused by additional negative life experiences.

Adversely, Murch and Cohen (1989) verified an opposing view. No "inoculation" from high levels of stress was found with spina bifida adolescents with a negative family environment. These adolescents probably rely heavily on their families to buffer against stress and to offer support and protection from life stressors.

On the other hand, family stress has been related with lower self-esteem (Zuckerman, 1989), whereas family conflict and low family support have been associated with alcohol use in adolescents (Baer, Garmezy, McLaughlin, Pokorny, & Wernick, 1987). Still, Bennett (1988) found an overall positive relationship between social support and self-esteem. In addition, his findings suggested that social support is also a buffer against stress. In opposition, Windle (1992) found no support for the stress-buffering model.

Additionally, family support has indicated a strong relationship with adjustment in adolescents (Cauce, Hannan, & Sargeant, 1992): "The availability of social supports,

particularly parents, can moderate the effects of stress and enhance coping" (Petersen & Spiga, 1982, p. 522). Supportive and well structured families aid in the development and use of coping mechanisms (Moos & Moos, 1994), and have been associated with less psychological distress among children (Holahan & Moos, 1987). Adjustments include such stressors as peer, physical, and general competence (Cauce *et al.*, 1992), and stress is stronger in these area if the events accompanying them are more negative than positive (Larson & Ham, 1993).

Additionally, "by its protective influence, the family environment can reduce the ongoing stressors and enhance the social resources associated with extrafamily life context factors" (Moos & Moos, 1994, p. 29). For example, family support serves as a buffer against negative events effecting school competence (Cauce *et al.*, 1992) and against high levels of stress (Cohen & Wills, 1985). Other research reports family environments as stress buffers for female graduate students, although no buffering effect was found for male graduate students (Mallinckrodt & Leong, 1992).

Further, evidence has been found that a better father-adolescent relationship has a stress buffering effect against internalized problems (*e.g.*, depression) produced by family stressors (Forehand *et al.*, 1991). More stable family environments and nurturant relationships with primary care givers intensifies resiliency to stress in pre-adolescent

children (Wyman *et al.*, 1992). Subsequently, the particular importance of the father's relationship may be found in the findings that fathers' symptoms of stress have a greater impact on adolescents than mothers' symptoms (Compas, Howell, Phares, Williams, & Ledoux, 1989), although less anxiety symptoms have been reported in Protestant men (Zuckerman, 1989). This connection may exist due to the infrequent occurrence of these symptoms in the father or to the influence the father has in the family dynamics (Compas *et al.*, 1989).

Results from another investigation disclosed that adolescents describe their stressors to be related to either school and/or work or to interpersonal and/or family problems (Stern & Zevon, 1990). In fact, 68% of the subjects studied indicated their stressors as interpersonal or family. Evidently, late adolescence includes stressors, such as leaving home, that seem to affect even the parents' adjustment (Anderson, 1990).

In addition, perception of the family environment is a determinant of coping strategies in Stern & Zevon's (1990) work. A negative perception was related with the use of emotionally-based coping strategies (*i.e.*, self-blame and wish-fulfilling fantasy). Whereas, a positive perspective was connected to more problem-solving coping strategies (*i.e.*, expressiveness and intellectual orientation) (Stern & Zevon, 1990). According to some child psychiatrists, certain home conditions may have very negative influences on the

personality and mental health of some children. Some of the conditions that are related with childhood psychiatric disorders include: severe marital discord, low social status, large family size, and maternal psychiatric disorder (Humphrey & Humphrey, 1983).

In a study of family environment and stress in relation to a skin disorder, atopic dermatitis (AD), major life stressors were not related to the symptoms (Gil *et al.*, 1987). However, family environment, as measured by the FES, was related to the skin disorder. Families scoring high on the Independent/Organized factor demonstrated fewer symptoms in the child's AD, whereas high scores on the Moral/Religious factor were linked to more symptoms (Gil *et al.*, 1987).

Several explanations for the findings of the effects of family environment on children with AD have been given (Gil *et al.*, 1987). First, Independent/Organized families may serve as stress buffers due to their emphasis on independent thinking, self-reliance, planning, regular routine, and clear family responsibilities. Thus, these families comply more with treatments (Gil *et al.*, 1987).

On the other hand, Moral/Religious families have more strict and rigid views of right or wrong, believe in punishment for wrong doing, rely on faith, and participate in religious activities regularly (Gil *et al.*, 1987). Ironically, children from these homes were administered more medication. Possibly, these family environments are more

stressful and produce more symptoms in the children with AD.

A religious community life can also be a source of stress and a buffer for stress (Henry, Chertok, Keys, & Jegerski, 1991). However, family-of-origin serves as a buffer for ministers. Blanton (1992) reviewed a national survey of Episcopal clergy and spouses that reported that most of the population polled thought that their families dealt with some stresses that were unique to clergy families. Even though stresses experienced by clergy families are similar to those of other families, there are aspects of their life situations that characterize their stresses as atypical.

According to Blanton (1992), the stressors experienced by clergy families can be classified into two dimensions: external and internal. External stressors include the environmental (external of the family) demands on family resources. Such stressors include unrealistic expectations from the congregation and community, financial constraints, lack of family privacy, mobility, and lack of social support (Blanton, 1992; Conway & Conway, 1984; Lee & Balswick, 1989). For example, a clergy family who continuously encounters an intrusive congregation experiences higher levels of stress. Additionally, minister's children often feel the pressure of unrealistic expectations and double standards by the congregation in comparison to their peers (Bouma, 1979).

Internal stressors come from within the family and involve interpsychic and interpersonal demands (Blanton,

1992). Some of these stressors include redefinition of career roles, marital communication, parent-child relationships, and self-esteem and identity. For example, clergy children often experience anxiety about their public actions in fear of some reflection upon their parents.

Religion/Family Literature

A strong bond exist between families and religiosity (Beaman *et al.*, 1992). One way these two variables coincide is that the religious interpersonal community provides individuals a buffer to life stress through social support (Maton & Pargament, 1987). Both institutions are comprised of the concept of love (Beaman *et al.*, 1992). In fact, parents who are more religious exhibit more favorable parenting practices, lower hostility, and greater social support from friends (Strayhorn, Weidman, & Larson, 1990), as well as more harmonious relationships and reduced stress (Shafranske, 1992). Similar findings (Beaman *et al.*, 1992) have additionally highlighted the strong relationships between parental religiosity and supportive parenting and prosocial values.

In a study of religious and nonreligious families of children with developmental delays (Weisner, Beizer, & Stolze, 1991), religious families rated rather high on family connectedness and activities compared to nonreligious

families. Companionship was also higher among religious couples. In addition, these families have a greater emphasis on family supports, although a considerable number of nonreligious families did rate considerably high on familism. Further, religious families report their child's developmental delays as an opportunity to help.

Additionally, a positive correlation seems to exists between religiousness and mental health (Strayhorn *et al.*, 1990). In fact, family moral-religious emphasis has been related to better physical health among young people (Hanson, 1986). Based upon Bergin's (1983) meta-analysis of studies on religiosity and mental health, approximately half of the studies reported that a positive relationship was evidenced between the two variables. In fact, religious and church involvement have a preventive impact by providing a structure of distinctive restraints and guidelines for living (Maton & Pargament, 1987). In accordance, religious belief is thought to reduce depression, anxiety, and related symptoms (Ross, 1990). Nonetheless, group support in an adolescent's immediate environment is necessary to deter religious discrimination and ultimately low self-esteem (Rosenberg, 1965).

Moreover, a connection exists between religious belief and non-belief with distress (Ross, 1990). Individuals holding strong religious beliefs have lower distress levels than any other group surveyed: However, those with no

religion also have low distress levels. Paradoxically, among individuals with religious affiliation but weak beliefs in religion are high distress levels (Ross, 1990). Further, in evangelical college students, the family's religious involvement are not predictive of religiosity for the students (Dodrill, Bean, & Bostrom, 1973).

On the other hand, research of Mormon college students demonstrated more disciplined and emotional interdependent life-styles (Bergin, Stinchfield, Gaskin, Masters, & Sullivan, 1988). Their life-styles are associated with better mental health. Although intertwined with pleasing parents and the parents' parenting skills, religious development did seem to have an association with better functioning (Bergin *et al.*, 1988). The Mormon adolescent population appears to have an enormous resistance to negative peer pressures that oppose parental and church values, as well as high amounts of church participation.

A national sample of adolescents representing 13 religious affiliated organizations indicated a positive correlation between church/religion and prosocial actions (Forliti & Benson, 1986). Hence, adolescents high on prosocial behavior (*e.g.*, helpfulness, kindness, sharing) tend to have strong positive attitudes toward the church and religion.

Further, adolescents are less likely to use alcohol and drugs when they have a strong commitment to the church and

have a centrality of religion. And, family nurturance, closeness and affection also impede alcohol and drug use (Forliti & Benson, 1986). In addition, youth who have more liberating religious beliefs (*i.e.*, God is a forgiving God.), have more positive attitudes toward the church, higher self-esteem, are less racially prejudiced, are more prosocial, and refrain from alcohol and drugs and antisocial behavior (Forliti & Benson, 1986).

In addition, parental involvement in religious activities increases the likelihood of adolescent involvement (Beaman *et al.*, 1992; de Vaus, 1983). Nevertheless, the mother tends to hold more influence on the adolescent's religious activities (*e.g.*, prayer). Moreover, Beaman *et al.* (1992) established a positive correlation between the mother's religiosity and the adolescent's self-esteem. When discrepancies occur between parental and peer religious orientations, parents ascend in importance (de Vaus, 1983).

Furthermore, adolescents involved in sexual intercourse, chemical use, or antisocial behavior place less emphasis on church and religion, display lower achievement, and receive less parental nurturance and support (Forliti & Benson, 1986). In addition, adolescent females who are more religious are less likely to be sexually promiscuous (Herold & Goodwin, 1981); whereas, others found evidence that church or religious participation, not religiousness in and of itself, deterred sexual promiscuity (Emmert, Collins, & Fletcher, 1991).

CHAPTER III

METHOD

Background Information

The study was conducted at Carson-Newman College in Jefferson City, Tennessee. Carson-Newman College is a private liberal arts college affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention and the Tennessee Baptist Convention. Originally, Carson College began as Mossy Creek Missionary Baptist Seminary in 1851. Within a few years the seminary became Mossy Creek Baptist College. In 1880, the College became known as Carson College in honor of one of the founders who established an endowment for ministerial education. In 1882, Newman College was established for the education of women. Existing side by side, the two colleges were integrated in 1889. Carson-Newman is one of the first co-educational institutions.

The purpose of the college is to prepare capable men and women for meaningful service in vocation and study through its associate's, bachelor's, and master's degree programs. Carson-Newman strives to be Christian in order to provide higher education within the perspective of the Christian understanding of life. The college's philosophy also centers around a commitment to Jesus Christ in community and

individual pursuit of academic excellence. (Carson-Newman College Catalog, 1992-1993).

Carson-Newman College enrolled 1853 undergraduate students and 116 graduate students in the spring semester of 1995. There were 462 freshmen, 470 sophomores, 427 juniors, 469 seniors, and 27 unclassified students. The students represented about 34 states and 8 foreign countries. The largest student populations were from Tennessee (65.8%), then Florida (6.8%), Virginia (6.4%), Georgia (5.1%), South Carolina (3.0%), Ohio (2.2%), Kentucky (2.0%), North Carolina (1.9%), etc.

According to the Carson-Newman College President's Annual Report for 1994, there were 1837 single and 298 married students enrolled in the Fall of 1994. The college enrolls about 1000 males and 800 female undergraduates. Of the religious affiliations of students, Baptist ranked as the highest at 1441 students with Methodist following at 139. Eighty-nine students also are reported to be ministers's dependents.

Sample

The study was conducted during the Spring semester of 1995. The participating subjects were drawn from volunteers from psychology courses and by word of mouth. All subjects representing the non-clergy children population were drawn

from three psychology courses: Introduction to Human Behavior, Educational Psychology, and Abnormal Psychology. These courses are required and/or recommended for several areas of study. Therefore, these courses enrolled the best cross-section of students available from the student population of the college. Summaries of the descriptive data of the clergy children and non-clergy children samples are presented in Tables 1-9. Tables 1-4 have summarized the descriptive characteristics of the non-clergy children sample: home states, subjects' sex and class, the age ranges for each class represented, and subjects' sex and parents' marital status. Table 5-9 have summarized the descriptive characteristics of the clergy children sample: home states, subjects' sex and class, the age ranges for each class represented, subjects' age and fathers' years of service as the senior pastor of a church, and subjects' sex and average attendance of fathers' church. Subjects representing the clergy children population were drawn from the three courses and by word of mouth.

Table 1

Non-Clergy Children Sample

Home States, Numbers, and Proportions

STATE	PARTICIPANTS	PERCENTAGE
Tennessee	19	59%
Georgia	4	13%
Virginia	4	13%
Ohio	2	6%
Florida	2	6%
Alabama	1	3%
TOTAL = 6 states	32	100%

Table 2

Non-Clergy Children Sample

Subjects' Sex and Class

		SEX		
		Females	Males	Totals
CLASS	Freshmen	5 (16%)	3 (9.4%)	8 (25%)
	Sophomores	9 (28%)	3 (9.4%)	12 (37.5%)
	Juniors	5 (16%)	3 (9.4%)	8 (25%)
	Seniors	3 (9.4%)	1 (3%)	4 (12.5%)
	TOTALS	22 (69%)	10 (31%)	32 (100%)

Table 3

Non-Clergy Children Sample

Subjects' Age and Class

		CLASS				
		FRESHMEN	SOPHOMORES	JUNIORS	SENIORS	TOTALS
	18	3	0	0	0	3
	19	2	6	0	0	8
A	20	2	6	5	1	14
G	21	0	0	1	2	3
E	22	0	0	0	1	1
S	23	0	0	1	0	1
	24	0	0	1	0	1
	25	1	0	0	0	1
TOTALS		8	12	8	4	32

Table 4

Non-Clergy Children Sample

Subjects' Sex and Parents' Marital Status

	SEX		
	FEMALES	MALES	TOTALS
Divorced	2	1	3
Married	16	7	23
Deceased	1	0	1
Widower	1	0	1
Widow	1	2	3
Widow, Remarried	1	0	1
Totals	22	10	32

Note. All clergy children are from intact homes.

Table 5

Clergy Children Sample

Home States, Numbers, and Proportions

STATE	PARTICIPANTS	PERCENTAGE
Tennessee	16	50%
Georgia	2	6.3%
Virginia	2	6.3%
Florida	2	6.3%
Kentucky	2	6.3%
Maryland	2	6.3%
Oklahoma	1	3%
Arkansas	1	3%
North Carolina	1	3%
South Carolina	1	3%
Indiana	1	3%
Texas	1	3%
TOTAL = 12 states	32	100%

Table 6

Clergy Children Sample

Subjects' Sex and Class

		SEX		
		Females	Males	Totals
CLASS	Freshmen	7 (22%)	1 (3%)	8 (25%)
	Sophomores	5 (16%)	4 (13%)	9 (28%)
	Juniors	6 (19%)	7 (22%)	13 (41%)
	Seniors	1 (3%)	1 (3%)	2 (6%)
	TOTALS	22 (69%)	10 (31%)	32 (100%)

Table 7

Clergy Children Sample

Subjects' Age and Class

		CLASS				
		FRESHMEN	SOPHOMORES	JUNIORS	SENIORS	TOTALS
	18	4	0	0	0	4
A	19	4	5	1	0	10
G	20	0	4	8	0	12
E	21	0	0	3	1	4
S	22	0	0	1	1	2
TOTALS		8	9	13	2	32

Table 8

Clergy Children Sample

Subjects' Age and Fathers' Years as Pastor

		FATHERS' YEARS AS PASTOR				
		1 - 10	11 - 19	20 - 25	26 - 31	TOTALS
	18	0	0	2	2	4
A	19	3	2	3	2	10
G	20	2	5	3	2	12
E	21	1	0	0	3	4
S	22	0	1	1	0	2
TOTALS		6	8	9	9	32

Table 9

Clergy Children Sample

Subjects' Sex and Average Attendance of Fathers' Church

	SEX		
	Females	Males	Totals
20 - 100	3 (9%)	1 (3%)	4 (13%)
120 - 300	4 (13%)	5 (16%)	9 (28%)
500 - 600	5 (16%)	0 (0%)	5 (16%)
800 - 1000	1 (3%)	1 (3%%)	2 (6%)
Resigned	1 (3%)	2 (6%)	3 (9%)
Retired	1 (3%)	0 (0%)	1 (3%)
TOTALS	15 (69%)	9 (31%)	24 (75%)

Procedures

The experimenter distributed informed consent statements along with the Family Environment Scale, the Stressors in Clergy Children and Couples Scale, and Rosenberg's Self-Esteem Scale to all participants in the study. The scales were paper and pencil and required approximately 20-35 minutes to administer. When the scales were collected, they were scored to determine family moral-religious emphasis, levels of stressors, and self-esteem.

Instrumentation

The Family Environment Scale

In 1974, Moos developed an instrument, the Family Environment Scale (FES), to objectively measure an individual's perception of his/her family environment (Robertson & Hyde, 1982). The FES was administered to 1000 individuals in a sample of 285 families. Families were recruited from three samples of family groups. The first sample was selected from three different church groups, a newspaper advertisement, and through students at a local high school (Moos, Insel, & Humphrey, 1974). A minority sample from the families recruited represented Mexican-American and Afro-American ethnic groups. Also, a sample included disturbed families collected from a psychiatrically-oriented family clinic and a probation and parole department. A revised 90 true-false items, ten subscales Form R (real) of the FES was constructed from the data from these three samples (Moos *et al.*, 1974).

Five criteria guided test construction and selection of items to be included in the final form (Moos *et al.*, 1974):

> (1) The overall item split should be as close to 50-50 as possible to avoid items characteristic only of extreme families;
> (2) items should correlate more highly with their own than with any other subscale; (all of the final 90 items met this criterion and only four of the items correlated below .40 with their own subscale);

(3) each of the subscale should have an approximately equal number of items scored true and scored false to control for acquiescence response set;
(4) the final subscales should show only low to moderate intercorrelations;
(5) each item (and each subscale) had to maximally discriminate among families. (p. 4-5)

Two difficulties exist in these criteria. First, item selection and subscale construction were obtained from the sample. Hence, subscale dimensions have not been independently confirmed (Robertson & Hyde, 1982). Second, the criteria suggest that the scale was constructed from a factor analysis, but none was performed (Robertson & Hyde, 1982).

The final form of the FES Form R divides the 10 subscales into dimensions. First, the Relationship dimensions include three subscales: Cohesion, Expressiveness, and Conflict. According to Moos *et al.* (1974), these subscales assess the sense of pride and belongingness the family members feel, the extent of open expression within the family, and the degree that interactional conflicts are characteristic of the family.

In the second group of Personal Growth dimensions are the subscales Independence, Achievement Orientation, Intellectual-Cultural Orientation, Active Recreational Orientation, and Moral-Religious Emphasis. These dimensions measure how much the family emphasizes certain developmental processes which may be fostered by family living (Moos *et al.*, 1974). Independence reflects the extent that family members are encouraged to be assertive and independent in decision-making. Achievement Orientation measures the emphasis on academic and

competitive concerns. Intellectual-Cultural Orientation determines the degree that the family is concerned with intellectual and cultural activities. And, Active Recreational Orientation and Moral-Religious Emphasis Subscales measure the extent the family participates in sporting activities and religious issues and values (Moos *et al.*, 1974).

The final subscales, Organization and Control, are conceptualized as assessing System Maintenance dimensions. These subscales evaluate the structure within the family system and the proportion of control family members have within the family (Moos *et al.*, 1974).

Internal consistencies were calculated from 814 family member scores by using the Kuder-Richardson Formula 20 and are reported to be in an acceptable range: Independence rates the lowest (.64), and Moral-Religious Emphasis has the highest score (.79). Correlations of the item-to-subscale vary from moderate (.45 for Independence) to significant (.58 for Cohesion). The Moral-Religious Emphasis item-to-subscale correlation is fairly significant (.55). Test-retest reliabilities of the ten subscales were determined by administering the FES twice to 47 family members of 9 families with an approximate eight-week interval between testings. Test-retest for all subscales are acceptable. Independence has the lowest score of .68, Cohesion has the highest at .86, and a substantial score of .80 is reported for Moral-Religious

Emphasis (Moos *et al.*, 1974).

Further, the subscale scores were intercorrelated for the same sample (814 family members from 240 families). The average subscale intercorrelations are around .20. These intercorrelations reveal that the subscales measure distinct and related aspects of the family social environment. Also, less than 20 percent of the subscale variance are accounted for in the intercorrelations (Moos *et al.*, 1974). Additionally, moral-religious emphasis has been highly related to an index of religious participation (Moos & Moos, 1994).

A study of the validity and factor structure of the FES items by Robertson and Hyde (1982) revealed two factors out of the 10 subscales by a 10-factor solution: Moral-Religious Emphasis and Active Recreational Orientation. However, both of these subscales had items with loadings close to zero. Some of the subscales surfaced in modified forms, including items from different subscales. Factors that did not represent any subscales also emerged.

In an eight factor solution, some of the FES subscales were rearranged. For example, Factor 6 was called religion, consisting of five items, and corresponded to the FES Moral-Religious Emphasis subscale. All items were from the original subscale, although items of morals were not loaded. After examining the eight factor solution, it was determined that the new subscales could be replicated rather well, especially the Religion subscale. Of the five items, four had loadings

greater than .30, and the loading of the fifth item was .24 (Robertson & Hyde, 1982).

Results of Robertson and Hyde's (1982) study revealed that 10 factors did not emerge in a factor analysis of the FES. Also, collapsing some of the subscales indicated that they did not characterize independent dimensions of the family environment. Further, the original Moral-Religious Emphasis subscale included items of both moral and religious nature that are apparently independent of each other. The final results of the factor analysis suggest that the content of the FES is best represented by seven subscales (Robertson & Hyde, 1982).

In a similar study, Waldron, Sabatelli, & Anderson (1990) conducted a factor analysis of the FES subscales. A six factor solution was the most interpretable for their study. Of the six factors, Factor 5, Religious Emphasis, contained the original items from the FES subscale. As in Robertson & Hyde's study, the two moral and ethical items of the nine total items were not representative of the conceptualization of the subscale. However, the content of the other items did represent religious issues and values. Subsequently, the failure to confirm the distinguished presence of the 10 subscales calls into question the construct validity of the FES (Waldron *et al.*, 1990).

In 1990, Roosa and Beals tested five subscales of the FES. Reliability estimates of the five subscales, Cohesion,

Expression, Conflict, Organization, and Control, were originally reported from .67 to .78. Internal consistencies from .36 and .75 were reported for the same subscales in Roosa & Beals' study. Moos (1990) argued that Roosa and Beals used a comparison sample that was restrictive and was not comparable to the original normative sample. Moreover, when examining the subscales across different family types (ex., alcoholic families, divorced families, and bereaved families), strong variabilities arise in Roosa and Beals' study. Moos (1990) does not deny the fact that stabilities vary in different groups of families depending on stressful situations that are occurring. Nevertheless, Moos (1990) examined the subscale stabilities over intervals of 12-months, 36-months, and 48-months. The subscale scores are predicted to remain stable over intervals of as long as four years.

Additionally, ratings from a panel of college students raised questions about the validity of the subscales (Roosa & Beals, 1990). Moos (1990) replicated the study with nine untrained raters. Out of the 45 items, 39 were categorized correctly by at least six of the nine raters. The point Moos (1990) raised was that untrained raters can place most of the items on the correct subscale when they are given adequate information about the content of the dimension and are allowed to provide a "probable" judgment.

Rosenberg's Self-Esteem Scale

Rosenberg's Self-Esteem Scale (SES) "is a 10-item Guttman scale which has satisfactory reproducibility and scalability" (Rosenberg, 1965, p. 16). This scale is easy to administer and economical, since it consists of only ten items. Also, it "insures a unidimensional continuum" (Rosenberg, 1965, p. 16), which means a standard must be fulfilled before the scale can be accepted. Hence, "the aim of Guttman scaling is to order a series of objects so that the order is generally transitive" (Weller & Romney, 1990). The ten items are based on a 4-point Likert-scaling format, ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree." The normative sample included a total of 5,024 high school students from ten randomly selected schools in New York.

The coefficient of reproducibility for the scale is reported as .92 and a coefficient of scalability of .72 with the original sample (Rosenberg, 1979), and a correlation slightly higher with 560 British adolescents (Byrne, 1983). In 1965, Silber and Tippett (as cited in Rosenberg, 1979) in found a test-retest coefficient of .85 for 28 college students over a 2-week period, and McCullough found a test-retest reliability of .88.

These researchers also tested for convergent validity and discriminant validity. Using a multitrait-multimethod matrix analysis, they correlated scores from the SES with three other

measures yielding correlations of .67, .83, and .56. For discriminant validity, Silber and Tippett (Rosenberg, 1979; Byrne, 1983) found correlations of .40, .34, and .21 with measures of stability. The SES is often scored on the Likert format and yields similar results. Wiley (1974) rates the SES as an outstanding instrument considering both reliability and validity. Additionally, factor loading of items yielded loadings of .81 to .57 (O'Brien, 1985) with an average of .688 (median=.675).

The Stressors in Clergy Children and Couples Scale

The Stressors of Clergy Children Inventory (SCCI), the original scale, was designed to measure which events are perceived as stressful by minister's children (Ostrander *et al.*, 1990). According to Moy and Malony (1987), few research studies have addressed these particular events. Ostrander *et al.* (1990) used a national sample of adolescent and adult children of ministers within an evangelical Protestant denomination to investigate definitions of adolescent stress. Included were subjects from ages 15 to 42 years old with almost half being male or female. Due to a low representation of female ministers reported as a parent, only children of male ministers were included in the study. Additionally, 30 local church members were given the inventory to check for readability and clarity (Ostrander *et al.*, 1990).

The instrument consists of 42 items "scored on a Likert scale of 0 to 5 (does not apply, not concerned, a little concerned, somewhat concerned, quite concerned, and very, very concerned)" (Ostrander *et al.*, 1990, p. 788). A high internal consistency was found based on estimations using the SPSS^{x} reliability analysis; Cronbach alpha = .93. The inventory was examined by dividing it into three scales based on the type of stressor: church, family, and individual. These scales measured diverse areas of potential change that minister's children perceive as stressful (Ostrander et. al, 1990).

A principal components factoring of the SPSS^{x} followed by varimax rotation was also used to determine the construct validity for each of the three stressor types. This procedure was used to reduce improper solutions resulting from maximum likelihood estimation factoring (Ostrander *et al.*, 1990). From the Church Stressors Scale factoring, three factors emerged: Direct Impact on Offspring, Moving Concerns, and Church Interference in Parent-Child Relationship. From factoring the Family Stressors Scale, three subscales also were distinguished: Family Work, Family Resilience, and Family Security. From factoring the Individual Stressors Scale, the subscales that surfaced were Alienation, Health Concerns, and Personal Concerns.

Internal consistency was determined for all 42-items by SPSS^{x} reliability analysis. An internal reliability coefficient of .91 was found. Further, concurrent validity

was established on a positive correlation between the inventory and the A-FILE Total Recent Life Changes Scale, a self-report instrument of perceived individual and family stressors (Ostrander *et al.*, 1990).

Developing out of the SCCI is the Stressors in Clergy Children and Couples Scale (SCCCS). From the original scale, the SCCI, 19 items are relevant to additional members (e.g, minister, spouse, and child) rather than children only. Hence, the SCCCS consists of these items and is used as a short version for the SCCI (Ostrander *et al.*, 1993).

One-hundred-and-thirty-five families from five Protestant denominations across the United States participated in the study. These families totaled 317 family members. The denominations represented in the family sample includes 42 Episcopal, 44 Church of Christ, and 46 were from small evangelical-based denominations -Free Methodist, Wesleyan, and Christian Missionary Alliance.

One-hundred-and-ten of the ministers were men, 10 were women, and 15 did not indicate. The average age of the ministers was 44.2 (mode = 35), spouses was 42.9 (mode = 36), and children was 12.5 (mode = 9). The sample of ministers' children included 32 boys, 33 girls, and 4 did not indicate (Ostrander *et al.*, 1993).

The SCCCS instrument is also scored on a Likert scale of 0 to 5 (no, did not occur; occurred, not upset; occurred, little upset; occurred, somewhat upset; occurred, quite upset;

occurred, very, very upset) (Ostrander *et al.*, 1993). The scale shows high internal consistency of reliability (Cronbach alpha= .80) and high construct validity ($p<.001$).

As with the validity testing of the SCCI, a principal components factoring of the SPSS^x followed by varimax rotation was also used to determine the construct validity. Three subscales surfaced from the factor loading: the family's public life, expectations, and family isolation (Ostrander *et al.*, 1993).

Analysis of Data

Suggested analysis of the research material included the *t* test of the demographic data to determine if the two groups, clergy children and non-clergy children, had substantial differences that may be contributing to differences between them that are unrelated to the three variables: MRE, self-esteem, and stress. Also, *t* tests were used to determine differences between clergy and non-clergy children. Further, a Pearson *r* was directed to determine if relationships existed between the three variables.

The measurements in this study have been considered interval data. Nominal data are categorical data, such as hair color or telephone numbers. Ordinal data relate objects, events, people or characteristics in terms of being greater than, less than, or equal to one another on the basis of a

selected criterion. Interval or ratio data measures the same characteristics as the ordinal data, except the interval scale has a constant unit of measurement; for example, IQ or degrees Fahrenheit temperature (Huck, Cormier, & Bounds, 1974).

Parametric tests were used to analyze the data due to their strength in comparison to nonparametric scales, and the data was considered interval. The groups were also drawn from similar populations in the same Christian college setting and variances were assumed to be the same. Parametric statistics, such as the *t* test and ANOVA, test hypotheses based on several assumptions:

(1) the samples come from populations that are normally distributed, that is, the variable being measured is normally distributed in the population (Ferguson & Takane, 1989; Gay, 1987; Huck, Cormier, & Bounds, 1974);

(2) the data describe interval or ratio data (Gay, 1987);

(3) the subjects are randomly and independently selected (Ferguson & Takane, 1989; Gay, 1987); and,

(4) there is homogeneity of variance (Ferguson & Takane, 1989; Huck, Cormier, & Bounds, 1974). Therefore, the variances within groups are the same.

On the other hand, nonparametric statistical procedures test hypotheses that do not specify population normality or homogeneity of variance assumptions from which the samples are drawn (Huck, Cormier, & Bounds, 1974). Some researcher think that parametric tests cannot be used with small sample sizes,

but there are others who say it does not make any difference. Many researchers presume that most parametric tests are strong against violations of normality and homogeneity (Huck, Cormier, & Bounds, 1974). Unless there is adequate verification to suggest that the population is extremely irregular and that the variances are heterogeneous, parametric tests should be used because of their additional power. These tests help prevent a Type II error, failure to reject a null hypothesis that is really false.

The ANOVA and *t* test are similar. They are used to compare groups to see if the differences between group means are large enough to assume that the corresponding population means are different (Huck, Cormier, & Bounds, 1974). The *t* test is the most basic of these techniques. It is used most often to compare the means of two groups, not standard deviations. If the means are far enough apart, the test will yield a significant difference. This would conclude that the two populations probably do not have the same mean. Since the t test and one-way ANOVA have the same general purpose, to compare the means, the *t* test was used in this study to analyze the data.

The independent sample *t* test was implemented because the scores in the clergy children group have no logical relationship with the scores in the non-clergy children group. Two samples are considered independent when either (1) the subjects are randomly assigned to two subgroups, or (2) they

are randomly selected from larger populations (Huck, Cormier, & Bounds, 1974). Consequently, if the two groups "are essentially the same at the end of the study, the null hypothesis is probably true" (Gay, 1987, p. 391) and vice versa. The *t* test also assumes that the scores in one group have about the same degree of variability as the scores in the second group. If the two group have an equal number of scores, a violation of the assumption of equal variances does not affect the validity of the *t* test.

A correlation was utilized to describe the relationships between MRE, stressors, and self-esteem. The three basic types of correlation include: (1) positive correlations - an increase in one variable is related to an increase in the second variable, (2) negative correlations - an increase in one variable is related to a decrease in the second variable, and (3) zero correlations - "no relationship exists between the variables being measured" (Huck, Cormier, & Bound, 1974, p. 31). The closer the coefficient is to +1 or -1, the stronger the relationship. The most commonly used correlation is the Pearson Product Moment (Pearson *r*), because it has the most reliable estimate of correlation (Gay, 1987).

A *t* test was used to test the significance of the correlations between the groups, because the groups consisted of less than 50 subjects ($n<50$). Otherwise, a *z* score would have been used. The SPSS program used in this study uses the *t* test as the standard for testing the significance of the

Pearson *r* (Norusis, 1988). The test of significance, where *t* is equal to *r* multiplied by the square root of $\{(n-2)/(1-r^2)\}$, has a *t* distribution, then it is interpreted like any other t test to determine significance (Ferguson & Takane, 1989).

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

The results of the data analysis are presented in the framework of each of the three hypotheses. For students attending a private Southern Baptist liberal arts college, the following predictions were made:

(1) There would be no significant difference in family moral-religious emphasis between clergy children and non-clergy children as measured by Moos's Family Environment Scale (Moos, Insel, & Humphrey, 1974).

The resulting means of both groups (*e.g.*, clergy children = 8.19, non-clergy children = 7.09) were skewed heavily in the direction of strong family moral-religious emphasis (MRE). This finding is not surprising for students attending a religious affiliated school. However, a two-tailed t-test for independent samples yielded a significant difference between the two groups. Since $t = 3.15$ and is greater than the critical value of 2.66 at a .01 level of significance ($df=62$; $p<.01$), the null hypothesis should be rejected and an alternative hypothesis accepted. A significant differences in family MRE does exist between clergy children and non-clergy children.

(2) There would be no significant differences of measures of

stressors between clergy children and non-clergy children as measured by the Stressors in Clergy Children and Couples Scale (Ostrander, Ceglian, & Fournier, 1993).

The Stressors Scale generated four separate scores: Family Public Life (FPL), Expectations (Exp), Family Isolation (FI), and an overall score (T). Results from t-tests suggested that there were no significant differences of stressors between clergy children and non-clergy children. The t values FPL = .77, Exp = .49, FI = 1.48, T = 1.10 are not significant. Each of these t values are less than the critical value of 2.0 at a .05 level of significance (df=62; $p<.05$). Therefore, the null hypothesis should not be rejected at the $p<.05$ level of significance. Significant differences do not exist between the clergy children group and the non-clergy children group in regards to existing stressors. However, Family Isolation (FI) shows the greatest difference between the two groups.

(3) There would be no significant difference between clergy and non-clergy children on scores of self-esteem as measured by Rosenberg's Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965).

No significant difference was established between the clergy children group and the non-clergy children group in regards to the Self-Esteem Scale (SES). A t-test yielded a t value = -0.84 which is not significant compared to the critical value of 2.0 at the $p<.05$ level of significance.

Therefore, the null hypothesis should not be rejected. No significant differences of self-esteem were exhibited between the two groups.

Tables 10-12 sum up the findings for the hypotheses presented.

Table 10

t values, Degrees of Freedom, and 2-Tail Probabilities for the Moral Religious Emphasis Subscale, Clergy Children and Couples Scale, and the Self-Esteem Scale for the Clergy Children and Non-Clergy Children.

	MRE	FPL	Exp	FI	T	SES
t value	3.15	0.77	0.49	1.48	1.10	-.84
Degrees of Freedom	62	62	62	62	62	62
2-Tail Probability	.003*	.442	.623	.145	.276	.403

* Significant *t*

Table 11

Ranges, Means, and Standard Deviations for the Moral-Religious Emphasis Subscale, Stressors in Clergy Children and Couples Scale, and the Self-Esteem Scale for the Clergy Children.

	MRE	FPL	Exp	FI	T	SES
Maximum	9	3.5	2.8	3.25	2.79	6
Minimum	6	0.6	0.0	0.0	0.37	0
Mean	8.19	1.7	1.09	0.84	1.36	1.09
Standard Deviation	0.88	0.66	0.65	0.79	0.57	1.35

Table 12

Ranges, Means, and Standard Deviations for the Moral Religious Emphasis Subscale, Stressors in Clergy Children and Couples Scale, and the Self-Esteem Scale for the Non-Clergy Children.

	MRE	FPL	Exp	FI	T	SES
Maximum	9	2.8	2.4	2.75	2.26	6
Minimum	2	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.32	0
Mean	7.09	1.57	1.01	0.55	1.21	1.40
Standard Deviation	1.72	0.64	0.65	0.79	0.52	1.56

Subhypotheses

The results of the data analysis are presented in the context of each of the three subhypotheses. In examining the three variables, the following predictions were made:

(1) There would be no significant relationship between moral-religious emphasis and stressors.

No significant correlations were found between moral-religious emphasis (MRE) and the four dimensions of the stressors for all the subjects combined nor for the groups individually. Therefore, the null hypothesis should not be rejected.

(2) There would be no significant relationship between moral-religious emphasis and self-esteem.

No significant relationship was found between MRE and SES

for either group nor for the groups individually. Thus, the null hypothesis should not be rejected.

(3) There would be no significant relationship between stressors and self-esteem.

There was a very significant positive correlation between SES and the Family Public Life stressor (.3289) for all subjects at $p<.01$ level of significance. Also, there was a significant positive correlation between SES and the Total stress score ($r=.2891$) for all subjects at a $p<.01$ level of significance.

For non-clergy children, two significant positive correlations were found between stress and self-esteem. SES and T were correlated ($r=.3602$) at a $p<.05$ level of significance. Also, SES and FPL were correlated (.3988) at a $p<.05$ level of significance.

The null hypothesis should be rejected. The findings for the clergy children subjects do not necessarily reflect the same finding for the non-clergy group. However, there were really close results for significance among the dimensions of the stressors scale.

Tables 13-15 sum up the findings for the subhypotheses presented

Table 13

Pearson Product Moment Correlations of All Subjects' Moral-Religious Emphasis Subscale and Self-Esteem Scale with the Four Dimensions of the Stressors in Clergy Children and Couples Scale.

	MRE	SES	FPL	Exp	FI	T
MRE		-.0090	.0150	-.1787	.0723	-.0238
SES			.3289*	.0959	.1733	.2891*

* Significant at the .01 level

Table 14

Pearson Product Moment Correlations of Moral-Religious Emphasis Subscale and Self-Esteem Scale with the Four Dimensions of the Stressors in Clergy Children and Couples Scale for Clergy Children.

	MRE	SES	FPL	Exp	FI	T
MRE		.0114	.0268	-.1276	.2320	.0452
SES			.2829	.0478	.2465	.2590

Table 15

Pearson Product Moment Correlations of Moral-Religious Emphasis Subscale and Self-Esteem Scale with the Four Dimensions of the Stressors in Clergy Children and Couples Scale for Non-Clergy Children.

	MRE	SES	FPL	Exp	FI	T
MRE		.0441	-.0514	-.2804	-.1122	-.1623
SES			.3988*	.1520	.1555	.3602*

* Significant at the .05 level

Additional Findings

A multiple regression analysis was conducted as a supplemental analysis for the results of the correlational subhypotheses. The multiple regression analysis is often used to make a more accurate prediction of the variables' relationships (Gay, 1987). Tables 16-18 report the results from the multiple regression analysis. A significant relationship exists between self-esteem (SES) and the overall stress score (T) for all subjects and for non-clergy children, specifically.

Table 16

Multiple Regression Analysis for MRE, Stress (T), and SES

Independent Variable(s)	Dependent Variable	F ratio	Significant F
MRE	T	.035	.85
MRE	SES	.005	.94
SES	T	5.65	.02*
SES, MRE	T	2.80	.069

* Significant F

Table 17

Multiple Regression Analysis for MRE, Stress (T), and SES for Clergy Children

Independent Variable(s)	Dependent Variable	F ratio	Significant F
MRE	T	.061	.81
MRE	SES	.004	.95
SES	T	2.16	.15
SES, MRE	T	1.07	.36

Table 18

Multiple Regression Analysis for MRE, Stress (T), and SES for Non-Clergy Children

Independent Variable(s)	Dependent Variable	F ratio	Significant F
MRE	T	.811	.37
MRE	SES	.06	.81
SES	T	4.47	.04*
SES, MRE	T	2.79	.078

* Significant F

A significant ($r=-.412$; $p<.01$) correlation was found between MRE and age for non-clergy children. Additionally, this relationship was negatively related: Increase in one constitutes a decrease in the other. This relationship was not found among the clergy children - further highlighting the

significance of the differences in MRE between the two groups. A possible curvilinear relationship may exist between MRE and age for non-clergy children.

An item analysis of the Stressors in Clergy Children and Couples Scale revealed three significant differences between the clergy children and non-clergy children groups. The greatest difference emerged in the Family Public Life (FPL) dimension of the scale. The stressor - lack of privacy (people seem to watch us) - expressed the greatest difference between the subjects. Moving was also reported as a great stressor for clergy children. However, non-clergy children reported more feelings of stress by someone in their family dying than clergy children.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

Summary of Findings

The purpose of this study was to discover more about the differences between clergy and non-clergy children and the relationships between the families' moral-religious emphasis, stressors on children, and self-esteem.

Significant findings related to the hypotheses included only that clergy children were more inclined to report higher levels of family moral-religious emphasis on the MRE subscale of the Family Environment Scale than non-clergy children. As a result, the hypothesis related to MRE was rejected. Since this data was collected in a religious school environment, the MRE differences between these two groups are probably more significant outside a Christian college.

Significant findings related to the subhypotheses include:

(1) A positive relationship was suggested between the Self-Esteem Scale and the Family Public Life subscale of the Stressors in Clergy Children and Couples Scale for all subjects.

(2) A positive relationship was suggested between the Self-Esteem Scale and the overall stress score of the Stressors in

Clergy Children and Couples Scale for all subjects.

(3) A positive relationship was suggested between the Self-Esteem Scale and the Family Public Life subscale of the Stressors in Clergy Children and Couples Scale for non-clergy children.

(4) A positive relationship was suggested between the Self-Esteem Scale and the overall stress score of the Stressors in Clergy Children and Couples Scale for non-clergy children.

Overall, the null hypothesis concerning the relationship between stress and self-esteem should be rejected, because the hypothesis was not stated to include the relationships between dimensions of the stressor scale. Also, findings or lack thereof with the clergy children did not necessarily reflect the same results among the non-clergy children.

A positive relationship between stress and self-esteem may be the result of self-efficacy or stress inoculation to overcome the stressor. Nevertheless, the stress research includes mention of the role of social resources to modify the individual's perception of the event and moderate the stress potential (Lieberman, 1982): "To the degree that stressful events erode self-esteem and feelings of personal mastery, social resources can modify such effects" (Lieberman, 1982, p. 778).

Significant findings not related to the hypotheses include:

(1) A negative relationship was discovered between family

moral-religious emphasis (MRE) and age among non-clergy children.

(2) Clergy children reported significantly higher levels of stress from lack of privacy than non-clergy children.

(3) Moving was reported to be much more stressful for clergy children than non-clergy children.

(4) The stressor of someone in the family dying was reported as significantly higher for non-clergy children than clergy children.

The negative relationship between MRE and age for non-clergy children was related to an expected finding that clergy children would report greater MRE than non-clergy children. The ages of the non-clergy children were slightly dispersed more than the clergy children's ages. Clergy children may not express this relationship because of internalizing of parental moral values.

Reported lack of privacy among the clergy children was an expected finding because of continually being in the public eye. Also, moving has been reported to be quite stressful for those who must move a lot (Munton, 1990; Raviv, Keinan, Abazon, & Raviv, 1990; Sluzki, 1992). For example, similar findings have been suggested for military children (Terr, 1992; Ursano, Holloway, Jones, & Rodriguez, 1989). Additionally, clergy children from other denominations, such as the United Methodist Church, may report even greater upset for this stressor because they move more often than Baptists.

Reports of stress from a family member dying was not expected for non-clergy children. However, the stronger MRE of clergy children may buffer against the stress of losing a family member. Belief in God and in life after death attribute to this adaptation.

Conclusions

Even though the difference between clergy children and non-clergy in regards to the family's moral-religious emphasis (MRE) has never been investigated, the MRE findings from this study were expected. Since clergy are deeply involved in their ministry, their teachings are expected to have an influence on their children. Others have related parental involvement in religious activities with increases in adolescent involvement (Beaman *et al.*, 1992; de Vaus, 1983).

The positive relationship between stress and self-esteem was an unexpected finding for both the clergy children and non-clergy children. Research has generally reported at least marginal support of a negative correlation between stress and self-esteem in most areas of life (Bennett, 1988; Zuckerman, 1989). For example, higher stress levels were related with lower self-concepts in a study of ministers (Hatcher & Underwood, 1990). In addition, the findings seem to contradict Zuckerman's (1989) association of family stress with lower self-esteem.

However, the positive relationship between stress and self-esteem confirms other clergy children research. According to Moy and Malony (1987), clergy children have higher stress exposure due to parental involvement in social issues and exposure to external expectations; therefore, they learn to adapt to stressful situations. Because of higher levels of adaptation, minister's children have higher levels of self-concept and lower levels of stress.

With a movement towards less religious emphasis in the family (The Gallup Report, 1984), the negative relationship between MRE and age for non-clergy children is not surprising. However, as people age there is a tendency to return to previous religious involvement. From a 1983 report based on five surveys, "the level of church membership increases with age, with 61% of persons 18 to 24 years old say they belong to a church compared to 81% among persons 65 and older" (The Gallup Report, 1984, p. 54). Therefore, the relationship may actually be curvilinear.

Lack of privacy was an expected finding for clergy children and has been reported in other studies (Bailey & Bailey, 1979; Blanton, 1992; Conway & Conway, 1984; Ostrander *et al.*, 1990). In fact, Bouma (1979) found that clergy children often report the existence of double standards from within the church congregation, peers, and even family members. In addition the stress of moving has been reported as a major reason clergy have left the ministry (Moy & Malony,

1987).

Limitations

Certain features of the study limit the generalizability of the findings:

(1) All clergy children included in the sample were children of Southern Baptist ministers.

(2) All clergy children involved in the study were from intact homes, whereas the non-clergy children represented several family structures.

(3) All subjects involved in the study were caucasian.

(4) All members of the research samples were single, never married.

(5) All subjects included in the study were of the typical age range (18-25 years old) for college students.

(6) Most subjects involved are from the South, particularly from Tennessee.

(7) The homogeneous nature of the subjects limit the possibility that the findings of this study will have meaning for clergy children and non-clergy children who do not correspond to the makeup of these research samples.

(8) The moral-religious emphasis subscale may not be representative of an individual's personal religious involvement.

(9) The data used was self-reported. This data may not be

representative of actual behavior and may limit the validity of the study.

Implications for Future Research

Future research should be arranged to broaden the research sample so that the results would be more representative of the population. For example:

(1) The sample should come from both secular and non-secular institutions.

(2) The sample should represent a greater geographical region, rather than just the South.

(3) Other ethnic groups should be examined and compared with the caucasian samples in this study.

(4) Other denominations should be surveyed and compared with Southern Baptists.

(5) The study should be replicated with subjects with a greater age range.

(6) The study should be replicated using different social interests topics, such as loneliness, to compare with MRE.

(7) The study should be replicated using a religiosity scale to compare the individuals' personal religiosity with their families' MRE.

(8) The study should be replicated using additional or all subscales of the Family Environment Scale.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Family Environment Scale
Form R

There are 90 statements on the Family Environment Scale representing ten subscales. The following statements are representative of the Moral-Religious Emphasis Subscale. Each subject rated the following statements as either true for most members of their family or false for most members.

Moral-Religious Emphasis Subscale

8. Family members attend church, synagogue, or Sunday School fairly often. True

18. We don't say prayers in our family. False

28. We often talk about the religious meaning of Christmas, Passover, or other holidays. True

38. We don't believe in heaven or hell. False

48. Family members have strict ideas about what is right and wrong. True

58. We believe there are some things you just have to take on faith. True

68. In our family each person has different ideas about what is right and wrong. False

78. The Bible is a very important book in our home. True

88. Family members believe that if you sin you will be punished. True

APPENDIX B

Stressors in Clergy Children and Couples Scale

Subjects were asked to circle for each item: (or not to circle if it did not happen or was not true for him/her)

1	2	3	4	5
not upset	little upset	somewhat upset	quite upset	very very upset

Family Public Life Subscale

1. Someone in our family died.
2. The time my family spends praying/reading the Bible together.
3. Our parents fight.
4. At least one of my parents is gone a lot when I am home.
5. Lack of privacy (people seem to watch us).
6. Being told how to act by church people.
7. My minister parent does not practice what they preach.
8. A person in our family gets sick a lot.
9. Moving.
10. Being criticized.

Expectations

11. Both my parents work because we need the money.
12. I wonder if I can ask for help if I get sick or feel bad.
13. Both my parents work.
14. Doing thing to get my parent's attention.
15. How I am allowed (or not allowed) to express my negative feeling (sad, mad, hate, anger and such).

Family Isolation

16. I feel all alone or different from other people my age.

17. My parents are divorced or talk about getting a divorce.

18. Not having a really good friend.

19. Wondering if I matter as much to my parents as other people.

APPENDIX C

Rosenberg's Self-Esteem Scale

The SES is a 10-item Guttman scale with a Coefficient of Reproducibility of 92 percent and a Coefficient of Scalability of 72 percent. Respondents were asked to strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree with the following items (asterisks represent low self-esteem responses):

(1)	On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.	SA	A	D*	SD*
(2)	At times I think I am no good at all.	SA*	A*	D	SD
(3)	I feel that I have a number of good qualities.	SA	A	D*	SD*
(4)	I am able to do things as well as most other people.	SA	A	D*	SD*
(5)	I feel I do not have much to be proud of.	SA*	A*	D	SD
(6)	I certainly feel useless at times.	SA*	A*	D	SD
(7)	I feel that I'm a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with other.	SA	A	D*	SD*
(8)	I wish I could have more respect for myself.	SA*	A*	D	SD
(9)	All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure.	SA*	A*	D	SD
(10)	I take a positive attitude toward myself.	SA	A	D*	SD*

VITA

Jenny Laurie Owensby Warren was born in San Jose, Costa Rica on December 8, 1966 while her parents were in language school preparing to serve as missionaries to Venezuela. After returning to the United States in 1971, she attended public schools in South Carolina's Spartanburg County School System, graduating with honors from Broome High School in May 1985. She entered Carson-Newman College the following August and received a Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology in May 1989, graduating Cum Laude and Psi Chi. In December 1990, she was awarded the Master of Education degree with a major in Counselor Education from East Tennessee State University in Johnson City, Tennessee. She is a member of Phi Kappa Phi.

The author served as a temporary guidance counselor in the Knox County School System during the Spring semester of 1991. The following August she began her doctoral work in the Educational and Counseling Psychology Department at The University of Tennessee, Knoxville and received the Doctor of Philosophy degree in Education in August 1995.

During her graduate studies, she married Michael Hunter Warren, Jr. on March 19, 1994. She also taught in her department, worked as a graduate assistant in the Assistant Vice-Chancellor's office, and taught at Carson-Newman College. She is a member of the Alpha Xi Chapter of Pi Lambda Theta.