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## Longitudinal Changes in Religiosity among Emerging Adult College Students

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### Abstract

Issues of religion are important aspects of the identity process, which for many emerging adults may be intensified by the college experience. This study investigated longitudinal changes in the religiosity of 434 emerging adult college students (52% female) of diverse ethnic backgrounds (32% African American, 29% Latino American, and 39% European American) during the first three semesters of university. Results suggest that changes occur throughout this period, but that such changes are not monolithic across dimensions of religiosity. In the aggregate, significant declines in the behavioral aspects of religiosity were observed across semesters. In contrast, importance of religious beliefs remained relatively constant during this time. However, variations in these patterns were observed when considered at the individual-level. Findings further demonstrate that heterogeneity in religiosity is also evident based upon gender and religious affiliation, suggesting that it is fruitful to consider the unique ways in which individuals change during this developmental period.

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Although previous work (Erikson, 1968; Marcia, 1980) has relegated the identity formation process to adolescence, contemporary theorists have suggested that in industrialized nations, the most intensive period of identity exploration may actually occur during emerging adulthood – the time from the late teens through the mid-twenties. Characterized as an “age of possibilities” (Arnett, 2004, p. 8), emerging adulthood extends the exploration processes begun in adolescence to a period of rolelessness and instability, in which individuals are free to consider multiple life alternatives before embracing the commitments of adulthood.

As emerging adults strive to achieve a more defined sense of self, their searches often turn inward to beliefs and values. With earlier cognitive advancements solidified, emerging adults begin to address abstract ideals, often involving issues of existential purpose and religious identity (Arnett & Jensen, 2002; Markstrom, 1999). Fowler (1981) has proposed that during this time, many young people enter a period of individuating-reflective thought. This period involves a tension between the self and institutional ideologies, prompting individuals to examine previously-socialized beliefs to establish a more mature sense of the religious self.

Participation in higher education, undertaken by a majority of emerging adults (National Center for Education Statistics, 2002), may also heighten the desire to explore religious identity. As highlighted by Erikson (1968), college often serves as a socially-sanctioned

moratorium, instrumental in promoting identity formation. The early semesters are particularly foundational for shaping development (e.g., Davis, 1977; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). During these early semesters, many students first encounter opportunities for autonomous decision-making apart from their family of origin and initial exposure to diverse worldviews. This may intensify the desire to make more intentional, self-defined choices about their own beliefs and values, setting in motion exploration processes that guide subsequent identity commitments (Arnett, 2004).

In spite of what is known about the importance of the early college experience, few studies have examined change in religiosity during this time. Of the studies that have addressed religiosity, many have employed one-item measures or religious variables merely as adjuncts to demographic information. In contrast, recent work emphasizes the need to study religion from a developmental perspective and advocates multidimensional conceptualizations of religiosity to encompass public and private aspects of beliefs and behaviors (King & Boyatzis, 2004).

In this study, we applied a longitudinal approach to assess changes in multiple aspects of religiosity among emerging adults during their first three semesters of college. To better understand how religiosity varies for emerging adults of differing gender and religious affiliational experiences, we also examined patterns of change within and between these groups.

## Importance of Religiosity

Evidence suggests that religion and spirituality are important sources of identification and influence for emerging adults. In a national study (Higher Educational Research Institute, 2005), the majority of first-year college students reported that they attended religious services, believed in God, and that their religious and spiritual beliefs provided them with strength and guidance. Most college students also report that they pray or meditate (McKinney & McKinney, 1999).

Another reason that religiosity is relevant for emerging adults is its association with preventive outcomes. Several studies have proposed links between religiosity and well-being during this time, including associations with physical health (Francis, Robbins, Lewis, Quigley, & Wheeler, 2004), adjustment to college (Low & Handal, 1995), and lower sexual risk-taking (Zaleski & Schiaffino, 2000). Moreover, there are associations between college students' religiosity and negative body image issues (Boyatzis & McConnell, 2006), highlighting the need to understand how dimensions of religiosity operate with regard to specific outcomes.

## Developmental Change

Extant research demonstrates that significant changes occur in religiosity during the college years. Work by Feldman and Newcomb (1969) shows that a majority of college students report some change in religious orientation across the college years. At the aggregate-level, Feldman and Newcomb observed a general decline in the importance of religious values relative to other values during this time. However, Feldman and Newcomb suggested that variation in the amount and direction of change also exists at the individual-level, noting that although some individuals decrease in religiosity during this period, others may increase or remain stable.

In a study by Lefkowitz (2005) in which students retrospectively reported on changes since attending college, students who were in college longer were more likely to report changes in religious beliefs, becoming more questioning, and changes in views of other religions. Work

by Boyatzis and McConnell (2006) showed that overall Quest orientation, or sense of religious openness toward existential questioning, was higher among students who were in the latter years of college than among students who were in the early years of college or after graduation.

Given that current theories emphasize religiosity's multidimensionality (Spilka, Hood, & Gorsuch, 1985), it is necessary to examine specific aspects to capture the nuances of change. Certain dimensions of religiosity may evidence different developmental patterns, with particular aspects of religiosity increasing, others remaining stable, and others declining. For example, cross-sectional work has found disparities between institutionally-focused behaviors and intrinsically-centered belief importance during emerging adulthood. Several of these studies suggest declines in behaviors (e.g., service attendance), but stability or increases in intrinsic commitment and belief importance (Arnett & Jensen, 2002; Astin, 1993; Lee, 2003).

Few studies have examined longitudinal change in religiosity during early college, however. In this investigation, we focus explicitly upon developmental changes across multiple dimensions of religiosity during the first three semesters of college. We expected that when examined in the aggregate that we would observe different developmental paths across dimensions. We predicted linear decreases in religious behaviors (frequency of religious service and activity attendance), but stability in importance of religious beliefs. When considered at the individual-level, however, we predicted that we would find greater heterogeneity in developmental trajectories across dimensions, such that some individuals would report patterns of decline in dimensions of religiosity, whereas other individuals would report patterns of stability or increase.

## Contextual Heterogeneity

It is also important to account for the unique contextual and social milieus that might shape religious development. Scholars have suggested that during college, influences from the social context may promote polarization effects such that individuals who begin college either high or low in religiosity tend to grow in the direction of their initial tendencies due to socialization and affiliative identification with others in the college environment that confirm and support these tendencies (Astin, 1993; Ozarak, 1989).

In this study, we focus on two salient aspects of social and contextual experience, gender and religious affiliation, which previous research suggests play important roles in religious socialization. With regard to gender, evidence indicates that women tend to report being more religious than men (Gallup & Bezilla, 1992; Smith, 2004). Women are more likely to participate in religious services and activities, to report greater intrinsic religious commitment and importance of religion, and to pray more frequently during the college period (Buchko, 2004; Gallup & Bezilla; Zinnbauer & Pargament, 1998).

Religiosity may also vary according to the unique context of religious affiliation (Smith, 2004; Steensland et al., 2000). Differences in exposure to religious norms, rituals, and beliefs hold implications for religious development as aspects of religiosity, such as service attendance, prayer, and activity involvement, are likely to differ by affiliation (Benson, 2006). For example, evidence suggests that Catholic youth report less frequent attendance at religious services and activities and less importance of religion in daily life than youth from other affiliations. Differences among Protestant youth also exist, with Black and Evangelical Protestants reporting more religiosity compared to Mainlines (Smith). In this study therefore, we predicted that we would observe varied patterns of change across domains both at the aggregate and individual levels based on gender and affiliation.

## Affiliational Change

A final focus in this study was change in religious affiliation identification. Although religious conversions are most likely to take place during adolescence and emerging adulthood (Hadaway & Roof, 1988), and many emerging adults report feeling uncertain about their religious beliefs at times (Arnett, 2004; Higher Educational Research Institute, 2005), cross-sectional work shows that the majority of emerging adults do not change their religious affiliations (Ozarak, 1989). Moreover, when compared to emerging adults of other religious orientations, individuals with distinct affiliations, such as Catholicism or Judaism, are among the least likely to switch because of the unique religious niches these identities fulfill (Loveland, 2003). We extend existing work by examining changes in affiliation, predicting that the majority of emerging adults would remain consistent in their affiliational identity during this time.

## Method

### Participants

We recruited participants as part of a longitudinal study conducted at a large, public university in the Northeast. To capture the increasing diversity among U.S. college students (“Almanac,” 2005), we oversampled African Americans and Latino Americans. Using Registrar records, we invited all first-year students between the ages of 17 and 19 who identified as African American or Latino American to participate. We also included a randomly-generated subsample (approximately 9%) of first-year students within this age range who identified as European American. Of the initial 839 students contacted, 434 (52% female; 32% African American, 29% Latino American, and 39% European American) consented to participate. The mean age in the sample upon entry to the study was 18.5 years ( $SD = 0.4$ ), with a range of 17.5 to 19.8 years. Most participants’ (95%) parents had graduated from high school, but there was great diversity in parents’ educational level beyond that, ranging from some college to graduate degrees.

Religious preferences upon entry were distributed as follows: 40% Protestant, 39% Catholic, 5% “other” (e.g., undecided, unaffiliated, still looking), 4% Jewish, and less than 1% Muslim or Buddhist. Another 12% reported agnosticism, atheism, or no religion. Additionally, we asked participants to report on the religion in which they were raised. Approximately 45% reported that they were raised Catholic, 44% Protestant, 4% Jewish, 4% agnostic/atheist/no religious upbringing, and 3% “other.”

We surveyed participants at three time points. Time 1 occurred during participants’ first semester (Fall), Time 2 during their second semester (Spring), and Time 3 during their third semester (Fall). Students were paid \$25 at Time 1, \$30 at Time 2, and \$35 at Time 3. Of the 434 participants who completed a Time 1 survey, 95% ( $N=414$ ) remained in the sample at Time 2 and 90% ( $N=390$ ) at Time 3. Of those 10% from the original sample who were no longer present by Time 3, 32 were no longer students at the university, 7 had scheduling conflicts, 4 refused, and 1 was deceased. As the focus of this study was specifically related to experiences of emerging adults attending college, we included only those participants who were still students during this time, and 97% of this group was retained at Time 3.

To examine attrition biases, we compared the 390 participants who completed the Time 3 survey to the 44 who did not chi-square and t-tests. By Time 3, men ( $\chi^2=8.1, p < .01$ ) were more likely to have dropped out of the study relative to women. No significant attrition differences were found on any of the other demographic or religiosity variables.

## Measures

**Demographics**—We assessed demographic characteristics with a brief questionnaire.

**Religious affiliation**—We assessed religious affiliation by asking participants their current affiliation at each time. The measure included several common affiliational categories, as well as an open-ended question. We coded both forms of responses using the RELTRAD method (Steensland et al., 2000), supplemented by Smith's (2004) related coding scheme. Using these methods, we arrived at the following affiliational categories: Evangelical Protestant, Mainline Protestant, Black Protestant, Catholic, Jewish, Mormon, Other, and Atheistic/Agnostic/Not Religious. We also included categories for Protestant Not Otherwise Specified (NOS), Undecided, and Multiple Religions. Of these 11 categories, only 6 (Evangelical Mainline, Black Protestant, Protestant NOS, Catholic, and Agnostic/Atheist) could be used in the ANOVA analyses, due to statistically inadequate numbers ( $n < 15$ ) in the remaining groups.

**Religious behaviors**—We assessed behavioral aspects of religiosity by frequency of service attendance (i.e., number of times they had attended religious services) and activity attendance (i.e., number of times they had attended non-service religious activities such as Bible studies) during the past year. To reduce outliers, we capped attendance responses that were more than three standard deviations above the mean at 60.

**Religious beliefs**—We measured beliefs using the 7 scaled items from Rohrbaugh and Jessor's (1975) religiosity scale. Each item contained 4 or 5 response choices indicating degrees of agreement or importance. Response options varied across questions. For example, Item 3, which asked "When you have a serious personal problem, how often do you take religious advice or teaching into consideration?" offered the following responses: almost always, usually, sometimes, or never. We summed responses to all items to derive a composite score. Higher scores indicated a higher degree of importance of religious beliefs in daily life. Reliability in the current sample ranged from  $\alpha = .89-.91$  across time, was comparable across genders and affiliations, and was similar to previous research (Nicholas & Durkheim, 1996; Rohrbaugh & Jessor).

## Results

To assess the main effects of time and gender, we performed an initial series of 3 (time)  $\times$  2 (gender) mixed method ANOVAs for each of the dependent variables (service attendance, activity attendance, and importance of beliefs). Religious affiliation was then incorporated into the analyses using the subsample of participants from the 6 analyzable affiliations ( $n = 303-338$ ) with a series of 3 (time)  $\times$  2 (gender)  $\times$  6 (affiliation) mixed method ANOVAs. When we found affiliational differences, we performed Tukey's post-hoc tests. When we found interactions with time, we examined time differences within each group. As results with and without affiliation were comparable, we describe only findings with affiliation included (Table 1).

We found significant main effects of time for both behavioral measures of religiosity. Specifically, in their first semester of college, students reported attending religious services an average of 1.6 times a month. By their second semester, they reported attending an average of only once a month, and by their third semester, even less frequently. Service attendance also appeared to vary by religious affiliation. Post-hoc tests showed that Evangelical Protestants attended services more frequently than most other affiliations, particularly when compared to Agnostic/Atheists ( $p < .001$ ), Protestant NOS's ( $p < .001$ ), and Mainline Protestants ( $p < .05$ ). Black Protestants and Catholics also attended service more

frequently when compared with Agnostic/Atheists ( $p < .001$ ) and Protestant NOS's ( $p < .01$ ). A significant time  $\times$  affiliation interaction was also evident; Evangelical, Mainline, and Black Protestants, and Catholics,  $F_s > 9$ ,  $p_s < .001$ , tended to report less frequent service attendance across time whereas Protestant NOS and Agnostic/Atheist individuals did not change over time.

Participants also reported decreases in their attendance at religious activities across time. In their first semester, they reported attending activities an average of 6 times a year and by their third semester, only about 3 times a year. There was a significant time  $\times$  gender interaction, such that for men decreases in activity attendance were more dramatic, with declines in both the second and third semesters,  $F_s > 14$ ,  $p_s < .001$ . For women, a decline in this domain was evident only in the third semester,  $F(1,173) = 4.5$ ,  $p < .05$ . Although there were main effects of affiliation, these differences were not moderated by time. Post-hoc tests showed that compared to other affiliations, Evangelicals attended activities more frequently ( $p_s < .001$ ).

We found no main effects of time for importance of religion, indicating that in general, most emerging adults reported stability in the importance of their beliefs across the first three semesters. Differences were evident between genders and religious affiliations, however. Women reported that beliefs were more important than did men, and post-hoc analyses revealed that Evangelical and Black Protestants rated their beliefs as more important than did Agnostic/Atheists ( $p_s < .001$ ) and Catholics ( $p_s < .01$ ).

Although mean differences are important, it is possible that such analyses could mask individual variation in development. To assess individual patterns, we calculated difference scores from Time 1 to Time 3 for each dependent variable. Based upon the distributions and consideration of meaningful units, we established cut-points to classify participants into 1 of 3 categories: increasing, decreasing, or stable in each domain. For service and activity attendance, we classified difference scores  $< -3$  as decreasing,  $-3$  to  $+3$  as stable, and  $> +3$  as increasing. For importance of beliefs, we classified difference scores  $< -1.5$  as decreasing,  $-1.5$  to  $1.5$  as stable, and  $> +1.5$  as increasing. Using these categories, we performed cross-tabulations to examine patterns of change in the overall sample and between genders and affiliations (Table 2).

In contrast to group-level analyses, the individual-level analyses revealed more stability in religious behaviors and more change in belief importance. With regard to service attendance, decreases over time and stability occurred at similar rates. Nearly three quarters of the sample reported stability in activity attendance, and nearly half reported stability in importance of beliefs. Less than a quarter of the sample reported decreases in activity attendance and a third of the sample reported decreases in importance of beliefs. Although increasing patterns were relatively rare for behaviors, occurring for 10% or less of the sample for both behavioral measures, nearly a quarter of the sample reported increases in importance of beliefs. In general, the patterns were similar for men and women.

There were several instances in which the pattern for a specific affiliation appeared different from the main sample. The modal pattern for Protestants NOS and Agnostic/Atheists was stability in service attendance, whereas the modal pattern for the three other Protestant groups was instability. Stability in activity attendance was the most common pattern for all 6 groups, but nearly a quarter of Evangelical Protestants increased their attendance. Nearly half of individuals who identified as Protestant NOS increased in the importance of their beliefs in comparison to less than a quarter of individuals identifying with other affiliations.



Finally, we examined the percentage of participants who changed their religious affiliation across semesters. Results confirmed our hypothesis, showing that the majority of students (78%) indicated stability in their affiliation across this time.

## Discussion

By examining religiosity within a multidimensional, longitudinal framework, the results of this study provide insight into developmental changes across domains of religiosity during emerging adulthood. Over the first three semesters of college, emerging adults reported significant decreases in religious service and activity attendance. The importance of their religious beliefs, however, tended to remain stable. The opposing trends we observed between behaviors and beliefs may reflect the tensions between institutional ideology and the self that Fowler (1981) highlighted as characteristic of this developmental period. These results also provide longitudinal support for the individualization phenomenon proposed in qualitative work by Arnett and Jensen (2002), suggesting that current generations of emerging adults are eschewing institutional participation and dogma-related activities in favor of more personalized forms of religious self-expression. Behavioral declines could further signify developmental artifacts of emerging adulthood as there is some speculation that religious behaviors later increase with marriage or parenthood in young adulthood (Hoge, Johnson, & Luidens, 1993).

Our results indicate the importance of considering heterogeneity in religiosity based upon gender and religious affiliation. Although cross-sectional work suggests that women are more religious than men (Buchko, 2004; Gallup & Bezilla, 1992), in our study gender differences were most pronounced in terms of women's greater emphasis on importance of religion compared to men, whereas behaviors appeared less differentiated.

Across all dimensions of religiosity, we found differences between religious affiliations. Although both Evangelical and Black Protestants declined in service attendance, members of these affiliations consistently attended services more frequently than others. Despite declines in service attendance, Evangelicals, on average, attended religious activities more frequently and ascribed greater importance to their beliefs relative to most other affiliations. Previous work shows that Evangelicals tend to maintain relatively high levels of religiosity during college, particularly in secular university settings where they may feel the need to more strongly assert this aspect of their identity (Hammond & Hunter, 1984). Thus, it is possible that certain aspects of religiosity, such as beliefs or self-selected activities, assume greater priority in this identity work over other aspects such as service attendance, which may have been previously mandated by parents.

Religious affiliation played a key role in moderating the decline in service attendance as Evangelical, Mainline, Black Protestants, and Catholics declined in service attendance across time, whereas others did not. As certain affiliational groups, such as Protestant NOS and Atheist/Agnostic, were already attending services infrequently at the start of college, floor effects could be indicated. Protestant NOS students, who began college with less emphasis on belief importance than other Protestants, were more likely to increase in importance than other groups. Protestant NOS students and Catholics began college with similar levels of importance, but Catholics were twice as likely to remain stable and only half as likely to increase, suggesting that developmental changes reflect a combination of initial level of importance and affiliation.

These results highlight the roles of gender and religious affiliation in creating the lens through which religious behaviors and beliefs are interpreted and expressed. Depending upon contextual locations or social affiliations, young people are socialized to respond to

various facets of religious life in differing ways, shaping religious development according to specific trajectories. For instance, gender differences in religiosity may be associated with varying levels of social power granted to men and women in contemporary societies, which emerging adults increasingly encounter as they enter adult society (Buchko, 1995). Similarly, affiliation provides key aspects of the social location from which young people explore and construct their own personal sense of religious identity, including differences in practice and belief (Smith, 2004).

Although we found declines in average levels of religious behaviors, it is noteworthy that when we considered individual-level patterns across time, results showed that decreasing was the modal pattern only for service attendance, with stability also fairly common in this domain. Stability was also the most common pattern for activity attendance and importance of beliefs. Interestingly, these analyses also showed that, in contrast to aggregate trends, many individuals also reported changes (both decreases and increases) in the importance of beliefs during this time.

Although these analyses were only descriptive, findings support previous observations (Feldman and Newcomb, 1969) that the process of religious identity construction may be more complex at the individual-level than at the group-level and that many individuals' processes of change deviate from aggregated trends. Likewise, the magnitude of change across domains of religious identity for individuals differs significantly from what group-level analyses imply.

Reasons for heterogeneity at the individual-level are likely complex and related to individual differences or contextual variations. One possible explanation for varying trajectories of change is polarization effects (Astin, 1993; Ozarak, 1989). Depending upon one's initial tendencies, individuals may seek out social experiences that support their predilections. Other reasons for differential patterns of change include variations in time available to individuals based upon specific life circumstances, such as school or employment obligations, differences in the emotional salience of religious issues, or disparities in opportunities or desires to exercise autonomy in religious practices or belief expression (Arnett & Jensen, 2002; Wuthnow & Glock, 1973). Clearly, generating a more complete understanding of the mechanisms behind such differences is an important area for continued research.

More than three-quarters of the emerging adults in this study demonstrated stability in religious affiliation across this time period. Such persistence of affiliational identity may be due, at least in part, to the unique social and cultural roles that religious traditions fill in the lives of their members (Dillon, 1996; Loveland, 2003). Further, although many emerging adults report persistence in affiliations socialized by families-of-origin, when asked about the specific beliefs and practices that they espouse, their responses may bear little resemblance to the actual proscriptions of these affiliations (Arnett & Jensen, 2004). For some emerging adults, it is possible that religious affiliation serves more of a nominal format for self-identification, rather than a truly ideologically salient aspect of identity. Further research is warranted to fully assess the actual meaning and content that emerging adults attribute to such affiliational identifications.

Several limitations restrict the generalizability of these findings beyond the present study. Although the sample in this study is ethnically and socioeconomically diverse, many emerging adults of other contextual circumstances are not represented in this sample and thus results will not generalize to these groups. Moreover, as emerging adulthood extends into the mid-twenties (Arnett, 2004), future research will be necessary to understand the ways in which religiosity changes at later points encompassed by this developmental period.



Similarly, a broader array of religious dimensions beyond those included in this study should also be explored.

In spite of these limitations, results of this study indicate both change and stability across specific dimensions of religiosity and suggest that religious development during the early college period is not necessarily monolithic across individuals or contextual circumstance. Findings also provide conceptual support for the application of a multidimensional, developmentally-sensitive framework in seeking to understand the complex ways in which individuals construct unique aspects of religious identity during this time.

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**Table 1**

Frequency of Attendance at Religious Services, Frequency of Attendance at Religious Activities, and Importance of Beliefs by Time, Gender, and Religious Affiliation

Dimension	Time 1 <i>M(SD)</i>	Time 2 <i>M(SD)</i>	Time 3 <i>M(SD)</i>	<i>F</i> (time)	<i>F</i> (gender)	<i>F</i> (affiliation)	<i>F</i> (time × gender)	<i>F</i> (time × affiliation)
Frequency of Religious Service								
Attendance	19.0 (18.4)	13.8 (16.3)	11.3 (15.5)	48.8***	1.3	12.0***	0.2	3.8***
Male	19.4 (18.1)	13.2 (16.0)	11.0 (15.6)					
Female	18.6 (18.6)	14.3 (16.5)	11.6 (15.4)					
Evangelical Protestant								
Mainline Protestant	32.0 (15.9)	22.8 (16.0)	20.5 (19.1)					
Black Protestant	20.0 (17.6)	14.2 (14.4)	8.8 (11.5)					
Protestant (NOS)	24.6 (17.7)	15.7 (16.3)	11.8 (13.4)					
Catholic	6.4 (8.0)	7.6 (8.8)	5.1 (6.0)					
	20.5 (19.1)	16.1 (18.1)	13.9 (17.7)					
Agnostic/Atheist	5.5 (10.7)	2.5 (5.5)	3.2 (9.1)					
Frequency of Religious Activity Attendance								
	6.3 (12.0)	4.4 (10.6)	3.3 (9.5)	10.6***	0.1	19.1***	5.5***	1.2
Male	7.7 (13.7)	4.1 (10.2)	3.9 (10.9)					
Female	5.1 (10.1)	4.6 (11.0)	2.9 (8.1)					
Evangelical Protestant								
Mainline Protestant	18.1 (19.3)	15.8 (18.7)	17.9 (21.6)					
Black Protestant	8.8 (10.8)	7.6 (13.9)	3.0 (7.1)					
Protestant (NOS)	10.2 (13.5)	7.0 (10.5)	5.7 (11.5)					
Catholic	5.2 (11.3)	2.3 (6.3)	2.0 (3.6)					
	3.8 (9.8)	2.1 (8.2)	1.1 (4.8)					
Agnostic/Atheist	1.0 (3.9)	0.2 (1.4)	0.1 (0.5)					
Importance of Beliefs								
	15.3 (6.3)	15.1 (6.4)	14.9 (6.9)	2.0	6.4**	45.2***	0.6	0.7
Male	14.1 (6.6)	14.1 (6.6)	13.8 (6.6)					
Female	16.2 (5.9)	15.8 (6.2)	15.8 (6.1)					
Evangelical Protestant								
Mainline Protestant	19.6 (4.6)	18.3 (5.1)	18.4 (5.6)					
Black Protestant	16.0 (5.2)	16.1 (5.3)	15.8 (5.5)					
Protestant (NOS)	20.0 (3.7)	19.6 (4.2)	19.1 (4.3)					
	15.3 (5.5)	16.0 (6.5)	15.5 (6.0)					

Dimension	Time 1 M(SD)	Time 2 M(SD)	Time 3 M(SD)	F (time)	F (gender)	F (affiliation)	F (time × gender)	F (time× affiliation)
Catholic	15.3 (5.0)	14.9 (5.1)	15.0 (5.1)					
Agnostic/Atheist	6.2 (5.9)	5.9 (5.1)	6.0 (5.1)					

\*  $p < .05$ ;

\*\*  $p < .01$ ,

\*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

*Note.* Interactions of gender×affiliation were never significant and are therefore not reported.

Due to missing data and omission affiliations with small cell sizes, sample size ranged from  $n = 303$  to 338.

**Table 2**

Patterns of Change in Religious Service Attendance, Religious Activity Attendance, and Importance of Beliefs by Gender and Religious Affiliation

	Religious Service Attendance Time 1 to Time 3 Change			Religious Activity Attendance Time 1 to Time 3 Change			Importance of Beliefs Time 1 to Time 3 Change					
	Valid n	% +	% -	% =	Valid n	% +	% -	% =	Valid n	% +	% -	% =
Overall	379	10	46	44	377	6	22	72	368	24	33	43
Gender												
Male	172	9	49	42	171	5	22	73	165	26	32	42
Female	207	11	44	45	206	6	22	72	203	22	34	44
Religious Affiliation												
Evangelical Protestant	25	12	72	16	24	21	33	46	24	13	38	50
Mainline Protestant	36	3	58	39	36	5	42	53	36	25	28	47
Black Protestant	64	5	64	31	64	8	34	58	60	22	31	47
Protestant (NOS)	25	8	28	64	25	8	16	76	25	44	36	20
Catholic	142	14	44	42	141	3	15	82	139	24	32	44
Agnostic/Atheist	46	4	24	72	46	0	9	91	44	18	39	43
Jewish	14	0	50	50	14	0	29	71	14	28	36	36
Other	12	17	25	58	12	17	17	66	11	0	18	82
Undecided	7	14	29	57	7	0	14	86	7	29	29	42
Multiple Affiliations	2	100	0	0	2	50	0	50	2	0	50	50
Mormon	1	0	100	0	1	0	100	0	1	0	0	100

Note. Due to missing data and omission of small cell size among some affiliations, sample size ranged from n=343-381.