18

PARENTING, RELIGION, AND SPIRITUALITY

Annette Mahoney and Chris J. Boyatzis

Introduction

Parenting feels holy to me, something that's not part of this world. It feels really "above normal." I know God exists. But other than my baby, I never really saw or felt God.
—*Married father and mother in Mahoney, Pargament, and DeMaris* (2018)

I ask God for help a lot. I don't know the right way to parent. I know the wrong way. I've seen the wrong way, so it's hard for me sometimes. I second guess myself a lot. I'm very insecure sometimes about it, but I just do what's right in my heart, and I just think that God is guiding me so that I can give this child what he needs. I want to have the strength to give him the support, and love to nurture him. I ask God for a lot of help in the way I discipline him; like the amount of time we spend together, and the things we do when we're together. I have depression and sometimes it's hard for me to get out of bed. I ask God to help me get up, get dressed, take him to the zoo or somewhere.
—*Single mother in Sullivan* (2008)

Every part of our parenting is guided by our faith and spiritual beliefs. We believe our child deserves an affirming Christian education in a gay-friendly zone.
—*Cohabiting father in Rostosky, Abreu, Mahoney, and Riggle* (2017)

Parenting can be saturated with spiritual significance and meaning for married, single, and cohabiting parents. Statistically speaking, 79% of U.S. married mothers, 77% of single mothers, and 68% of cohabiting mothers say religion is "somewhat" or "very important" to their daily life based on 2011–2013 national surveys (National Center for Family and Marriage Research, 2017). According to recent cross-cultural surveys, mothers and fathers from nine countries strongly agree, on average, that religion influences their parenting and is important in their lives (Bornstein et al., 2017). In short, many millions of those rearing children and youth across the globe likely view parenting as a sacred calling and turn to divine Being(s) or religious tradition(s) to help them navigate the longest, perhaps most arduous developmental journey of adulthood—becoming and being a parent. Yet the scientific community has been mysteriously quiet about the many ways that faith presents resources or risks for parenting. For instance, comprehensive reviews suggest that less than 1% of the peer-reviewed studies on parenting or family life published between 1980 and 2009 in social science journals targeted hypotheses about how religious or spiritual factors may shape parenting across the life span (Mahoney, 2010; 2019). We hope that this chapter will entice family scientists to delve into and extend scientific inquiry on this topic.

Our chapter begins with a historical sketch of empirical research on parental religiousness (R) and spirituality (S). We then discuss the conceptual and methodological challenges that scholars face to expand rigorous investigation of the bright and dark side of R/S for parenting, also elaborating in this section on our rationale to use the abbreviation R/S throughout this chapter. Next, we introduce Mahoney's (2010, 2013) Relational Spirituality Framework (RSF) to organize empirical findings and illuminate theoretical possibilities about specific ways that R/S could shape childbearing and rearing. The bulk of the chapter delineates theory and empirical findings on the possible roles R/S could play across diverse families in becoming and being a parent. Within each of these two major sections, we first review findings derived from indices of parents' general involvement in organized religion (e.g., frequency of attendance or overall importance of religion) and then highlight specific R/S cognitions and behaviors that could function as resources or risks for parents in national or community-based studies. We then summarize the scarce research on how R/S may function within subsamples of parents facing serious parenting challenges. We close by outlining the largely untapped potential for social scientists to engage in translational research that integrates R/S into education and prevention programs in communities, as well as clinical interventions with distressed parents. Our emphasis in this chapter is on extensive empirical evidence of direct links between parents' self-report of their own R/S functioning and their parenting cognitions or practices, supplemented by impressive longitudinal studies of indirect pathways of influence of parental R/S on youth psychosocial and R/S adjustment via parenting. We refer readers elsewhere to extensive discussions of how parents may directly influence their offspring's R/S development (Boyatzis, 2013; Boyatzis, Dollahite, and Marks, 2006; King and Boyatzis, 2015) and how children's and adolescents' self-reports about their own R/S adjustment are tied to their psychosocial well-being (Holden and Vittrup, 2010; Yonker, Schnabelrauch, and DeHaan, 2012).

Historical Considerations in Social Science on R/S and Parenting

Jenkins (1991) published a comprehensive review of research on religion and families from 1930 to 1990. During that era, social scientists focused on generating evidence that married heterosexuals' religious affiliation (e.g., Catholic, Protestant, Jewish, Other, or None) and frequency of religious attendance, as well as interreligious marriage, were tied to childbirth and divorce rates, marital satisfaction, and general attitudes about marriage or parenting in Western countries. Family scientists' interest in these linkages appears to have waned by the end of this 60-year period. For example, unlike prior decades, the *Journal of Marriage and Family* (JMF) did not cover R/S in JMF's 1990 "Decade-in-Review" volume. R/S factors tied to parenting likewise had little visibility in mainstream psychology throughout the 20th century. For example, 1999 marks the first year to our knowledge that any journal sponsored by the American Psychological Association published a peer-reviewed study on parents' R/S predicting parenting practices (Gershoff, Miller, and Holden, 1999). In 2001, APA's *Journal of Family Psychology* then published the first special section on R/S and marriage/family life that included a meta-analysis of 97 peer-reviewed studies published in social science journals from 1980 to 1999 that explicitly examined ways that R/S factors were tied to marital and family functioning (Mahoney, Pargament, Swank, and Tarakeshwar, 2001). In 2010, JMF published a similar review on 184 peer-reviewed studies published from 2000 to 2009 (Mahoney, 2013). Other encouraging signs of family scholars' growing interest in parental R/S as a persistent cross-cultural reality include books (Marks and Dollahite, 2016; Wilcox and Wolfinger, 2016), special issues in the *Journal of Family Psychology* (Mahoney and Cano, 2014) and the *International Journal for the Psychology of Religion* (Boyatzis, 2006), and the integration of R/S factors into multidimensional models of parenting (Bornstein, 2016; Holden and Vittrup, 2010).

The scholars who have published peer-reviewed studies that target parental R/S factors as predictors of parenting have come from many disciplinary backgrounds, ranging from university-based

Psychology, Sociology, Social Work, and Marriage and Family Studies departments, as well as Obstetrics and Gynecology, Pediatric, and Nursing departments in medical centers (Mahoney, 2019). Thus, diverse research methods have been used in this literature. Family sociologists have tended to conduct secondary data analyses on broad-based surveys conducted with large community or nationally representative samples. By contrast, developmental and family psychologists have tended to target community samples using in-depth surveys, experimental designs, and/or observational techniques. Others, particularly within Marriage and Family Studies departments, have obtained rich qualitative data on married heterosexual parents who are highly involved in Christian, Muslim, or Jewish religious groups.

Distinctive Characteristics of Social Science on R/S and Parenting

Scope

To provide additional historical perspective, we highlight two distinctive characteristics of literature on R/S and parenting. First, consistent with the fact that world religions have historically offered teachings on virtually every aspect of childbearing and rearing, the scope of topics that social scientists have touched on has been broad. Yet any one topic has garnered relatively little scientific attention. For example, in Mahoney's 2010 review of peer-reviewed studies published during the 2000–2009 decade, 80 addressed marriage or divorce and 104 dealt with parenting or family-related topics. Within the latter set of studies, 72 focused on becoming or being a parent and examined women's fertility ($n = 11$), fathers' involvement in infants and children's lives ($n = 9$), pregnancy and infant care ($n = 10$), corporal punishment ($n = 8$), risk of child physical abuse, ($n = 4$), parental warmth and monitoring of children ($n = 5$), parenting children in stressful contexts ($n = 4$), and monitoring and relational quality with adolescents ($n = 16$). Hopefully this chapter will spur more scientific investigations on the roles that parents' R/S may play on the approximately 100 facets of parenting covered across this five-volume *Handbook of Parenting*.

Measurement

A second distinctive feature of research in this niche is a tendency to rely on conceptual models and measures that confound specific R/S resources and risks. During the 2000–2009 decade, for instance, around 75% of all studies on partners' or parents' R/S and marriage and family life involved quantitative data, but about 75% of those studies relied on one or two general questions on religiosity, such as how often participants reported they attended worship services or viewed religion as important to their daily life. Such general items cannot disentangle the potentially helpful and harmful manifestations of R/S, recognizing both types of processes could be shaped by parents' own upbringing and their present or prior participation in an organized religious group(s). The central theme woven throughout this chapter is that theory-driven assessment tools need to be developed that differentiate specific R/S resources and risks for parenting; we delineate numerous quantitative studies where the measures used pinpointed specific R/S processes, for better or worse. Qualitative studies could also be a valuable means to develop additional measures. To date, however, qualitative studies on faith and family life have nearly exclusively involved interviews with highly devout and married heterosexuals with children—that is, parents who may be especially likely to experience and thus report R/S beliefs and behaviors that are helpful. Factor analyses of multi-item measures derived from such samples are likely to yield highly intercorrelated subscales of R/S resources, with very low base rates of R/S risk factors. Supplemental strategies to advance theory and measurement would be to recruit samples of parents where some R/S resources, such as participation in religious groups, may be less salient and/or less tightly correlated with other R/S resources, such as a felt connection to higher powers or R/S cognitions about parenting

per se. In addition, studies are needed that involve families seeking professional help to address parental struggles (e.g., infertility) or family problems (e.g., child maltreatment) where maladaptive R/S beliefs or behaviors may be more frequent and likely to intensify parental or child distress.

Commonplace Constraints of Social Science on R/S and Parenting

Not surprisingly, the body of research on R/S and parenting has been constrained by the same methodological limitations that have plagued social science research historically. Studies have been predominantly published in English and primarily involved samples drawn from Western societies. For instance, from 2000 to 2009, most quantitative studies on marriage and parenting used national (52%) or community (34%) samples of Americans. Thus, consistent with U.S. religious norms, most participants self-identified as being affiliated with a Christian group, with wide variation in the frequency of religious attendance or salience. More work, such as a study by Bornstein and colleagues (2017), is needed on non-Western and Western societies with large subsamples of parents who identify with various R/S traditions. Most quantitative studies have also relied on cross-sectional designs rather than longitudinal or experimental designs. Cross-sectional designs obviously make causal inferences about the influence of R/S on parents difficult to defend because critics can easily argue that reverse causality and many third-variable confounds, such as socioeconomic status, education, and personality variables, account for linkages. Two other common methodological limitations involve mono-method assessment. Specifically, studies on faith and family life (1) have relied heavily on the self-report of only one family member to assess both R/S predictors and relationship outcomes and (2) have rarely used direct observation of family interactions (e.g., eight studies on parent–youth dyads between 2000 and 2009). Moving forward, researchers will ideally employ multiple reporters (e.g., two parents; a parent and child) and assessment tools (e.g., self-report and observational data) as well as sophisticated longitudinal analyses to advance the scientific credibility of findings on R/S parenting, while reminding themselves and journal editors, that the use of cross-sectional data and solo reporters from Western samples are commonplace constraints in social science research.

In summary, the study of R/S and parenting has not historically been a mainstream concern of family scientists. However, conceptual and measurement advances are evident in numerous empirical studies that target links between parental R/S and some features of parenting. We selectively emphasize these studies and past comprehensive reviews (Mahoney et al., 2001; Mahoney, 2010) to illustrate key points in the rest of this chapter.

Central Issues in Science on Religion/Spirituality and Parenting

Defining Religion and Spirituality

In this section, we discuss four potentially polarizing issues in scientific research on R/S and parenting. The first centers on debates about overarching definitions of the complex, multifaceted, and overlapping domains of Religion/Religiousness (R) versus Spirituality (S), discussions at risk of becoming increasingly divisive in scientific literature dominated by researchers from Western societies. In general, R has been portrayed within the psychology of religion and spirituality literature as public engagement in a given organized socio-cultural-historical religious tradition; adherence to theologically orthodox beliefs, dogmas, or rituals; and external pressure to conform to social norms promoted by a religious group (Pargament, Mahoney, Exline, Jones, and Shafranske, 2013). One widely used definition of religion, for instance, has been:

> an organized system of beliefs, practices, rituals, and symbols that serve (a) to facilitate individuals' closeness to the sacred or transcendent other (i.e., God, higher power, ultimate truth)

and (b) to bring about an understanding of an individual's relationship and responsibility to others living together in community.

(Koenig, McCullough, and Larson, 2001, p. 18)

Along these lines, in family research, attendance at worship services and endorsement of conservative Christian beliefs, such as a literalistic interpretation of the Bible, has typically been labeled as "religiousness" or "religiosity." By contrast, S has tended to be framed in social science literature as personal belief in supernatural entities or phenomena, a private quest for enlightenment or virtues, and internal motivation to seek out a sense of purpose and transcendence within or outside of organized religion groups. Koenig et al. (2001), for example, defined spirituality as "a personal quest for understanding answers to ultimate questions about life, about meaning, and about relationship to the sacred or transcendent, which may (or may not) lead to or arise from the development of religious rituals and the formation of community" (p. 18).

Consistent with the integrative approach recommended by Pargament et al. (2013) and used within the RFS (Mahoney, 2010, 2013), we suggest that scholars focused on parenting resist polarizing R against S for at least four reasons (Mahoney and Cano, 2014). First, R remains the primary social institution worldwide that encourages parents to integrate S into their daily lives, and in many societies mothers and fathers are likely to seek out spiritual resources for their journey as a parent from one or more well-established religious groups' traditions, such as enhancing their sense of connection to God/divine Being(s) or fellow believers. Second, religious groups encompass progressive to conservative theological positions on social, political, and existential issues, and wide variation exists within and between religious denominations on controversial moral and ethical issues pertinent to parenting (Onedera, 2008; Starks and Robinson, 2007). Parents can, in turn, selectively seek out support from leaders or members within a religious subgroup(s) that reinforces their family values. For example, parents can find religious groups that affirm the spiritual significance of becoming a parent in a family system labeled "traditional" (e.g., first-time heterosexual marriage) or "nontraditional" (e.g., single, remarried, foster, or multigenerational parent; Edgell, 2005; Konieczny, 2013; Rostosky et al., 2017; Sullivan, 2008). Although more research is needed, the goodness of fit between parents and their religious group of choice most likely determines whether parents gain access to R/S resources or encounter R/S struggles in their parental roles (Mahoney, 2010, 2013). Third, parents can turn to secular groups to support their values and reject the notion that possessing a stable sense of identity or morality inherently involves "being spiritual," finding the phrase perhaps superfluous at best and insulting at worst. Fourth, U.S. and cross-cultural data suggest that self-identifying as embracing spiritual beliefs and practices promoted by many religious groups persists as a prominent cultural reality for many parents. In 2014, for example, a majority of Americans reported believing in God (78%), praying (74%), attending religious services (74%), being religious (80%), and being spiritual (89%) to some degree (Twenge, Sherman, Exline, and Grubbs, 2016). Thus, although frequent participation in religious institutions, like other major social institutions, has declined over recent decades in the United States and Europe, the notion that R and S are mutually exclusive domains may apply primarily to a relatively narrow slice of the global demographic pie: more highly educated, younger, unmarried, childless, male, and/or Caucasian persons from individualistically oriented Western societies. In short, organized religion represents a primary means by which parents cross-culturally are exposed to messages about the role that divine Beings could play for parenting and how to infuse parenting with spiritual meaning. Thus, consistent with the RSF, we suggest Western scientists respect, yet move well beyond, Americans' global self-identification as "being religious and/or spiritual" or their nominal religious affiliation by uncovering specific R/S mechanisms that may shape parenting, for better and worse, across multiple societies.

Traditional Versus Nontraditional Families

A second potentially polarizing issue at the intersection of faith and family life is that Western social scientists have largely focused conceptually on one type of family—namely married heterosexuals

with biological children—as the primary, if not only, domestic context where R/S matters for parent-hood. This scientific preoccupation is consistent with the fact that highly vocal religious subcultures in the United States, particularly socially and theologically conservative Christian groups, have por-trayed such family units as the morally ideal context to conceive and rear children. In turn, social scientists have leaned heavily on a theoretical orientation within sociology called "religious familism" that emphasizes ties between religion and nuclear families (Edgell, 2005; Marks and Dollahite, 2016; Wilcox, 2006). Consequently, many unasked questions remain about whether R/S is relevant for the rising number of families headed by single, cohabiting, step, adoptive, foster, LBGTQ, and/or multi-generational parents (Mahoney and Krumrei, 2012). In the United States, for example, approximately 41% of children are currently born outside of marriage, up from just 5% in 1960 (Pew, 2008). Less than half (46%) of U.S. youth live with two married heterosexual parents in their first marriage, com-pared to 73% of children in 1960. Furthermore, across cultures, multiple family members often func-tion as a primary parent figure in addition to or other than birth parents. Thus, in our view, the scope of scientific inquiry on R/S and parenting needs to be broadened to avoid R/S being prematurely presumed as irrelevant to contemporary families in Western or non-Western societies and potentially pushed further to the edges of mainstream social science literature.

Family scholars who research the roles that R/S plays across diverse families need to be alert to two central issues. First, higher base rates of R/S factors are very likely to persist within families that conform to heterosexual marital norms promoted by most religious traditions. Nevertheless, it is hard to think of another social institution across the world that continues to voluntarily attract unmarried parents. For example, as of 2011–2013, 39% of single and 32% of cohabiting mothers attended reli-gious services at least two to three times per month compared to 49% of American married mothers (2011–2013 NSFG; National Center for Family and Marriage Research, 2017). Likewise, the abso-lute number of European-American mothers who attended services two to three times per month outnumber African-American and Latina American mothers, even though European-Americans' base rate attendance was lower than the other two groups (39% versus 57% and 48%, respectively; 2011–2013 NSFG; National Center for Family and Marriage Research, 2017). Second and *far more importantly*, R/S factors may function similarly for diverse parents, regardless of statistically significant differences in the average rates of religious attendance by subgroups of parents based on their ethnic-ity, nationality, or family structure. For instance, in a recent national U.S. survey, religious attendance appeared to be similarly helpful to married and single mothers (Henderson, Uecker, and Stroope, 2016), reinforcing findings where greater R/S has been correlated with better parenting by single mothers living in adverse socioeconomic circumstances (Mahoney, 2010; Petts, 2012).

In summary, many and diverse families participate in religious groups in the United States and other countries (Bornstein et al., 2017). The more that family scholars expand their conceptual models beyond religious familism, the more they can avoid inadvertently perpetuating unfounded stereotypes that R/S is exclusively helpful and/or harmful to married heterosexuals with biological offspring.

Socially Conservative Versus Progressive Theological Values

A third polarizing issue undergirded by the religious familism lens is a potential loss of perspective by narrowly focusing on ways that conservative Protestant/Christian (CPC) values can shape parenting cognitions and practices. One topic that illustrates this issue is corporal punishment. Social scientists have established that Americans who self-identify as a conservative Protestant (e.g., Southern Baptist, evangelical, or nondenominational Christian) and/or interpret the Bible literally are more likely to believe in and use corporal punishment compared to nonbelievers and parents from other Christian or non-Christian groups (Ellison and Bradshaw, 2009; Ellison, Bartkowski, and Segal, 1996; Ellison, Musick, and Holden, 2011; Ellison and Sherkat, 1993). Such findings have generated heated debate

about the adverse impact, or not, of spanking on children within evangelical Christian families who value this disciplinary strategy (Dyslin and Thomsen, 2005; Ellison and Sherkat, 1993; Perrin, Miller-Perrin, and Song, 2017). To our knowledge, however, only two peer-reviewed studies have examined the effect of corporal punishment on children within CPC families. We unpack these two studies next to illustrate the need for family scientists to maintain a patient, nuanced, and clear-headed perspective about R/S and conservative to progressive values about corporal punishment and any parenting strategy.

Using longitudinal data gathered between 1987 and 1994, Ellison et al. (2011) examined the assertion that slapping or spanking young children is helpful, not harmful, within CPC families. They found that American 2- to 4-year-olds of CPC mothers exhibited minimal negative effects of corporal punishment five years later, and less antisocial behavior if CPC mothers had initially used but discontinued spanking. Updating and extending this study with longitudinal data collected between 2001 and 2005 on two-parent families, Petts and Kysar-Moon (2012) found U.S. preschoolers to be less likely to display misbehavior over time with very specific family dynamics: if only the father spanked and spanked infrequently, and only if both parents were conservative Protestants. In the bulk of the two-parent American families who did not conform to these strict parameters, spanking predicted greater negative child outcomes, as has been documented more generally (Gershoff and Grogan-Kaylor, 2016). Our main point here is to offer a demographic perspective on these findings. Specifically, it is important to recognize that only around 11% of contemporary U.S. families involve married CPC mothers and fathers, only a subportion of whom have young children. For example, in 2013, 23% of U.S. mothers self-identified as evangelical Protestant; of this group, 65% were married, 22% were single parents, and 13% cohabited with a partner (National Center for Family and Marriage Research, 2017). Thus, only about 15% of American families included a married and evangelical Protestant mother, but only 75% of these women were married to an evangelical Protestant man according to a 2014 Pew survey on interfaith marriage (hence the 11% estimation earlier). In short, a small minority of U.S. households fits the family context where corporal punishment may co-occur in a broader set of CPC parenting values and actions that may assuage its typically adverse effects on young children. Moving forward, social scientists will hopefully replicate and broaden investigations of R/S factors tied to spanking and other parenting practices or values across theologically conservative to progressive parents of youth of all ages.

Conceptual Frameworks Explaining Versus Explaining Away R/S

Fourth, scholars may differ about what they ultimately believe can or should be achieved in scientific investigations of faith and family life. For some, the goal may be to uncover the most parsimonious set of factors that prospectively predict parenting cognitions or practices over time, assuming that scientific evidence will eventually "explain away" R/S factors by more basic biopsychosocial factors (Mahoney, 2013; Pargament, 2013; Pargament, Exline, and Jones, 2013). For others, the goal may be to uncover key constructs embedded in R/S systems of meaning, identifying concepts that center on supernatural beings, symbols, and rituals that have no obvious conceptual parallels in secular worldviews as a means to build in-depth theoretical models about and address substantive R/S constructs in public policy and clinical practice (Mahoney, 2013; Pargament, 2013; Pargament et al., 2013). An attitude of humility is perhaps needed in reconciling these objectives, recognizing that scientific worldviews and methods are ill equipped to adjudicate the ultimate ontological reality of the cast of divine and demonic characters and existential plots embedded in R/S narratives that people draw on to guide their journey through parenthood. Nevertheless, scientific evidence that facilitates respectful dialogue in basic and applied research could help open parents' access to soothing R/S resources and resolve painful R/S struggles that intensify personal or familial distress. Thus, in our view, scientists and practitioners need to be curious about R/S factors that may shape parents' responses to the

dilemmas they face in conceiving and caring for their children. Both science and practice could be richer and better prepared to respond to parents with scientific information on psychospiritual constructs that make a difference conceptually and practically. To achieve this end and navigate the four central concerns we have delineated in this section, scholars need theoretical models that help identify specific, malleable R/S constructs that could generalize to many parents from diverse family structures and religious traditions. We now turn to one such conceptual framework.

Theoretical Considerations for Science on R/S and Parenting

Relational Spirituality Framework

Overview

To organize and illuminate potential linkages between R/S variables and couple and family outcomes, Mahoney (2010, 2013) developed the RSF as is illustrated in Table 18.1. We use the RSF to summarize theory and findings on parents' overall involvement in religious groups being tied to parenting and then highlight findings about specific RS resources or risks that could shape parenting cognitions and practices.

In the RSF, spirituality refers to "the search for the sacred" (Pargament, 2007; Pargament and Mahoney, 2017), and the two elements of this definition merit brief review. Here the core of "the sacred" refers to human perceptions of immanent or transcendent supernatural realities. For those following monotheistic religious traditions (e.g., Christianity, Judaism, Islam), this core typically centers on a deity who has a personal relationship with followers and is immanent within humans' lives, although perceived presence and characteristics of a monotheistic God (and demonic forces) can vary widely across individuals and religious groups. For those affiliated with Buddhism or polytheistic or pantheistic traditions (e.g., Hinduism, nature oriented, New Age groups), the core of the sacred may refer to multiple deities or to transpersonal and/or impersonal ultimate realities thought to underlie existence. In either case, the broad sphere of "the sacred" can extend beyond this core and encompass any aspect(s) of life that people experience as embodying spiritual properties, which for many include family and social relationships (Mahoney, Pargament, Murray-Swank, and Murray-Swank, 2003). The "search" component, which is elaborated later, involves the formation, maintenance, and transformation of the sacred across the life span (Pargament, 2007; Pargament and Mahoney, 2017). "Relational spirituality" refers to R/S cognitions, behaviors, and emotions that people may have as they strive to form, maintain, and transform relationships within or outside of organized religious contexts. Or, more elegantly stated, "relational spirituality" refers to when the search for the sacred is united, for better or worse, with the search for relationships.

Relational Stages

The columns in Table 18.1 across the top of the RSF sort family research literature into three recursive stages analogous to Pargament's (1997) conception of religion as a search for significance involving the discovery, conservation, and transformation of the sacred. In the RSF, Mahoney translated these stages to relationships as follows: (1) formation—creating and structuring a particular relationship, (2) maintenance—preserving and protecting an established relationship, and (3) transformation—coping with the reformation or termination of a distressed relationship. As noted earlier, controversies exist between and within religious groups about the morally ideal or permissible family context to form a parent–child bond and the circumstances under which coparents should transition to getting married, divorced, or remarried. Furthermore, although religious communities tend to promote similar messages on the importance of parents investing tremendous resources into the parental role,

Table 18.1 Relational Spirituality Framework Within the Context of Parenting

Relational Spirituality		Stages of Parent–Child Relationships		
		Formation: Becoming a parent	*Maintain: Being a parent*	*Transform: Addressing parenting problems*
Global R/S Factors: Overall importance of religion and/or attendance . . . 1–2 items about the reporter		. . . increases likelihood of women wanting and having children when married	. . . increases parental satisfaction and parental investment by married parents and single mothers, and lowers corporal punishment and risk of child physical abuse	No studies focus on subsamples of clinic-referred families or parents.
Specific Factors: Multiple items assess the reporter's religious (R)/ spiritual (S) emotions, cognitions, and behaviors tied to the relationship. Content of items and context of relationship determine whether the specific factor helps or harms the relationship or family member(s) — **Tier 1: Relationship with God/Higher Power**	Resource	? Does *Support from God* with increase the desire and intentional decision-making to become a parent across diverse families?	? Does *Divine Support* motivate diverse parents to engage in effective parenting and coparenting?	? Does *Divine Support* enhance effectively confronting and resolving parenting or coparenting problems?
	Risk	? Do *Struggles with God* over becoming a parent increase ambivalence and poor planning in becoming a parent across diverse families?	? Do *Divine or Demonic Struggles* motivate diverse parents to engage ineffective parenting and coparenting?	? Do *Divine or demonic struggles* intensify parental denial and dysfunction?
Tier 2: Family Relationship possesses spiritual properties	Resource	? Does *Sanctification of Parenting* increase intentional parenthood and good prenatal care of diverse parents?	√ *Sanctification of Parenting* is tied to more parental satisfaction and strengthens commitment to preferred parenting practices by married heterosexuals. √ *Spiritual Intimacy/Disclosure* is tied to better parent–young adult relationships functioning.	? Does *Sanctification of Parenting* increase distressed parents' motivation to change their parenting? (Or increase rigidity?)
	Risk	? Does viewing infertility as a *Desecration/ Sacred Loss* predict greater relational and personal distress?	? Does *Spiritual One-upmanship* foster greater negativity on part of parents with children or coparents?	? Does viewing parenting problems a *Desecration/Sacred Loss* escalate parental distress?
Tier 3: Relationship with religious community	Resource	? Does *Support from a Religious Group* reinforce intentional decisions about parenthood and prenatal care?	? Does *Support from a Religious Group* increase positive parenting by parents and coparents?	Does *Support from a Religious Group* increase confronting and resolving parenting problems?
	Risk	? Do *Struggles with a Religious Group* over parenthood increase ambivalence and poor planning?	? Does *Support from/Struggles with a Religious Group* increase ineffective parenting by parents and coparents?	? Do *Struggles with a Religious Group* escalate parental negativity?

√ = Emerging findings ? = Illustrative future research questions

differences of opinion exist within and across religious groups on optimal childrearing goals and strategies, as well as division of parental roles between men and women (Onedera, 2008).

Psychospiritual Processes

Moving down the rows of Table 18.1, Mahoney divided the couples, parenting, and family literature into whether researchers assessed global versus specific R/S factors in connection with relationship structure and processes. Studies on global factors usually measure a particular family member's involvement in organized religion, often with only one or two items. Salient examples include how often a parent attends religious services or overall importance of religion in his or her life. Occasionally, researchers combine two reporters' responses on global factors to assess their degree of (dis)similarity, such as the overlap in how often coparents attend religious services. Findings based on studies of parents that use global R/S factors are summarized across the top row in Table 18.1.

Studies on specific R/S factors involve an assessment of a particular family member's R/S beliefs and behaviors about a given relationship, usually with multiple items. The RSF further divides specific factors into three relational tiers that can reciprocally influence each other. These include Tier 1: the respondent's perceived relationship with supernatural beings; Tier 2: the respondent's close interpersonal relationship under investigation (e.g., parent–child relationship); and Tier 3: the respondent's relationship with a religious community. Tier 1 in the RSF allows for the possibility that parents draw on a felt connection to supernatural beings to shape their search for human relationships or vice versa, with or without displaying or disclosing these spiritual processes to others, including coparents or children. Examples include prayer, meditation, and turning to perceived deities, angels, saints, or immortal ancestors to cope with relational stressors. Tier 2 in RSF allows for the possibilities that individuals may (1) privately invest a given human relationship itself with spiritual properties, such as viewing parenting as a sacred calling, and/or (2) engage in observable behaviors with another person that integrate spirituality into their relationship, such as engaging in R/S activities, rituals, or conversations with a partner or child. Notably, the constructs in Tier 2 may or may not involve belief in one or more supernatural beings. Tier 3 allows for the possibility that individuals form connections to religious groups that reciprocally impact the processes within the first two tiers. Within each tier, specific constructs can be identified that could theoretically be expected to be R/S resources or risks for a relationship or individual, depending on the content of the factor and the context of the relationship. For example, married and unmarried individuals in generally happy unions who pray for the well-being of their partner are more likely to act in prosocial ways that maintain the relationship, such as being more forgiving (Fincham and Beach, 2013). However, in a context where individuals are embroiled in dysfunctional dynamics, prayer could intensify problems if praying causes a parent to externalize or internalize parenting or coparenting problems excessively.

It is important to recognize that the RFS's three tiers of mechanisms may or may not overlap for a given individual. For some parents, all three tiers may be tightly integrated. Such parents may have a close felt relationship with one or more divine Beings and religious groups that reinforce their spiritual beliefs and behaviors focused on parenting. For others, only one or two tiers may be relevant. For example, parents who identify as atheist are unlikely to experience spiritual struggles with, or support from, God when coping with parenting, but they may still experience parenting as being spiritually salient and/or participate in religious/spiritual groups to foster family life. Others may not turn to religious/spiritual groups because of a lack of history, familiarity, or access to supportive fellow believers. For example, single or same-sex parents may find it difficult to find a hospitable faith community but still view God as a source of strength and support. Others may attend religious services and/or believe in God but not view parenting itself as possessing a spiritual dimension, such as being a sacred calling.

Parental R/S as a Dependent Variable

Although this chapter emphasizes various ways that parental R/S factors may predict parenting outcomes, bidirectionality is embedded within the RSF, which is consistent with relational developmental systems (RDS) meta-theories (Lerner et al., 2019; Lerner, Johnson, and Buckingham, 2015; Overton, 2013). Just as RDS theorists argue that there are mutually influential relations between individuals' life span development and the many levels of their surrounding bioecology, parents' R/S thoughts, feelings, and actions are likely rooted in their own developmental histories as children and adolescents. Furthermore, the etiology and maintenance of adults' R/S beliefs or behaviors, including about parenting, are presumed to be reciprocally influenced by multiple systems longitudinally—biological, psychological, social, cultural, and so on—consistent with bioecological theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1974), sociocultural theory (Vygotsky, 1978), and social transaction models (Kuczynski, 2003), including parents' interactions with their own children. Indeed, enormous and complex bodies of theory and research exist on causal factors that contribute to the development of individuals' personal R/S beliefs and behaviors (see Pargament et al., 2013). In particular, extensive research on the intergenerational transmission of R/S shows that people to a large extent "inherit" their R/S development (or lack thereof) orienting systems from their own families, with religious (dis)affiliation and worship (non)attendance rates being remarkably consistent across generations, particularly in families with close parent–youth relationships (Boyatzis, 2013; King and Boyatzis, 2015). For example, warm and supportive relationships with religious parents appear to enhance the religious and spiritual development of U.S. adolescents (Hardy, White, Zhang, and Ruchty, 2011) and Indonesian Muslim youth (French et al., 2013). Abara, Carter, and Winsler (2009) examined the link between African–American parents' religiosity and parenting style and the religious beliefs and practices of their late adolescents and college students; although there was no main effect of parenting style or parent religiosity, a significant interaction emerged as higher authoritative parenting combined with higher parental religiosity predicted unique variance in youth religiosity. Thus, the extent to which parents arrive at parenthood carrying R/S as a resource or burden is likely to depend on how their own parents contributed to their R/S development as a child and teen. Furthermore, according to longitudinal data, both married and single U.S. parents who attended religious services weekly as adolescents but disengaged during early adulthood are much more likely than their childless counterparts to return to a religious institution after they have children (Uecker, Mayrl, and Stroope, 2016). This finding suggests that, unlike for child-free adults, the trials and high stakes of parenting may lead parents to reach out to religious communities for support. Another implication of Uecker et al. (2016) is that religious stigmatization does not interfere with religious return among previously religiously engaged single parents. Adults who were minimally involved in religious groups as adolescents, however, do not appear to join religious groups after marriage or having children (Schleifer and Chaves, 2017), and for couples, it is becoming a parent rather than tying the marital knot that appears to facilitate reintegration into religious groups (Gurrentz, 2017). Ideally, future research will further identify factors that predict parental R/S as a dependent variable over the life course.

We now turn our attention to studies where parental R/S factors are framed as the predictors, not outcomes, of their own parenting processes, which, in turn, may affect the well-being of their children. More specifically, we unpack theory and empirical findings on parental R/S and the stages of becoming a parent and being a parent of typically developing youth from infancy to emerging adulthood. Within these major sections, we summarize findings based on global markers of parents' involvement in organized religion, especially attendance or overall importance of religion. We then highlight theory and studies that have begun to identify specific, malleable R/S beliefs or behaviors that could function as resources or risks for parenting.

Relational Spirituality and Becoming a Parent

Perhaps the most profound and permanent interpersonal decision an individual will make in his or her lifetime, intentional or not, is to become a parent. Consistent with RDS meta-theories, answers to the questions of whether, when, with whom, and in what life context to make this transition inevitably shape the journey of parenthood for any of the adults involved. Married or partnered biological coparents effectively merge their genetic predispositions, psychosocial characteristics, and extended family and cultural contexts in conceiving a child together. The stability and quality of their union prior to and after the birth of a child carries long-term implications for parental and offspring developmental trajectories. Biological coparents who dissolve their marriage or union may introduce other parent figures into a child's life via remarriage, cohabitation, "living apart together," or dating. Alternatively, some may decide to give birth as a solo woman and later introduce one or more copartners into their child's life, along with siblings from the new union or prior unions (Weinraub and Kaufman, 2019). Also, individuals or couples or may adopt children born from other unions or use surrogate birth parents (Pinderhughes and Brodzinsky, 2019). Any of these scenarios, of course, raises complex questions about the desirable ways to form parent–child relationships, and world religions have historically had much to say about the optimal moral parameters of becoming a parent.

Parents' Global Participation in Religious Groups and Becoming a Parent

One overarching message that most religious traditions promote is that adults should bear biological children but delay sexual intercourse, and thus pregnancy, until after entering into a heterosexual marriage (Mahoney and Krumrei, 2012; Regnerus, 2009; Wilcox and Wolfinger, 2016). Within evangelical Christian circles, for example, marriage is taught to be an explicit expression of lifelong commitment of one man and one woman that provides the only sanctioned structure for sexual intercourse and childbearing, resulting in nonmarital sex, cohabitation, same-sex marriage, single parenthood, divorce, and stepfamilies being morally undesirable. Theological positions on adoption being as morally legitimate as bearing children within marriage have varied over the centuries, particularly within Catholicism. Socially conservative teachings in Islam and Judaism also uphold the nuclear family as the ideal context to become a parent. For example, within conservative and orthodox Judaism, procreation within heterosexual marriage mirrors the very nature of God. Because heterosexual marriage is considered the only sanctioned way for men and women to be alone together within Islam, alternative family forms, such as cohabitation and same-sex unions, are ruled out as viable options to achieve pregnancy.

In summary, three major monotheistic world religions (Judaism, Christianity, Islam) have traditionally argued that a family headed by a married heterosexual pair is the ideal context to become a parent. Consistent with these themes, ample empirical research reflects the prominent "religious familism" premise that greater overall religious involvement will increase the likelihood of becoming a biological parent within heterosexual marriage.

Global R/S Factors and Becoming a Biological Mother

Collectively, studies published prior to 2010 on maternal fertility using data collected in the 1980s or earlier established that greater importance of religion was tied to women's fertility. This global indicator was tied to women reporting greater intentions to bear children, being more likely to have a child rather than remain childless into middle age and being less likely to have children before age 24 and have unplanned births, especially during adolescence (Mahoney, 2010). Religious service attendance continues to be tied American women's higher intentions to have a child, with this effect

fully mediated by greater perceived importance of motherhood (McQuillan, Greil, Shreffler, and Bedrous, 2015). Even in more secularized Europe, greater overall religiousness is also indirectly tied to higher rates of first births by facilitating women's favorable evaluations of children (Becker and Lois, 2017). Finally, to illustrate using NLSY97 surveys from 1997 to 2013, 34% of American women who attended religious services at least twice a month at age 17–18 had a marital birth by age 27–28 compared to 26% for those with less attendance (Petts, 2018).

Global R/S Factors and Becoming a "Nontraditional" Parent

Intriguing findings exist on how religious participation relates to attitudes and behaviors associated with nonmarital parentage by contemporary parents. On one hand, drawing on U.S. surveys conducted up through 2012, Wilcox and Wolfinger (2016) found that many unmarried adults who attended religious services several times a month said they engaged in sexual actions contrary to orthodox religious teachings, such as having nonmarital sex in the past year (65%–69% Nonwhites; 48%–49% Caucasians) and using contraception (53%–62% Nonwhites; around 70% Caucasians). Many also believed a single mother could rear a child as well as two parents (around 60% men and 80% women), with a sizable minority agreeing a woman should be able to get an abortion for any reason (16%–22% men; 20%–27% women). On the other hand, over time, frequent worship attenders were less likely than infrequent attenders to bear children outside of marriage (Wilcox and Wolfinger, 2016). To illustrate concretely using NLSY97 surveys from 1997 to 2013, 41% of women who reported no or low religious attendance at age 17–18 had a nonmarital birth by age 27–28 compared to 29% for those who attended services at least twice a month (Petts, 2018). Yet although the latter figure is significantly lower than the former, 29% is noticeably higher than zero—that is, reserving biological motherhood only for marriage.

Only three peer-reviewed studies appear to have focused on the role R/S plays for women (all teens) who were unmarried and directly faced the dilemma of whether to end an unplanned pregnancy (Adamczyk, 2008, 2009; Adamczyk and Felson, 2008). Adamczyk's findings indicate that U.S. adolescents who were more highly involved in religious groups in the 1980s more often became single mothers rather than terminate the pregnancy. In another study of unmarried U.S. teen mothers, those who prenatally attended religious services more often experienced greater prenatal and postnatal depression, perhaps due to internalizing or experiencing more religious guilt or rejection for becoming a single parent (Sorenson, Grindstaff, and Turner, 1995). Updating findings on abortion rates based on 2006–2010 U.S. surveys, Wilcox and Wolfinger (2016) estimated that 20% of unmarried European-American, 19% of African-American, and 13% of Latina American women who attended religious services several times per month aborted a pregnancy, with these figures again being markedly higher than zero, but still significantly lower than rates reported by women who did not attend frequently (32%, 31%, and 22%, respectively).

There are scarce findings on links between involvement in organized religion and becoming a nontraditional parent intentionally. In one study focused on adoption, greater importance of religion emerged as a strong factor tied to adoption by European-American women out of a host of other motivations and fertility issues (Hollingsworth, 2000). We were unable to locate peer-reviewed studies on how greater religious involvement relates to purposefully becoming a single, step, divorced, remarried, or foster parent; taking on primary caregiver responsibility for grandchildren or other relatives; or using assisted reproductive technology.

Overall, given that "save sex for marriage" persists as the primary message preached from most pulpits about pregnancy (Regnerus, 2009; Wilcox and Wolfinger, 2016), the greater normalcy of nontraditional families, as well as the delay of first-time marriage and high rates of unmarried sex, cohabitation, and remarriage by adults of all ages in modern societies may be raising difficult R/S dissonance for many more religious teens and adults about when and how to become a parent. We look

forward to research efforts to illuminate ways that people navigate R/S teachings that conflict with contemporary patterns of heterosexual intercourse and marital or nonmarital pathways to parenthood and potentially draw on R/S resources that facilitate becoming a parent or coparent.

Global R/S Factors and Prenatal Care

Once pregnant, a biological mother's higher participation in religious groups has been correlated with better prenatal care. In a U.S. national survey, for instance, higher religious attendance has been tied to less alcohol use, smoking, marijuana, on the part of pregnant and post-partum women (Page, Ellison, & Lee, 2009) and to less prenatal maternal smoking, depression and pregnancy anxiety in small scale studies of disproportionally low income and/or minority pregnant women (see Mahoney, 2010). These links persist after controlling for demographics and social support, raising questions regarding what it is about religious involvement that may encourage better pregnancy adjustment. To address such questions, we next offer some speculative theorizing and review of related available studies.

Specific R/S Resources and Risks

Although greater involvement in organized religion is tied to women becoming biological mothers, studies are needed to identify specific R/S factors that function as resources or risks when men and women engage in decision-making about fertility and prenatal health care. Otherwise, skeptics can argue that worship attendance merely reflects social coercion that parents experience from being embedded in any social network (religious or not) that encourages childbearing, not because of unique R/S beliefs. Conversely, critics could argue higher engagement in organized religion promotes unique R/S beliefs that are detrimental to the intentionality, timing, or social context of becoming a parent. For example, adults affiliated with conservative Protestant denominations may less often use birth control and more often bear children outside of marriage due to internalizing conservative Biblical teachings that induce sexual guilt and inhibit premeditated intercourse and contraception (Burdette, Haynes, Hill, and Bartkowski, 2014). To advance a balanced, in-depth understanding about why participation across diverse religious groups may matter, researchers could assess specific R/S beliefs or behaviors that do not have direct parallels in nonreligious worldviews. For instance, might people draw on R/S beliefs to reinforce their decisions about when and with whom to become a parent? Could partnered and single individuals invest more effort in pursuing parenthood, whether via heterosexual intercourse, assisted reproductive technology, and/or adoption, if they believe parenthood is a sacred calling? Might people turn to God or their religious community in their quest to become parents? Could R/S resources or struggles lower or increase distress in coping with unintended pregnancy, infertility, divorce and remarriage, and other challenges in becoming a parent or coparents?

Specific R/S Factors Tied to Pregnancy and Prenatal Care

Although scarce research has attempted to untangle R/S resources and risks that may shape pregnancy and prenatal adjustment, a cross-sectional study of 178 married heterosexuals pregnant with both spouses' first biological child found that positive R/S coping, such as feeling supported by God and an R/S community, was associated with greater self-reported stress-related growth attributed to the pregnancy (Lucero, Pargament, Mahoney, and DeMaris, 2013). However, greater R/S struggles, such as experiencing R/S conflicts internally or with God or a religious community, were linked to greater depression and anxiety and lower marital commitment for both spouses. Also, being unable to access a sense of affirmation from God or fellow believers to manage pregnancy stressors correlated with less maternal satisfaction with the pregnancy and greater paternal anxiety and labor fears (Lucero et al., 2013). In a study of the R/S beliefs of mothers who reported pregnancy ambivalence or prior fertility

problems, women who held attributions of God as loving and knowable and residing within the self, as opposed to a supreme being who was judging, had better scores on anxiety, depression, perceived stress, and social support (Athan, Chung, and Sawyer-Cohen, 2015).

Summary

Overall, initial findings on R/S and becoming a parent suggest that greater worship attendance, as well as supportive forms of R/S coping with potentially distressing pregnancies, may spark higher maternal fertility rates and better prenatal care by married and unmarried mothers, whereas R/S struggles experienced in getting or being pregnant may intensify prenatal distress. Far more research is needed, however, to uncover specific R/S resources or risks that may shape men and women's decision-making about becoming a parent in or outside a first-time heterosexual marriage, given rapid changes in attitudes and behavior patterns toward becoming a parent or coparent in modern societies marked by high rates of unmarried sexual intercourse, cohabitation, and remarriage with children.

Relational Spirituality and Being a Parent

Parents' General Participation in Religious Groups and Being a Parent

Regardless of the route by which one becomes a parent, diverse faith traditions emphasize that parents should be highly invested in the youth placed in their care and exhibit desirable parenting practices, such as being attentive, affectionate, and consistent and fair in disciplinary practices (Onedera, 2008). In turn, greater involvement in organized religion could be tied to higher satisfaction and lower stress in being a parent due to fulfilling a spiritually idealized role and deriving support from a religious community that affirms parenting choices. From a religious familism lens, such linkages might be expected to be especially robust for married and CPC parents due to the strong value these groups place on "traditional" families (Henderson et al., 2016; Wilcox, 2006). Available empirical literature tells a far more incomplete and complex story on the role of CPC. By contrast, compelling empirical evidence suggests that greater parental involvement in any place of worship is tied to more positive parenting of children and adolescents. Before delving into such findings, however, we review mixed results from efforts to link greater parental R/S to parenting during infancy and early childhood.

Global R/S Factors and Parenting Infants and Toddlers

In a short-term longitudinal study of urban and disproportionally unmarried mothers, those who attended religious services a few times per month or more shortly after birth were more likely than mothers who never attended services to initiate breastfeeding, with no difference in rates of continuing through 6 months (Burdette and Pilkauskas, 2012). In a cross-sectional study, first-time mothers ages 20 to 34 who partially or regularly attended religious services engaged in lower (not higher) rates of positive, playful interactions with 0- to 23-month-olds, whereas this factor was unrelated to playtime for teen or older mothers (Kim, Connolly, Rotondi, and Tamim, 2018). For urban and disproportionally unmarried fathers, greater religious attendance at the time of their child's birth predicted more future playtime, but postpartum declines in attendance predicted less playtime (Petts, 2007). Higher attendance at birth also decreased the odds that unmarried fathers later resided with their children (Carlson, McLanahan, and Brooks-Gunn, 2008).

When it comes to coparenting by married heterosexuals across the transition to parenthood, greater religious attendance by first-time mothers has been tied to greater maternal gatekeeping of fathers' involvement in infant care, suggesting that mothers who are more engaged in religious

groups are also more controlling of the division of coparental labor (Schoppe-Sullivan, Altenburger, Lee, Bower, Kamp Dush, 2015). Greater religious attendance and Biblical conservatism has also been longitudinally associated with a traditional division of childcare where new mothers take a dominant position over new fathers, but neither factor increased fathers' behavioral contributions to daily infant care (DeMaris, Mahoney, and Pargament, 2011). In addition, for more religiously involved mothers, greater daily infant care by fathers more strongly predicted lower maternal aggravation toward their infants, suggesting that these first-time mothers may be especially emotionally soothed when husbands contribute to childcare; this is in contrast to less religiously engaged mothers who may have more egalitarian expectations about coparenting that husbands more routinely fulfill (DeMaris, Mahoney, and Pargament, 2013). Overall, current evidence as to whether greater R/S is tied to desirable coparenting arrangements is debatable, given that dividing childrearing labor in complementary versus egalitarian roles is a value-laden issue. More research is merited on R/S factors that predict coparenting processes, such as perceived support and solidarity, that appear to optimize children's development (Schoppe-Sullivan et al., 2015).

Finally, scientific efforts to verify that married fathers affiliated with CPC churches invest more time than other men in forming a relationship with their offspring after they are born, rather than being distant or absent fathers, have yielded inconclusive results (Mahoney, 2010). For example, at least five large, rigorous studies failed to find evidence that married CPC fathers devoted more time to childcare, one-on-one activities, or supportive dialogue than other fathers (Mahoney, 2010) and did not replicate a prior finding (Wilcox, 2002) that CPC fathers engaged in more recreational activities with their children than unaffiliated or mainline Protestant fathers. Also, Wildeman (2008) found that new, unmarried CPC fathers from urban areas spent far less time than other unmarried fathers playing with their infants and toddlers, perhaps because their unmarried family structure violated family norms promoted within their religious subculture.

Taken together, the inconsistent body of research on parental R/S across the transition to parenthood illustrates that being affiliated (or not) with a CPC group compared to another religious group or "none" is a poor predictor of parenting processes during infancy (like other stages of family life), most likely due to the wide heterogeneity of parental R/S beliefs and behaviors within this and all (non)religious subgroups. More studies are clearly needed on whether active participation by parents across diverse religious groups facilitates parenting at this early stage of children's development, as well as pinpointing specific R/S beliefs that facilitate optimal parenting across the transition to parenthood.

Global R/S Factors Tied to Corporal Punishment
and Risk of Child Physical Abuse

Families with preschool and school-aged children constitute the largest concentration of the empirical findings on parents' involvement in organized religion. In particular, researchers have focused heavily on the topic of corporal punishment cognitions and practices as well as the risk of child physical abuse, with a handful of studies also focused on parental subjective satisfaction and stress, as well as desirable parenting practices. Here we extract key findings from studies within this niche of the literature.

As mentioned earlier, consistent evidence from peer-reviewed studies indicates that Americans affiliated with CPC groups and/or who more strongly endorse theologically conservative views of the Bible place a higher priority on child conformity and obedience, and more often endorse attitudes in favor of corporal punishment than do non-CPC parents (Hoffmann, Ellison, and Bartkowski, 2017; Mahoney, 2010; Mahoney et al., 2001). An analysis of repeated cross-sectional data from U.S. General Social Surveys (GSS) 1986 to 2014 finds that attitudes in support of corporal punishment have remained most robust over time among less educated CPC, with some erosion among more highly educated CPCs (Hoffmann et al., 2017). CPC factors are also tied to parents' self-reports of actual use of corporal punishment in the United States (Ellison et al., 2011, Mahoney

et al., 2001, 2010; Petts, 2012) and Canada (Frechette and Romano, 2015), but some nuance may apply. For instance, in a study of parents in the Southwestern United States, parents affiliated with CPC denominations were no more likely to spank preschoolers when stressed than non-CPC parents (or no affiliation) and equally likely to use nonpunitive, disciplinary techniques (Gershoff et al., 1999). Nevertheless, CPC parents more strongly believed that spanking was necessary to gain obedience and reported fewer negative side effects of this method for themselves (guilt) or their children (fear, anger). Such beliefs mediated the links between CPC affiliation and spanking (Gershoff et al., 1999).

The persistent link between a CPC orientation and pro-spanking attitudes and practices has prompted innovative efforts to develop and test the effectiveness of a Biblical education intervention to decrease support for spanking by CPCs. A randomized experimental design found that undergraduates enrolled in a conservative Christian university who had been exposed to both empirical research on adverse effects of spanking and progressive Christian interpretations of Biblical verses reported a greater decrease over time in favorable attitudes toward spanking compared to those who were only exposed to the research findings (Perrin et al. 2017). These decreases were especially strong among undergraduates who initially endorsed strong fundamentalistic views of the Bible (Miller-Perrin and Perrin, 2017a); another study with American-Korean parents attending a CPC church replicated this moderator effect (Miller-Perrin and Perrin, 2017b).

Given theoretical and empirical linkages between CPC and corporal punishment, social scientists have long raised concerns that devout evangelical Christians in the United States may also be more physically abusive of their children than other parents. In a study of 313 counties drawn from seven geographically diverse U.S. states, however, documented rates of child physical abuse were lower, not higher, in counties that had higher levels of Christian conservativism (Breyer and MacPhee, 2015). Two in-depth studies have further pinpointed the use of R/S for instrumental purposes (i.e., extrinsic religiousness) as a key predictor of greater risk of child physical abuse, not religious affiliation per se, orthodox religious beliefs, or the centrality of religion to one's identity (i.e., intrinsic religiousness; Dyslin and Thomsen, 2005; Rodriguez and Henderson, 2010).

Moving beyond CPC affiliation as a potential risk factor, greater frequency of religious attendance by parents, regardless of place of worship, has been empirically tied to *lower*, not higher, reported occurrence or potential risk of child physical abuse. Higher religious attendance emerged as a protective factor against child physical abuse in three early rigorous longitudinal studies (Mahoney et al., 2001). To illustrate, based on official U.S. state records and youth self-reports of maltreatment across a 17-year period, children whose parents rarely attended services were more than twice as likely to be physically abused over time than children whose parents attended religious services regularly (Brown, Cohen, Johnson, and Salzinger, 1998). Additionally, in studies of low-income or minority U.S. mothers, higher importance of R/S in their lives has been repeatedly tied to a lower risk of child maltreatment or harsh parenting (Mahoney, 2010; Mahoney et al., 2001). Furthermore, greater religious participation by parents has been tied to *less*, not more, use of corporal punishment. For instance, in a longitudinal study of unmarried U.S. mothers, multiple trajectories of higher maternal religious attendance (i.e., consistent frequent, moderate, or monthly attenders and high-increasing attenders) predicted lower corporal punishment over time compared to nonattending mothers (Petts, 2012). Higher worship attendance was also tied to lower corporal punishment in separate cross-sectional analyses of Canadian parents (mostly married and female) of children ages 2 to 5 years, 6 to 9 years, and 10 to 11 years (Frechette and Romano, 2015). Similarly, a more in-depth 12-item measure of R/S experiences (e.g., I feel God's love for me directly; I find strength in my religion or spirituality) correlated with lower rates of spanking and slapping children by Ukrainian mothers (71% married/partnered; Grogan-Kaylora, Burlakab, Mac, Leea, Castilloa, and Churakovab, 2018). Taken together, available evidence suggests that greater parental participation in religious groups is tied to lower, not higher, rates of corporal punishment and risk of child physical abuse. These findings highlight the

need for social scientists to untangle specific R/S factors that predict lower versus higher rates of parents' physical aggression toward children across diverse faith communities.

Global R/S Factors Tied to Parental Satisfaction and Stress

Based on a 2007–2008 U.S. national survey of parents ages 24 to 34, greater religious attendance, prayer, and importance of religion were each associated with greater overall satisfaction with parenting by U.S. mothers and fathers, even when controlling for marital status (Henderson et al., 2016). In follow-up subgroup regression analyses, higher religious attendance was tied to higher parental satisfaction for single or cohabiting mothers, but not married mothers for whom only frequency of prayer mattered. Perhaps also unexpectedly, single or cohabiting mothers (thus, those who were violating conservative religious norms about the optimal family context) who were more religiously engaged did not report more parenting stress, even if affiliated with CPC groups (Henderson et al., 2016). In a longitudinal study, Petts (2012) also found that single U.S. mothers who consistently attended religious services at least monthly reported lower parenting stress (Petts, 2012). Petts's longitudinal study reinforces cross-sectional links found between greater R/S salience and less parental stress focused on predominantly unmarried, urban, and poor mothers (Lamis, Wilson, Tarantino, Lansford, and Kaslow, 2014; Mahoney, 2010). Thus, participation in R/S groups represents a potentially important resource across diverse families that may enhance parents' perceived satisfaction and mitigate subjective stress tied to parenting, despite lower base rates of religious attendance by unmarried parents, many of whom may turn to a felt connection to God/divine Beings for strength and comfort in parenting rather than faith communities (Sullivan, 2008).

Global R/S Factors Tied to Desirable Parenting Cognitions and Practices

In addition to parental well-being, a range of cross-sectional findings suggests that greater religious salience and attendance are tied to parenting cognitions or practices that benefit children. To illustrate, in national U.S. surveys, greater worship attendance has been tied to greater parental communication and shared meals with children (Perry and Snawder, 2017), parental affection (Wilcox, 1998), fathers' positive self-evaluations of their supervision, mental investment and quality of father–child bonds (Bartkowski and Xu, 2000; King, 2003), and grandparents' involvement and satisfaction as primary caregivers (King, 2010). Likewise, in a study focused on married coparents, couples who more often participated in public or private religious practices and tried to rely on faith to guide their lives said they spent more time on the weekends and in one-on-one (e.g., homework), family, recreational, and cultural activities with their tweens (ages 10 to 14; Jorgensen, Mancini, Yorgason, and Day, 2016), echoing earlier evidence of greater parental consistency and positivity in community samples of traditional families (Brody, Stoneman, and Flor, 1996; Schottenbauer, Spernak, and Hellstrom, 2007). Across several studies of economically disadvantaged, single mother families, greater religious attendance and personal salience of God or spirituality have been associated with more maternal authoritativeness, efficacy, and consistency (Mahoney, 2010). Overall, greater participation in R/S groups is linked to more positive parenting for diverse families.

Global R/S Factors Tied to Parenting Adolescents and Emerging Adults

Greater parental involvement in organized religion has also been repeatedly cross-sectionally linked to parents being more involved in their teenagers' lives (Mahoney, 2010). In one U.S. survey, for example, higher parental religious attendance correlated with parents imposing higher moral expectations and supervision on adolescents and being more aware of and influential in their offspring's social networks (Kim and Wilcox, 2014). In two-parent U.S. households, a combined index of parental reports of

both parents' religious attendance and familial religious activities with early adolescents was tied to youth reports of more parental monitoring, positive reinforcement and affection, and less interparental conflict; preliminary analyses found parallel results with single-parent households (Li, 2013). A 15-item measure of parental R/S was tied to more self-reported authoritative parenting with early adolescents in African-American families (Landor, Simons, Simons, Brody, and Gibbons, 2011), as well as direct observations in the home of more effective parenting by European-American and African-American parents (Simons, Simons, and Conger, 2004). In another earlier observational study focused on European-American two-parent families, higher general parental religiousness predicted more authoritative strategies with their adolescents during videotaped problem-solving discussions (i.e., blending demands with negotiation and mothers being less authoritarian (Gunnoe, Hetherington, and Reiss, 1999). Overall, parents' self-reports of greater R/S engagement have been repeatedly tied to more authoritative and engaged parenting of adolescents.

Whereas the salutary findings highlighted above rely on parents' self-reports, other studies have focused on emerging adults' perceptions of their parents' R/S and parent–child dynamics. Drawing on two universities the southeastern United States, for example, college students' recall of parents' public and private religious activities during the prior two years was correlated with their reports of better parenting, including communication, closeness, support, monitoring, and peer acceptance (Snider, Clements, and Vazsonyi, 2004). In other studies, however, young adults' perceptions of parental R/S devotion have only been indirectly (not directly) tied to their perceptions of more positive parenting practices in the United States (Power and McKinney, 2013) and Muslim Indonesian families (French et al., 2013) by increasing youth's own R/S commitments which, in turn, predicted better youth–parent relational processes. Also, according to longitudinal surveys, U.S. adolescents who initially said religion was personally important, or became more important during the teen years, later reported feeling more satisfied and closer to their parents as young adults, even controlling for their degree of rebelliousness (Regnerus and Burdette, 2006); but no such links emerged for changes in religious attendance or affiliation. Overall these results imply that parents' sharing and/or transmitting an internalized and meaningful sense of faith among adolescents is key for facilitating close parent–offspring bonds across adolescence and into early adulthood.

Family Members' (Dis)Similarity on Global R/S Factors

An important emerging stream of research focuses on whether (dis)similarity between family members on global markers of religious salience is tied to the quality of dyadic relationships. High similarity between mothers and adolescents in the perceived importance of religion during the teen years has been longitudinally tied to offspring feeling more satisfied with their relationship with their mother as adults; but if religion is markedly more important to mothers, then adult offspring later report more relational discord and distance (Stokes and Regnerus, 2009). Likewise, in a complex cross-sectional study using latent class analyses, when mother–adolescent pairs overlapped a great deal on higher ratings of multiple indices of religiousness (importance, attendance, and/or prayer), teens reported better relational well-being, such as more shared activities, better communication patterns, and greater closeness, which was not the case if mothers were markedly more religious than the teens (Noonan, Tracy, and Grossman, 2012). The reverse pattern of adolescents self-reporting higher religiousness than mothers has been tied to teens' greater satisfaction with their parent–child relationship, perhaps partly because these teens draw on R/S resources outside the home to bolster their personal and relational functioning (Stokes and Regnerus, 2009). Yet marked discrepancies where parents rated religion as more important than adolescents longitudinally predicted youth having more internalizing and externalizing problems, with these effects being mediated by adolescents' poorer view of the quality of their relationships with their parents (Kim-Spoon, Longo, and McCullough, 2012). As a parallel, major disagreements between married parents about religious

beliefs or attendance have been found to increase the risk of children's adjustment problems, presumably partly due to religiously based conflicts over parental goals or methods that undermine coparenting (Bartkowski, Xu, and Levin, 2008; van der Jagt-Jelsma et al., 2011). To maintain perspective about these findings, it is worth emphasizing that major dissimilarity between parents and offspring on global R/S variables is fairly rare. For example, Stokes and Regnerus (2009) found that only 11% of parents rated religion as much more important than their teens. Overall, greater relational distress and youth maladjustment is more likely in the minority of families where family members experience conflicts over matters of faith, but most families experience relative R/S harmony, which is typically tied to relational well-being.

Pathways of Parents' R/S to Parenting to Youth Psychosocial Well-Being

We have thus far highlighted direct links between parents' greater overall participation in religious groups and desirable parenting outcomes for diverse families during childhood and adolescence. We now turn to longitudinal studies that replicate these direct linkages and also test indirect pathways of influence between parents' self-reported R/S to their offspring's later psychosocial and/or RS adjustment by way of better parenting. Such mediational modeling reinforces parental R/S as a salient factor to include in multidimensional models of parenting and child well-being (Bornstein, 2016). Because these longitudinal studies reduce (though do not completely eliminate) concerns that selection effects or third variables fully account for cross-sectional evidence tying greater R/S participation to desirable parenting practices, we offer in-depth descriptions of their rigorous methods and compelling results.

Starting in 1989, Spilman, Neppl, Donnellan, Schofield, and Conger (2013) conducted a 20-year study across three generations of 451 two-parent families with children from rural Iowa. Couples with higher R/S initially demonstrated more positive parenting (and marital) functioning during their adolescent's high school years, which, in turn, was tied to their offspring later exhibiting more positive parenting with their grandchildren. Specifically, latent measures of R/S for the first-generation (G1) combined couples' religious attendance and importance being religious and R/S in daily life in 1991. Parallel latent R/S measures were created for the next generation (G2) by combining their adolescents' R/S ratings across the high school years. The quality of parenting by G1 was assessed by directly observing the parents and adolescents engaging in discussions at three annual home visits across high school. After the G2 reached adulthood and had a child, their quality of parenting was assessed by one direct observation of G2 parents supervising a clean-up task with their young child. The quality of G1 and G2 marital and romantic relationships was also assessed by directly observing the G1 and G2 couples' communication skills over time. Higher reports of R/S by the G1 couples had a positive, indirect effect across generations, with G1's initial R/S predicting higher-quality G1 marital interactions and parenting behaviors, which, in turn, were associated with better G2 parenting practices and couples' communication skills. These pathways emerged after controlling for personality traits, gender, income, education, and religious affiliation (60% of G1 were mainline Protestants and 18% Catholic).

In a national survey of two-parent U.S. households (Li, 2013), a combined index of parents' religious attendance and familial religious activities with 12- to 14-year-olds was directly tied to youth being less likely to be involved in delinquent behavior two years later, as well as indirectly tied to less delinquency by increasing teens' reports of better parenting. That is, much of the relationship between familial R/S and conduct problems was mediated by the mechanisms of teens' perceptions of less interparental conflict, better parenting practices, and stronger affection for parents; preliminary analyses found similar results with single-parent households. In another longitudinal study of 612 African-American families, greater parental R/S as captured by a 15-item measure when an adolescent was 15 to 16 years old predicted less risky sexual behavior (early sexual debut,

multiple sexual partners, and inconsistent condom use) two years later by the teen (Landor et al., 2011). Parental religiosity was tied to later adolescent sexual behavior by increasing authoritative parenting, adolescent religiosity, and the adolescents' association with less sexually permissive peers. Finally, Bornstein et al. (2017) assessed ways parents' self-reports of the overall importance of religion and religious beliefs shaped parenting in a three-year longitudinal investigation of 1,198 families from nine countries, spanning four religions (Catholicism, Protestantism, Buddhism, and Islam) plus unaffiliated parents. On a positive note, greater parental R/S at child age 8 was associated with higher parental efficacy and warmth at child age 9; both of these parenting factors, in turn, increased children's social competence and school performance at age 10. On a less desirable note, greater parental R/S at child age 8 was associated with stronger parent behavioral control of youth with little opportunity for autonomy, at child age 9, which in turn was associated with more child internalizing and externalizing problems at age 10, although the children's difficulties fell below clinical levels of distress. Greater parental religiousness was also tied to children's, but not parents', reports of parental rejection, which in turn was associated with increases in children's adjustment difficulties at age 10. Notably, none of these effects were moderated by religious group affiliation or nationality.

In summary, rigorous longitudinal evidence has begun to tie greater parents' R/S to desirable parenting processes that, in turn, predict various indices of better youth psychosocial adjustment (Landor et al., 2011; Li, 2013; Spilman et al., 2013). Whereas greater parent R/S increased parents' self-appraised confidence and warmth, and thus children's social and academic achievements over time in Bornstein et al.'s cross-cultural study (2017), it also fostered more parental rigidity and elicited more strain from the children's point of view. Such mixed findings highlight the need to untangle specific R/S factors that may trigger positive and negative parenting cognitions and practices. We now turn to a fuller discussion of such efforts.

Specific R/S Resources and Risks for Being a Parent

Overall, evidence suggests that greater involvement in organized religion may intensify parents' commitment to their parenting goals and socialization strategies of choice. Perhaps the most straightforward implication is that many parents may benefit from being more engaged in R/S religious communities of their choice. Of course, it is unlikely social scientists would make this blanket recommendation because global R/S indices confound theological teachings that could motivate adaptive or maladaptive parenting. Furthermore, global R/S measures tap into nonspecific psychological or social benefits that religious and nonreligious organizations can offer, such as providing families a sense of social solidarity or support and encouraging parent and child prosocial conduct. But historically, diverse religious groups have offered people a myriad of unique beliefs and rituals that envelop being a parent with R/S significance (Onedera, 2008). Religious baby naming ceremonies vividly exemplify occasions where the role of being a parent is wrapped in a rich web of R/S cognitions and behaviors. In turn, viewing parenting through a sacred lens and engaging in R/S dialogues or rituals with offspring may help prompt parents to make sacrifices for the sake of their children. In addition, parents may often turn to God/divine Beings as allies to cope mindfully and gracefully with the stresses of parenting. When parents encounter childrearing challenges, they may also encounter painful R/S struggles as they attempt to conserve or transform their understanding of being a good parent as a R/S end and means. Our next section offers evidence on various specific R/S beliefs and behaviors that could function as resources or risks for parenting. Consistent with the RSF, Figure 18.1 provides a graphic illustration of hypothetical direct and indirect pathways from parental R/S relational resources to youth outcomes via parenting that may account for positive linkages between R/S resources, adaptive parenting, and better youth R/S and psychosocial adjustment.
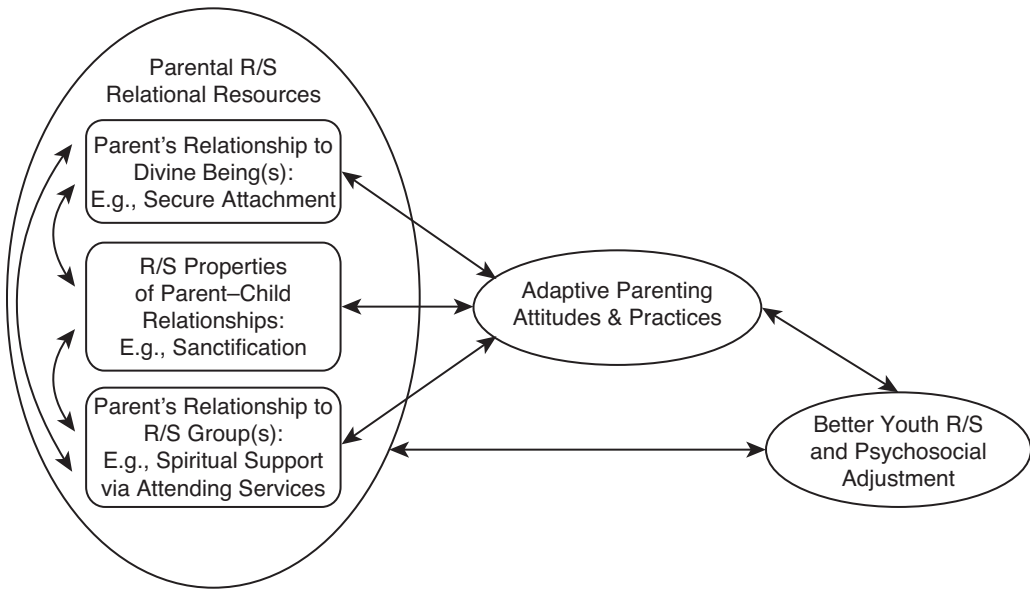
Figure 18.1 Direct and indirect pathways from religious/spiritual (R/S) relational resources to youth outcomes via parenting

Possible Resource: Sanctification

"Sanctification" falls within Tier 2 of the RSF and is a construct broadly conceptualized for psychological research as "perceiving an aspect of life as having divine significance and meaning" (Mahoney et al., 2003; Mahoney, Pargament, and Hernandez, 2013; Pargament and Mahoney, 2005). Thus far, sanctification has been operationalized in two ways. Theistic sanctification refers to perceiving an aspect of life to be a manifestation of God. For example, most married spouses from the Midwestern United States who were pregnant with their first child agreed to some degree that "God played a role in our getting pregnant" (83% mothers, 76% fathers); "Our pregnancy is a reflection of God's will" (84%, 78%); and "I sense God's presence in this pregnancy" (79%; 73%; Mahoney, Pargament, and DeMaris, 2009). Nontheistic sanctification involves viewing an element of daily life as being imbued with sacred qualities typically associated with perceived deities or transcendent realities. Examples regarding pregnancy include "makes me very aware of a creative power beyond us" (83% mothers, 76% fathers), "is sacred to me" (76%, 68%), and "feels like part of a larger spiritual plan" (88%, 73%; Mahoney et al., 2009). Notably, these couples attended religious services on par with other married U.S. couples with children, implying that many Americans may view parenting as having divine significance. Substantiating this assertion, in a 2014 national survey of U.S. parents of 5- to 12-year-old children (60% married, 37% single, 3% cohabiting; 38% male), the average rating of the nontheistic sanctification item "My role as a parent is holy and sacred" was 3.0 on a Likert scale where 1 equaled "strongly disagree" to 4 equaled "strongly agree" (Nelson and Uecker, 2017). Parenthetically, although theistic sanctification was not assessed in this study, the two sanctification subscales tended to be moderately highly correlated (Mahoney et al., 2013). We now turn evidence on how viewing parenting as a sacred calling is linked to parenting cognitions or practices.

When it comes to parenting satisfaction, a one-unit increase in nontheistic sanctification of parenting increases the odds of Americans' parental satisfaction during childhood by 77% after controlling for the following three indicators of R/S salience: overall importance of religion and the frequency of

religious attendance and prayer, marital status, and other demographics (Nelson and Uecker, 2017). Furthermore, sanctity of parenting fully mediated the significant direct linkages of parental satisfaction with religious attendance and importance of religion. In subanalyses of two-parent families, couples' combined sanctification of parenting increased the odds of dyadic parental satisfaction by 57% and fully mediated significant associations between interfaith marriages and lower parental satisfaction, as well as couples' higher worship attendance and higher parental satisfaction. In a different study of families of college students, greater nontheistic, but not theistic, sanctification, was tied to students' and both mothers' and fathers' satisfaction with the parent–child relationship (Brelsford, 2013). In summary, viewing parenting through a sacred lens appears to be tied to being a more satisfied American parent.

Sanctification of parenting may translate into differing patterns of parenting practices, depending on how people construe effective approaches to childrearing. During the transition to parenthood, for instance, greater perceived sanctity of the parent–infant bond increased the traditional gender divisions of infant care between 164 married heterosexuals from the Midwest United States (81% European-American) and was unrelated to parental overprotectiveness or irritability toward their infant (DeMaris et al., 2011). In a study of 134 married Midwestern European-American mothers of elementary-aged children, greater sanctification of parenting was tied to more corporal punishment and positive parent–child interactions when mothers interpreted the Bible literally (Murray-Swank, Mahoney, and Pargament, 2006). In contrast, greater sanctification was tied to less corporal punishment and did not alter relatively high levels of positive mother–child interactions for mothers with more liberal views of the Bible. For all mothers, sanctification related to less verbal hostility and more consistency in parenting. In another study of 139 Midwestern U.S. parents who were predominantly mothers (86%) and European-American (91%), higher levels of sanctification buffered parents against feeling stressed as their reports of children's behavior problems, suggesting they felt more confident in their parenting practices in the face of child noncompliance (Weyand, O'Laughlin, and Bennett, 2013). In a Midwestern U.S. sample of 58 married heterosexual (96% European-American) couples, higher maternal and paternal reports of the sanctification of parenting were related to more positive socialization (e.g., contingent praise) and the use of induction (e.g., teaching reparation), but not punitive techniques (e.g., shaming or spanking), to elicit young children's moral conduct in disciplinary situations (Volling, Mahoney, and Rauer, 2009). Parents' use of non-punitive strategies combined with a belief in the sanctity of parenting also translated into children's greater conscience development, suggesting these parents were more determined to instill their ethical values in their offspring. In a study focused on 174 fathers (68% European-American; 26% African-American) from the upper U.S. Midwest, those who more strongly viewed parenting as a sanctified role said they were more involved in their children's lives, even after accounting for their personality and marital quality, but their children did not report feeling closer or more attached to their fathers (Lynn, Grych, and Fosco, 2016). In a fairly ethnically diverse sample of 149 parents (96% mothers; 44% African-American, 44% European-American, 11% Latin American or other) from a low-income, urban setting, those who reported greater sanctification of parenting also reported greater investment of effort to care for their children, but not parental efficacy (Dumas and Nissley-Tsiopinis, 2006). Overall, viewing parenting as a sacred endeavor may intensify parental involvement and convictions about their preferred childrearing methods and coparenting processes. Studies using larger and diverse samples are needed to confirm this conclusion, as well as identify for whom and when greater belief in the sanctity of parenting is tied to desirable versus undesirable childrearing practices. In the meantime, it may be valuable for family professionals to begin to respectfully but explicitly explore parents' perceptions about the sanctity of their childrearing goals and methods in education or intervention programs, rather than ignore this apparently prevalent R/S cognition about parenting that may often undergird parenting values and practices (Mahoney, LeRoy, Kusner, Padgett, and Grimes, 2013).

Possible Risk: Sacred Loss and Desecration

The RSF highlights that family events can be viewed through a distressing R/S lens that may adversely affect parents. Sacred loss or desecration exemplify two such Tier 2 processes (Mahoney, 2013). For example, divorce and romantic break-ups are often viewed as the loss or violation of a union that partners had previously viewed as having sacred qualities or being a manifestation of God, and such perceptions have been tied to longitudinally greater anxiety and depressive symptoms as well hostility between ex-spouses (Krumrei, Mahoney, and Pargament, 2011a). Although parallel studies are needed that focus on parenting, significant obstacles in tied to being a parent, such as experiencing major chronic conflicts with or estrangement from offspring or coparents, or an unwanted divorce, or ex-spouse's remarriage, could likewise often be perceived as a sacred loss or desecration, which could heighten the risk of parents, coparents, and their children experiencing relational or personal distress.

Possible Resource: Supportive R/S Disclosure and Dialogue

In addition to R/S beliefs that individuals may internalize about interpersonal relationship(s), Tier 2 of the RSF highlights that people in close relationships can engage in overt R/S behaviors that infuse a given relationship(s) with R/S significance in helpful ways. Emerging research along these lines has examined ways that dyadic conversations about R/S are reciprocally tied to relational quality. For example, Brelsford and Mahoney (2008) assessed the degree to which college students and parents candidly told each other about their R/S views, resources, and struggles, a process labeled spiritual disclosure. Notably, spiritual disclosure does not require two parties to strongly endorse or share a particular R/S worldview. Based on reports from both college students and parents, greater spiritual disclosure was tied to greater satisfaction within the mother–child and father–child relationship (Brelsford, 2010, 2013; Brelsford and Mahoney, 2008) and lower verbal hostility (Brelsford and Mahoney, 2008), even after controlling for the extent to which the dyads discussed other sensitive topics, such as sexuality or alcohol or drug use. Because R/S convictions or doubts can easily be disputed and difficult to defend, many people, perhaps especially adolescents, may avoid revealing such information to parents (or vice versa) for fear of being dismissed, criticized, or misunderstood. Kusner, Mahoney, Pargament, and DeMaris (2014) therefore created a measure to assess both spiritual disclosure and the ability to respond to another's spiritual disclosures in an empathic, nonjudgmental manner (i.e., spiritual support), labeling the two combined processes "spiritual intimacy." In a study of couples, greater spiritual intimacy by both husbands and wives robustly predicted less observed negativity and more positivity exhibited by both spouses when couples discussed their top three marital conflicts, even after using fixed effects modeling to control for stable characteristics of the spouses. Although such findings need to be extended to parent–youth dyads, family members who openly discuss and affirm their respective R/S journeys may enjoy more harmonious relationships.

Other empirical evidence suggests that mutually respectful R/S dialogues may foster parental and youth personal R/S development. For instance, Boyatzis and Janicki (2003) collected survey and qualitative data from Christian families with children aged 3 to 12. Mothers recorded in a diary every conversation they had with their children about religion over a two-week span, documenting the topics, frequency, setting, and processes involved in such conversations. The diaries showed that mothers and children discussed R/S issues close to three times per week, with the most common topics being God, Jesus, and prayer. Analyses of diaries found that children initiated and terminated about half the conversations, spoke as much as parents did, and frequently asked questions and offered their own views. In short, parent–child communication about religion was bidirectional, not unilateral, and deepened parents' reflections about their own R/S identities. In a study of highly religious Jewish, Christian, and Muslim two-parent families, Dollahite and Thatcher (2008) found both parents and adolescents cited conversations about faith as the most positive type of shared R/S experience

compared to other joint R/S activities, such as family devotions or prayer or attending religious services together. "Youth-centered" conversations that focused on adolescents' spiritual needs and issues were described by both teens and parents as more positive and meaningful than "parent-centered" conversations in which parents lectured rather than listened. Similarly, in a qualitative study of families headed by same-sex couples who valued R/S, parents reported intentionally engaging in child-centered dialogues about R/S as a means to facilitate their children's access to R/S resources (Rostosky et al., 2017). Indeed, King, Furrow, and Roth (2002) found that Protestant parents' conversations with adolescents about religious issues predicted adolescents' experience of God and their report of the importance of religion. In two-parent families headed by heterosexuals, however, gender differences may exist in the influence of parent–youth R/S dialogues. In an initial study of a large ethnically and religiously diverse U.S. sample, for instance, mothers' supportive spiritual dialogue (but not general care and concern) predicted adolescents' R/S development, whereas fathers' general care and concern (but not supportive spiritual dialogue) predicted their teens' R/S outcomes (Desrosiers, Kelly, and Miller, 2011).

We look forward to more in-depth research on the content and processes adults intentionally use to help their children access R/S knowledge and resources as a parental goal. To illustrate, Braswell, Rosengren, and Berenbaum (2011) examined the extent to which Midwestern Protestant and Catholic parents encouraged their children's beliefs about religion and science. Parents viewed both religion and science as being highly important for their children to learn (4.4 and 4.6, respectively on a 1 to 5 scale), although they wanted their children to learn about religion at younger age (4.9 years) than about science (5.4 years). The strength of parents' R/S beliefs very strongly correlated with the value they placed on children learning about science and religion. Parents' desire to educate children about R/S appears to extend to atheist and agnostic scientists at elite U.S. universities (Ecklund and Lee, 2011). Although the scientists revealed a striking personal disinterest in any form of R/S during qualitative interviews, many emphasized that exposing their children to religion was important and consistent with their value of free thinking; they viewed involving their children in religion "was a way to expose them to diverse religious ideas so that they (the parents) do not inadvertently indoctrinate them with atheism" (p. 736).

For full discussion of how parents typically influence youth R/S development and, reciprocally, ways that children shape parents' R/S identities, see Boyatzis (2013); Boyatzis et al. (2006); and King and Boyatzis (2015). Although it is also beyond the scope of this chapter to review the enormous literature linking personal R/S adjustment to adults' or adolescents' mental health outcomes across the life span (Holden and Vittrup, 2010; Pargament et al., 2013; Yonker et al., 2012), we suggest that open-ended and mutually respective parent–child dialogues about R/S may be an important pathway that facilitates close parent–child bonds, as well as each party's access to personal R/S resources, which, in turn, bodes well for each party's individual psychosocial well-being.

Possible Risk: Spiritual One-Upmanship

As a counterpoint to the preceding discussion, within Tier 2 of the RSF, parents and youth may sometimes engage in destructive R/S dialogues. As a case in point, Brelsford and Mahoney (2009) surveyed Midwestern U.S. college students and their parents about 20 ways each party might triangulate R/S into their conflicts using both theistic (i.e., God-centered) and nontheistic strategies; hence, we label this risk factor in this chapter as "spiritual one-upmanship" rather than "theistic triangulation" as originally coined. Examples include arguing that the other party's opinions oppose important R/S principles, believing one is spiritually obliged to hold firm to a position, or saying God would be disappointed in the other's point of view, with these three sample items endorsed as "often" or "sometimes" occurring in 12% to 18% of cases, depending on the reporter and item. More importantly, the more frequently one or both parties relied on such strategies, the more each engaged in verbal

aggression and stonewalling to handle disagreements. In another older study, 27% of school–aged children from a Midwestern region of the U.S. reported that at least one of their parents told them God would punish them if they were bad (Nelsen and Kroliczak, 1984). These initial studies show that some parents may draw on R/S as a maladaptive means to back up their authority with offspring or to reinforce their position in disputes with coparents, perhaps especially after a divorce or remarriage, with far more research needed to uncover spiritual one-upmanship given its potential power to undermine the well-being of individual family members and their relationships.

Possible Resource: Divine Support

We now illustrate specific R/S factors that fall within Tier 1 of the RSF. Extensive research exists on R/S methods to cope with nonfamilial stressors (e.g., natural disasters, illness), often relying on Pargament's theoretical model of R/S coping, as well as Pargament and colleagues' 110-item R-COPE measure or 14-item brief R-COPE to assess ways that people rely on R/S strategies to appraise and respond to stressful life events (Pargament, 1997, 2007). Both the long and short R-COPE measures yield two overarching dimensions of "positive" and "negative" R/S coping (Pargament, Smith, Koenig, and Perez, 1998). Measures of positive R/S coping largely tap into the extent to which people draw on a benevolent and secure relationship with God (i.e., divine coping), along with a sense of spiritual support from co-believers, to cope with stressful events. Such measures have been tied to better individual health and psychological adjustment (Lucero et al., 2013; Pargament, 2007).

   Although scarce research has examined positive R/S coping in the context of family functioning, social learning, attachment, and family systems models of parenting can be extended into the realm of divine entities using a relational spirituality perspective. That is, some parents may experience divine beings as supportive allies and attachment figures who reinforce their confidence, encourage them to make sacrifices to satisfy their children's needs, and help them be more engaged and efficacious in parenting practices (Mahoney, 2010, 2013). Along these lines, in a community sample, positive R/S coping by parents was related to higher self-appraisals of competence, particularly when parenting children with significant behavior problems (Weyand et al., 2013). However, such salutary links did not emerge in two cross-sectional studies where parents were asked about turning to God to cope with parenting at-risk preschoolers (Dumas and Nissley-Tsiopinis, 2006) or children with autism (Tarakeshwar and Pargament, 2001). Such null findings may reflect stress-mobilization coping processes where parents may more often call on God at times they feel taxed or overwhelmed, with the benefits of seeking divine support only becoming evident later. A unique longitudinal study, however, yielded complex interactive effects over time between indices of the adolescents' and mothers' perceived closeness with God in predicting each party's well-being (Goeke-Morey, Taylor, Merrilees, Shirlow, & Cummings, 2014). In 667 Christian and predominantly single-parent families from Northern Belfast, youth who reported a closer relationship with a God figure were less likely to suffer from internalizing adjustment problems one year later, but only if their mothers more often turned to God to cope with their own difficulties. Thus, in families where youth are relatively emotionally stable, mothers may model for teens how to access an image of a loving, loyal deity figure to help cope with stressors, which may help prevent youth from developing internalizing problems over time. Yet teens who initially reported higher internalizing problems later reported having a weaker relationship with God, and mothers' positive R/S coping did not buffer them from increased difficulties with God over the year. Thus, in families where youth are already struggling with emotional problems, both teens and mothers may need help in revising their attributions of God's role in why the youth had been experiencing problems and help accessing R/S resources to resolve difficulties. We look forward to more research along these lines, noting an apparent absence of research focused on whether links between a parent's felt secure attachment to divine Beings is tied to better parenting processes, despite a growing literature

on links between family-of-origin dynamics and developing a secure versus anxious/ambivalent sense attachment to God (Granqvist and Kirkpatrick, 2013).

Possible Risk: Divine and Demonic Struggles

Within the subfield of the psychology of R/S, "negative" R/S coping refers to ways that stressors trigger distressing R/S thoughts and feelings about supernatural figures (e.g., anger toward God, feeling punished by the devil), religious groups (e.g., conflicts with co-believers), or the self (e.g., feeling morally conflicted). Such processes appear to be increasingly referred to as "spiritual struggles," especially since Exline, Pargament, Grubbs, and Yali (2014) created new subscales that differentiate divine (i.e., God-focused) and demonic struggles from interpersonal, moral, and intrapsychic spiritual struggles that do not involve supernatural figures. Cross-sectional and longitudinal evidence suggests that R/S struggles generally lead to declines in physical, psychological, and R/S well-being, particularly if left unresolved, but occasionally greater personal growth is attributed to R/S struggles, particularly when they are resolved (Exline et al., 2014; Pargament, 2007).

Given that children and adolescents from more religiously engaged families tend to exhibit fewer psychosocial difficulties than other families (Holden and Vittrup, 2010; Yonker et al., 2012), parents may be especially prone to divine struggles if they have difficulties eliciting and maintaining positive child behavior. Such struggles could range from feelings of shame, guilt, or punishment to parental ineffectiveness in God's eyes, to doubts and anger at God about their children's problems, to despair about God's failure to intervene. At least four studies have examined negative religious coping by parents facing difficulties, with measures that predominantly assessed strain in a parent's relationship with God, such as feeling abandoned or angry at God. In a study of parents of preterm (25 to 35 weeks' gestation) infants, negative R/S coping was related to poorer family cohesion and greater use of maladaptive denial (Brelsford, Ramirez, Veneman, and Doheny, 2016). For parents of both at-risk preschoolers (Dumas and Nissley-Tsiopinis, 2006) and children with autism (Tarakeshwar and Pargament, 2001), greater R/S struggles were correlated with parental distress and depression. Consistent with other literature, these studies suggest divine struggles intensify poor adjustment when parents face significant parenting challenges. Weyand et al. (2013), however, did not find moderator effects in a nondistressed community sample. Thus, R/S struggles may only emerge in families facing sufficiently high base rates of child difficulties. Clearly, more research is needed on ways that a conflicted or insecure relationship with God could exacerbate poor parental and coparental adjustment, particularly when youth exhibit maladjustment. Finally, studies are needed on demonic struggles tied to parenting, given that nearly half (48%) of adults from the U.S. Midwest in one unique study viewed their divorce to be the work of the devil, and such beliefs were tied to postdivorce maladjustment (Krumrei, Mahoney, and Pargament, 2011b).

Summary

Numerous studies have accumulated wherein greater general involvement in diverse R/S groups by parents of children or teens is tied to more parental satisfaction and less subjective stress, greater investment in parenting, more positive parenting practices or cognitions, lower risk of child physical maltreatment and corporal punishment, and more satisfying parent–adolescent relationships. These salutary findings have emerged in studies of non-distressed families headed by married heterosexuals and single mothers. Inconsistent findings exist for the role of R/S when parenting infants. With the exception of greater belief in and use of corporal punishment, endorsing conservative Protestant/Christian attitudes or affiliation has also not been consistently tied to parenting during infancy, childhood, or adolescence. Studies have begun to differentiate helpful and harmful manifestations of R/S for parenting. R/S resources that may facilitate being a more engaged and effective parent include the

sanctification of parenting, supportive spiritual dialogues between family members, and experiencing a sense of divine support from God and others. Less attention has thus far been paid to specific R/S risk factors that may foster maladaptive parenting, but possible examples include perceiving family problems as a sacred loss or desecration, destructive R/S dialogues between family members, and experiencing divine or demonic struggles in parenting. Yet to paraphrase a famous quote within treatment outcome research, researchers need to go beyond binary categories of R/S resources versus risks and also begin to uncover "what specific R/S factors promoted by which R/S traditions are most and least effective for this parent with that specific problem and under which set of circumstances?" Thus, we next explore when and for whom R/S may be especially likely to not work well.

Relational Spirituality and Reforming Parenting to Address Major Problems

Paradoxically, from a relational spiritual perspective, R/S may be especially likely to go awry when parents face major obstacles in becoming and being a parent. Theoretically, when people find that their most cherished family goals conflict with their own or others' wishes for whether and how to create and sustain parent–child bonds, they may encounter painful spiritual problems, especially with other people or supernatural beings, that undermine their family relationships or personal well-being (Mahoney, 2010, 2013). Salient situations where specific R/S factors may function as an added strain in forming a family include infertility, unwanted single parenthood, unplanned pregnancy, an uncommitted coparent, remarriage, or parents or youth violating traditional social norms (e.g., unmarried or same-sex parenthood). Salient situations where faith may function as a stumbling block in being a parent include dysfunctional parenting or coparenting dynamics; child maltreatment; domestic violence; parenting a child with severe developmental, mental health, and/or physical problems; or coparenting after a divorce or remarriage. However, many single, partnered, married, divorced, and remarried parents may draw on R/S resources in the midst of their darkest hours as a unique source of resilience to facilitate their own and their children's well-being (Marks and Dollahite, 2016; Mahoney, 2013; Sullivan, 2008).

Basic Research With Distressed Parents or Families

Lechner, Tomasik, Silbereisen, and Wasilewski (2014) investigated the role of R/S in dealing with family-related uncertainties about the stability of one's partnership, relationship to parents, or having a child, on the part of 2,571 Polish adolescents and adults 20 to 46 years. Not surprisingly, greater identification with a religious tradition or group was tied to lower family-related uncertainties. More interestingly, greater overall religious identification exacerbated the association of family uncertainties with psychological distress. This moderator effect suggests that experiencing uncertainties or ambivalence about family circumstances that conflict with religiously cherished family-related values and norms may trigger more distress for stronger believers. Similarly, greater R/S (a 15-item measure) was associated with greater depressive symptoms in parents caring for children with developmental disabilities; in follow-up qualitative interviews, these parents reported struggling to turn to God as a last resort to cope (Gallagher, Phillips, Lee, and Carroll, 2015). Likewise, Strawbridge, Shema, Cohen, Roberts, and Kaplan (1998) found that although markers of greater R/S buffered the impact of several nonfamily life events on depression, greater R/S exacerbated depressive symptoms on the part of older adults' who reported dealing with relational abuse, marital problems, or trouble with children. Such results converge with basic research we discussed earlier on R/S struggles with parenting challenges potentially intensifying parental distress (Brelsford et al., 2016; Dumas and Nissley-Tsiopinis, 2006; Tarakeshwar and Pargament, 2001). Yet in some qualitative studies, highly religious parents say they view their child's developmental disabilities through a positive spiritual lens that reduces their

psychological distress (Marks and Dollahite, 2016; Mahoney et al., 2001). Clearly, more basic research is merited that focuses on distressed families where parents may be especially likely to be alienated from R/S resources and vulnerable to R/S struggles that heighten despair.

Applied Research With Distressed Parents or Families

Creative edited books have been written on integrating R/S into family therapy (Walker and Hathaway, 2013; Walsh, 2009) that draw on scholarship about diverse teachings about family life across religious denominations, broad psychological and sociological theories about R/S, inferences drawn from basic research on R/S for nondistressed families, and clinical wisdom bolstered by case examples. We were unable, however, to locate randomized experimental studies with a control group that examined the utility of addressing R/S issues when intervening with parents dealing with significant parental, marital, or family problems. Thus, in using such resources, practitioners need to carefully assess how R/S may be part of the problem or solution in addressing dysfunctional parenting or child adjustment (Mahoney et al., 2013). Hopefully more extensive applied research will be forthcoming where basic findings are translated into applied work in religious or nonreligious settings. We next discuss some recommendations along these lines.

Translational Work to Facilitate Parenting

In 2007, the American Psychological Association's Council of Representatives adopted a resolution that ended with that statement that the APA "encourages collaborative activities in pursuit of shared prosocial goals between psychologists and religious communities when such collaboration can be done in a mutually respectful manner that is consistent with psychologists' professional and scientific roles" (p. 4). One such collaboration involves turning to religious leaders as experts to help mental health professional address R/S issues when providing clinical interventions to distressed parents. Notably, the treatment outcome literature is rapidly expanding to respond to recent calls for mental health professionals to develop competencies to acknowledge, not ignore, the fact that R/S beliefs and practices reflect a persistent and important dimension of cultures across the globe. At a minimum, mental health professionals are being encouraged to proactively assess the ways that R/S may be part of the problem or solution when clients seek counseling services (Mahoney et al., 2013; Pargament, 2007; Saunders, Miller, and Bright, 2010). Practitioners are also encouraged to seek out collegial relationships with religious leaders who can provide consultation about R/S issues, as well as be referral sources for clients who may benefit from ministerial and spiritual care that counselors feel unqualified to provide. Conversely, mental health providers can be a resource to religious leaders who feel ill equipped to provide intensive clinical care.

A markedly different partnership that family educators, researchers, and mental health professionals could pursue is to work with religious leaders to enhance psychoeducational prevention programs delivered in religious contexts and/or aimed at community groups composed of people who, by and large, are not clinically distressed. Examples include parenting enrichment programs. As we have shown, higher religious attendance at any place of worship has been tied to family processes tied to the well-being of diverse parents. Applied researchers could work productively with religious organizations of their choice to identify specific spiritual beliefs and practices promoted by many religious groups that could be incorporated into evidence-based parenting programs delivered in religious settings.

The demarcation of educational prevention versus intervention collaborations helps underscore the potentially contrasting and implicit assumptions about R/S that mental health professionals and religious leaders may hold due to their different vocational contexts. Religious leaders may tend to witness R/S functioning as a wellspring of strength that helps parents in their communities cope

with the ups and downs of daily life. Such perceptions would reflect empirical findings with non–clinic-referred samples where high engagement in religious groups tends to be tied to better parental functioning. Paradoxically, however, distressed parents may avoid disclosing serious family or personal problems to religious leaders, especially if they fear being judged or that religious authorities will align with friends or family members against them. Thus, psychotherapists may be disproportionally exposed to anecdotes, case studies, or direct experience with clients where a religious leader or community are unsupportive or even exacerbate parental and family-related distress.

In summary, mental health professionals may be especially conscious of R/S risks, whereas clergy may be especially attuned to R/S strengths. Hopefully, our chapter has effectively illustrated malleable and specific R/S facts that could function in both ways and be integrated into evidence-based prevention and intervention programs, with the goal of enhancing outcomes in both community and clinical contexts.

In moving forward on translational research, it is important to recognize that specific R/S mechanisms that appear to operate as strengths within community samples may not translate easily or directly into interventions in clinical practice. For example, although praying for a partner appears to enhance kindness and love between generally happy couples in community samples (Fincham and Beach, 2013), this does not mean this strategy functions the same way for highly distressed partners or parents. Rather, clinicians need to carefully assess whether the content of prayers has the unintended consequence of escalating maladaptive dynamics, such as reinforcing a partner's or parent's excessive dominance or denial. Indeed, it is important to avoid naively generalizing that any R/S processes that seem beneficial in routine daily life work well for distressed clients. Clients embroiled in relationship dysfunction when becoming and being a parent may face complex, excruciating dilemmas that deserve in-depth and sensitive efforts to help them untangle R/S beliefs or behaviors that could facilitate or undermine effective problem-solving and resolution of emotional or spiritual turmoil within families.

Conclusions

A growing and exciting body of scientific research exists on the roles that R/S may play, for better or worse, in becoming and being a parent. In this chapter, we summarized available empirical findings using the Relational Spirituality Framework in hopes of encouraging more research. Scientific evidence conducted primarily with U.S. samples suggests that greater religious attendance is tied to parental satisfaction and desirable parenting cognitions or practices for married heterosexual parents and single mothers. However, many unexamined issues exist across this fragmented literature. Much work remains to identify malleable R/S factors that could function as added unique resources or risks during routine daily life and times of family distress. We offer the five recommendations to encourage rigorous research on global and specific R/S processes relevant to parents from diverse family structures and societies.

First, scholars need to appreciate that higher base rates of engagement in organized religious groups are very likely to persist for married mothers and fathers with biological children, particularly those involved in religious groups that promote socially conservative norms regarding childbearing and family life. Nevertheless, many adaptive R/S processes may predict parenting cognitions and practices in a similar fashion for parents from diverse families. Available findings, for example, suggest that higher religious attendance is tied to more positive parenting by married heterosexual parents and single mothers despite the fact that the latter tend to attend religious services less frequently and be socioeconomically disadvantaged. The R/S factors that may drive such associations need more investigation. Both groups, for example, may similarly view parenting as a sacred calling and draw on a felt supportive relationship with God in ways that strengthen their dedication to their children. Scarce research is available on general or specific R/S factors tied to better parenting by divorced, remarried,

or cohabiting coparents or families headed by grandparents, LBGTQ, adoptive, or foster parents. We encourage scholars to maintain an open mind about the possibility that R/S resources may be helpful in becoming or being a parent within traditional and nontraditional family contexts.

Second, the RSF conceptually discriminates three sets of R/S resources and risks. Within the former category, we highlighted sanctification, spiritually intimate dialogues, and drawing on divine beings for support as three promising specific R/S resources. Far less research is available on R/S risk factors for parents. However, drawing on research focused on marriage or divorce, we outlined possible maladaptive processes, such as viewing obstacles in becoming or being a parent or coparent as a sacred loss and desecration, or experiencing divine or demonic struggles when family or parenting problems arise. Notably, both R/S resources processes may often overlap, especially for parents who do not experience major clashes between what their religious tradition teaches about childbearing and rearing and their own R/S beliefs or behaviors tied to parenting and coparenting. Subsamples of parents, however, may face challenges accessing some R/S resources. For example, single, LBGTQ, or other nontraditional parents may have difficulties finding a supportive R/S community. Other subsamples of parents may be especially prone to experiencing R/S struggles that undermine parenting wherein their R/S upbringing or beliefs create havoc in a felt relationship with God or with other family members due to value conflicts over parenting goals or methods. Thus, although specific R/S mechanisms within the RSF (i.e., Tiers 1, 2, and 3) may tend to be intercorrelated, we see conceptual and practical value to differentiating malleable R/S processes in basic research studies so that these processes could potentially be identified and integrated into evidence-based prevention and intervention programs to facilitate better parenting across diverse settings and families.

Third, available evidence suggests that R/S resources are more prevalent than R/S risk factors and tend to be helpful for parents in samples drawn from the general population or communities samples. R/S risk factors may be more common and especially potent for parents who encounter major problems in parenting. Especially if a major goal of basic science is to translate findings into practical applications, we encourage more in-depth studies on both nondistressed and distressed families to illuminate both the bright and dark side of relational spirituality for all kinds of parents.

Fourth, many parents may draw on R/S to inform their preferred childrearing tactics. For example, ties to CPC subgroups or beliefs translate into greater beliefs in and use of corporal punishment with young children but not, to date, higher risk of child physical abuse. More research is needed on such links, and we have suggested that social scientists expand their scope of inquiry into the many R/S factors that could shape the broad array of childrearing strategies that many parents may use to reach their goals. We suggest that readers recognize that, according to a 2014 Pew survey, U.S. parents' top five child socialization goals did not vary according to parents' religious affiliations or political ideologies, including conservative Christian subgroups. Specifically, teaching children to be responsible emerged as the top goal of American parents, with 94% saying this childrearing value was "especially important." Instilling the ability to work hard was the second most endorsed value (92%), followed by rearing children to be helpful (86%), well mannered (86%), and independent (79%). Many married and unmarried parents across the theologically progressive to conservative spectrum may view reaching such parenting goals as a profound R/S responsibility and be more committed to their parenting methods of choice to achieve their ends, especially if their R/S community reinforces their efforts. Family science policymakers, researchers, educators, and counselors who can convey an appreciation of the many R/S facets of parenthood may build better rapport with parents from diverse religious traditions and thus be better able to pass along empirically based education about the optimal means for diverse parents to reach their most cherished ends.

Fifth, as is the case with many areas of family science, we hope that more research is conducted cross-culturally, using in-depth qualitative methods that unpack parents' R/S thoughts and feelings about parenting across religious traditions as well as quantitative research designs to verify the scope and strength of relational R/S processes in predicting parenting cognitions and practices. Consistent

with the rigorous methodological standards within family science, studies would ideally rely on two or more informants from a family and employ self-report and observational assessment tools. Finally, given the surprising gaps in the literature, cross-sectional studies represent a valuable starting point for many unexamined hypotheses for samples drawn from diverse countries, but more rigorous longitudinal studies will hopefully follow to help clarify direction of effects.

References

2011–2013 NSFG: Public Use Data Files, Codebooks, and Documentation, National Survey of Family Growth. Retrieved from www.cdc.gov/nchs/nsfg/nsfg_2011_2013_puf.htm

Abara, B., Carter, K. L., and Winsler, A. (2009). The effects of maternal parenting style and religious commitment on self-regulation, academic achievement, and risk behavior among African-American parochial college students. *Journal of Adolescence*, *32*, 259–273. doi: 10.1016/j.adolescence.2008.03.008

Adamczyk, A. (2008). The effects of religious contextual norms, structural constraints, and personal religiosity on abortion decisions. *Social Science Research*, *37*, 657–672. doi: 10.1016/j.ssresearch.2007.09.003

Adamczyk, A. (2009). Socialization and selection in the link between friends' religiosity and the transition to sexual intercourse. *Sociology of Religion*, *70*, 5–27. doi: 10.1093/socrel/srp010

Adamczyk, A., and Felson, J. (2008). Fetal positions: Unraveling the influence of religion on premarital pregnancy resolution: Religion's influence on premarital pregnancy resolution. *Social Science Quarterly*, *89*, 17–38). doi: 10.1111/j.1540-6237.2008.00519.x

American Psychological Association Council of Representatives. (2007). *Resolution on religious, religion-based and/or religion-derived prejudice.* Washington, DC: Author.

Athan, A., Chung, S., and Sawyer-Cohen, J. (2015). Spiritual beliefs of mothers with potentially distressing pregnancies. *Spirituality in Clinical Practice*, *2*, 216–232. http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/scp0000069

Bartkowski, J. P., and Xu, X. (2000). Distant patriarchs or expressive dads? The discourse and practice of fathering in conservative protestant families. *The Sociological Quarterly*, *41*, 465–485. doi: 10.1111/j.1533-8525.2000.tb00088.x

Bartkowski, J. P., Xu, X., and Levin, M. L. (2008). Religion and child development: Evidence from the early childhood longitudinal study. *Social Science Research*, *37*, 18–36. doi: 10.1016/j.ssresearch.2007.02.001

Becker, O., and Lois, D. (2017). On the interplay of norms and incentives in fertility decisions. *Zeitschrift Fur Soziologie*, *46*, 437–455. doi: 10.1515/zfsoz-2017-1024

Bornstein, M. H. (2016). Determinants of parenting. In D. Cicchetti (Ed.), *Developmental psychopathology, risk, resilience, and intervention* (Vol. 4, 3rd Ed., pp. 180–270). New York, NY: Wiley.

Bornstein, M. H., Putnick, D. L., Lansford, J. E., Al-Hassan, S. M., Bacchini, D., Bombi, A. S. . . . Alampay, L. P. (2017). "Mixed blessings": Parental religiousness, parenting, and child adjustment in global perspective. *Journal of Child Psychology & Psychiatry*, *58*, 880–892. doi: 10.1111/jcpp.12705

Boyatzis, C. J. (Ed.). (2006). Advancing our understanding of religious dynamics in the family and parent–child relationships [special issue]. *The International Journal for the Psychology of Religion*, *16*, 245–251.

Boyatzis, C. J. (2013). The nature and functions of religion and spirituality in childhood. In K. I. Pargament (Ed.), *APA handbooks of psychology, religion, and spirituality* (Vol. 1, pp. 497–512). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association Press.

Boyatzis, C. J., Dollahite, D. C., and Marks, L. (2006). The family as a context for religious and spiritual development in children and youth. In E. C. Roehlkepartain, P. E. King, L. Wagener, and P. L. Benson (Eds.), *Handbook of spiritual development in childhood and adolescence* (pp. 297–309). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Boyatzis, C. J., and Janicki, D. (2003). Parent–child communication about religion: A survey and diary assessment of unilateral transmission and bi-directional reciprocity. *Review of Religious Research*, *44*, 252–270.

Braswell, G. S., Rosengren, K. S., and Berenbaum, H. (2011). Gravity, God, and ghosts? Parents' beliefs in science, religion, and the paranormal and the encouragement of beliefs in their children. *International Journal of Behavioral Development*, *36*, 99–106.

Brelsford, G. M. (2010). Interpersonal spirituality between college students and fathers. *Research in the Social Scientific Study of Religion*, *21*, 27–48.

Brelsford, G. M. (2013). Sanctification and spiritual disclosure in parent–child relationships: Implications for family relationship quality. *Journal of Family Psychology*, *27*, 639–649. doi: 10.1037/a0033424

Brelsford, G. M., and Mahoney, A. (2008). Spiritual disclosure between older adolescents and their mothers. *Journal of Family Psychology*, *22*, 62–70.

Brelsford, G. M., and Mahoney, A. (2009). Relying on God to resolve conflict: Theistic mediation and triangulation in relationships between college students and mothers. *The Journal of Psychology and Christianity*, *28*, 291–301.

Brelsford, G. M., Ramirez, J., Veneman, K., and Doheny, K. K. (2016). Sacred spaces religious and secular coping and family relationships in the neonatal intensive care unit. *Advances in Neonatal Care*, 16(4):315–322.

Breyer, R. J., and MacPhee, D. (2015). Community characteristics, conservative ideology, and child abuse rates. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, *41*, 126–135. doi: 10.1016/j.chiabu.2014.11.019

Brody, G. H., Stoneman, Z., and Flor, D. (1996). Parental religiosity, family processes, and youth competence in rural, two-parent African American families. *Developmental Psychology*, *32*, 696–706. doi: 10.1037/0012-1649.32.4.696

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1974). Developmental research, public policy, and the ecology of childhood. *Child Development*, *45*, 1–5. doi: 10.1111/j.1467-8624.1974.tb00552.x

Brown, J., Cohen, P., Johnson, J. G., and Salzinger, S. (1998). A longitudinal analysis of risk factors for child maltreatment: Findings of a 17-year prospective study of officially recorded and self-reported. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, *22*, 1065.

Burdette, A. M., Haynes, S. H., Hill, T. D., and Bartkowski, J. P. (2014). Religious variations in perceived infertility and inconsistent contraceptive use among unmarried young adults in the United States. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, *54*, 704–709. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016.

Burdette, A. M., and Pilkauskas, N. (2012). Maternal religious involvement and breastfeeding initiation and duration. *American Journal of Public Health*, *102*, 1865–1868. doi: 10.2105/AJPH.2012.300737

Carlson, M. J., McLanahan, S. S., and Brooks-Gunn, J. (2008). Coparenting and nonresident fathers' involvement with young children after a nonmarital birth. *Demography*, *45*, 461–488. https://doi.org/10.1353/dem.0.0007

DeMaris, A., Mahoney, A., and Pargament, K. I. (2011). Doing the scut work of childcare: Does religiousness encourage greater father involvement? *Journal of Marriage and Family*, *73*, 354–368. doi: 10.1111/j.1741-3737.2010.00811.x

DeMaris, A., Mahoney, A., and Pargament, K. I. (2013). Fathers' contributions to housework and childcare and parental aggravation among first-time parents. *Fathering: A Journal of Theory, Research, and Practice about Men as Fathers*, *11*, 179–198. doi: 10.3149/fth.1102.179.

Desrosiers, A., Kelly, B. S., and Miller, L. (2011). Parent and peer relationships and relational spirituality in adolescents and young adults. *Psychology of Religion and Spirituality*, *3*, 39–54). doi: 10.1037/a0020037

Dollahite, D. C., and Thatcher, J. Y. (2008). Talking about religion: How religious youth and parents discuss their faith. *Journal of Adolescent Research*, *23*, 611–641. http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0743558408322141

Dumas, J. E., and Nissley-Tsiopinis, J. (2006). RESEARCH: Parental global religiousness, sanctification of parenting, and positive and negative religious coping as predictors of parental and child functioning. *International Journal for the Psychology of Religion*, *16*, 289–310). doi: 10.1207/s15327582ijpr1604_4

Dyslin, C., and Thomsen, C. (2005). Religiosity and risk of perpetrating child physical abuse: An empirical investigation. *Journal of Psychology and Theology*, *33*, 291–298. doi: 10.1177/009164710503300405

Ecklund, E. H., and Lee, K. S. (2011). Atheists and agnostics negotiate religion and family. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, *50*, 728–743.

Edgell, P. (2005). *Religion and family in a changing society*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Ellison, C. G., and Bradshaw, M. (2009). Religious beliefs, sociopolitical ideology, and attitudes toward corporal punishment. *Journal of Family Issues*, *30*, 320–340. doi: 10.1177/0192513X08326331

Ellison, C. G., Bartkowski, J. P., and Segal, M. L. (1996). Do conservative protestant parents spank more often? Further evidence from the national survey of families and households. *Social Science Quarterly*, 77, 663–673.

Ellison, C. G., Musick, M. A., and Holden, G. W. (2011). Does conservative Protestantism moderate the association between corporal punishment and child outcomes? *Journal of Marriage and Family*, *73*, 946–961. doi: 10.1111/j.1741-3737.2011.00854.x

Ellison, C. G., and Sherkat, D. E. (1993). Conservative Protestantism and support for corporal punishment. *American Sociological Review*, *58*, 131–144. http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/2096222

Exline, J. J., Pargament, K. I., Grubbs, J. B., and Yali, A. M. (2014). The religious and spiritual struggles scale: Development and initial validation. *Psychology of Religion and Spirituality*, *6*, 208–222. doi: 10.1037/a0036465

Fincham, F. D., and Beach, S. R. H. (2013). Can religion and spirituality enhance prevention programs for couples? In K. I. Pargament, A. Mahoney, and E. Shafranske (Eds.), *APA handbook of psychology, religion, and spirituality* (Vol. 2, pp. 461–480). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association Press.

Frechette, S., and Romano, E. (2015). Change in corporal punishment over time in a representative sample of Canadian parents. *Journal of Family Psychology*, *29*, 507–517. doi: 10.1037/fam0000104

French, D. C., Eisenberg, N., Sallquist, J., Purwono, U., Lu, T., and Christ, S. (2013). Parent-adolescent relationships, religiosity, and the social adjustment of Indonesian Muslim adolescents. *Journal of Family Psychology*, *27*, 421–430. http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/a0032858

Gallagher, S., Phillips, A. C., Lee, H., and Carroll, D. (2015). The association between spirituality and depression in parents caring for children with developmental disabilities: Social support and/or last resort. *Journal of Religion and Health*, *54*, 358–370. doi: 10.1007/s10943-014-9839-x

Gershoff, E. T., and Grogan-Kaylor, A. (2016). Race as a moderator of associations between spanking and child outcomes: Race as a moderator of spanking. *Family Relations*, *65*, 490–501. doi: 10.1111/fare.12205

Gershoff, E. T., Miller, P. C., and Holden, G. W. (1999). Parenting influences from the pulpit: Religious affiliation as a determinant of parental corporal punishment. *Journal of Family Psychology*, *13*, 307–320. doi: 10.1037/0893-3200.13.3.307

Goeke-Morey, M. C., Taylor, L. K., Merrilees, C. E. Shirlow, P., & Cummings, E. M. (2014). Adolescents' relationship with God and internalizing adjustment over time: The moderating role of maternal religious coping. *Journal of Family Psychology, 28*(6), 749. http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/a0037170

Granqvist, P., and Kirkpatrick, L. A. (2013). Religion, spirituality and attachments. In K. I. Pargament, J. J. Exline, and J. W. Jones (Eds.), *APA handbook of psychology, religion, and spirituality* (Vol. 1, pp. 139–154). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association Press.

Grogan-Kaylora, A., Burlakab, V., Mac, J., Leea, S., Castilloa, B., and Churakovab, I. (2018). Predictors of parental use of corporal punishment in Ukraine. *Children and Youth Services Review*, *88*, 66–73. doi: 10.1016/j.childyouth.2018.03.003.

Gunnoe, M. L., Hetherington, E. M., and Reiss, D. (1999). Parental religiosity, parenting style, and adolescent social responsibility. *The Journal of Early Adolescence*, *19*, 199–225. doi: 10.1177/0272431699019002004

Gurrentz, B. T. (2017). Family formation and close social ties within religious congregations. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, *79*, 1125–1143. doi: 10.1111/jomf.12398

Hardy, S. A., White, J. A., Zhang, Z., and Ruchty, J. (2011). Parenting and the socialization of religiousness and spirituality. *Psychology of Religion and Spirituality*, *3*, 217–230. http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/a0021600

Henderson, W. M., Uecker, J. E., and Stroope, S. (2016). The role of religion in parenting satisfaction and parenting stress among young parents. *The Sociological Quarterly*, *57*, 675–710. doi: 10.1111/tsq.12147

Hoffmann, J., Ellison, C., and Bartkowski, J. (2017). Conservative protestantism and attitudes toward corporal punishment, 1986–2014. *Social Science Research*, *63*, 81–94. doi: 10.1016/j.ssresearch.2016.09.010

Holden, G. W., and Vittrup, B. (2010). Religion. In M. H. Bornstein (Ed.), *Handbook of cultural developmental science* (pp. 279–295). New York, NY: Psychology Press.

Hollingsworth, L. D. (2000). Who seeks to adopt a child? Findings from the National Survey of Family Growth, 1995. *Adoption Quarterly*, *3*, 1–23. doi: 10.1177/0192513X13479333

Jenkins, K. W. (1991). Religion and families. In S. J. Bahr (Ed.), *Family research: A sixty-year review, 1930–1990* (Vol. 1, pp. 235–288). New York: Lexington Books.

Jorgensen, B., Mancini, J., Yorgason, J., and Day, R. (2016). Religious beliefs, practices, and family strengths: A comparison of husbands and wives. *Psychology of Religion and Spirituality*, *8*, 164–174. doi: 10.1037/rel0000052

Kim, T., Connolly, J., Rotondi, M., and Tamim, H. (2018). Characteristics of positive-interaction parenting style among primiparous teenage, optimal age, and advanced age mothers in Canada. *Bmc Pediatrics*, *18*. doi: 10.1186/s12887-017-0972-z

Kim, Y., and Wilcox, W. B. (2014). Religious identity, religious attendance, and parental control. *Review of Religious Research*, *56*, 555–580. doi: 10.1007/s13644-014-0167-0

Kim-Spoon, J., Longo, G. S., and McCullough, M. E. (2012). Parent-adolescent relationship quality as a moderator for the influences of parents' religiousness on adolescents' religiousness and adjustment. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, *41*, 1576–1587. doi: 10.1007/s10964-012-9796-1

King, P. E., and Boyatzis, C. J. (2015). Religious and spiritual development. In M. E. Lamb (Ed.), *Socioemotional processes, Handbook of child psychology and developmental science* (Vol. 3, 7th Ed., pp. 975–1021). New York, NY: Wiley.

King, P. E., Furrow, J. L., and Roth, N. (2002). The influence of families and peers on adolescent religiousness. *Journal of Psychology and Christianity*, *21*, 109–120.

King, V. (2003). The influence of religion on fathers' relationships with their children. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, *65*, 382–395. doi: 10.1111/j.1741-3737.2003.00382.x

King, V. (2010). The influence of religion on ties between the generations. In C. G. Ellison and R. A. Hummer (Eds.), *Religion, families, and health: Population-based research in the United States* (pp. 86–105). New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

Koenig, H. G., McCullough, M. E., and Larson, D. B. (2001). *Handbook of religion and health* (1st Ed.). New York, NY: Oxford Press.

Konieczny, M. E. (2013). *The spirit's tether: Family, work, and religion among American Catholics*. New York, NY: Oxford Press.

Krumrei, E. J., Mahoney, A., and Pargament, K. I. (2011a). Spiritual stress and coping model of divorce: A longitudinal study of a community sample. *Journal of Family Psychology*, *25*, 973–985. doi: 10.1037/a0025879

Krumrei, E. J., Mahoney, A., and Pargament, K. I. (2011b). Demonic dimensions of divorce: The prevalence of demonization of divorce and links to adult post-divorce adjustment. *Family Relations*, *60*, 90–103. doi: 10.1111/j.1741-3729.2010.00635.x

Kuczynski, L. (2003). Beyond bidirectionality: Bilateral conceptual frameworks for understanding dynamics in parent–child relations. In L. Kuczynski (Ed.), *Handbook of dynamics in parent–child relations* (pp. 1–24). Thousand Oaks CA: Sage Publications.

Kusner, K., Mahoney, A., Pargament, K. I., and DeMaris, A. (2014). Sanctification and spiritual intimacy predicting observed marital interactions across the transition to parenthood. *Journal of Family Psychology*, *28*, 604–614. doi: 10.1037/a0036989

Lamis, D., Wilson, C., Tarantino, N., Lansford, J., and Kaslow, N. (2014). Neighborhood disorder, spiritual well-being, and parenting stress in African American women. *Journal of Family Psychology*, *28*, 769–778. doi: 10.1037/a0036373

Landor, A., Simons, L. G., Simons, R. L., Brody, G. H., and Gibbons, F. X. (2011). The role of religiosity in the relationship between parents, peers, and adolescent risky sexual behavior. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, *40*, 296–309. doi: 10.1007/s10964-010-9598-2

Lechner, C. M., Tomasik, M. J., Silbereisen, R. K., and Wasilewski, J. (2014). Religiosity reduces family-related uncertainties but exacerbates their association with distress. *The International Journal for the Psychology of Religion*, *24*, 185–200. doi: 10.1080/10508619.2013.847700

Lerner, R. M., Johnson, S. K., and Buckingham, M. H. (2015). Relational developmental systems-based theories and the study of children and families: Lerner and Spanier (1978) revisited. *Journal of Family Theory & Review*, *7*, 83–104. doi: 10.1111/jftr.12067

Li, S. D. (2013). Familial religiosity, family processes, and juvenile delinquency in a national sample of early adolescents. *The Journal of Early Adolescence*, *34*, 436–462. doi: 10.1177/0272431613495445

Lucero, S. M., Pargament, K. I., Mahoney, A., and DeMaris, A. (2013). Religious coping and adjustment of husbands and wives during first pregnancy. *Journal of Reproductive and Infant Psychology*, *31*, 309–322. doi: 10.1080/02646838.2013.798864

Lynn, M. G., Grych, J. H., and Fosco, G. M. (2016). Influences on father involvement: Testing for unique contributions of religion. *Journal of Child and Family Studies*, *25*, 3247–3259. doi: 10.1007/s10826-016-0486-6

Mahoney, A. (2010). Religion in families 1999–2009: A relational spirituality framework. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, *72*, 805–827. doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-3737.2010.00732.x

Mahoney, A. (2013). The spirituality of us: Relational spirituality in the context of family relationships. In Pargament, K., Exline, J. J., Jones, J., (Eds.), *APA handbook of psychology, religion, and spirituality, Vol 1*, (pp. 365-389). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association. doi: 10.1037/14045-020.

Mahoney, A. (2019). Faith and families: The scientific pursuit of relational spirituality for partners and parents. In J. Levin (Ed.), *Religion and the social sciences: Basic and applied research perspectives*. Philadelphia, PA: Templeton Press.

Mahoney, A., and Cano, A. (2014). Introduction to the special section on religion and spirituality in family life: Pathways between relational spirituality, family relationships and personal well-being. *Journal of Family Psychology*, *28*, 735–738. http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/fam0000041

Mahoney, A., and Krumrei, E. J. (2012). Questions left unaddressed by religious familism: Is spirituality relevant to non-traditional families? In L. Miller (Ed.), *The Oxford handbook of the psychology of spirituality* (pp. 165–181). Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

Mahoney, A., LeRoy, M., Kusner, K., Padgett, E., and Grimes, L. (2013). Addressing parental spirituality as part of the problem and solution in family psychotherapy. In D. F. Walker and W. Hathaway (Ed.), *Spiritual interventions in child and adolescent psychotherapy* (pp. 65–88). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association Press.

Mahoney, A., Pargament, K. I., and DeMaris, A. (2009). Couples viewing marriage and pregnancy through the lens of the sacred: A descriptive study. *Research in the Social Scientific Study of Religion*, *20*, 1–45.

Mahoney, A., Pargament, K. I., and DeMaris, A. (2018, March 15). *Sanctification of parenting*. Retrieved from www.bgsu.edu/arts-and-sciences/psychology/graduate-program/clinical/the-psychology-of-spirituality-and-family/research-findings/parenting/sanctification-of-parenting.html

Mahoney, A., Pargament, K. I., and Hernandez, K. M. (2013). Heaven on earth: Beneficial effects of sanctification for individual and interpersonal well-being. In J. Henry (Ed.), *The Oxford book of happiness* (pp. 397–410). Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

Mahoney, A., Pargament, K. I., Murray-Swank, A., and Murray-Swank, N. (2003). Religion and the sanctification of family relationships. *Review of Religious Research*, *40*, 220–236. doi: 10.1177/0192513X10363888

Mahoney, A., Pargament, K. I., Swank, A., and Tarakeshwar, N. (2001). Religion in the home in the 1980s and 90s: A meta-analytic review and conceptual analysis of religion, marriage, and parenting. *Journal of Family Psychology*, *15*, 559–596. doi: 10.1037/0893-3200.15.4.559

Marks, L. D., and Dollahite, D. C. (2016). *Religion and families: An introduction*. New York, NY: Routledge.

McQuillan, J., Greil, A. L., Shreffler, K. M., and Bedrous, A. V. (2015). The importance of motherhood and fertility intentions among U.S. women. *Sociological Perspectives*, *58*, 20–35. doi: 10.1177/0731121414534393

Miller-Perrin, C., and Perrin, R. (2017a). Changing attitudes about spanking among conservative Christians using interventions that focus on empirical research evidence and progressive biblical interpretations. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, *71*, 69–79. doi: 10.1016/j.chiabu.2017.03.015

Miller-Perrin, C., and Perrin, R. (2017b, September). *Changing attitudes using alternative biblical interpretations.* Paper presented at the 22nd International Summit on Violence, Abuse and Trauma La Jolla, California.

Murray-Swank, A., Mahoney, A., and Pargament, K. I. (2006). Sanctification of parenting: Links to corporal punishment and parental warmth among biblically conservative and liberal mothers. *The International Journal of the Psychology of Religion*, *16*, 271–287. doi: 10.1207/s15327582ijpr1604_3

National Center for Family and Marriage Research. (2017, February 3). *2011–2013 National Survey of Family Growth religiosity and family structure.* Personal communication. Bowling Green, OH: Bowling Green State University.

Nelsen, H. M., and Kroliczak, A. (1984). Parental use of the threat "God will punish": Replication and extension. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, *23*, 267–277. http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/1386041

Nelson, J. J., and Uecker, J. E. (2017). Are religious parents more satisfied parents? Individual-and couple-level religious correlates of parenting satisfaction. *Journal of Family Issues*, *39*, 1770–1796. doi: 10.1177/0192513x17728983

Noonan, A., Tracy, A. J., and Grossman, J. M. (2012). Constructing profiles of religious agreement and disagreement between adolescents and mothers: A research note. *Review of Religious Research*, *54*, 239–254. doi: 10.1007/s13644-012-0053-6

Onedera, J. D. (Ed.). (2008). *The role of religion in marriage and family counseling.* New York, NY: Routledge.

Overton, W. (2013). A new paradigm for developmental science: Relationism and relational–developmental systems. *Applied Developmental Science*, *17*, 94–107. doi: 10.1080/10888691.2013.778717

Page, R. L., Ellison, C. G., and Lee, J. (2009). Does religiosity affect health risk behaviors in pregnant and postpartum women? *Maternal and Child Health Journal*, *13*, 621–632. doi: 10.1007/s10995-008-0394-5.

Pargament, K. I. (1997). *The psychology of religion and coping: Theory, research, practice.* New York, NY: Guilford Press.

Pargament, K. I. (2007). *Spiritually integrated psychotherapy: Understanding and addressing the sacred.* New York, NY: Guilford Press.

Pargament, K. I. (2013). Searching for the sacred: Toward a nonreductionistic theory of spirituality. In K. I. Pargament, J. J. Exline, and J. W. Jones (Eds.), *APA handbook of psychology, religion, and spirituality* (Vol. 1, pp. 257–273). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association Press.

Pargament, K. I., Exline, J. J., and Jones, J. W. (2013). *APA handbook of psychology, religion, and spirituality* (Vol. 1). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association Press.

Pargament, K. I., and Mahoney, A. (2005). Sacred matters: Sanctification as vital topic for the psychology of religion. *The International Journal of the Psychology of Religion*, *15*, 179–198. doi: 10.1207/s15327582ijpr1503_1

Pargament, K. I., & Mahoney, A. (in press). Spirituality: The search for the sacred. In S. J. Lopez (Eds), *Oxford handbook of positive psychology* (3rd Edition). Online Publication Date: Feb 2017 DOI: 10.1093

Pargament, K. I., Mahoney, A., Exline, J. J., Jones, J. W., and Shafranske, E. (2013). Envisioning an integrative paradigm for the psychology of religion and spirituality: An introduction to the APA handbook of psychology, religion and spirituality. In K. I., Pargament, J. J. Exline, and J. W. Jones (Eds.), *APA handbook of psychology, religion, and spirituality* (Vol. 1, pp. 3–19). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association Press.

Pargament, K. I., Smith, B. W., Koenig, H. G., and Perez, L. (1998). Patterns of positive and negative religious coping with major life stressors. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, *37*, 710–724. doi: 10.2307/1388152

Perrin, R., Miller-Perrin, C., and Song, J. (2017). Changing attitudes about spanking using alternative biblical interpretations. *International Journal of Behavioral Development*, *41*, 514–522. doi: 10.1177/0165025416673295

Perry, S. L., and Snawder, K. J. (2017). Pornography, religion, and parent–child relationship quality. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, *46*, 1747–1761. doi: 10.1007/s10508-016-0927-8

Petts, R. J. (2007). Religious participation, religious affiliation, and engagement with children among fathers experiencing the birth of a new child. *Journal of Family Issues*, *28*, 1139–1161. doi: 10.1177/0192513x07300788

Petts, R. J. (2012). Single mothers' religious participation and early childhood behavior. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, *74*, 251–268. doi: 10.1111/j.1741-3737.2011.00953.x

Petts, R. J. (2018, March 23). *Women's fertility NLSY 1997–2013 surveys.* Personal communication.

Petts, R. J., and Kysar-Moon, A. E. (2012). Child discipline and conservative Protestantism: Why the relationship between corporal punishment and child behavior problems may vary by religious context. *Review of Religious Research*, *54*, 445–468. doi: 10.1007/s13644-012-0080-3

Pew. (2014). Retrieved December 21, 2017, from www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2014/09/18/families-may-differ-but-they-share-common-values-on-parenting

Pew (2015). Retrieved June 2, 2017, from www.pewforum.org/2015/05/12/chapter–2–religious–switching–and–intermarriage/#interfaith–marriage–commonplace

Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life. (2008). *U.S. religious landscape survey*. Washington: Pew Research Center. http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2014/12/22/less-than-half-of-u-s-kids-today-live-in-a-traditional-family/

Power, L., and McKinney, C. (2013). Emerging adult perceptions of parental religiosity and parenting practices: Relationships with emerging adult religiosity and psychological adjustment. *Psychology of Religion and Spirituality*, *5*, 99–109. http://dx.doi.org.ezproxy.bgsu.edu:8080/10.1037/a0030046

Regnerus, M. D. (2009). *Forbidden fruit: Sex and religion in the lives of American teenagers* (1st Ed.). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Regnerus, M. D., and Burdette, A. (2006). Religious change and adolescent family dynamics. *The Sociological Quarterly*, *47*, 175–194. doi: 10.1111/j.1533-8525.2006.00042.x

Rodriguez, C. M., and Henderson, R. C. (2010). Who spares the rod? Religious orientation, social conformity, and child abuse potential. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, *34*, 84–94. doi: 10.1016/j.chiabu.2009.07.002

Rostosky, S., Abreu, R. L., Mahoney, A., and Riggle, E. D. B. (2017). A qualitative study of parenting and religion/spirituality in LBGTQ families. *Psychology of Religion and Spirituality*, *9*, 437–445. doi: 10.1037/rel0000077

Saunders, S. M., Miller, M. L., and Bright, M. M. (2010). Spiritually conscious psychological care. *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice*, *41*, 355–362. doi: 1 0.1037/a0020953

Schleifer, C., and Chaves, M. (2017). Family formation and religious service attendance: Untangling marital and parental effects. *Sociological Methods and Research*, *46*, 125–152. doi: 10.1177/0049124114526376

Schoppe-Sullivan, S. J., Altenburger, L. E., Lee, M. A., Bower, D. J., and Kamp Dush, C. M. (2015). Who are the gatekeepers? Predictors of maternal gatekeeping. *Parenting*, *15*, 166–186. doi: 10.1080/15295192.2015.1053321

Schottenbauer, M. A., Spernak, S. M., and Hellstrom, I. (2007). Relationship between family religious behaviors and child well–being among third–grade children. *Mental Health, Religion and Culture*, *10*, 191–198. doi: 10.1080/13674670600847394

Simons, L. G., Simons, R. L., and Conger, R. D. (2004). Identifying the mechanisms whereby family religiosity influences the probability of adolescent antisocial behavior. *Journal of Comparative Family Studies*, *35*, 547–563.

Snider, J. B., Clements, A., and Vazsonyi, A. T. (2004). Late adolescent perceptions of parent religiosity and parenting processes. *Family Process*, *43*, 489–502.

Sorenson, A. M., Grindstaff, C. F., and Turner, R. J. (1995). Religious involvement among unmarried adolescent mothers: A source of emotional support? *Sociology of Religion*, *56*, 71–81. doi: 10.2307/3712040

Spilman, S. K., Neppl, T. K., Donnellan, M. B., Schofield, T. J., and Conger, R. D. (2013). Incorporating religiosity into a developmental model of positive family functioning across generations. *Developmental Psychology*, *49*, 762–774. doi: 10.1037/a0028418

Starks, B., and Robinson, R. V. (2007). Moral cosmology, religion, and adult values for children. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, *46*, 17–35. doi: 10.1111/j.1468-5906.2007.00338.x

Strawbridge, W. J., Shema, S. J., Cohen, R. D., Roberts, R. E., and Kaplan, G. A. (1998). Religiosity buffers effects of some stressors on depression but exacerbates others. *The Journals of Gerontology Series B: Psychological Sciences and Social Sciences*, *53*, 118–126. doi: 10.1093/geronb/53B.3.S118

Stokes, C. E., and Regnerus, M. D. (2009). When faith divides family: Religious discord and adolescent reports of parent–child relations. *Social Science Research*, *38*, 155–167. doi: 10.1016/j.ssresearch.2008.05.002

Sullivan, S. C. (2008). Unaccompanied children in churches: Low–income urban single mothers, religion, and parenting. *Review of Religious Research*, *50*, 157–175. Retrieved from www.jstor.org/stable/20447559

Tarakeshwar, N., and Pargament, K. I. (2001). Religious coping in families of children with autism. *Focus on Autism and Other Developmental Disabilities*, *16*, 247–260. doi: 10.1177/108835760101600408

Twenge, J. M., Sherman, R. A., Exline, J. J., and Grubbs, J. B. (2016). Declines in American adults' religious participation and beliefs, 1972–2014. *SAGE Open*, *6*, 215824401663813. doi: 10.1177/2158244016638133

Uecker, J. E., Mayrl, D., and Stroope, S. (2016). Family formation and returning to institutional religion in young adulthood. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, *55*, 384–406.

van der Jagt-Jelsma, W., de Vries-Schot, M., de Jong, R., Verhulst, F. C., Ormel, J., Veenstra, R., Swinkels, S., and Buitelaar, J. (2011). The relationship between parental religiosity and mental health of pre–adolescents in a community sample: the TRAILS study. *European Child & Adolescent Psychiatry*, *20*, 253–260. DOI 10.1007/s00787-011-0171-7.

Volling, B. L., Mahoney, A., and Rauer, A. J. (2009). Sanctification of parenting, moral socialization, and young children's conscience development. *Psychology of Religion and Spirituality*, *1*, 53–68. doi: 10.1037/a0014958

Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes*. In M. Cole, V. John-Steiner, S. Scribner, and E. Souberman (Eds.), Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Walker, D. F., and Hathaway, W. (2013). *Spiritual interventions in child and adolescent psychotherapy*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association Press.

Walsh, F. (2009). *Spiritual resources in family therapy* (2nd Ed.). New York: Guilford Press.

Weyand, C., O'Laughlin, L., and Bennett, P. (2013). Dimensions of religiousness that influence parenting. *Psychology of Religion and Spirituality*, *5*, 182–191. doi: 10.1037/a0030627

Wilcox, W. B. (1998). Conservative protestant childrearing: Authoritarian or authoritative? *American Sociological Review*, *63*, 796–809. doi: 10.2307/2657502

Wilcox, W. B. (2002). Religion, convention, and paternal involvement. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, *64*, 780–792.

Wilcox, W. B. (2006). Family. In H. R. Ebaugh (Ed.), *Handbook of religion and social institutions* (pp. 97–116). New York, NY: Springer.

Wilcox, W. B., and Wolfinger, N. H. (2016). *Soul mates: Religion, sex, love, and marriage among African Americans and Latinos*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Wildeman, C. (2008). Conservative Protestantism and paternal engagement in fragile families. *Sociological Forum*, *23*, 556–574. doi: 10.1111/j.1573-7861.2008.00076.x

Yonker, J. E., Schnabelrauch, C. A., and DeHaan, L. G. (2012). The relationship between spirituality and religiosity on psychological outcomes in adolescents and emerging adults: A meta-analytic review. *Journal of Adolescence*, *35*, 299–314. doi: 10.1016/j.adolescence.2011.08.010