When faith divides family: Religious discord and adolescent reports of parent–child relations ☆

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ABSTRACT

What happens to family relations when an adolescent and her parent do not share the same religious convictions or practices? Whereas previous work on religion and intergenerational relations looks at relationships between parents and their adult children, we shift the focus to younger families, assessing how parent–child religious discord affects adolescents' evaluation of their relationship with their parents. Exploring data from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health, we find several interesting patterns of association between religious discord and parent–child relations. Overall, religious discord predicts lower quality intergenerational relations. When parents value religion more than their teens do, adolescents tend to report poorer relations with parents. Relationship quality is not lower, however, when it is the adolescent who values religion more highly. We also find that religious discord is more aggravating in families where parent and child share religious affiliation and in families where the parent is an evangelical Protestant.

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1. Introduction

In the United States, religion and family are tightly linked institutions. Religion imbues family affairs with sacred meaning, provides norms that prescribe and proscribe family related behaviors, and offers access to social networks and resources to support family life (Bartkowski, Xu, and Levin, 2008). Research on families and religion has noted links between religion and a variety of family outcomes, including marital duration and satisfaction, distinctive parenting practices, and parenting consistency (e.g., Bahr and Chadwick, 1988; Regnerus and Burdette, 2006; Thornton, 1985; Wilcox, 1998, 2004). It should come as little surprise, then, that social scientists find compelling evidence that religious agreement is an important factor in intergenerational relations between parents and their adult children (Myers, 2004; Pearce and Axinn, 1998). The broad picture painted by studies of religion and intergenerational relations is clear: when parents and their adult children agree about religion, they also report better intergenerational relationships.

Within the broad portrait of religious agreement and better intergenerational relations, several subtle themes emerge. First, among individual religious characteristics, religious salience (the importance an individual affords religion) appears to be relatively more important to intergenerational relational quality than other aspects of religious life (Pearce and Axinn, 1998). Second, religious congruence (where parent and child belong to the same denomination, report the same level of religious-service attendance, etc.) is relatively more important to intergenerational relational quality than individual religious characteristics (Myers, 2004). Third, religious effects on intergenerational relationships can be moderated by factors such as gender, family structure, and type of religious affiliation (Myers, 2004).

Unfortunately, social scientific research to date contributes little to the understanding of religious and relational dynamics within *younger* families, as the majority of studies on religious congruence and family relations deal with *adult* intergenerational relationships. Drawing upon insights from family scholars, and especially engaging the intergenerational solidarity paradigm (e.g., Silverstein and Bengston, 1997), we focus on younger families, and specifically investigate how religion impacts adolescent reports of parent–child[1] relations. Adolescence can be a period of great change and stress for all children and their parents, even in the healthiest of families. For these younger families, shared religious traditions, values, and practices can provide important resources to help negotiate the risky shoals of adolescent life. Conversely, if parents and their adolescent children diverge in their religious values and practices, religious disagreements may exacerbate overall levels of conflict.

In this study, we employ data from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health (Add Health) to address these particular questions: Does religious discord between parent and child correspond with adolescent reports of lower levels of affection for parents? Do the type and source of religious discord matter? Is parent–child religious discord equally corrosive to parent–child relations across religious traditions, or is it more profound among traditions that tend to publicly esteem family relations and religious harmony? Simply put, what happens to parent–child relations when the religious socialization of adolescent children appears to have been unsuccessful?

2. Religious discord and intergenerational affinity

Attitudes about religion are frequently transmitted across generations (Glass et al., 1986). Previous research on parents and their adult children also demonstrates that religious concordance is associated with better intergenerational relations (Myers, 2004; Pearce and Axinn, 1998). We expect the inverse is equally likely, namely that religious discord is associated with lower quality intergenerational relationships. Following Myers (2004), we find aspects of the solidarity paradigm helpful in explaining how religious concord/discord is related to intergenerational relations. The solidarity paradigm has guided considerable research within the sociology of family and is itself grounded in social psychological advances in understanding of small groups and family cohesion (Jansen, 1952; Silverstein and Bengtson, 1997). Solidarity is a multidimensional construct, composed of six principal dimensions of relations between generations that are experienced as dialectics or tensions (Bengtson et al., 2002). The first two dimensions of the intergenerational solidarity framework—affect and consensus—*cluster* such that parent–child consensus (agreement in opinions, values, and/or lifestyles) is closely connected with parent–child feelings of affection. Silverstein and Bengtson label the cluster of affect and consensus "intergenerational affinity" (1997). The solidarity paradigm predicts that consensus (religious or otherwise) and higher affection co-occur, and inversely, that lack of consensus and lower affection go hand in hand.

There are also several reasons to expect that specifically religious consensus/discord would have a powerful influence on family relations. Religious institutions promote the belief that positive family relationships are desirable, provide numerous activities and resources to encourage positive familial interaction, and often facilitate closure of social ties which, in turn, promotes strong parent–child relationships (Pearce and Axinn, 1998; Bartkowski et al., 2008). Religious messages like "Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord"[2] (Holy Bible, 1984), when internalized by children, can facilitate less conflict among parents and children, and likely, more genial relations (Regnerus and Burdette, 2006). Additionally, religion can serve as a resource in conflict–resolution processes in parent–child relationships (Mahoney, 2005). Religion is among the most powerful of social-control mechanisms; it can galvanize and organize moral indignation; yet it can also encourage trust, caring, and self-sacrifice; and its practitioners are often actively conscious of and committed to the next generation. Religion addresses foundational questions and is a source of social authority on many values (e.g., obedience, sexual morality, and familism) over which adolescents and parents may wrestle.

Religion is also multidimensional. Group affiliation, beliefs, and practices are all religious dimensions along which individuals vary widely. Individuals also vary as to the importance of religion in their lives, a concept usually called religious salience. Many recent studies in the sociology of religion have touted the importance of considering several dimensions of religion (e.g., Regnerus and Burdette, 2006). In this study, we consider three important dimensions of religion: religious salience, religious attendance, and religious affiliation. While there is certainly considerable overlap between salience, attendance, and affiliation (e.g., a devout religious person likely considers religion important and demonstrates this in their association with co-religionists through affiliation and practice) we believe the three dimensions are conceptually and empirically distinctive enough to warrant separate attention. Below we briefly define each of these dimensions as we understand them in the context of this study.

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[1] We use the term "child" in its relational, rather than developmental, sense throughout—especially to refer to adolescents in the phrase "parent–child".

[2] Colossians 3:20, NIV (Holy Bible, 1984).

Affiliation represents an individual's choice to associate with a particular religious organization. For some affiliation may indicate only a loose identification with a particular organization and little adherence to the group's beliefs and practices. For instance, someone may identify themselves as a Baptist because they sincerely believe in and adhere to Baptist beliefs, or because they attend a Baptist church, or because their family has been Baptist for three generations, or all three. *Attendance* represents an individual's pattern of religious association and practice. As with affiliation, attendance does not necessarily imply commitment to a package of beliefs and practices but it does increase the likelihood that an individual will be exposed to particular religious messages, norms, and socially reinforcing networks. *Salience* is the importance of religion to a particular individual. High salience is likely indicative of an internalized set of religious beliefs and adherence to religiously motivated practices. While individuals may have strong extrinsic motivations for affiliation (to keep the family tradition) or attendance (to keep up appearances or connections), salience gives a better indication of an individual's intrinsic religious motivation (Regnerus, 2007). By examining the level of parent–child discord on each of these dimensions, as well as considering all three dimensions together, we begin to unravel which aspects of religion are most important in predicting how adolescents evaluate their relationships with their parents.

Given that the solidarity paradigm closely links parent–child consensus and positive affection (Silverstein and Bengtson, 1997), we expect that parents and children who draw upon a common religious base (i.e., value consensus) should display greater relationship quality. Conversely, religious discord (however it is measured) between parents and adolescent children will result in lower quality parent–child relationships:

> *Hypothesis 1* (General religious discord): When parents and adolescent children differ in religious salience, attendance, or affiliation, adolescents tend to report lower quality parent–child relationships.

As noted above, recent studies of adult children and their parents indicate that religious salience is more consistently related to family relations than are reports of overall or discordant religious attendance or affiliation (Pearce and Axinn, 1998; Myers, 2004). We think there are good reasons to expect religious salience to be the most important religious predictor of relationship quality in younger families as well, perhaps even more so. For adolescents, while attendance may be coerced and affiliation ascribed, salience is much more likely indicative of internalized religious commitments. An adolescent may personally afford little importance to religion but attends services regularly to appease her parent (for whom religion is very important) and claim her parent's religious affiliation because she is correctly answering a survey question about her religious denomination. While similar scenarios could be spun where parent and child agree on salience, but not on attendance or affiliation, salience seems the least likely of the three dimensions to be coerced.[3]

Additionally, there is likely a reciprocal relationship between religious concord/discord and parent–child relations. As children age they have greater influence over their parents' attitudes and either parent, child, or both may make adjustments in their religious attitudes and practices in order to maintain positive relations (Glass et al., 1986). Sherkat and Wilson (1995) find that children who are close to their parents are less likely drop their religious affiliation altogether (though they may switch to a less conservative affiliation). As such, children who have positive relations with their parents may be less likely to declare a different religious affiliation or attend at a different rate than their parents. These children may "quietly" place less value upon religion than their parents, but they avoid open differences in order to maintain harmonious relations.

Overall, discordant affiliation and attendance are likely to be less reliable predictors of parent–child affection. Moreover, we suspect the most likely scenario is not one of coerced attendance and affiliation but rather one where the adolescent (or parent) is low on all three dimensions of religion. In this case, affiliation and attendance discord may predict lower intergenerational relationship quality, but much of their impact may be due to the underlying effect of discordant salience. Thus:

> *Hypothesis 2* (Type of religious discord): Discordant affiliation and attendance are not as detrimental to parent–child relationship quality as is discordant religious salience.

While much of our theorizing thus far has been illustrated by stories of devout parents and their religiously rebellious teens, these are certainly not the only, or perhaps even the most likely, scenarios of religious discord. Does it matter for parent–child relations if parent or child is more (or less) devout? We think there are good reasons to expect different dynamics to be at work depending on whether the parent or child is more devout. Where there is religious discord in a family, the religion itself may provide the cognitive framework for understanding the discord, along with possible solutions and the relational tools to accomplish them. For example, the Bible contains several passages where individuals are urged to take special care in relating genially with their unbelieving family members, especially in the hope that they might win them over to the faith (e.g., I Corinthians 7:13–16). For an adolescent who is more religious than her parents, she may take special care

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[3] Another set of confounding possibilities occurs when a parent and her child report discordant affiliations and/or attendance. At the extremes, this open divergence could be a sign *either* of a genial agreement to disagree *or* evidence of an open wound in the parent–child relationship. In any case, these possibilities only serve to further muddy the waters of affiliation and attendance reports and support our hypothesis that personal salience is the most reliable and important measure for this outcome.

to preserve good relations with her parents in the hope that they might one day share her zeal, or she may seek to preserve peaceful relations by adopting a tolerant stance toward her parents' lack of devotion.

While we might predict a more devout parent will act similarly genially toward her less observant adolescent, we think there are at least two reasons to expect a difference. First, our study focuses on the adolescent's report of the parent–child relationship. An adolescent may not understand and/or even be offended by her devout parent's well-intentioned, religiously motivated gestures. Second, while a religiously zealous adolescent might express her devotion in behaviors (such as obedience) that facilitate better parent–child relations, a religiously devout parent might focus more on demanding obedience from her less observant child, which, in turn, leads to poorer relationship quality, at least from the adolescent's point of view. Thus:

> *Hypothesis 3* (Source of religious discord): Adolescents whose parents report higher religious attendance and/or salience will be more likely to report lower quality parent–child relations. Conversely, adolescents who report higher religious attendance and/or salience will be less likely to report lower quality parent–child relations.

3. Religious affiliation as a moderator

Religious affiliation may be a less important direct predictor of parent–child relationship quality but it may still play a key role as a moderator of the effects of the other dimensions of religion. Religious affiliation identifies the religious sub-cultural context in which the other aspects of religion are occurring. Regularly attending religious services at a Pentecostal church is different in important ways from regularly attending a Unitarian Universalist congregation. Moreover, high religious salience can imply commitment to very different beliefs and practices depending on whether the individual in question is an Orthodox Jew or Sunni Muslim. Below, we hypothesize two ways in which religious affiliation moderates the effects of attendance and salience on parent–child relations.

Expanding upon the family solidarity model, Bengtson et al. (2002, 571) suggest that family relationships wherein particular dimensions of solidarity are low "may consist of some people who are content to be more tenuously connected along that dimension" and thus still generally satisfied with their family relations. Families that are already religiously heterogeneous in makeup (i.e., where parent and child affiliate with different religious traditions) may have experience with religious diversity and may better tolerate discordant religious attendance or salience, insulating such discord from affecting family relationships. Even in cases where the parent and child are at odds about their differing affiliations, the fact that the adolescent feels comfortable or confident enough to declare a separate affiliation suggests that the discord is out in the open and that feelings may be in some stage of reconciliation.

By idealizing family relations within a *sacred* context, religion is thought to prompt more consistent agreement between religiously *congruent* parents and children about the boundaries of acceptable child behavior (Bartkowski and Ellison, 1995). This may be a mixed blessing, however. Within the context of a common religious tradition, discordant religious attendance and/or salience may exacerbate even ordinary parent–child grievances (Mahoney, 2005):

> *Hypothesis 4* (Variation by affiliation congruence): The effects of discordant religious attendance and/or salience are more aggravating for the quality of parent–child relationships where the two people share the same religious affiliation (or general tradition), as compared to family units where the parent and child subscribe to different religious affiliations.

In the same vein, discordant religious attendance and/or salience may also be more divisive within families that belong to stricter religious traditions, or among traditions that assign particular theological significance to family matters. Evangelical Protestants appear to strive for—and often enjoy—close, religiously congruent relationships because of their pro-family culture and shared concern about the decline of the traditional American family (Wilcox, 1998, 2004). In the presence of discordant religious commitments, however, religious conservatism may uniquely exacerbate family relationship problems. Studies of married couples detect more significant conflict and disruption in marriages involving only one conservative Protestant partner (Curtis and Ellison, 2002; Ellison et al., 1999; Lehrer and Chiswick, 1993). Similar evidence is found in Sherkat and Darnell's (1999) study where they observe that fundamentalist parents suppress the educational attainment of non fundamentalist children but boost educational attainment of children who share their fundamentalist affiliation. Myers (2004) also notes suboptimal intergenerational assistance among adults and their parents when the respondent parent is divorced *and* the parent, child, or both are evangelical Protestant.

The politicization of the family may constitute added external stress for families within religious traditions that perceive themselves as presently embroiled in a fight to maintain traditional definitions of family. Thus when evangelical households become home to very different levels of religious attendance and/or salience, unique relational strains may result—distinct from the typical wax and wane of parent–child relations:

> *Hypothesis 5* (Variation by parental affiliation): Discordant religiosity is more aggravating for parent–child relationship quality in households where the parent(s) reports an evangelical Protestant religious affiliation.

4. Data, measures, and analytic approach

4.1. Data

The survey data come from the first two waves of Add Health, a longitudinal, nationally representative, school-based study of adolescents in grades 7–12. A sample of 80 high schools was selected with probability proportionate to size. These schools were stratified by region, urban location, school type (public, private, and parochial), ethnic diversity, and enrollment size. Additionally, a feeder school (typically a middle school) for each high school was also identified and selected, yielding a pair of schools in each of the 80 communities. Nearly 80 percent of the schools contacted agreed to participate, and refusals were replaced with another pair of schools. Data were gathered from adolescents themselves, from their parents, siblings, friends, romantic partners, fellow students, and from school administrators. Further details regarding the sample and methods of study can be found in Bearman et al. (1997). The first wave of in-home interviews was conducted between April and December 1995. While a second wave of data collection followed the first by approximately one year, parents were only interviewed at the first wave. Prior to listwise deletion of missing values, the working sample size of respondents for whom there are all waves of data and survey weights, is 13,303 adolescents.

4.2. Measures

4.2.1. Parent–child relationship quality

The dependent-variable is a summed index of five measures reflecting the adolescent's evaluation of relationship quality with the respondent parent, assessed at both Waves I and II. At Wave I of Add Health, one parent (could be mother or father) of each adolescent was surveyed about themselves, their adolescent, and family life in general. Because the Wave I respondent parent is the only one for whom we can directly measure levels of religiosity, we consider the adolescent's report of relationship quality with only the *respondent* parent.[4] In cross-sectional models, we use the Wave I assessment; in longitudinal models we use the Wave II assessment, and in change models we use the Wave II assessment with the Wave I measure included as a control.

The five items creating the index are taken from two different sections where adolescents were asked several questions (at both Waves I and II) about their residential mother/father or mother-like/father-like figure (or both). The first question was, "How close do you feel to your mother [or residential mother's name]?" Respondents could respond on a five-point range from 1 (not close at all) to 5 (extremely close). Next they were asked, "How much do you think she [or residential mother's name] cares for you?" Answers could range from 1 (not at all) to 5 (very much). Identical questions were then asked about the respondent's residential father. Later in the survey, respondents were presented with a series of statements about their relationships with their parents: "Most of the time, your father is warm and loving toward you," "You are satisfied with the way you and your father communicate with each other," and "Overall, you are satisfied with your relationship with your father". Respondents were then asked to evaluate the same statements about their mother and could respond to each with an answer ranging from 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree). Our index is intended to reflect similar measures employed in a study by Ellis et al. (1976) and is comparable to the solidarity model's measure of affective solidarity (Silverstein and Bengtson, 1997). The alpha coefficients of reliability for the set of five items, split by gender of parent and study wave, range from 0.83 to 0.87. Table 1 presents summary statistics for all variables.

4.2.2. Parent–child religious discord

We measure religious congruence/discord in three ways: affiliation, religious salience, and attendance patterns. Each of these has been featured in other recent studies (e.g., Myers, 2004; Pearce and Axinn, 1998; Curtis and Ellison, 2002). While single items may not be the ideal measures of public and private religiosity, their concurrent use within models is extensive within sociological research (Myers, 2004; Nonnemaker et al., 2003; Pearce and Axinn, 1998).

4.2.3. Discordant affiliations

We group parent and adolescent religious affiliation into seven categories in step with Steensland et al.'s (2000) classification scheme, including evangelical Protestants, mainline Protestants, Black Protestants, Roman Catholics, Jews, the religiously unaffiliated, and a category of "other" religious groups.[5] Affiliation discord is calculated as a dichotomous measure (1 = the respondent parent and child report belonging to different religious traditions [e.g., mainline Protestant vs. evangelical Protestant]).

4.2.4. Discordant religious salience

Religious salience taps a more private and subjective form of religiosity in a respondent's life. In Add Health, both parent and child respondent were asked: "How important is religion to you?" Four response categories ranged from "not important at all" to "very important". Unfortunately, respondents who indicated on the first religion section question that they had no

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[4] Add Health asked parent respondents to provide information on their spouse's religious affiliation but not religious attendance or salience. We experimented with including spousal affiliation in our religious discord measures, but it did not prove significant.

[5] We paid particular attention to potential collinearity problems between race/ethnicity and affiliation variables (e.g., Black Protestant), which, given ample sample sizes, did not arise.

Table 1
Means, ranges, and standard deviations of measures

Variables	Range	Mean	SD
Dependent-variables			
Parent-child relationship quality, Wave I	5–25	22.2	3.05
Parent-child relationship quality, Wave II	5–25	21.8	3.17
Religious discord measures			
Parent rates religion as much more important than adolescent does	0,1	.11	.32
Parent rates religion as slightly more important than adolescent does	0,1	.25	.43
Parent and adolescent rate religion's importance equally	0,1	.53	.50
Adolescent rates religion as slightly more important than parent does	0,1	.08	.27
Adolescent rates religion as much more important than parent does	0,1	.03	.16
Parent attends religious services considerably more than adolescent	0,1	.07	.25
Parent attends religious services slightly more often than adolescent	0,1	.16	.37
Parent attends religious services at same level as adolescent	0,1	.55	.50
Adolescent attends religious services slightly more often than parent	0,1	.15	.35
Adolescent attends religious services considerably more than parent	0,1	.07	.26
Adolescent and parent report different religious affiliations/traditions	0,1	.26	.44
Control variables			
Parent is affiliated with a conservative Protestant denomination	0,1	.17	.38
Parent respondent's religious service attendance	1–4	2.80	1.15
Parent respondent's importance of faith	1–4	3.46	.86
Change in child's service attendance habits between waves	−3 to 3	−.04	.96
Change in child's importance of religion between waves	−3 to 3	−.06	.88
Adolescent is Female	0,1	.51	.50
Parent Respondent is Female	0,1	.94	.23
Age	12–19	15.19	1.56
White	0,1	.59	.49
Average parental education	0–1	.26	.39
Biological two-parent family	0,1	.57	.50
Stepfamily	0,1	.17	.34
All other household structure types	0,1	.26	.46
Household size	1–15	3.62	1.55
Parent reports that child has a bad temper	0,1	.30	.46
Social desirability Bias Index	0–3	.12	.41
How well parent gets along with adolescent	1–5	4.30	.69

religious affiliation were skipped out of all subsequent religion questions. Rather than lose a considerable number of cases (approximately 2000), Add Health data users have typically compensated by assigning the lowest value on attendance and religious salience to youth and parents who indicated "no religion".

We constructed four dichotomous variables indicating degrees of discord:

1. The parent's report of self-rated importance of religion is two or more steps higher than their adolescent child's (e.g., parent reports religion as "very important" while adolescent reports religion as "fairly unimportant").
2. The parent reports only one step higher on religious salience.
3. The child reports only one step higher on religious salience.
4. The child reports two or more steps higher on religious salience.

These are compared with parent–child dyads who expressed an identical level of religious salience.

4.2.5. Discordant attendance

Religious-service attendance is a reliable and traditional measure of the public and collective expression of religion, and it captures involvement in a parent–child moral community. The measure is ordinal (ranging 1–4) and was asked of both parent and child respondent as follows: "In the past 12 months, how often did you attend religious services?" Response categories ranged from "never" to "once a week or more". The series of four attendance discord variables are parallel in construction to the religious-salience discord series, and are compared with parent–child dyads that indicate identical attendance patterns.

4.2.6. Control variables

We include several control variables thought to be related both to religious discord and parent–child relationship quality. They should function to limit any spurious associations between religious discord and the outcomes.

4.2.7. Religion

We include the baseline parent attendance and religious salience variables in the models as control variables. We do not, however, include the parallel adolescent religiosity measures, given their extensive correlation with the identical parent

measures, collinearity problems, and our primary concern with children's divergence from parent's religious benchmarks. We also include measures of change in adolescents' attendance and religious salience, in order to control for religious instability/dynamism that is fairly common during adolescence. We make no claims about the direction of effects; religious change and family dynamics are likely bidirectional processes (Glass et al., 1986). We also include a dichotomous measure of the parent's conservative Protestant religious affiliation, in step with other studies of religious congruence/discord (e.g., Curtis and Ellison, 2002; Myers, 2004).

4.2.8. Other controls

Socioeconomic background has demonstrated a small effect on parent–child relations in several studies (Pearce and Axinn, 1998; Rossi and Rossi, 1990); thus we include a measure of average parental education. Family structure has been linked with family relations as well as family religiosity (Bahr and Chadwick, 1988; Booth and Amato, 1994). We include two dichotomous variables indicating whether the respondent is living in a stepfamily or in some other type of family (single-parent, adopted, another type) compared with a biologically intact, two-parent family. We also control for household size, age, and race. To control for the possibility of respondents giving socially desired responses to survey items, we include an index summed from three items designed to tap social desirability bias. Some studies have suggested that certain temperaments might be conducive to both higher religiosity and certain positive outcomes (e.g., Miller and Hoffman, 1995). To control for temperament, we add a dichotomous variable indicating whether or not the parent respondent said the adolescent had a "bad temper". To help estimate the relative size of religious discord effects we include a measure which should be a strong independent predictor of the child's report of parent–child relations, namely the parent's own report of how well the parent gets along with the adolescent. Finally, parent–child value consensus and cohesiveness is expected to vary somewhat by gender, with sons closer to fathers and daughters to mothers (Pearce and Axinn, 1998; Silverstein and Bengtson, 1997), so we include measures of gender for both the adolescent and parent respondent.

4.3. Methods

First, we estimate OLS coefficients from a series of baseline (Wave I only) models predicting adolescents' assessment of their relationship with their respondent parent. Next we display longitudinal OLS models using the adolescents' report of the parent–child relationship at Wave II. Finally, we report a lagged dependent-variable (LDV) model predicting the adolescents' report of the parent–child relationship at Wave II. The LDV models are essentially evaluations of change while also controlling for unmeasured heterogeneity in the outcomes. Together the first sets of models serve as a test of the first three hypotheses. In full models, we include all religious measures outlined above (i.e., discord, parental baseline, and adolescent change). Despite intercorrelations among the measures, the regression models are stable; OLS variance inflation factors rarely exceed 2.7, well within reasonable boundaries. Both the sample size and the conceptual distinctiveness of the different types of religious measures contribute to model stability.

We then report OLS coefficients from the baseline and lagged dependent-variable models from the sample, split by parent–child religious affiliation congruence, as a test of Hypothesis 4. Finally, we split the sample by parent's religious affiliation and re-estimate the models for a test of Hypothesis 5. In each of these split-sample models, we evaluate whether the religious discord coefficients are significantly different between samples, using a formula outlined by Clogg et al. (1995). We follow with a simple t test that has been used repeatedly (e.g., Myers, 2004; Regnerus, 2002):

$$\frac{b(x) - b(y)}{\sqrt{[se(x)]^2 + [se(y)]^2}}$$

All of the estimates include a school and region cluster term, as well as a weight to account for unequal probability of respondents being sampled. The school cluster increases the standard error of coefficients to account for homogeneity within schools, which are the primary sampling unit for Add Health. To accommodate the weights for Add Health, we generated OLS and LDV regression models in Stata using the *svyreg* function (StataCorp, 2001). Since standardized betas are not readily available using such clustered techniques, we do not report them here (available upon request, using unclustered OLS models). Since the parent–child relationship outcomes are limited to adolescents who report a residential mother or father or comparable figures, such adolescents may be systematically different in terms of their relationship with the resident parent(s) from those whose biological parent(s) are not present in the household. This may lead to biased and inconsistent estimated coefficients. As a solution, we evaluated Heckman models, but they proved to be poor choices, issuing in erratic estimates and model convergence problems.

5. Results

Table 2 displays results from OLS regression models predicting adolescents' self-reports about the quality of their relationship with their respondent parent. The first four models are baseline models evaluating Wave 1 parent–child relations, followed by a model employing the Wave 2 dependent-variable and finally a lagged dependent-variable model. Standing alone, discordant parent–child reports of affiliation, and higher parental reports of religious salience and attendance each predict more unfavorable adolescent reports of parent–child relationship quality. These results only partially support our

Table 2
OLS and LDV estimates of effects on adolescents' reports of parent–child relations, add health

Effect	OLS Wave I DV				OLS Wave II DV	LDV Wave II DV
	#1	#2	#3	#4	#5	#6
Parent religious salience	.15**	.13*	.34***	.33***	.47***	.25**
	(.05)	(.06)	(.06)	(.06)	(.08)	(.07)
Parent attendance	−.06	.03	−.13**	−.10	−.15*	−.08
	(.04)	(.05)	(.05)	(.05)	(.07)	(.06)
Parent affiliates with conservative Protestantism	.02	−.00	−.05	−.06	−.06	−.02
	(.09)	(.09)	(.09)	(.11)	(.11)	(.09)
Parent rates religion as much more important than child does			−.89***	−.77***	−1.00***	−.44*
			(.17)	(.19)	(.23)	(.18)
Parent rates religion as slightly more important than child does			−.70***	−.66***	−.62***	−.20*
			(.10)	(.10)	(.11)	(.09)
Child rates religion as slightly more important than parent does			.07	.08	.31	.21
			(.12)	(.13)	(.19)	(.15)
Child rates religion as much more important than parent does			.11	.12	.32	.17
			(.30)	(.29)	(.43)	(.33)
Parent attends religious services considerably more than child		−.85***		−.53**	−.28	.01
		(.19)		(.20)	(.22)	(.17)
Parent attends religious services slightly more often than child		−.22*		−.06	.15	.18
		(.09)		(.09)	(.11)	(.10)
Child attends religious services slightly more often than parent		.05		−.07	.14	.17
		(.10)		(.11)	(.11)	(.09)
Child attends religious services considerably more than parent		.20		−.04	.00	−.03
		(.16)		(.18)	(.23)	(.19)
Parent and child report different religious affiliations	−.25**	−.15	−.06	−.04	−.05	−.03
	(.08)	(.08)	(.10)	(.10)	(.10)	(.08)
Female	−.58***	−.60***	−.63***	−.64***	−.54***	−.17**
	(.07)	(.08)	(.07)	(.07)	(.07)	(.06)
White	−.09	−.08	.13	.12	.02	−.06
	(.08)	(.09)	(.08)	(.10)	(.08)	(.07)
Respondent parent is female	1.62***	1.63***	1.66***	1.66***	1.04***	.09
	(.14)	(.14)	(.14)	(.14)	(.17)	(.17)
Age	−.22***	−.21***	−.21***	−.20***	−.09***	.02
	(.02)	(.02)	(.02)	(.02)	(.02)	(.02)
Average parental education	−.08	−.12	−.08	−.10	−.10	−.04
	(.11)	(.11)	(.11)	(.11)	(.13)	(.10)
Stepfamily	−.37**	−.33**	−.34**	−.33**	−.39**	−.21*
	(.10)	(.11)	(.11)	(.11)	(.11)	(.10)
All other household types (except bio-intact)	−.30**	−.25***	−.26**	−.24*	−.40***	−.27**
	(.11)	(.11)	(.11)	(.10)	(.10)	(.08)
Number of persons in household	−.06**	−.07**	−.06*	−.06**	−.08**	−.03
	(.02)	(.03)	(.03)	(.03)	(.03)	(.02)
Parental report of child's temper	−.47***	−.45***	−.44***	−.44***	−.27**	−.03
	(.08)	(.09)	(.09)	(.09)	(.10)	(.08)
Social desirability index	.68***	.68***	.65***	.66***	.43***	.06
	(.08)	(.08)	(.08)	(.08)	(.10)	(.07)
Parent gets along well with adolescent	1.03***	1.03***	1.02***	1.02***	1.00***	.42***
	(.07)	(.07)	(.07)	(.07)	(.07)	(.06)
Change in child's service attendance habits between waves					.03	.01
					(.07)	(.06)
Change in child's importance of religion between waves					.34***	.24**
					(.09)	(.07)
Relationship with parent, Wave I						.57***
						(.01)
R-square	.13	.14	.15	.15	.11	.36
N	10154	10154	10154	10154	10154	10154

Notes: Standard errors appear below the coefficient, in parentheses.
  * p < .05.
  ** p < .01.
*** p < .001 (two-tailed tests).

first hypothesis, because—in conjunction with the affinity cluster of the solidarity paradigm—Hypothesis 1 predicts that *all* forms of religious discord would result in poorer-quality parent–child relationships. But when the adolescent reports greater religiosity than the parent, relationship quality does not appear to suffer at all. Based on these first results, then, Hypothesis 1 seems to be a good fit only for certain directions of religious discord (i.e., when parents exceed children). These mixed results support Hypothesis 3; the affect of religious discord on parent–child relations appears to vary by the source of the discord.

In both the full OLS models of Table 2, scenarios where the parent respondent reports higher religious salience (no matter by how much) than does their adolescent child strongly correspond with lower assessments of parent–child relations, com-

Table 3
OLS and LDV estimates of religious discord effects on adolescents' reports of parent–child relations split by parent–child religious affiliation congruence

Effect	OLS Wave I DV		OLS Wave II DV		LDV Wave II DV	
	Congruent	Not congruent	Congruent	Not congruent	Congruent	Not congruent
Religious discord measures						
Parent rates religion as much more important than child does	−1.12***	−.54*	−1.48***a	−.24	−.72**a	.18
	(.26)	(.25)	(.29)	(.39)	(.23)	(.30)
Parent rates religion as slightly more important than child does	−.71***	−.57*	−.74***a	−.25	−.29**a	.12
	(.11)	(.22)	(.11)	(.21)	(.10)	(.18)
Child rates religion as slightly more important than parent does	.28	−.48	.35	.35	.13	.60*
	(.17)	(.31)	(.28)	(.35)	(.16)	(.28)
Child rates religion as much more important than parent does	.36	−.58	1.10*	−.29	.80	.01
	(.42)	(.44)	(.53)	(.68)	(.42)	(.55)
Parent attends religious services considerably more than child	−.44	−.47	−.09	−.57	.11	−.30
	(.23)	(.38)	(.27)	(.49)	(.24)	(.41)
Parent attends religious services slightly more often than child	−.21	.28	.07	.30	.16	.14
	(.12)	(.21)	(.12)	(.25)	(.12)	(.20)
Child attends religious services slightly more often than parent	−.15	.24	.07	.36	.16	.21
	(.14)	(.23)	(.27)	(.32)	(.12)	(.26)
Child attends religious services considerably more than parent	−.26	.48	−.26	.65	−.11	.38
	(.21)	(.26)	(.30)	(.37)	(.25)	(.31)
Model fit statistics						
R-square	.16	.13	.12	.09	.36	.35
N	7524	2630	7524	2630	7524	2630

Notes: Standard errors appear below the coefficients in parenthesis. All models include controls for parent respondent attendance and religious salience, parent religious tradition, parent gender, family structure, number of persons in household, average parental education, adolescent's gender, race, age, child's temper, socially desirable response pattern, and report of how well parent gets along with child. LDV model includes additional controls for change in adolescent's change in attendance and salience between waves and for adolescent report of the parent–child relations at Wave I.
  [a] Estimated coefficient is significantly different between groups at the *p* < .05 level.
  * *p* < .05.
  ** *p* < .01.
  *** *p* < .001 (two-tailed tests).

pared with religiously congruent parents and children. The effects persist in the lagged dependent-variable model, though the coefficients are reduced substantially.

Less evidence suggests that the same manner of association exists when we evaluate attendance discord. In the Wave I full model (model 4), children who attend much less frequently than does their parent respondent are likely to report a significantly poorer relationship with their respondent parent than children who attend as often as their parent does. But as models 5 and 6 demonstrate, higher levels of parental attendance at Wave I have no significant association with parent–child relations at Wave II. As with discordant religious salience, there is no evidence in Table 2 to suggest that the relationship suffers when adolescents attend *more* often than their parents do, lending further support to Hypothesis 3.

No evidence suggests that simple parent–child affiliation congruence matters for relationship quality after accounting for discordant salience and attendance. In other words, children who identify as affiliating with a different religious tradition than does their parent respondent (e.g., Catholic vs. mainline Protestant) do not report better or worse relations with their mother or father. No notable association is found with parental evangelical Protestantism, but baseline parental religious salience is significantly related to more positive adolescent evaluations of the parental relationship at both Waves I and II. Baseline parental attendance is only weakly related, and it tends to be negative when it is significant. Positive change over time in adolescent religious salience corresponds with a more positive evaluation of (or improvement in) the parent–child relationship in both the Wave II OLS and LDV models. The stronger overall efficacy of religious salience here is consonant with other studies of family relations (e.g., Myers, 2004; Pearce and Axinn, 1998). Table 2, then, suggests strong support for the second hypothesis, that discordant salience is more aggravating on adolescent reports of parent–child relationship quality than are discordant attendance or affiliation.[6]

Before moving to the next set of analyses we also note some interesting patterns among the control variables. First, the negative effect of much higher parental religious salience is roughly equal in magnitude (see especially model 5) to the positive effect of a one unit increase in the parent's rating of how well she gets along with her adolescent child. In ancillary analyses (not shown) we observed that the coefficient for much higher parental salience is not significantly altered by the removal of the control for parent rating of the parent–child relationship. This indicates that discordant religious salience is a powerful independent predictor of parent–child relations. Second, the coefficients for the sex of both the adolescent and the parent are strong and significant predictors of parent–child relations, with female adolescents reporting lower quality

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  [6] Surprisingly, a negative gender effect is apparent in all models, even in simple bivariate correlations. The strength of the association, however, declines with the age of the adolescent and is insignificant by age 18. By comparison, Pearce and Axinn (1998) positive association between gender and parent–child relations was found during young adulthood (around age 23).

relationships overall and mothers eliciting more favorable relational reports than fathers. In ancillary analyses (not shown) we investigated models with cross-product interactions to see if the effects of religious discord might differ depending on the gender combination of the parent–child dyad. We did not find any statistically significant differences in the effects of religious discord across the different types of dyads, though the small number of respondent fathers makes it difficult to obtain reliable estimates of this type.

Table 3 splits the sample by parent–child affiliation congruence in order to evaluate our fourth hypothesis—that the effects of discordant religiosity are more detrimental to family units where parent and child share the same affiliation than to units where they do not (e.g., adolescents in mixed-faith families). We report only the discordant religiosity coefficients (controls are included but not displayed). Greater parental religious salience is clearly *more* problematic in families who share the same affiliation than in those who do not. Interestingly, at Wave I the negative impact of greater parental religious salience is not significantly different for congruent versus non-congruent families but in both the Wave II (OLS and LDV) models, the coefficients for greater parental religious salience are significantly different between congruent and non-congruent families. This may indicate that some families which are non-congruent at Wave I may have worked out disputes over religious differences by Wave II. No between-group differences in discordant attendance effects are noted. The results displayed in Table 3 support the fourth hypothesis, at least with respect to discordant religious salience.

Table 4 displays separate OLS and LDV estimates by religious affiliation, and it serves as a test of our fifth hypothesis—that religious discord between parent and child is more detrimental to the relationship among "family-focused" conservative or evangelical Protestants. Evangelical Protestant adolescents who value religion slightly or much less than does their parent respondent report lower evaluations of the parent–child relationship than those who are congruent with their parent on religious salience. These coefficients appear to be different from those of the other religious affiliations, but the differences are largely not statistically significant, at least in the Wave I models. In the Wave II (OLS and LDV) models, the coefficients for evangelical Protestants remain statistically significant—and negative when the parent reports higher religious salience than the adolescent at Wave I. Several of these differences between evangelicals and the other groups are significant in the Wave II models. There is modest statistical evidence to support the fifth hypothesis—that religious discord is more harmful to relationships within evangelical families than within those of other religious affiliations. Once again we find support for Hypothesis 3, that when the adolescent reports higher importance of religion than the respondent parent, the quality of the parent–child relationship is not negatively affected. In fact, we see some evidence that, for evangelicals and Catholics, more religious children report better quality relations with their less religious parent.

Table 4 demonstrates that, overall, discordant attendance continues to be unimportant in predicting adolescent reports of the parent–child relationship quality. One unexpected finding is some evidence that, among Catholics, when the adolescent rates religion as much more important *or* reports attending services slightly more often than the parent respondent, the parent–child relationship is more positively rated.

6. Discussion

Using survey data from American adolescents and parents we have investigated how religious discord affects intergenerational relations among *younger* families. Specifically, we estimated the associations between adolescent reports of parent–child relations and three dimensions of religion: affiliation, salience, and attendance. The results supported our broad hypothesis, that religious discord between parents and their adolescent children is indeed associated with the latter's lower affection toward parents. This finding meshes well with one assertion of the solidarity paradigm, namely that consensus and affection cluster such that low consensus is associated with low affection (Silverstein and Bengtson, 1997). Our findings strongly suggest that those parents who care about religion appear to be frustrated with their children who do not, creating an environment with both opportunities for conflict and for inscribing "normal" conflict with religious meaning. And the greater the magnitude of the discord, the more intense is the negative sentiment from child to parent.

We find that not all kinds of religious discord, however, are equally harmful to family relationships. Differing religious-service attendance habits or even separate religious affiliations, do not seem nearly as harmful, if they are harmful at all, as differing religious salience. While affiliation and attendance discord are associated with lower quality relationships, much of their impact seems to be based in the intergenerational differences in salience. When an adolescent ascribes relatively less importance to religion than her parent, she also often attends religious services less than her parent and/or claims a different religious affiliation than her parent. But even when parent and child attend services at the same rate and claim the same religious tradition, if religion is comparatively more important to the parent the teen tends to feel less affection for the parent.

Reports from adolescents that rated religion as much less important than their parent rated are not as common as one might have predicted. As Table 1 notes, such reports comprise only 11 percent of the sample. Yet, in our analyses these families represent the form of religious discord most strongly associated with parent–child disharmony. Surprisingly, such situations are typically less often about moderately religious kids living in very religious households than about unreligious kids in moderately religious households. In ancillary analyses (results are available upon request) we found that, in cases where an adolescent affords religion *much less* importance than does her parent, about 28 percent of parents reported *never* attending services, and 33 percent reported attending less than once a month. This stands in contrast with the common mental picture of devout parents dragging a reluctant adolescent to church for religious force-feeding. In sum, parent–child

Table 4
OLS estimates of religious discord effects on adolescents' reports of parent–child relations, split by respondent parent's religious affiliation

Effect	OLS Wave I DV				OLS Wave II DV				LDV Wave II DV			
	Evangelical Protestant	Black Protestant	Mainline Protestant	Catholic	Evangelical Protestant	Black Protestant	Mainline Protestant	Catholic	Evangelical Protestant	Black Protestant	Mainline Protestant	Catholic
Parent rates religion as much more important than child does	−1.00**	−.53	−.78**	−.77*	−1.67***	−.54	−.29 [b]	−1.27**	−1.02**	−.19	.19 [b]	−.64
	(.33)	(.35)	(.28)	(.31)	(.45)	(.52)	(.29)	(.48)	(.38)	(.44)	(.27)	(.36)
Parent rates religion as slightly more important than child does	−.95***	−.49	−.65**	−.59***	−1.11***	−.21 [a]	−.54**	−.39 [a]	−.58**	.06 [a]	−.17	.02 [a]
	(.18)	(.30)	(.20)	(.15)	(.24)	(.28)	(.17)	(.21)	(.24)	(.20)	(.18)	(.17)
Child rates religion as slightly more important than parent does	.40	.66	−.01	−.16	.77**	.31	.03	.28	.53	−.04	.02	.30
	(.28)	(.40)	(.31)	(.25)	(.29)	(.61)	(.34)	(.30)	(.28)	(.54)	(31)	(.23)
Child rates religion as much more important than parent does	.97	−.87	.28	−.09	1.18	−2.12	.12	1.27*	.63	−1.73	−.05	1.26*
	(1.03)	(1.80)	(.74)	(.55)	(1.61)	(1.64)	(.91)	(.60)	(1.31)	(1.16)	(.72)	(.50)
Parent attends religious services considerably more than child	−.57	−.16	−.60	−.66	.13	−.32	−.83	−.23	.36	−.25	−.46	.22
	(.51)	(.37)	(.38)	(.40)	(.53)	(.42)	(.43)	(.38)	(.39)	(.33)	(.36)	(.26)
Parent attends religious services slightly more often than child	−.18	.02	−.04	−.06	−.02	.10	−.01	.27	.05	.08	.02	.32
	(.19)	(.24)	(.24)	(.15)	(.24)	(.25)	(.23)	(.21)	(.22)	(.25)	(.21)	(.18)
Child attends religious services slightly more often than parent	−.20	.41	−.01	−.27	−.13	.58	−.12	.48*	.00	.36	−.16	.61**
	(.32)	(.34)	(.18)	(.16)	(.27)	(.30)	(.24)	(.22)	(.23)	(.25)	(.21)	(.19)
Child attends religious services considerably more than parent	−.45	−.61	.27	.25	−.71	−.02	.39	.25	−.43	.28	.21	−.01
	(.35)	(.65)	(.31)	(.29)	(.43)	(.51)	(.39)	(.45)	(.38)	(.43)	(.33)	(.40)
Model fit statistics												
R-square	.14	.12	.20	.18	.11	.10	.14	.15	.32	.35	.39	.40
N	1742	1585	1977	3048	1742	1585	1977	3048	1742	1585	1977	3048

Notes: Standard errors appear below the coefficient, in parentheses. All models include controls for parent respondent attendance and religious salience, parent gender, family structure, number of persons in household, average parental education, adolescent's gender, race, age, child's temper, socially desirable response pattern, and report of how well parent gets along with child. LDV models include additional controls for change in adolescent's change in attendance and salience between waves and for adolescent report of the parent–child relations at Wave I.

[a] Estimated coefficient is significantly different from evangelical Protestant at the $p < .05$ level.

[b] Estimated coefficient is significantly different from evangelical Protestant at the $p < .01$ level.

* $p < .05$.

** $p < .01$.

*** $p < .001$ (two-tailed tests).

eligious discord is really not normative, and when present, it is less often about devout parents and their rebellious children and more often about religious-but-uninvolved parents and their religiously unsocialized adolescent children.[7]

On the flip side, we find some slight evidence that when the adolescent values religion *more* highly and/or attends services *more* frequently than their parent(s), the adolescent may report a better relationship with parents. In these cases, religious teens may be responding to religious messages to obey their parents or otherwise maintain family harmony, perhaps in the hopes that their less religious parent will be persuaded to become more religious. Future research into this phenomenon can help to clarify exactly why religious discord is less harmful to parent–child relations when it is the adolescent who is more religious.

While affiliation discord was less important as a predictor, we did find that affiliation is an important moderator of other religious associations with parent–child relational quality. The co-occurrence of religious salience discord and lower quality of family relations is more prominent in families where parent and child report the *same* religious affiliation (Mahoney, 2005). We believe this indicates that when a parent and child have different affiliations the religious differences may be more out in the open; parents and children with different affiliations may agree to disagree about religious issues. Conversely, when adolescents and parents share the same religious affiliation (as over 70 percent of our sample does), differences in religious salience may contribute to latent unresolved tensions, or underlie disputes about religiously charged matters such as sexual morality or obedience.

The general relationship between religious discord and intergenerational relations was slightly more prominent among evangelical (conservative) Protestants, though the trend could hardly be called robust. Though we hypothesized that discord in religious salience and attendance might be worse for parents and children from more conservative religious traditions, evangelical Protestants are clearly not alone in their valuing of family relations. Religious discord appears to be about equally harmful across the major Christian religious traditions in the United States. Investigating the effects of religious discord in other (non-Christian) religions remains fruitful ground for scientists.

Although discord was our primary analytic focus, some other independent effects of religiosity are noteworthy. Specifically, religious change over time in the lives of adolescents corresponded with improved parent–child relations, especially an increase in the importance of religion (not necessarily attendance) to the adolescent. Additionally, a parent's baseline religious salience consistently corresponded with a more positive adolescent assessment of the relationship. Structured social integration habits (like church attendance) appear less important for family relations than do the overall level of religious salience *and* the extent of parent–child congruence in religious salience (Pearce and Axinn, 1998). Wimberley (1989) contends that religious salience acts as a stimulant to religious cognitive structures, a light switch of sorts that—if active—turns on the force of religious cognitive structures and moral directives about general family themes (such as their proper formation and function). Simple exposure (via attendance) appears much less effective at generating norm adherence than does valuing religion personally. Religious involvement can still be indirectly helpful to family relations, through increased social support and affirmation as well as guidance for addressing the challenges inherent in parent–child relationships (Wilcox, 2002).

Some measures of religious discord were unavailable to us, including measures of belief in biblical literalism, disagreement over which may be quite influential and bears investigation (Curtis and Ellison, 2002). Future studies of the relationship between religion and family relations would also do well to consider reciprocal relationship possibilities, as well as comparisons between religious discord and other aspects of family solidarity (like function, structure, and norms). Additionally, for our adolescent respondents in two-parent families, we were unable to measure the religious attendance and salience of both parents. What happens to parent–child relations when parents disagree about religion? Based on our findings in this study, we suspect that if parents present a unified religious front to a religiously different teen, the parent–child relationship suffers. A family where parents differ religiously may offer more room for diversity of beliefs and behaviors and thus be less hostile to a teen who does not conform to the religion of one or both parents. In any case, we can do no more than speculate. Perhaps future qualitative studies (or surveys that interview both parents) will help answer this question.

Other studies have shown that religious congruence increases family solidarity among adult parents and children at various stages in the life course (Pearce and Axinn, 1998). This study contributes to that literature by examining religious discord from the perspective of adolescents. But how do patterns of religious congruence and discord *change* over the life course? Do the negative affects of religious-salience discord persist into adult relationships, or do parents and children tend to become more congruent over time? As longitudinal studies like Add Health extend further into adulthood, these questions will provide fertile ground for future investigations.

Finally, the empirical connections between religiosity, religious discord, and parent–child relations documented here *may* be stronger than we have initially detected. That is, religiosity and its accompanying measures (such as congruence and change) may benefit or harm family relations *indirectly* as well as directly, through such intervening outcomes as parenting practices and approaches, marital interaction strategies, and marital conflict and divorce. Future research may investigate these mediating factors.

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[7] Davie (1994) refers to this form (more common in Europe) as "belief without belonging". Typical scenarios that might account for parents who indicated high religious salience but low attendance may include those who are (a) religious but not actively involved in a church at present, (b) very religious in the past, but not presently involved, or (c) quite devout when compared to the adolescent's own irreligiousness (but perhaps not by other standards).

7. Conclusion

Divorce and remarriage patterns in the West have created a complex web of family structures, often leaving "ambiguous and sometimes tenuous lines of responsibility across generations" (Silverstein and Bengtson, 1997, 434). Add to this web an increasing religious heterogeneity within intergenerational family systems, and the connections among religion, family, and responsibility become even more strained (Kalmijn, 1998). These trends are often taken as motivation for renewed religious efforts to promote strong families and consolidate children's religious socialization (Wilcox, 2004). Sometimes, however, this socialization is rejected by adolescents, or parents themselves drop out of organized religion. The resulting religious discord can be extremely detrimental to parent–child relationships, as one party dismisses concepts that remain elemental—or even sacred—to the other. Norms about anticipated relations and appropriate actions become muddied, as conflicting religious views—each with its own claims upon life and family, battle for acceptance and perhaps, dominance. During adolescence, children begin to form adult relationships with parents at the same time that they are distancing themselves from parental authority. In the turbulent confluence of these two developmental streams, it appears that adolescents and parents who share religious values are better equipped to enjoy the resulting rapids, rather than be broken apart by them.

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