



Published in final edited form as:

J Relig Spiritual Aging. 2015 ; 27(4): 343–357. doi:10.1080/15528030.2015.1073208.

Characterizing Change in Religious and Spiritual Identity among a National Sample of African American Adults

Beverly Rosa Williams, PhD, Cheryl L. Holt, PhD, Daisy Le, MPH/MA, and Emily Shultz, PhD OTR/L, CFLE

Abstract

We explore changes in self-reported religious/spiritual identity in 313 African American adults over an average period of 2.5 years. Changes in religious and spiritual identity were reported by half of the participants and were associated with age, education, and income. The least stability was observed among respondents identifying as religious/not spiritual at baseline but shifting to religious and spiritual at follow-up. This trend was significant for respondents age 55 and over. Faith-based interventions for African Americans should consider viewing religious and spiritual identity as a fluid rather than fixed characteristic assessing changes in spiritual and religious attributes over time.

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Faith-based organizations are important institutions in African American communities, serving both religious and spiritual needs while promoting a sense of identity, belonging, and cohesion (Giger, Appel, Davidhizar, & Davis, 2008; Pattillo-McCoy, 1998). There is ongoing interest in the influence that religious and spiritual attributes exert on health behaviors among African Americans (Koenig, King, & Carson, 2012), but we know little about the stability of religious and spiritual identity over time in this population. While there is some evidence for the durability of the religious dimension of personality during the adult years (Pulkkinen & Kokko, 2000), a large body of research documents that religious and spiritual dispositions and practices can exhibit marked variation, particularly during early and late adulthood (Barry, Nelson, Davarya, & Urry, 2010; Button, Stallings, Rhee, Corley, & Hewitt, 2011; Hayward, Maselko & Meador, 2012; Heinz & Baruss, 2001). However, there remains a paucity of research examining religious and spiritual change particularly among African American populations. Studies in this area have generally examined developmental changes occurring in late adolescence and emerging adulthood (Lopez, Huynh, & Fuligni, 2011; Stoppa & Lefkowitz, 2010). To the best of our knowledge, there is limited or no research focusing on the stability of religious and spiritual identity among a national sample of African American adults.

Religion and Spirituality

As theoretical constructs, religion and spirituality can be used jointly to describe the totality of an individual's beliefs, attitudes, behaviors and perspectives toward the sacred (Hill et al., 2000). For research purposes, the religion/spirituality construct often is operationalized as a multidimensional variable comprised of faith-based beliefs, transcendent experiences, and

personal and congregational practices (Park, Lim, Newton, Suresh, Bliss, 2014). However, religion and spirituality also have been seen as distinct, but overlapping and co-occurring constructs. According to Thoresen (1998, p. 415), religion is “an organized system of [religious] beliefs, practices, rituals, and symbols”, while spirituality involves “one's transcendent relationship to some form of higher power.”

There is evidence supporting the use of religion and spirituality as separate constructs. Empirical research designed to examine the association between religiosity and spirituality with psychological wellbeing found distinct patterns of linkages between religious participation and spirituality with various aspects of emotional wellbeing (Greenfield, Vaillant, & Marks, 2009). Qualitative research with African American church members revealed some areas of commonality in interpretations of religiosity and spirituality, while highlighting salient distinctions (Holt, Clark & Osuji, 2006). The strongest area of convergence was found for the belief component of religion and spirituality, with participants focusing on a shared context of meaning guiding religious practices and spiritual focus. In areas of divergence, the idea of religion more frequently was represented in categories related to behavior and structure, while the notion of the spiritual more frequently appeared in classifications related to inner experiences of a higher being.

Religious Identity and Spiritual Identity

Religiosity and spirituality are human attributes that contribute to the development of a meaningful sense of self, provide salience to social roles, and link individuals to social institutions (Ellor & McGregor, 2011; Kiesling, Sorell, Montgomery, & Colwell, 2006). Ysseldyk and colleagues (2010) articulate how religiosity informs personal and social identity, characterizing religious identification as a unique perspective which carries with it membership in a distinctive social group (Ysseldyk, Matheson, & Anisman, 2010). In their work, Kiesling and colleagues (2006, p. 1269) describe spiritual identity as comprising “a persistent sense of self that addresses ultimate questions about the nature, purpose, and meaning of life.” As social phenomenon, religious identity and spiritual identity are shaped by reference groups, manifested in the context of group norms and cultural values (Hill, et al., 2000), and connected to other forms of social classification such as race, gender, and socio-economic status (Pesut and Reimer-Kirkham, 2010). In research with African Americans, religious identity has been conceptualized and measured as ideational and affective closeness to church-going people (Taylor, Chatters, & Brown, 2014), while spiritual identity has been defined in terms of how one views oneself “as a spiritual being or person of faith” (Washington, Moxley, Garriott, & Weinberger, 2009). In the present study, we conceptualized and assessed religious and spiritual identity by asking participants if they identified as religious, spiritual, both or neither.

The role of religious and spiritual identity in emotional health has been examined, providing evidence of a mediating role for religious social identity in the positive relationship between religious participation and psychological wellbeing (Greenfield & Marks, 2007). Similarly, Keyes and Reitzes identified a role for religious identity in explaining variations in the relationship between self-esteem and depression among older adults (Keyes & Reitzes, 2007). Qualitative inquiry has provided a window into how the spiritual and religious self is

understood and experienced among African Americans (Holt, Schulz, & Wynn, 2009; Nelson-Becker, 2003). However, surveys of the general population exploring religion and spirituality do not include enough African Americans to make meaningful characterizations (Chatters, Taylor, and Jackson, 2009), resulting in insufficient data on how demographic factors shape spiritual identity and practice among this population. Likewise, little is known about the correlates of religious and spiritual identity as personal and social attributes accompanying or existing outside of formal faith-based participation among African Americans.

The purpose of this paper is to (1) examine the prevalence of self-reported religious and spiritual identification among a national sample of African American adults, (2) describe changes in self-reported religious and spiritual self-identification over time and (3) identify sociodemographic factors associated with these temporal shifts in religious/spiritual identity.

METHODS

Data were derived from Wave 1 (December 2009 – July 2010) and Wave 2 (April 2012 – May 2013) of the Religion and Health in African Americans (RHIAA II) study, a national telephone survey of randomly-selected African American adults using probability-based methods to develop a call list of households from all 50 states. A detailed account of the RHIAA-II study methods were reported previously (Holt, Schulz, Williams, Clark & Wang, 2012). Wave 1 of the RHIAA II study sample consisted of 803 participants recruited through OpinionAmerica, an external data collection subcontractor whose professional interviewers contacted households via telephone, recruiting the first eligible adult at each home. Eligibility criteria included self-identification as an African American and age 21 years or older. After hearing an informed consent script, the individual provided verbal consent for study participation. Interview items included measures of religiosity and spirituality, psychosocial constructs, and physical and emotional functioning. Participant sex, age, relationship status, educational attainment, work status, and annual household income before taxes were assessed as part of a demographic module. Upon completion of the 45-minute telephone interview, participants were mailed a \$25.00 gift card.

At Wave 2, 39.1% of the Wave 1 participants (n=314) were retained for the follow-up interview approximately 2.5 years after Wave 1. Retained participants tended to be older and retired from the work force but did not differ in religious involvement from participants who were lost to follow-up.

Study Variables

Religious identity and spiritual identity were assessed by asking participants to indicate whether they considered themselves religious, spiritual, both or neither. Validity of the religious and spiritual identity item was supported through significant associations with established measures of religious involvement (Lukwago et al. 2001) and daily spiritual experiences (Underwood & Teresi, 2002), respectively. Responses to the religious and spiritual identity item were organized into a typology composed of four groups: (1) religious/not spiritual, (2) spiritual/not religious, (3) both religious and spiritual, (4) neither religious nor spiritual.

Analysis

The data were analyzed using SPSS 21.0 for Mac. Descriptive and chi-square analyses were conducted for the sociodemographic and religious/spiritual identity variables. Chi-square analyses were used to examine change in religious/spiritual identity from baseline to follow-up and to test for significance within each of the following socio-demographic variables: sex, age, marital status, education, education levels, employment status, income, and income levels.

FINDINGS

Sociodemographic Characteristics

A total of 313 participants responded to the religious/spiritual identity item at both baseline and follow-up, and therefore comprise the analytic sample. As Table 1 shows, significant differences were found in sociodemographic characteristics between baseline and follow-up values in the areas of age ($p<.001$) and employment ($p<.001$), primarily driven by an increase in the proportion of respondents who moved into the 55 and older age group and those who entered retirement.

Religious and Spiritual Identity

As Table 2 illustrates, at baseline roughly one quarter of participants self-identified as religious/not spiritual (26.8%) and another quarter as spiritual/not religious (24.9%). Just over two-fifths of respondents (43.5%) classified themselves as both religious and spiritual. At follow-up slightly over one-fifth of participants self-identified as religious/not spiritual (20.8%) and another quarter as spiritual/not religious (25.6%). Close to one-half of respondents (48.6%) classified themselves as “both religious and spiritual.” Just over 1 in twenty respondents indicated they were neither religious nor spiritual (5.1%). At the follow-up interview, self-reported religious and spiritual identity remained stable in half of the cases (50.8%).

Significant differences were observed between baseline and follow-up values for religious and spiritual identity. The greatest stability in religious and spiritual identity was observed for participants who described themselves as “both religious and spiritual” at baseline, with 61.8% of this group endorsing the same identity at follow-up. In contrast, only 32.1% of participants with a baseline identity as “religious/not spiritual” chose the same response at follow-up (data not shown). The data further revealed a 6 percentage point drop in the proportion of respondents self-identifying as “religious/not spiritual, but virtually no change in the percentage of participants who self-identified as “spiritual/not religious.” The decline in the “religious/not spiritual” category corresponded with a 5 percentage point increase in the “both religious and spiritual” classification observed between baseline and follow-up. Values for the “neither religious nor spiritual” category remained low and virtually unchanged over the study period.

Sociodemographic Correlates of Change in Religious/Spiritual Identity

In 49.2% of cases ($n=154$), self-reported religious and spiritual identity changed from baseline to follow-up. Table 3 displays the sociodemographic correlates of **any** change in

religious/spiritual identity observed in this study. Education and income were found to be associated with change in religious/spiritual identity over time. Compared to respondents with a high school education or beyond, respondents with less than a high school education were more likely to change their religious/spiritual classification over the study period. Likewise, compared to respondents with annual incomes >\$30,000, respondents with annual incomes ≤\$30,000 were more likely to report a change in their religious/spiritual identity from baseline to follow-up. When income levels were examined, the highest proportion of change was observed for those earning ≤\$5,000 per year.

Because the highest percentage of change was observed for the 43 participants reporting a change from religious/not spiritual to both religious and spiritual, a secondary analysis was conducted to delve more deeply into this subgroup. This group represents 13.5% of the total sample and 27.9% of participants who changed their identity from baseline to follow-up. While the frequency of change did not vary by sex, marital status, education or employment status, a statistically significant difference in age was identified (data not shown). Compared to respondents who were under the age of 55 years at baseline, a significantly higher proportion of respondents age 55 years and older cohort changed from “religious/not spiritual” to “both religious and spiritual” between baseline and follow-up ($p=.023$).

DISCUSSION

The current study examined prevalence of self-reported religious and spiritual identity among a national sample of African American adults, a population for whom religiosity and spirituality have been salient features of social life. The study found that at baseline over 95% of respondents identified as religious, spiritual or both, reflecting the importance of religiosity and spirituality in African American heritage and culture. Furthermore, those who self-identified as religious or spiritual tended to maintain a religious and/or spiritual identification over the study period, signifying the embedded and habituated nature of religious orientation among African American adults. There were, however, a relatively high and perhaps unexpectedly great number of changes (in ~50 percent of participants) *within* religious and/or spiritual identity over the relatively brief 2.5-year study period. Rather than a personal and social attribute that persists unchanged throughout adulthood, these findings suggest that religious/spiritual identity is subject to change among African Americans over a relatively short period of time.

The study also confirmed that for over half of the respondents, religious identity and spirituality identity did not co-occur, signifying that the distinction between the two constructs is a salient one for many African American adults. This is consistent with previous research that exploring understandings of religion and spirituality among African American adults (Holt, Clark & Osuji, 2006).

Further, change in religious/spiritual identity was associated with participant demographic characteristics such as socioeconomic status (SES), with lower income and lower education associated with a shift from one identity category to another. This may reflect a response to distress incurred by African Americans with lower incomes during the economic downturn of the observation period. Such an interpretation is consistent with the previous findings on

the role religiosity and spirituality as resources for coping with relative deprivation in the African American community (Utsey et al., 2007).

Although the proportion of individuals reporting changes in religious/spiritual identity declined as educational levels increased, the greatest stability in religious/spiritual identity was observed for individuals on the lower end (grades 1-8) and upper end (doctoral/other advanced degrees) of the educational scale. We can only surmise what factors mitigate against changes in religious/spiritual identity among the least-educated and most highly educated African Americans. Perhaps they share a social status that situates them outside of the mainstream of the community, protecting them from the impact of shifts in social and economic circumstances. The inverse relationship between educational level and proportion of change supports previous research reporting that African Americans with more years of formal education attributed more importance to spirituality than their less-educated counterparts (Taylor, Chatters, & Jackson, 2009). However, more recent work by Taylor and colleagues (2014) found a negative association between education and spiritual identity among African Americans.

Interestingly, we did not identify significant differences by sex, marital status or employment status in the frequency of change in religious-spiritual identity, suggesting that African American men and women equally are susceptible to shifts in religious and spiritual identity, and that those shifts are not limited to any particular marital or employment status.

During the study period, the study population experienced increasing age. We observed small, but not statistically significant, differences by age in the frequency of religious-spiritual identity change. However, the significance of age emerged only when we looked at the change from an identity characterized as religious/not spiritual to one categorized as both religious and spiritual. Indeed, the most frequently reported change involved the assumption of a spiritual identity among those with previous identification as “religious/not spiritual.” This change was seen most often in participants who were age 55 years or older. This is consistent with recent research among African Americans that found a positive association between older age and spiritual identity in terms perceived closeness in feelings and ideas to religious and church-attending individuals (Taylor, Chatters, & Brown, 2014).

Given the persistence of African American spiritual tradition as an important social and cultural heritage, the proportion of religiously-identified individuals at baseline who did not endorse a spiritual identity until late middle age and older adulthood was surprising. There is evidence from research with predominately white populations that as individuals age, they become more spiritual, especially if there is a history of religious participation. For example, using longitudinal data, Wink and Dillon (2002) found a significant increase in spiritual identity between late middle age and older adulthood for white persons, predicted, in part, by religious involvement in early adulthood. However, to the best of our knowledge there is little or no evidence of the adoption of a spiritual identity among African American persons who previously identified as religious/not spiritual.

The relationship between aging and spirituality has been approached from a psychosocial perspective. In narrative work with marginalized older adults, Nelson-Becker (2004), found

that their life stories contain numerous references to religion and spirituality which seemed to play a role in enhancing a capacity for coping and supporting a process for aging well. Likewise, Atchley (2006) articulated how spiritual growth in later life fosters an appreciation for the value of nurturing an inner life, which in turn, serves as a buffer against aging-related deficits. Research suggests that spiritual coping is utilized more often by African American older adults than their white counterparts and that African Americans are more likely than whites to rely on God as their principal source of social support (Eun-Kyoung & Sharpe, 2007).

There has been a growing interest in exploring how the characteristics of religious/spiritual identity undergo change across the life and in insulating their distinctive qualities among older adults. In a review of research on spirituality and aging, Dolby (2006) reported that while some features of spirituality remain unchanged into older adulthood, interpersonal (relationships/concerns for younger generations) developmental (self-transcendence), and existential issues (reconciling death) can engender spiritual changes among older adults. In his examination of older adult spirituality, Eggers (2003) found that is characterized by intrinsic religious questioning, purpose in life, and life satisfaction. In a similar vein, Mattes (2005, p. 55) described aging as vehicle of spiritual formation, characterizing aging as “a process of discovery and pondering, reminiscing, and acting, integrating and meaning making meaning. As a component of successful aging, the notion of “positive spirituality” has emerged in the gerontological literature as an “internalized personal relation with the sacred or transcendent that . . . promotes the wellness and welfare of self and others” (Crowther, Parker, Achenbaum, Larimore, & Koenig, 2002, p. 614).

Limitations

The results of this study should be understood in the temporal context from which they were derived. The relatively brief average follow-up period of 2.5 years may not be sufficient to provide a window into the patterns of fluctuations in religious and spiritual identity among adults. It is possible that a greater time interval would allow us to study change in a more meaningful way across the adult lifespan. That said, it is compelling that we observed the amount of change we did in a short period of time. Finally, the present results reflecting change in religious/spiritual identity may be due to measurement error across the two surveys. However, as previously discussed, we did attempt to validate the identity assessment through examining correlations with existing religiosity and spirituality surveys. Still, while it is unknowable how much of the present change could be due to measurement error, it is unlikely that measurement error would account for the significant degree of change that was observed in the present study.

CONCLUSION

Our research supports the relevance of distinguishing between religious identity and spirituality identity in research with African American adults and the appropriateness of using such distinctions in empirical research. We also documented that among African American adults, religious identity and spiritual identity are subject to change over time.

This highlights to the importance of periodic assessments of these attributes, especially when religion and spirituality are used as predictor variables in health outcomes research.

The emergence of a spiritual dimension in the lives of previously “religious- not spiritual” African American adults represents a potentially rich area of life course research. Age-competent health care interventions for older African Americans require an appreciation of spirituality as a durable thread woven into the social and cultural fabric of their lives (Newlin, Knafl, & Melkus, 2002). It is not enough for providers to familiarize themselves with the religious preferences of older adult patients, it also is necessary to be informed about the role of spirituality in the patient's life. It is equally important for providers to view religious identity and spiritual identity as fluid rather than fixed elements of the patient's profile and to assess changes in spiritual and religious attributes over time.

Finally, faith-based programs for promoting healthier lifestyles are growing in popularity, serving as a link between the academic, medical and religious communities. Integrating spirituality into faith-based interventions for older African Americans promotes a more holistic approach to aging and fosters a view of older adulthood as a period of continued growth and development amidst the challenges and losses that can accompany advancing years (Kimble, 2002). Research suggests that older adults are receptive to the inclusion of spirituality in health promotion interventions (Crowther, Parker, Achenbaum, Larimore, & Koenig, 2002).

REFERENCES

- Atchley RC. Continuity, spiritual growth, and coping in later adulthood. *Journal of Religion, Spirituality & Aging*. 2006; 18(2-3):19–29.
- Barry CM, Nelson L, Davarya S, Urry S. Religiosity and spirituality during the transition to adulthood. *International Journal of Behavioral Development*. 2010; 34:311–324.
- Button TMM, Stallings MC, Rhee SH, Corley RP, Hewitt JK. The etiology of stability and change in religious values and religious attendance. *Behavior Genetics*. 2011; 41:201–210. [PubMed: 20711848]
- Chatters LM, Taylor RJ, Jackson JS. Correlates of Spirituality Among African Americans and Caribbean Blacks in the United States: Findings from the National Survey of American Life. *Journal of Black Psychology*. 2009; 35(3):317–342. [PubMed: 21031157]
- Crowther MR, Parker MW, Achenbaum WA, Larimore WL, Koenig HG. Rowe and Kahn's model of successful aging revisited: Positive spirituality—the forgotten factor. *The Gerontologist*. 2002; 42(5):613–620. [PubMed: 12351796]
- Dalby PI. Is there a process of spiritual change or development with ageing? A critical review of research. *Aging & Mental Health*. 2006; 10(1):4–12. [PubMed: 16338808]
- Eggers SJ. Older adult spirituality: What is it? A factor analysis of three related instruments. *Journal of Religious Gerontology*. 2003; 14(4):3–33.
- Ellor JW, McGregor JA. Reflections on the words “religion,” “spiritual well-being,” and “spirituality.”. *Journal of Religion, Spirituality & Aging*. 2011; 23:275–278.
- Eun-Kyoung OL, Sharpe T. Understanding religious/spiritual coping and support resources among African American older adults: A mixed-method approach. *Journal of Religion, Spirituality & Aging*. 2007; 19(3):55–57.
- Giger JN, Appel SJ, Davidhizar R, Davis C. Church and spirituality in the lives of the African American community. *Journal of Transcultural Nursing*. 2008; 19:375–383. [PubMed: 18650398]

- Greenfield EA, Marks NE. Religious social identity as an explanatory factor for associations between more frequent formal religious participation and psychological well-being. *International Journal for the Psychology of Religion*. 2007; 17(3):245–259. [PubMed: 18698380]
- Greenfield EA, Vaillant GE, Marks NF. Do formal religious participation and spiritual perceptions have independent linkages with diverse dimension of psychological well-being? *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*. 2009; 50(2):196–202. [PubMed: 19537460]
- Hayward RD, Maseko J, Meador KG. Recollections of childhood religious identity and behavior as a function of adult religiousness. *International Journal for the Psychology of Religion*. 2012; 22(1): 79–88. [PubMed: 22844186]
- Heintz LM, Baruss I. Spirituality in late adulthood. *Psychological Reports*. 2001; 88:651. [PubMed: 11507998]
- Hill PC, Pargament KI, Hood RW, McCullough ME, Swyers JP, Larson DB, Zinnbauer BJ. Conceptualizing religion and spirituality: Points of commonality, points of departure. *Journal for the Theory of social Behaviour*. 2000; 30(1):51–77.
- Holt, CL.; Clark, EM.; Osuji, T. African Americans' church members' definitions of religiosity, spirituality, and faith.. In: Sylvan, D.; Ambrose, editors. *Religion and Psychology: New Research*. Nova Science Publishers, Inc.; Hauppauge, NY: 2006. p. 205-222.
- Holt CL, Schulz E, Williams BR, Clark EM, Wang MQ. Assessment of religious and spiritual capital in African American communities. *Journal of Religion & Health*. 2012; 51(4):1061–1074. [PubMed: 22810197]
- Holt CL, Schulz E, Wynn TA. Perceptions of the religion-health connection among African Americans in the southeastern United States: sex, age, and urban/rural differences. *Health Education & Behavior*. 2009; 36(1):62–80. [PubMed: 17652617]
- Keyes CL, Reitzes DC. The role of religious identity in the mental health of older working and retired adults. *Aging and Mental Health*. 2007; 11(4):434–443. [PubMed: 17612807]
- Kimble MA. Beyond the biomedical paradigm: Generating a spiritual vision of ageing. *Journal of Religious Gerontology*. 2002; 12(3-4):31–41.
- Kiesling C, Sorell GT, Montgomery MJ, Colwell RK. Identity and spirituality: a psychosocial exploration of the sense of spiritual self. *Developmental Psychology*. 2006; 42(6):1269–1277. [PubMed: 17087559]
- Koenig, HC.; King, DE.; Carson, VB. *Handbook of Religion and Health*. Oxford University Press; New York: 2012.
- Lopez AB, Huynh VW, Fuligni AJ. A longitudinal study of religious identity and participation during adolescence. *Child Development*. 2011; 82(4):1297–1309. [PubMed: 21679174]
- Lukwago SL, Kreuter MW, Bucholtz DC, Holt CL, Clark EM. Development and validation of brief scales to measure collectivism, religiosity, racial pride, and time orientation in urban African American women. *Family and Community Health*. 2001; 24:63–71. [PubMed: 11563945]
- Mattes R. Spiritual need one: Spiritual development: The aging process: A journey of lifelong spiritual formation. *Journal of Religion, Spirituality & Aging*. 2005; 17(3-4):55–72.
- Nelson-Becker HB. Practical philosophies: Interpretations of religion and spirituality by African American and European American elders. *Journal of Religious Gerontology*. 2003; 14(2-3):85–99.
- Nelson-Becker HB. Spiritual, religious, nonspiritual, and nonreligious narratives in marginalized older adults: A typology of coping styles. *Journal of Religion, Spirituality & Aging*. 2004; 17(1-2):21–38.
- Newlin K, Knafl K, Melkus GD. African-American spirituality: A concept analysis. *Advances in Nursing Science*. 2002; 25(2):57–70. [PubMed: 12484641]
- Park CL, Lim H, Newton M, Suresh DP, Bliss DE. Dimensions of religiousness and spirituality as predictors of well-being in advanced chronic heart failure patients. *Journal of Religion and Health*. 2014; 53(2):579–590. [PubMed: 23616124]
- Pattillo-McCoy M. Church Culture as a strategy of action in the Black community. *American Sociological Review*. 1998; 63(6):767–84.
- Pesut B, and Reimer-Kirkham S. Situated clinical encounters in the negotiator of religious and spirituality plurality: a critical ethnography. *International Journal of Nursing Studies*. 2010; 47(7): 815–825. [PubMed: 20022006]

- Pulkkinen L, Kokko K. Identity development in adulthood: A longitudinal study. *Journal of Research in Personality*. 2000; 34:445–470.
- Stoppa TM, Lefkowitz ES. Longitudinal changes in religiosity among emerging adult college students. *Journal of Adolescent Research*. 2010; 20(1):23–38.
- Taylor RJ, Chatters LM, Brown RK. African American religious participation. *Review of Religious Research*. 2014; 6(4):513–538. [PubMed: 25580034]
- Thoresen, CE. Spirituality, health, and science: The coming revival?. In: Roth-Roemer, S.; Kurpius, SR., editors. *The Emerging Role of Counseling Psychology in Health Care*. Vol. 1998. W. W. Norton; New York: 1998. p. 409-431.
- Underwood LG, Teresi JA. The daily spiritual experience scale: Development, theoretical description, reliability, exploratory factor analysis, and preliminary construct validity using health-related data. *Annals of Behavioral Medicine*. 2002; 24(1):22–33. [PubMed: 12008791]
- Utsey SO, Bolden MA, Williams III O, Lee A, Lanier Y, Newsome C. Spiritual well-being as a mediator of the relation between culture-specific coping and quality of life in a community sample of African Americans. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*. 2007; 38:123–136.
- Wink P, Dillon M. Spiritual development across the adult life course: Findings from a longitudinal study. *Journal of Adult Development*. 2002; 9(1):79–94.
- Ysseldyk R, Matheson K, Anisman H. Religiosity as identity: toward an understanding of religion from a social identity perspective. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*. 2010; 14(1):60–71. [PubMed: 20089847]

Table 1

Baseline and Follow-Up Sociodemographic Characteristics (N= 313)

	Baseline		Follow-up		P-Value
	N	%	N	%	
Sex					
Female	136	43.5%	136	43.5	
Male	177	56.5%	177	56.5	
Age					<.001
18-54 years	110	35.1	81	25.9	
55 years	203	64.9	232	74.1	
Marital Status					.08
Married/partnered	128	41.0	123	39.3	
Single/never married	90	28.8	79	25.6	
Separated/divorced	48	15.4	58	18.8	
Widowed	46	14.7	48	15.6	
Education Levels					.25
Grades 1-8	6	01.9	11	03.5	
Grades 9-11	21	06.7	23	07.5	
Grade 12 or GED	104	33.2	88	28.6	
1-3 years Higher Ed	79	25.2	92	29.4	
College Graduate	68	21.7	57	18.5	
Masters Degree	29	09.3	28	09.1	
Doctoral Degree	06	01.9	09	02.9	
Employment Status *					<.001
Full Time	86	27.7	70	22.7	
Part Time	39	12.5	25	08.1	
Unemployed	41	13.2	31	10.0	
On Disability	35	11.3	42	13.6	
Retired	110	35.4	141	45.6	
Income Levels **					.12
<\$5000	20	07.8	20	07.1	
\$5001 - \$10,000	25	09.7	34	12.1	
\$10,001 - \$20,000	42	16.3	45	16.0	
\$20,001 - \$30,000	38	14.7	54	19.2	
\$30,001 - \$40,000	27	10.5	26	09.3	
\$40,001 - \$50,000	25	09.7	24	08.5	
\$50,001 - \$60,000	15	05.8	23	08.2	
>\$60,000.	66	25.6	55	19.6	

*Data missing for 1 respondent

**Data missing for 29 respondents

Author Manuscript

Author Manuscript

Author Manuscript

Author Manuscript

Table 2

Change in Religious and Spiritual Identity Over Study Period (N=313)

	Baseline		Follow-up		<i>P</i> -value
	N	%	N	%	
Religious/Not Spiritual	84	26.8	65	20.8	.003
Spiritual/Not Religious	78	24.9	80	25.6	<.001
Both Spiritual and Religious	136	43.5	152	48.6	<.001
Neither Spiritual nor Religious	15	4.8	16	5.1	<.001

Table 3

Sociodemographic Correlates of Change in Religious-Spiritual Identity (N=154)

	Across Group Distribution of Sociodemographic Characteristics	With-in Groups Sociodemographic Correlates of Change	P-value
Sex			.538
Female	56.5%	49.1%	
Male	43.5%	49.2%	
Age			.287
18-54 years	37.0%	51.8%	
55 years	63.0%	47.8%	
Marital Status			.392
Married/partnered	37.7%	45.3%	
Single/never married	31.8%	54.4%	
Separated/divorced	17.5%	56.2%	
Widowed	13.0%	43.5%	
Education			.016
<High School	48.7%	57.3%	
High School	51.3%	43.4%	
Income**			.035
<\$30,000	44.8%	55.2%	
\$30,000	55.2%	42.1%	

*Data missing for 1 respondent

**Data missing for 29 respondents