

# RELIGIOUS DOUBTING IN PAROCHIAL SCHOOL ADOLESCENTS

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High school juniors ( $N = 267$ ) from Catholic and Protestant parochial schools were surveyed in regard to their doubting of core tenets of Christianity. Various indices were used to investigate the relationships between religious doubting and three constructs—adverse life events, family environment, and emotional distress. For the sample as a whole, support was mixed and generally weak for the hypotheses that religious doubt would correlate positively with adverse life events, conflictual family patterns, and emotional distress. However, although no denominational differences were predicted, separate analyses for the Catholic and Protestant students revealed that the latter group evidenced a pattern of consistently higher and statistically significant correlations for the predicted relationships. The authors conclude that religious doubting among adolescents may be most highly associated with adverse life events, conflictual family patterns, and emotional distress in subcultures in which religious values are well-integrated into the familial-cultural identity.

Within the literature on religious development and the psychology of religion, adolescence is typically characterized as a period of religious questioning and doubting (Allport, 1950; Goldman, 1964; James, 1902; Potvin, 1977; Potvin & Lee, 1982; Stewart, 1967; Strommen, 1963, 1974; Westerhof, 1976). Despite the prevalence of this theme, there have been few attempts to study the process of religious doubting in youth directly and comprehensively.

In 1990, the authors conducted a study of the process of religious doubting among a multid denominational sample of parochial high school students (Kooistra, 1990). Quantitative and qualitative information were obtained regarding the amount of religious doubting, the content of the religious doubts,

environmental factors that might contribute to religious doubting, and the emotional experience of religious doubting. The present article focuses on some of the quantitative findings regarding two possible contributing factors to religious doubting—adverse life events and conflictual family environments. In addition, findings are presented in regard to one aspect of the emotional experience of religious doubting—emotional distress.

Religious doubting was defined for this study as uncertainty and/or questioning regarding the verity of ideas that are considered central to a person's religious faith. (Please note that, henceforth, all references to "doubting" will pertain specifically to religious doubting.) According to this definition, doubting may involve a static process of uncertainty at a point in time and/or a more active process of questioning the truth of an issue. This definition also specifies that the doubting focuses on central or core issues to faith (e.g., the existence of God) rather than issues that would likely be regarded as more peripheral or secondary (e.g., proper attire for religious gatherings).

## *Contributing Factors to Religious Doubting*

What factors in an adolescent's environment might engender or intensify religious doubting? One potential contributing factor is adverse life events such as sickness, failing in school, divorce in the family, or loss of friends or family due to relocation or death. Religious doubts might result from personal encounters with such events as well as from observation of these types of adversities in the lives of others. There are numerous examples in theoretical and empirical literature of religious doubting related to adverse events (Allport, 1950; Grant, 1974; Guinness, 1977; Helfaer, 1972; Hulme, 1971; James, 1902; McCann, 1955; Pargament, 1997; Prus, 1976; Starbuck, 1899).

In his application of the concept of cognitive dissonance to religious belief maintenance and loss, Robert Prus (1976) suggested a framework for the relationship between religious doubt and adverse life events. Drawing on the work of Festinger (1957), Prus noted that persons who sense inconsistency between two cognitions will act to reduce that inconsistency. Thus, those who believe in the existence of a just, loving, omnipotent God might experience cognitive dissonance when they encounter life events that are perceived as cruel and unfair. To reduce the dissonance, they must either alter their view of God, alter their perception of the adverse events, and/or add new cognitions that reduce the incompatibility of their views of God and the events (e.g., the adversity may be seen as part of God's plan for the "greater good" of the person). It is likely that persons in the process of altering their views of God would experience religious doubting.

Although there has been anecdotal and theoretical support for the link between religious doubting and adversity, no empirical research to date has directly supported the relationship. In the present study, it was hypothesized that indices of religious doubting and adversity would, indeed, correlate positively.

Family environment might also contribute to religious doubting, especially in the case of conflictual environments. Adolescents in religious families might experience and verbalize religious doubts as a form of protest or rebellion against the belief system of the family. Furthermore, even in the absence of rebellion, some youth may question the religious beliefs of the family as a means of individuating or establishing an identity more distinct from the family. Conflicts in the family could increase an adolescent's desire or need to make a statement of rebellion or independence, thus contributing to religious doubting.

In some cases, adolescents' statements of rebellion or independence may be directed away from parents and projected onto another symbol of authority—God. This dynamic is illustrated in an excerpt from William Hulme's (1971) book, *Am I Losing My Faith?*:

The problem often begins in family relationships. One young man of nineteen, brought up in a Christian family, was seriously questioning the existence of God. Ostensibly he wanted intellectual evidence for belief. I suggested some reading he could do and also contributed some ideas of my own. What impressed me was the resistance I encountered. He was more like a debating opponent than an inquirer. When I mentioned this to him, he admitted he too was aware of it. "I seemed to

want to prove you wrong," he said. This gave me a clue. "Sometimes our troubles over God come from our trouble with people," I said. He was quiet momentarily and then said, "Like with my Dad?"... From then on we discussed his conflict—often violent—with his father... Rebellion against authority, particularly parental authority, extends easily to the authority of God—who is also called father. (pp. 23-24)

There has been much research on the relationship between family conflict and the religious experience of children and adolescents. For example, children's and adolescents' perceptions of problematic family relationships have been found to be associated with negative, punitive God-images (Benson & Spilka, 1973; Elkind, 1971; Potvin, 1977), feelings of religious alienation (Dominic, 1954; Dudley, 1978), negative attitudes toward institutional religion (Hoge & Petrillo, 1978, 1979), lower participation in religious activities (Kieren & Munro, 1987; Stewart, 1967), and less adherence to the religion of the parents (Hoge & Petrillo, 1978; Hunsberger, 1976; Kieren & Munro, 1987; Strommen, 1963). Whereas several writers have suggested that problematic family relationships may contribute to religious doubting in youth (Elkind, 1971; Helfaer, 1972; Hulme, 1971; Potvin, 1977; Wagner, 1978), only theoretical and/or indirect empirical support has been offered for this hypothesis. It was hypothesized in the present study that indices of religious doubting would correlate positively with measures of conflictual dynamics in the family.

### *Emotional Experience of Religious Doubting*

Although much qualitative information was obtained in the study concerning various emotional experiences of religious doubting, quantitative data were obtained only in regard to emotional distress. Positive correlations were predicted between doubting and emotional distress, in part, because of ways in which doubting might cause or exacerbate distress.

Given that religious beliefs provide a sense of purpose and significance for many youths (Hauser, 1981; Havighurst & Keating, 1971; Bealer & Willets, 1967; Strommen, 1963, 1974) as well as schemas by which they understand natural phenomena, interpersonal behavior, and issues of morality (McIntosh, 1995), religious doubting may be experienced as a significant threat. Furthermore, doubting may threaten a source of coping for some youth. Research has demonstrated that many religious coping strategies (e.g., praying, seeking social support from religious groups, appraising problems as part of God's plan) are helpful in dealing with

life stresses (Pargament, 1997; Pargament et al., 1990). Doubting that undermines confidence in a religious belief system can, thus, threaten religious coping strategies that function to reduce anxiety and emotional distress.

Additionally, persons with religious doubts may also experience anxiety related to the expectation that others would react negatively to disclosure of the doubts. Several writers on the religion of adolescents have noted that youth often refrain from expressing religious doubts because such disclosures may be regarded as inappropriate and/or sinful in some religious communities (Bealer & Willets, 1967; Gribbon, 1977; Hauser, 1981; Wagner, 1978). Some adolescents with religious doubts may also fear hurting others with their doubts. Wagner commented, "Youth may feel guilty when they question the teachings of those whom they respect and love; they may feel blasphemous and sinful when they question the Bible, immortality, and the existence of God" (p. 358).

Although no research to date has directly investigated the association between religious doubting and emotional distress in adolescents, some studies have provided indirect support for a positive correlation between these variables. Working with large samples of Lutheran youth in the 1960s and 1970s, Strommen found that "feelings about spiritual doubts and a lack of Christian certainty" were ranked high as distressing problems (Strommen, 1963, p. 13; see also Strommen, 1974). Kojetin, McIntosh, Bridges, and Spilka (1987) investigated the relationship between religious conflict, anxiety and "quest"—a faith orientation characterized by questioning and searching. In samples of university students, quest correlated positively with religious conflict ( $r = .53, p < .01$ ) and anxiety ( $r = .50, p < .01$ ), and religious conflict correlated positively with anxiety ( $r$ s from .36 to .48).

In sum, it was hypothesized in the present study that measures of religious doubting would be found to correlate positively with measures of adverse life events, problematic family relationships, and emotional distress.

## METHOD

### *Participants*

The participants in the study were 267 high school juniors from parochial schools in the Midwest. The students ranged in age from 15 to 18 years

old, with approximately 95% of the students being either 16 or 17 years old. The number of male and female students was approximately equal (136 females and 131 males). One hundred forty-two students (53%) were from a Catholic high school, and 125 (47%) were from a high school affiliated with a Protestant denomination in the Dutch Reformed tradition. (The latter group will hereafter be referred to as the Reformed Protestant or RP students.) The two schools in the sample were roughly equivalent in regard to intra-school diversity in denominational affiliation. Whereas 14% of the sampled students from the Catholic school indicated being non-Catholic, 6% of the sampled students from the Reformed Protestant school indicated no affiliation with a Reformed Protestant denomination (i.e., the Christian Reformed Church or the Reformed Church in America). The two schools were also roughly equivalent with respect to the percentage of students from racial minorities—11% minorities in the Catholic school and 7% minorities in the Reformed Protestant school.

### *Procedure*

The measures in this study were completed by the participants during two class periods in their respective schools. All except one of the students who were asked to participate in the study agreed to do so, and most of the students completed the questionnaire fully. Students were assured of the confidentiality of their responses and the voluntary nature of their participation. They were also given an opportunity to discuss their reactions to the study in group and individual conversations with the first author after the completion of the questionnaires.

### *Measures*

**Religious doubting.** Religious doubting was assessed with two scales. On the first of these scales—the Uncertainty Scale—the subjects were asked to rate from 1 (*totally certain*) to 7 (*not at all certain*) their level of certainty regarding 10 core doctrinal topics of Christianity. On the second scale—the Wondering Scale—the subjects were asked to respond to the same 10 doctrinal topics by rating from 1 (*never*) to 7 (*constantly*) the amount of time in the last year they had wondered about the truth of each topic (see Appendix). Both of these scales were scored by summing the responses across the 10 items.

The Uncertainty Scale and the Wondering Scale were developed by the authors in previous research to assess various forms of religious doubting. Whereas the Uncertainty Scale assesses a static condition of uncertainty at a given point in time, the Wondering Scale assesses a more active questioning process. The religious topics represented on the 10 items of the scales were adapted from a widely-accepted scale of religious orthodoxy (Batson, Schoenrade, & Ventris, 1993) which measures belief in traditional Christian doctrine. In a previous study of religious doubting among 321 parochial school youth, the Uncertainty and Wondering scales produced Cronbach alpha coefficients of .96 and .93, respectively (Kooistra, 1987). Additional support for the reliability and validity of these scales can be found in previous research (Kooistra, 1987, 1990).

It is noteworthy that the questionnaire also included a single multiple choice question in which each respondent was asked to choose among the following statements the one that best described him/herself: (a) I have some religious doubts; (b) I used to have religious doubts, but I do not have them any more; (c) I have never had religious doubts. (The responses to this question were not directly involved in the hypotheses investigated in the present article, yet they are included in the results below to give some general indication of the prevalence of religious doubting among the subjects.)

**Adverse life events.** Adverse life events were assessed using the Life Events Checklist (LEC), developed by Johnson and McCutcheon (1980). Although numerous indices can be obtained from this measure, only the score for negative change (i.e., the occurrence of undesirable life events judged by the subjects as having a negative effect on their lives) was calculated in the present study. The reliability and validity of this measure has been supported in past research (Johnson, 1986; Johnson & McCutcheon, 1980).

**Family environment.** Problematic family relationships were assessed using scales from the Youth Perceptual Inventory (YPI) developed by Dudley (1978). The following scales from this inventory were included in the study: Parental Authoritarianism, Parental Discipline, Emancipation from Parents, Religious Sincerity of Parents, and Family Harmony. In past research, the internal consistency coefficients for these scales were all found to be above .85 with the exceptions of Parental Discipline (.74) and Emancipation From Parents (.69; Dudley, 1978).

The YPI also contains a 10-item scale entitled Relationship with Parents ( $\alpha = .86$ ; Dudley, 1978). A limitation of this scale is that it assesses the subject's relationship with both parents as a couple. For the present study, this scale was altered to include 10 items addressing relationship with mother and 10 items addressing relationship with father, thus allowing for separate investigations of the roles of relationships with mothers and fathers in the process of religious doubting.

In previous research, the scales of the YPI have been used to investigate the relationship between adolescents' perceptions of their families and their feelings about religion. Working with a sample of Seventh-Day Adventist youth, Dudley (1978) found that religious alienation (defined by disinterest and dissatisfaction with religion) correlated positively ( $p < .01$ ) with parental authoritarianism, insincerity of parental religion, poor parent-child relationships, harsh discipline, and family disharmony. The findings were later corroborated in a follow-up study using a sample of 390 high school students from various Protestant denominations (Dudley & Laurent, 1989).

**Emotional distress.** Emotional distress was assessed using the measure of negative affect adapted from the Health and Daily Living Survey - Youth Form (HDL; Moos, Cronkite, Billings, & Finney, 1986). The scale of negative affect was revised because of its low internal consistency in samples of adolescents (Dubow, Kausch, Blum, Reed, & Bush, 1989). Research conducted by Dubow et al. with a large sample of high school students found the internal consistency for the scale of negative affect to be well within the acceptable range ( $\alpha = .90$ ). This scale is a self-report measure in which subjects indicate the degree to which they have experienced 15 negative feelings (e.g., have been worried, depressed, anxious) in the last month.

In addition, the scale of trait anxiety from the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI) was included as an index of emotional distress. Support for the reliability and validity of this measure is available in the manual for the inventory (Spielberger, Gorsuch, & Lushene, 1970).

## RESULTS

### *Initial Analyses*

Cronbach alpha coefficients were used to assess the internal consistencies of the scales noted above. The only scales that did not exceed an alpha of .80

were two scales from the YPI, Discipline ( $\alpha = .77$ ) and Emancipation ( $\alpha = .68$ ). In general, the means were found to be in the mid-range for each of the scales, and the standard deviations indicated that there was generally a good range of scores on each of the measures.

It is noteworthy that religious doubting was found to be relatively prevalent among the subjects. In response to the multiple choice question concerning the degree to which the subjects experienced religious doubts, 78% of the subjects indicated presently having religious doubts, 12% indicated having religious doubts in the past but not at present, and 9% indicated never having experienced religious doubts. Two percent of the subjects did not respond to this question.

Multivariate and univariate analyses of variance were used to investigate group differences across gender and religious denomination for the two scales of religious doubt, the scale of adverse life events, the seven scales of family environment, and the two scales of emotional distress. In regard to gender, multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) procedures revealed significant differences only for the scales of general emotional distress,  $F(2, 230) = 5.67, p < .01$ . Specifically, females indicated more emotional distress than males on the measure of Negative Affect,  $F(1, 231) = 10.06, p < .01$ . Although there were no group differences hypothesized with respect to religious denomination, MANOVAs showed an overall significant difference between Catholics and RP students,  $F(2, 230) = 35.68, p < .0001$ , on the scales of religious doubting. Univariate analyses of variance (ANOVAs) revealed denominational differences for both the Wonder Scale,  $F(1, 231) = 27.16, p < .0001$ , and the Uncertainty Scale,  $F(1, 231) = 70.19, p < .0001$ . Tukey comparisons revealed significantly more religious doubt among the Catholic students than among the RP students on both of these scales. For the seven scales of family environment, MANOVAs demonstrated an overall difference between Catholic and RP students,  $F(7, 215) = 3.86, p < .001$ . When each of these scales was investigated separately, however, only Parent's Religion,  $F(1, 221) = 17.32, p < .0001$ , discriminated between the two denominations. The Catholic students' ratings of insincerity and/or low commitment in their parents' religious behavior were significantly higher than those of the RP students.

It is noteworthy that group differences between the Catholic and RP students were found on other variables in the study as well. The RP students significantly exceeded the Catholic students in regard to frequency of church attendance, frequency of parents' church attendance, and *intrinsic religiousness*—a scale developed by Hoge (1972) to measure the degree to which subjects regard religion as personally influential and central in their lives. Because of these differences, the hypothesized correlations in the study were investigated separately by denomination as well as for the full sample.

### *Religious Doubting, Adversity, and Family Environment*

The first major question addressed in the study involved the relationship between religious doubting and two possible precursors of doubting—adverse life events and problematic family functioning. Table 1 presents Pearson correlations between the two scales of religious doubt and the measures of adverse life events (ALE) and family functioning. ALE correlated positively with both the Wondering Scale ( $r = .32, p < .001$ ) and the Uncertainty Scale ( $r = .17, p < .01$ ). Five of the seven scales of family environment correlated significantly with at least one of the scales of religious doubt. Parental Authoritarianism correlated significantly with both Wondering ( $r = .20, p < .01$ ) and Uncertainty ( $r = .12, p < .05$ ), indicating that students who perceived their parents as highly authoritarian were more likely to experience religious doubting. Parental Religion also correlated significantly with both Wondering ( $r = .31, p < .001$ ) and Uncertainty ( $r = .43, p < .001$ ), indicating that students who perceived their parents as more insincere and/or less committed in their religious behavior were more likely to report religious doubts than students who perceived their parents as more sincere and/or more committed in their religion. Table 1 also reveals significant correlations between Wondering and Emancipation ( $r = .13, p < .05$ ), Harmony ( $r = .13, p < .05$ ), and Relationship with Mother ( $r = .18, p < .01$ ), suggesting a slight tendency for students who experienced higher levels of autonomy and relational conflict in their families to report higher levels of religious questioning.

Given the previously noted denominational differences on several of the variables in the study, it was deemed important to examine the correlations between religious doubt, adverse life events, and

**Table 1**  
*Pearson Correlations of Religious Doubt With Adverse Life Events  
 and Family Environment*

	Wondering Scale	Uncertainty Scale
Adverse Life Events	.32***	.17**
Authoritarianism	.20**	.12*
Discipline (high = harsh)	.12	.07
Parental Religion (high = insincere/low commitment)	.31***	.43***
Emancipation	.13*	.06
Harmony (high = disharmony)	.13*	.04
Relationship with Mother (high = conflictual)	.18**	.15*
Relationships with Father (high = conflictual)	.10	.05

\* $p < .05$  \*\* $p < .01$  \*\*\* $p < .001$

**Table 2**  
*Pearson Correlations of Religious Doubt With Adverse Life Events  
 and Family Environment by Denomination*

	Wondering Scale		Uncertainty Scale	
	Catholic	RP	Catholic	RP
Adverse Life Events	.13	.50***	-.03	.41***
Authoritarianism	.13	.40***	.03	.31***
Discipline (high = harsh)	.05	.33***	.20*	.32***
Parental Religion (high = insincere/low commitment)	.16	.37***	.20*	.51***
Emancipation	.09	.19*	.13	.14
Harmony (high = disharmony)	.14	.31***	-.03	.35***
Relationship with Mother (high = conflictual)	.10	.33***	.02	.43***
Relationship with Father (high = conflictual)	.10	.18	.00	.19*

Note. RP = Reformed Protestant.  
 \* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ . \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

**Table 3**  
*Pearson Correlations Between Religious Doubt and Emotional Distress*

	All Students (N = 262)	
	Anxiety	Negative Affect
Wondering	.24***	.22***
Uncertainty	.11	.09
Catholic Students (n = 116)		
	Anxiety	Negative Affect
Wondering	.33***	.26**
Uncertainty	.05	.08
Reformed Protestant Students (n = 116)		
	Anxiety	Negative Affect
Wondering	.36***	.32***
Uncertainty	.37***	.30***

\*  $p < .05$  \*\* $p < .01$  \*\*\* $p < .001$

family functioning for students grouped according to denomination. Table 2 includes these correlations for the Catholic students and for the RP students. The correlations between the scales of religious doubt and adverse life events (ALE) were not significant for Catholic students. In contrast, for the RP students, ALE correlated moderately with both Wondering ( $r = .50, p < .001$ ) and Uncertainty ( $r = .41, p < .001$ ). Among the correlations between the scales of religious doubt and the indices of family environment, only the correlations between Uncertainty and Discipline ( $r = .20, p < .05$ ) and uncertainty and Parental Religion ( $r = .20, p < .05$ ) were significant for the Catholic students. However, for the RP students, both the Wondering and Uncertainty scales correlated significantly with Authoritarianism, Discipline, Parental Religion, Harmony, and Relationship with Mother ( $p < .001$ ). For the RP students, higher levels of religious wondering and uncertainty were associated with higher levels of parent authoritarianism, harsher styles of discipline in the family, perceptions of greater insincerity and/or less commitment in the parents' religion, higher levels of conflict in the family environment, and more conflictual relationships with mothers.

### *Religious Doubting and Emotional Distress*

Table 3 presents correlations between the scales of religious doubt and emotional distress. For the entire sample ( $N = 262$ ), Wondering correlated significantly with Anxiety ( $r = .24, p < .001$ ) and Negative Affect ( $r = .22, p < .001$ ). However, Uncertainty did not correlate significantly with either measure of emotional distress. Thus, for the cross-denominational sample, higher levels of emotional distress were associated with higher levels of active religious questioning but not with static religious uncertainty. Table 3 also includes the correlations between religious doubt and emotional distress separately for the Catholic and the RP students. For the Catholic students, Wondering correlated significantly with Anxiety ( $r = .33, p < .001$ ) and Negative Affect ( $r = .26, p < .01$ ), yet Uncertainty did not correlate significantly with either scale of emotional distress. In contrast, for the RP students, both Wondering and Uncertainty correlated significantly with each of the scales of emotional distress ( $p < .001$ ).

### DISCUSSION

For the sample as a whole, the results of the study provided mixed support for the hypothesized relationships between religious doubting and adverse life events, conflictual family relationships, and emo-

tional distress. However, the denominational differences found in the study indicated that the hypothesized relationships existed in moderate strength among the RP students and were generally nonexistent among the Catholic students. This finding certainly evokes questions regarding factors that might account for the differences between the groups.

One such factor may be differences in the degree to which students from various groups regarded their religious beliefs and behaviors as central to their personal identity. The higher indication of intrinsic religiousness among RP students, compared to the Catholic students, suggests that the RP students perceived their religion as more central in their lives. Subjective observations by the researchers also suggest that adherence to religious beliefs and behaviors was more tightly woven into the community identity of the RP students than that of the Catholic students. Most of the RP students appeared to come from a strongly cohesive ethnic subculture (in the Dutch Reformed tradition) in which the mores of religious behavior were well integrated into relatively homogeneous family, school, and church structures. The "rules" for religious behavior and the role of religion in life appeared to be relatively clear and a strong part of the identity of their culture. In contrast, the students at the Catholic school appeared to be more heterogeneous in regard to ethnic heritage and the role of religion in their personal and family lives. The mores of the subculture in the Catholic sample appeared to be less cohesive and generally less orthodox.

These cultural differences and the discrepancy in intrinsic religiousness could explain why the RP students evidenced a higher correlation between adversity and religious doubting than the Catholic students. In their relatively orthodox subculture, the RP students may have been more likely to assume that God would provide security and protection from adversity. In the wake of adversity, the RP students would seemingly be more likely to question the existence of a God whom they trusted to shelter them from the storms of life.

The noted cultural differences also likely relate to the denominational differences regarding the relationship of religious doubting and family environment. It was hypothesized previously that religious doubting is one means by which youth from religious families can foster individuation and/or protest against undesirable aspects of the family. These dynamics would likely be most operative in

families in which religion is regarded as central to family identity. If the family and ethnic identities of the RP students were, indeed, more highly integrated with religious values, then the stronger correlations between religious doubting and family conflict among them is not surprising.

It is noteworthy that these findings regarding religious doubt and family environment also corroborate with research cited in the introduction of this article, indicating that the ways in which parents relate with their children have a significant impact on the children's faith development. Parents who seek to convey their religious values and promote healthy spiritual development in their children should attend closely to "practicing what they preach" in family relationships.

In regard to limitations of this study, it is important to highlight that, although the hypotheses of the study contained direct and indirect inferences of causality (e.g., family conflict causes religious doubting), the correlational format of most of the analyses did not allow for conclusions regarding causality. It is hoped that future studies on this topic will include other forms of research (e.g., longitudinal studies) that allow for clearer indications of causality.

Finally, the present study evokes questions regarding the impact of religious doubting on faith development. The authors have observed that religious doubting may lead to a variety of outcomes, including spiritual growth, stagnation, and apostasy. Longitudinal research is needed to track the outcomes of doubt as well as to identify psychosocial variables that moderate the relationship between doubting and various outcomes. In the end, it is hoped that research in this area will provide greater understanding of the faith journeys of adolescents and, thereby, assist in the realization of greater potentials in their emotional and spiritual growth.

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**APPENDIX***Items from the Uncertainty and Wondering Scales*Uncertainty Scale

1. How certain are you that God really exists?
2. How certain are you that the Universe was created by God?
3. How certain are you that the Bible is really the inspired word of God?
4. How certain are you that there is really a life-after-death?
5. How certain are you that Jesus Christ is really coming to earth in a "second coming"?
6. How certain are you that there is really a heaven?
7. How certain are you that Jesus Christ was really the son of God?
8. How certain are you that there is really a hell?
9. How certain are you that God is real and has control over the Universe?
10. How certain are you that Jesus Christ really rose from the dead?

Wondering Scale

1. How often have you wondered if God really exists?
2. How often have you wondered if the Universe was created by God?
3. How often have you wondered if the Bible is really the inspired word of God?
4. How often have you wondered if there is really a life-after-death?
5. How often have you wondered if Jesus Christ is really coming to earth in a "second coming"?
6. How often have you wondered if there is really a heaven?
7. How often have you wondered if Jesus Christ was really the son of God?
8. How often have you wondered if there is really a hell?
9. How often have you wondered if God is real and has control over the Universe?
10. How often have you wondered if Jesus Christ really rose from the dead?