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Research Report #3

25 June 2014

Greenfield, E. A., & Marks, N. F. (2007). Religious social identity as an explanatory factor for

associations between more frequent formal religious participation and psychological well-being. *The International Journal for the Psychology of Religion*, *17*(3), 245-259.

1. **Need.** Studies have suggested that religious participation contributes to well-being; few empirically tested. Study aims to fill that gap by assessing whether religious identity is a contributing factor to well-being and religious service attendance.
2. **Purpose.** To contribute to a better understanding of the association between formal religious participation and mental health by examining religious identity as a contributory factor. Authors posited that a stronger religious identity would contribute to greater religious participation and better mental health.
3. **Sample.** Used data from 1995 National Survey of Midlife in the US survey which included 3,032 adults between the ages of 25 and 74. Participation was voluntary.
4. **Methods.** Cross-sectional qualitative study. Participants were called using RDD and were interviewed over the telephone and then completed a survey through the mail. 60.8% response rate (both modes). Items over the interviews and on the survey included negative and positive affect, life satisfaction, formal religious participation, and strength of religious identity.
5. **Results.** More frequent participation in religious services correlated to an increased religious identity. Religious identity was found to be a mediating factor in psychological well-being.
6. **Conclusions.** A stronger religious identity was found to correlate to more frequent religious service attendance correlated and higher positive affect, lower levels of negative affect, higher levels of life satisfaction.
7. **Limitations.** Data was collected from 1995; the study completed in 2007. Data could have been collected more recently. Authors suggest that religious community identity and participation in religious services are mutually reinforcing concepts.
8. **Implications.** Further research should include more recent data to support the conclusions here. Research across religions as well as across ages would also be interesting.