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RELIGIOSITY AND WELL-BEING OF
PENTECOSTALS AND CATHOLICS

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of
the requirements for the degree of
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at Massey University.

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the differences in religiosity and well-being between Catholics and Pentecostals. Subsidiary investigations were also carried out in the area of purpose in life and affect intensity. Religiosity was expected to moderate purpose in life in terms of well-being and affect intensity was expected to differ between the two groups. Subjects were selected from Catholic and Pentecostal Bible study groups. There were 122 Catholics and 125 Pentecostals. Respondents completed a questionnaire which contained measures of well-being, affect intensity, purpose in life, religiosity, and demographic information. Results indicated that there were differences between the two groups on all religiosity variables except knowledge. Both did not differ on well-being measures except on positive affect. There were no differences in affect intensity between them. Lastly, religiosity did not moderate purpose in life but both religiosity and purpose in life had independent effects on well-being. Purpose in life accounted for a greater proportion of variance than religiosity.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In the path of religious psychology, religious psychopathology (Freud, 1939) and the development of religious institutions and beliefs (Wundt, 1916) were amongst the concerns of early psychologists. Later attention was focussed on processes that were explicitly observable due to the dominance of Watson's (1925) Behaviorism. Studies of such nature include Allport's (1934) works on religious behaviours and social norms. Lately, however, a renaissance of interest in religious psychology has been occurring (Bergin, 1980 cited in Bergin, 1983). Of these, religiosity and well-being are becoming popularly researched.

Several studies have been completed in this area under a variety of topics such as: frequency of church attendance and well-being (Steinitz, 1980; St. George and McNamara, 1984; Gurin, Veroff, and Field, 1960), religious commitment and well-being (Hadaway and Roof, 1978), religious mindedness and well-being (Campbell, 1981; Hadaway, 1978), and church participation and well-being (Sprietzer and Snyder, 1974; Clemente and Sauer, 1976). All of these studies indicate a positive relationship between religiosity and well-being, although research (Bergin, 1983; Petersen and Roy, 1985) also indicates that the

relationship differs according to how religiosity and well-being are measured.

Most of the above research concentrated on either one or two dimensions of religiosity such as church attendance and church participation, and its effect on well-being (Peterson and Roy, 1985). None has so far examined all dimensions of the different typologies of religiosity to well-being (e.g. Glock's (1962) typology; King and Hunt's (1972a) typology; Hilty, Morgan and Burns's (1984) typology).

Research in the area of denominational religiosity and well-being is limited. Studies that have been completed in this area consist mainly of measuring and conceptualising religiosity such as Nudelman's (1971) factor-analytic study on Glock's typology using Catholics, Protestants, and Christian Scientists.

In psychology, the interest in subjective well-being is recent. So far, numerous studies have been conducted in the area of quality of life (Campbell, Converse and Rodgers, 1976; Andrews and Withey, 1976; Cantril, 1965) as well as in the area of predictors of well-being such as income (Braun, 1977; Campbell et al, 1976), race (Andrews and Withey, 1976; Bradburn 1969), employment (Cohn, 1979; Weaver, 1978), marital status (Sauer, 1977; Andrews and Withey, 1976), personality (Kozma and Stones, 1978, Wilson, 1960) and religion (Clemente and Sauer, 1976; McClure and Loden, 1982). The findings in the area of religiosity and well-being are mixed and Diener (1984) claims that this is

due to different operationalisations of religiosity.

The main focus of this study will be on two main denominations and their well-being; Catholics and Pentecostals. This study will firstly look at differences in religiosity between Catholics and Pentecostals using the religiosity scale revised by Hilty, Morgan, and Burns (1984). Secondly, the differences in well-being between the two groups will be examined using life satisfaction scales (Andrews and Withey (1976) Life 3; and Diener, Emmons, Larsen, and Griffen (1985) Satisfaction with Life Scale) and negative and positive affect scales (Kammann and Flett's (1983) Affectometer 2).

Affect Intensity is the third aspect of this study. Affect Intensity may be described as regular experiences of strong emotions irrespective of their content (Larsen and Diener, 1987). Research in the area of affect intensity is recent as well as limited. This component emerged as a result of the debate about the independence of positive and negative affect in the well-being domain (Diener, Larsen, Levine, and Emmons, 1985).

Catholics and Pentecostals will be tested on their level of affect intensity and whether there are differences between the groups. In relation to affect intensity, the Pentecostals could be described as highly emotional in comparison to Catholics based on the evidence of their spiritual experiences which will be explained later in this study. It could also be suggested that Pentecostalism is attractive to those who have an intense

emotional or affective temperament and Catholicism to those who are not highly intense or emotional.

Meaning in life, as a concept, is of central importance in the area of existential psychiatry and psychology. Frankl (1967) made a substantial contribution toward its theoretical development and as well as clinical implications of loss of meaning in life. When search for meaning in life is blocked it eventually leads to a pathological condition known as "noogenic neurosis" (Frankl, 1967; Maddi, 1967). Peterson and Roy (1985) comment that one function of religion is to provide meaning and purpose in life. Meaning in life has been associated with religiosity in a number of studies such as Soderstorm and Wright (1977), and Bolt (1975). The emphasis on meaning in life is evident in religious messages such as in Christian messages with Jesus Christ giving purpose to life. Further, meaning in life has also been reported to be a strong and consistent predictor of positive well-being (Zika and Chamberlain, 1987). The final purpose of this study is to examine whether religiosity moderates purpose in life in predicting well-being. Religious people could have a purpose in life arising from factors other than religiosity. This is based on the assumption that religiosity is not the sole contributor to purpose in life but that there are other factors in life which also contribute to it (Battista and Almond, 1973) and in turn to well-being.