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Effect of religiosity on the selection of life long mate in Pentecostal adult church attendees

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EFFECT OF RELIGIOSITY ON THE SELECTION
OF LIFE LONG MATE IN PENTECOSTAL
ADULT CHURCH ATTENDEES

A project based upon an independent investigation,
Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
For the degree of Master of Social Work.

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2008

ABSTRACT

This study was undertaken to examine whether a relationship existed between biblical teachings, religiosity, professional status, age and faith and mate selection among adult Pentecostal church attendees. A secondary finding of the study was the exploration of whether Pentecostals belief in their relationship with God and the Holy Spirit affected the kind of mate they chose as measured by the 5-point desirability scale.

A modified version of the Gough's Marital Preference Questionnaire was made available through the World Wide Web, including a link that solicited participation in the study. The researcher also made the survey available on a social interest website and by solicitations through electronic mail. A total of forty-seven persons responded, of which five declined to participate in the study. Forty-seven persons volunteered for the study that included thirteen males and thirty-four females.

The findings of this study showed that "faith" was a significant variable and that females ranked faith higher than males although both groups identified this variable as "desirable" or at least "somewhat desirable". There was no significant difference in professional status, age, biblical teachings and mate selection among the adult Pentecostals in this study.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Personality characteristics, romantic love, physical attraction, economics, religion and children are purported to be significant variables in mate selection; however are these characteristics equally weighted by men and women in their search for a life-long mate? Do men and women differ in their personality preferences; in what they want in and from a mate; or even in how they go about mate selection? How important is religion and do potential mates compromise when it comes to their personal beliefs and faith?

In the United States, mate selection and religion have become a self identifier. The quality and purpose affixed to the term religion, its roots and significance varies in importance within our communities and cultures. According to Lehrer (1998), mate selection is less likely to be religiously homogenous if people belong to a small religious group, have few people from whom to choose, and develop cultures and values similar to those outside the religious group. As individuals become more assimilated, intermarriages become more common. However, Lehrer (1998) goes on to report that the greater the religiosity and the commitment to one's faith, the less likely one will intermarry regardless of assimilation (Lehrer, 1998).

Marriages depend upon many relational factors, but most marriages begin with attraction. There is very little research on the relationship between mate selection and religiosity. There is even less research that addresses prior attitudes, behaviors, or practices that lead to choosing a mate. Most studies focus on cohabitation and the motivating factors for having children (Heaton, Jacobson & Holland, 1999; Raley and Sweeney, 2007; Wu and Musick, 2001). Research by Kline Rhoades, Stanley & Markman (2006), Davidson, Moore & Ullstrup, (2004); Lefkowitz, Gillen, Shearer & Boone (2004), Ribner (2003), and Sullivan (2001) discussed cohabitation, sexuality, love relationships and marriage as the dominant study variables. Other studies have examined couple similarity and marital satisfaction (Gaunt, 2006; Sullivan, 2001) and have found mate similarity to be more significant than religion as a variable for mate selection.

The importance of religion and spirituality in the lives of individuals has increased during recent years. According to the 2003 Harris Poll, the majority of Americans believe in God, religion or a spiritual being. Women are more likely than men to hold both Christian and non-Christian beliefs. African-Americans are more likely than whites and Hispanics to hold Christian beliefs. Of the 90% of adults who participated in the Harris Poll, 93% of women believed in God and 86% of the men reported a belief in God. 96% of the African-Americans who participated in this Harris Poll reported a strong belief in God. The current researcher believes that this increase in religiosity and Christianity will impact mate selection and marriage outcomes for men and women between the ages of

19 and 35, which according to Erik Erikson's Intimacy and Solidarity vs. Isolation Stage of Development is when individuals try to find mutually satisfying relationships, primarily through marriage and friends.

The focus of the current study is upon the role of religiosity in life-long mate selection and choices among adult Pentecostals. The researcher used Gough's Marital Preferences Questionnaire, which is a 76-item measure to identify a broad array of attributes that are desired in a potential mate. Specific attention was given to religious, gender and professional status factors of marital preference.

The 13th Edition of Webster's Dictionary defines religiosity as "the quality of being religious; religious feeling or sentiment; religiousness". For purposes of this study, religiosity refers to any values, beliefs, and practices learned from one's faith or religion. Christianity is used within this research as reference to followers of Christ and the belief in Jesus as the messiah and the ministry of Him. The term church is defined as "a chosen or called-out assembly" (Matthew 16:18). Its meaning signifies the purpose and cause for which persons congregate and are accountable in their belief about the doctrine established prior to the birth of the church.

The term Pentecostal is unique to this research because it utilizes the scriptural meaning of the word, therefore, connecting all terms and associating them to the Bible's teaching. Considering the history of the church, its teachings as gathered from the Bible, and its equivalence to Pentecost, the researcher

chose to remain focused on the motivating factor of a believer. The Pentecostal church is governed by the instructions from the Bible.

The term mate refers to the other individual within a relationship. Mate selection refers to the process of choosing the other individual as a potential spouse. This process takes into consideration persons who are single or single while in a relationship, single and engaged, newlywed couples, married, and divorced individuals. Professional status refers to level of education or academic attainment.

The researcher's assumptions for this study were that religiosity plays an important role in mate selection for Pentecostal adults, that differences exist between Pentecostal men and women in the mate selection process, and that differences exist in professional status and mate selection. These assumptions were the foundation for the following research hypotheses.

1. Religiosity is a significant predictor for mate selection among Pentecostal adults. (faith)
2. Pentecostal men express a greater preference for religiosity in a mate than do Pentecostal women. (biblical teachings)
3. There is no relationship between professional status and mate selection among Pentecostal adults. (profession)
4. There is no relationship between age and religious preference in mate selection among Pentecostal adults. (age)
5. Pentecostal women are less likely than Pentecostal men to preference religious factors in mate selection. (gender)

Findings from this study hold relevance to clinical practice. A client's spiritual and religious beliefs and values and how these beliefs impact marital relationships and problem-solving are important considerations in the therapeutic

process. The increasing prevalence of religion in the lives of Americans, as evidenced by the 2003 Harris Poll, suggests that a substantial proportion of clients may have religious beliefs, attitudes, and practices that potentially affect their personal development and romantic/marital relationships. It is reasonable to expect that from such a significant pool of adults for whom religion is important that clients would welcome clinician sensitivity toward and respect for their religious and spiritual beliefs. Findings from this study also will provide clinicians insight into culturally sensitive practices and will allow an integration of client culture into the counseling process.

This research used a qualitative study design to examine religiosity as a factor in mate selection among Pentecostal adults. Participants responded to questionnaires that gathered demographic information as well as information of mate preferences and selection. Originally ten Pentecostal churches within a specific zipcode in Marietta, GA were selected for this study; however to ensure an adequate sample pool, participation was extended to include a social forum group and use of www.hi5.com website for further solicitation. Study participants accessed the questionnaire via the internet, church vestibule, and directly from the researcher. Data was collected over a two-month period.

All participants in the study self-identified as Pentecostal adults. Ten churches were used as an attempt to obtain diversity in age, gender, and other demographics.

The following chapters provide a review of existing literature (Chapter II), the methodology used for this study (Chapter III), the study's findings (Chapter IV), and discussion (Chapter V).

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The purpose of this study was to determine whether Pentecostal adult attendees adhere to the biblical teachings regarding life preparedness and selection of a mate. There is very little available literature on the specifics of Pentecostal teachings in relation to mate selection in psychological and sociological journals (Baucom, 2001, p. 652). Some of the literature discusses the influence of religion on family systems, pre-marital relations, and marital satisfaction; however, information specifically related to the culture of Pentecostal beliefs and values was studied from a historical perspective of sacred text and religious resources. There are a few articles from independent organizations that detail the values and beliefs of biblical teachings on mate selection among Pentecostals.

Religiosity and Marriage Selection

There is no magic formula for a successful marriage and mate selection. Yet as researchers, we continue to search for answers on what constitutes a good marriage and what prevents a marriage from ending in divorce. Riley (1992) discusses in *Divorce: An American Tradition*, the high divorce rates within contemporary society and raises the question, how do we choose mates?

A significant number of research studies suggest that mate selection is a reflection of readiness for marriage, hormones, personal and cultural values, religious beliefs and practices, political and historical contexts, socioeconomic standing, and environment (Hanko, Master & Sabini, 2004; Hamon and Ingoldsby, 2003; and Jaffe & Chacon-Puignau, 1995) rather than a desire for the willingness and readiness to make a commitment (Chang & Chan, 2007). Robinson and Blanton (1993) stated that key elements of enduring marriages involved intimacy, commitment, communication, congruence, and religious faith. Newell (2005) discusses that in some cultures, women use the objects of their religiosity to establish a foundation upon which to secure their marriage. Hilty (1988) suggested that a specific weakness existed and interrupted the understanding of religious belief and attitude as it may be different for each individual and their group affiliation. Hill & Hood (1999) also acknowledged the importance of conceptual ambiguities that exist cognitively and emotionally (p. 1018). Forand (2002) stated that social norms involving respect is important as religious affiliation, though the process is a struggle for many families unable to afford the courting period (p. 338). Silverman and O'Connor (1989) suggested that mating was "once familiar and predictable..." but "family, school, and church are no longer acceptable matchmakers" (p.3). However, the strongest and most commonly found agreement among couples on the reasons for their marital stability, though not entirely decisive, appears to be their adherence to traditional values and religiosity, followed by educational attainment and professional status

(Blackwell & Lichter, 2000; Botwin , Buss & Shackelford, 1997; Forand, 2002; Horwatt, 1999).

For some men and women, mutual attraction and love are considered the most important factor in selecting a mate (Buss, Shackelford, Kirkpatrick, & Larsen, 2001). Similarities among regions of the United States compared to sexes were examined and it is believed that most persons favored the same religious background in selecting a mate (Buss, Shackelford, Kirkpatrick, & Larsen (2001, p. 498).

Hanko, Master, & Sabini (2004) discussed some aspects of individuals past fidelity and physical displays of outer success as impacting their characteristics. It is suggested that individuals' past behaviors, attitudes, and belief attract a degree of desirability to persons of the opposite sex and (Penton-Voak, Cahill, Pound, Kempe, Schaeffler, & Schaeffler, 2006) agree that personality attributes are linked to facial cues.

Both men and women are concerned about partner fidelity (Hanko, Master, & Sabini (2004). Though fidelity is difficult because not all men and women are able to make such a commitment (Stone, Goetz, & Shackelford (2005), cultural learning perspective is an extreme factor taken into consideration because men and women learn from their culture (DeSteno & Salovey, 1996a, 1996b; Harris & Christenfeld, 1996a, 1996b) and each culture vary in their approach to fidelity; and components of physical attractiveness is a factor to consider in regards to mate selection (Brase, Caprar, & Voracek, 2004, p. 765).

According to Horwatt (1999), increased religiosity increases marital stability. She found that religious affiliation in marriage, regardless of the religion the spouses practiced, was important to marital stability. She found that couples' ability to openly discuss their religious faith, participate in religious activities such as church attendance and prayer, and their views on doctrine were important to their overall happiness within the marriage. Other studies report that religiosity, specifically Christianity are the foundation of a good marriage (Ricucci, 2006). When couples are grounded in their faith and commitment to each other, they are more likely to overcome challenges and day-to-day stressors that implode marriages (Evans & Evans, 2006; Robinson and Blanton, 1993; Marks, 2005).

Fein and Schneider (1995) wrote that playing hard to get is not only the key to winning the heart of your dream man, but keeping him interested to the point of marriage. They suggest that because men enjoy a challenge, women should keep men guessing. "Men are born to respond to a challenge" (pg. 7), and it is this challenge that further attracts men to women. Fein and Schneider go on to state that following *The Rules* for capturing the heart of "Mr. Right" secures a relationship that leads to marriage.

The Rules appear to develop the self-confidence and self-motivation in women that allows them to then become physically and psychologically attractive to men. Although these rules do not necessarily focus on the spiritual or personal belief systems of individuals, they do assert conscientiousness and purposefulness in getting the man of your choice.

Pentecostal Teachings

According to Acts 2:4 [KJV], Anderson (2005), Livingstone (2006), and McGee (1999), the term Pentecostal refers to the first Christians, disciples who received the Holy Spirit “on the day of Pentecost.” This is the day on which believers of Jesus Christ accepted the comforter, also called the Holy Spirit (John 14:16). Pentecostals believe in the receipt of the Holy Spirit, and their foundation rests upon accepting Jesus as their Saviour. Pentecost also is significant because it is a festival of celebration in remembrance of the coming of the Holy Spirit after Christ’s ascension and anticipation toward the unifying of the body of Christ, and the church (Browning, 1997; 1 Corinthians 12:13 [KJV]).

Pentecostal Christians are instructed by the Bible to practice being led by the Holy Spirit so that they may demonstrate “love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance” (Galatians 5:23) to all persons so as not to be motivated to fulfill the sinful nature not of the ‘Spirit of God’ (Galatians 5:16, KJV). Groeschel (2007) explains the necessity for God’s presence, not just religion in ones relationship.

He wrote, “When I performed my first wedding, I typed the whole ceremony beforehand. Standing before the bride, groom, and hundreds of people, I ca to a paraphrased statement from Matthew 19:5: “The two will be united.” That’s what it was supposed to say. I had accidentally typed, “The two will be *untied*.” Oops. After the ceremony, I looked closely at the word. Only one small letter was out of place: the *I*. He That’s really how it works - when the *I* is in the proper place, submitted to Christ, His will, and His priorities, we’ll be united. When the *I* is in the wrong place, we’ll be untied” (p. 124).

The strength of the Holy Spirit is the way by which Pentecostal believers are able to walk according to God’s will for their purpose in life. The purpose of the Holy

Spirit is to assist believers to refrain from non-God-pleasing practices such as “adultery, fornication, sexual impurity, sexual excess, idolatry, witchcraft (sorcery), hatred, variance (strife or discord), emulations which are jealousy, wrath, strife (selfish ambition), seditions (dissensions), heresies (permanent organized divisions or cliques), envying, murders, drunkenness, revellings, ... (Galatians 5:19-21). These teachings instill the foundation of a solid marriage and prepare Pentecost believers for the sanctimony of marriage.

The Pentecostal Church upholds guidelines and expectations for those choosing to marry within the Church. Apostolou (2007) suggest that data from the hunting and gathering period conclude the regulation of mating decision is influenced by the parents of both sons and daughters. However, marriage within the Pentecostal Church is sanctioned by five covenants. First is the covenant of belief, which is a belief in the Pentecostal church that God wants Christians to be married to fellow Christians, so there must be evidence that couples have accepted Jesus Christ as their personal savior. Second is the covenant of purity, which mandates that one abstain from sexual relations until after the wedding has taken place. This covenant comes from the belief that sexual relations between men and women are intended only for the bonds of marriage. Thirdly is the need for the couple to live separately until the marriage has taken place. This is another term of the covenant of purity, as the Pentecostal church sees cohabitation before marriage as compromising to Christian witness. Fourth, the couple must enter the covenant of faithfulness by agreeing to keep Christ as a central focus throughout their marriage. This includes a life based on true faith

and continued participation in His church. Finally, the couple must realize that the minister selected to marry the couple reserves the right to deny services if the minister feels that the obligations to this covenant have not been met.

McKay and Quick (2005) stated that relationships are “much more effective” if individuals “use what they know about each other’s needs to develop a new collaborative solution to your problem” (p. 122). They further suggest that it is necessary for couples to explore their expectations of each other as well as their “hopes, desires, and needs” to assist in their process of developing a committed relationship.

History of Pentecostal Movement

Pentecostal ministries are spoken of as ministries which congregated as revivals. Barrett, Johnson, Guidry & Crossing (2003) specifies that it was in 1886 that the first wave of the re-emergence of Pentecostalism occurred. One example which evidenced the outpouring of glossolalia happened in Tinnevelly (Tirunelveli present-day Tamil Nadu), India in 1860-65 among the ‘Shanars’ low caste persons (Rapaka, p. 21, 2007). Rapaka stated that the revivals in India were led by an evangelist, John Christian Aroolappen who was trained as an Anglican catechist (p.21, 2007). Rapaka further mentioned that Aroolappen “read about revivals that occurred in the United States, England and Ulster in 1857 – 59 and then prayed for a breakthrough of a similar revival among his native land” (p.22, 2007). Such break through as evidenced by the growth of ministries throughout the U.S.A. is also evident within Africa, Australia, and the Caribbean. Kim (2005, July) also argued that classic Pentecostal revival

movement lead to “church growth in some countries like Korea, the Philippines and India in Asia, Chile, Guatemala, Brazil, and Argentina in Latin America (p. 237). Nevertheless, Creech added that the origin and up rise of the Pentecostal movement as linked to the United States of America is a myth (p.406, 2001).

The initiation of the Pentecostal movement dates back to the period biblical texts identified as 3 A.D. to 33 A.D. During this time Christ instructed his believers to teach all nations by baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19, KJV). (In post modern society, diverse recordings regarding the display of the gift of the Holy Spirit speaking in tongues, also expressed as glossolalia (McGee, p. 649, 1999) among Christians. However, McGee (1999), Mcgrath (2003), and Rapaka, (2007) dispute the origination of Pentecostal outbreak in the early 20th century. The misconception, however, as written by McGee (1999) is that “Pentecostalism had in reality become ‘full grown’ elsewhere before word of Azusa Street Revival of 1906” the location of an AME mission gathering (p.650).

McGee reported that Pentecostalism in India began prior to accounts recorded for American history in 1901 (p. 2, 1999). Mcgrath (2003) claimed that American Pentecostalism was a movement inspired by John Wesley’s being in communication “with Moravians in Georgia and in England which led to his conversion experience” (Chp. 39). Furthermore, Mcgrath (2003) claimed, however, that “many of the early Pentecostals came from churches including the Church of God (1886), the Christian Missionary Alliance (1887), the Church of the Nazarene (1895), and the Pilgrim Holiness Church and the Wesleyan

Methodist Church” (Chp. 39). Anderson on the other hand magnified the oversimplification in recorded history of the Pentecostal movement that has “... largely been written out of the histories” (2004, p. 140).

Erickson (2005) concurred that the separate denominations are said to have developed after splitting from major Protestant churches (p.1). The denominations, also referred to as evangelicals by Erickson (2005) believed that Protestants “did not emphasize biblical literalism, the need for personal and individual experience of conversion...” (Anderson, 2003). The major commonality between persons of Pentecostal faith is their belief and reliance on their personal relationship with God through seeking “moral perfection – or holiness” with the help of the Holy Spirit (Anderson, 2003). Charette (2006) believed that “it would be incorrect to describe glossolalia as the essence of Pentecostalism; nevertheless this spiritual gift has distinguished the movement from the beginning” (p.189).

International Pentecostals

In other areas of the world such as the Philippines, Southeast Asia, Suico (2005) wrote that Filipino laborers who traveled to the USA in the early 1920s paved the way for their exposure to Pentecostalism because many became missionaries and were instrumental in starting Pentecostal churches in various parts of the country (p. 225). Anderson (2006) better details his understanding of Pentecostalism among these varying countries and cultures similarly to Michael Wilkinson (2006) as a “local-ness that makes any attempt to describe global Pentecostalism with any comprehension as hazardous, perhaps even impossible

exercise,” a culture within cultures (p. 283). Thus, we can wonder whether Pentecostal Christians growth and uniqueness has contributed to the way Pentecostals select a partner with similar faith perspectives.

Religiosity

The term religiosity is defined by Louis (1999) as excessively, sentimentally, or affectedly pious. Religiosity emphasizes the practice, belief, and operation of an individual’s actions and devotion (Marzal, 2007). According to Marzal (2007), devotion is less intellectual and measured more by one’s faith (p.1). Religiosity plays a vital role in organizing society through moral values that continue within the 21st century as a guideline for human behavior (Sorensen, Lienard, & Feeny, 2006; Hardy & Carlo, 2005; Capps & Cole, 2000). The purpose of religiosity varies in the day-to-day life of individuals partly due to the limited support of religion found within other studies. For instance Frederick (2002) stated that believers see religion as an assistance to “find positive meaning both in ordinary daily events and in major life challenges” (p. 211). For non believers, however, religion may be seen as a weakness and inability in decision-making. Reiss (2000), however, stated that the reliance upon God is not related to a psychological weakness.

Diane and John Rhem (2002) stated in their book *Toward Commitment* that “marriage or any long-term relationship is a never-ending process of exploration and growth”, and that challenges occur when partners are at odds in their religious beliefs. Rhem and Rhem described this as a communal struggle in

relationships as both individuals try to understand themselves, their commonality, their shared efforts, and acceptance of things which may not change.

Religiosity promotes change in attitude and behavior among believers. It creates meaning and a sense of belonging for individuals about their purpose in life (Newell, 2005, p. 298). Religiosity also directs persons to conduct themselves appropriately in society, “a hard worker and good provider” (Apostolou, 2007). Corwyn and Benda (2002) stated that an individual’s religious belief impacts their selection of a partner (p. 13). Corwyn and Benda’s statement supports a relationship between religiosity, religious values and beliefs and purports that Pentecostal Christians are “characterized by the evident fruit of the Holy Spirit” (Galatians 5:22-23, KJV).

Religiosity operates as an important guide for persons interested in marriage and the selection of a mate. The Bible defines the practice of “pure religion” in James 1:27; Matthew 23: 23-28; Jeremiah 2:32, 3:14 and Isaiah 54:5. According to biblical text the union of a man and a woman symbolizes the relationship of God and the Church (Revelation 21:2). Some individuals may consider the church and its purpose “a silly, and at worst a destructive, institution ... which stood for hypocritical self-righteousness and did not deserve support” (Rhem, 2002, p. 95). Pentecostal believers are taught that marriage is a sacred act between a man and a woman (Genesis 2:18-25; Romans 7:2; I Corinthians 7:2). The teachings of the Church, the body of Christ, are important for believers because they consider their Bible teachings as a guide for their day-to-day living. For instance, St. Mark 10: 1 - 12 state Jesus’ belief on divorce.

Pentecostals and Marriage

Pentecostal teachings about marriage motivate individuals to seek a mate with the mindset to remain married “until death do us part” (Hilsdale, 1962, p. 137; Romans 7:2-3). Pentecostal believers with faith based on scriptural devotion are guided by these teachings. The gospel of Matthew recorded Jesus’ response to the Pharisees regarding the law and divorce (King James Version 19:3). It is written “He who made them at the beginning made them male and female ...” (Matthew 19:4, New King James Version) “and the two shall become one flesh ... So then, they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate” (Matthew 19:5-6, NKJV).

Giblin (2004) suggest that marital health is increased by a combination of societal and spiritual factors (p. 61.) Giblin proposed the need for couples to obtain “assistance in making connections between their experiences and their spiritual resources” (2004, p. 62). Simons (2006) states, however, that persons not affiliated with any mainstream religion and those considered indigenous is three times more likely to cohabit than others affiliated with a faith based value.

Based on these teachings, Pentecostal believers also are admonished by the Bible to be joined with persons who have similar religious faith and teachings, and also are like minded in one’s commonality with another (Hebrews 7:26). In 2 Corinthians 6:14, St. Paul cautioned believers to be separated from unbelievers. The gospel of Luke further stated “No servant can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon” (NKJV 16:13). Sherkat

(2004) reported that religious homogamy remains strong in the United States and concluded that “religious diversity within families creates difficulties related to higher rates of divorce...” p. 622.

Pentecostal believers and attendees are instructed to consider their faith and religious culture as a consideration in partner selection, as Family Matters (2006) reports that much is to be desired and agreed upon prior to a long term commitment, such as educational attainment, financial security, etc. (Smock, 2004). Winter (2002) suggested that such religious culture is a matter of traditionalism like Jewish customs uses in consideration of their Jewish identity. However traditional the beliefs and values are thought to be, consistency and “dependence on God” (Anderson, 2000) for strength is an integral piece of determining the basis for which such thinking is supported (p. 43). Anderson (2000) stated that believers’ identity is formed through who they are, which determines what they do (pg. 47). Therefore, in the marriage language of courtship Forand stated, “The mission of Pentecostal form of marriage negotiation is to carry out the will of True God” (Forand, 2002). Likewise, in Colossians 3:17 it is stated that whatever is done in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him” (NKJV). For that reason, it is the belief of Pentecostals regarding their biblical teachings that the Holy Spirit is present to guide their every decision that they may stay in the will of their God (Keener, 2007, p.180).

Cohabitation Prior to Marriage

According to Hebrews 13:4 “marriage is honorable in all and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge” (KJV). More specifically, Pentecostal Christians are advised “therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife...” (Genesis 2:24, KJV). The word cleave is used to mean “be joined.” Living together before marriage is one biblical teaching instructed against for Pentecostals Christians. However, Adams (2007) encourages a reformation of family values according to a postmodern feminist framework that embraces diversity and changes away from hierarchical constructs toward feminist empowerment of “envisioning families that accommodate women’s interests” (p. 524). It is believed that prior premarital relationships such as cohabitation deter some individuals from committing to marriage (Rhoades, Stanley, Markman (2006). Hall (2006) states that marriage is an important institution in the United States (p. 1437), Canada and the Australia (Family Matters, 2006), though young adults are getting married at a later age, marriage rates are declining, and cohabitation rates are increasing with “the average length of a relationship lasting about 2.5 years before breaking up” (de Vaus, 2004). There is a stigma on couples who cohabit prior to marriage. The stigma affiliated with cohabitation is a belief that cohabitation is not a definite commitment to an individual nor does it carry any permanence for either individual involved (de Vaus, 2004; Hall, 2006; Rhoades, Stanley, & Markham, 2006, p. 554).

Rhoades, Stanley, & Markman (2006) and Buss (1994) stated that religiosity can be measured by the degree of dedication individuals have to each other (p. 557). The uncertainty or impermanence associated with cohabitation is not supported by religious teachings and thus suggest that persons who cohabit are not willing to make the sacrifice associated with settling down. Rhoades, Stanley, & Markman (2006) and Cohan & Kleinbaum (2002) suggested that those who cohabit before marriage are considered less religious than those who do not (p. 555-556). Individuals with a religious culture and who think themselves to be of a certain faith are esteemed with great expectation to not cohabit.

Couples cohabitating before contemplating marriage are likely to live together and not get married and are judged to have lower levels of dedication (Rhoades, Stanley, & Markman, 2006, p. 554). Therefore, couples who are able to reap the benefits of being married within cohabitation are less likely to seek marriage because it is seen as an unnecessary ritual.

Based upon the review of literature this researcher finds it necessary to examine the teachings among Pentecostals and how these teachings impact marital behaviors. The current study addresses this need.

CHAPTER III
METHODOLOGY
Research Design

This quantitative relational study was designed to identify the effects of religiosity on mate selection among adult attendees of Pentecostal churches. A review of literature emphasized the significance of Pentecost with the Holy Spirit, communication to God through glossolalia, and faith in God as significant aspects of Pentecostals' daily lives. Additionally, the importance of one's belief is a reliance on religious doctrine as received through scriptural reproof for moral and relational guidance. However, the review failed to underscore the degree of commitment or devotion achieved by Pentecostals, and likewise the degree to which Pentecostals intertwine these values and beliefs in relation to their choice of a mate. The profession of social work's value to support and empowerment is limited when it fails to incorporate faith beliefs and practices into one's treatment modules. Heppner, Cooper, Mulholland, & Wei (2001) stated "earlier psychotherapy outcome researchers focused less on how clients cope ... and more on changing client behaviors regardless of their beliefs" (p. 331).

The significance of religiosity and its influence within the life of Pentecostal followers could be an essential, yet minimized and unidentified factor in psychotherapy. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to examine whether

the beliefs and values of specifically Pentecostal adherents are significant to contribute not only to every decision making factor, but particularly to their selection of a mate as scripturally instructed.

Sample Population

Criteria for participation in this study were men and women, ages 18 -64, literate in the English language, affirmed Pentecostals, affiliated with at least one of the ten (10) identified Pentecostal churches within a 5 mile radius of a Marietta, GA zipcode, and were members a local Pentecostal organization or were engaged in an online social network forum, and who voluntarily chose to participate in this study. The sample consisted of forty-seven (47) participants who were either members of a Pentecostal community organization or responded online at www.hi5.com.

Data Collection Methods

The researcher mailed a letter to each church located within the specified zip-code (See Appendix A) because these ministries met the study's criteria for participation. Potential participants from these churches believe in the baptism of the Holy Spirit, biblical teachings, and in everyday application of the scripture. One week following the mailing of solicitation letters, pastors were contacted via telephone and electronic mail for verification regarding their receipt of the letter and to inform whether they would like to meet with the researcher for further information about the study.

The www.hi5.com network link, which is a social network forum, was used for a snowball sampling to further ensure a doable sample population for the

study. None of the Pastors from the ten solicited Pentecostal churches chose to introduce the study to their parishioners. Therefore information about the study was not presented or distributed to members of any specific organized congregation within the required zipcode (See Appendix F). Forty-seven respondents however did respond to the research questionnaire. It is possible that pastors believed the survey to be an “outside” influence or uncharacteristic of church doctrines and therefore inappropriate for membership participation.

Forty-three of these respondents were obtained from the www.hi5.com e-mail solicitation and once they accepted the outlined requirements in the consent agreement, the survey was made available to them through the provided website link. The remaining four respondents were solicited from a Pentecostal organization.

Data was gathered through an electronically posted survey on the www.hi5.com website that the researcher made available from 1st January 2008 through 16th of March 2008, which allowed over a two-month period for participants to complete the survey. Participants were informed of their rights and privacy as outlined within the proposal and as presented to the Human Subjects Review Committee (HSRC) at Smith College School for Social Work prior to the distribution and collection of data. The approval of the submitted proposal and all research applications demonstrated adherence to the NASW Code of Ethics, and the Federal regulations for the Protection of Human Research Subjects.

A link to the research survey was posted on www.hi5.com and an e-mail was sent out to elicit participants for the study. The electronic mail included a letter (Appendix A) to the potential participant, a copy of the flyer, and the informed consent for each participant's personal records. This allowed the participant access to the informed consent and an opportunity to become familiar with the purpose of the study before choosing to access the survey.

To better guarantee participant confidentiality, personal notes regarding communications, signed consent forms and documented information regarding acceptance and individual's participation were stored separately from survey responses. Moreover, all information gathered was done over the internet through an online survey based website with the option of identifying computer information disabled. The survey population was not traceable as the researcher e-mailed the link to complete the survey to each participant who then e-mailed the link to other possible participants. No personally identifiable information was solicited or collected from potential participants.

Participants were asked to answer six (6) demographic questions related to age range, sexual orientation, racial/ethnic background, marital status, highest level of education completed, and frequency of church/fellowship attendance. Twenty-four (24) 5-scaled questions were listed throughout the survey (See Appendix B). The researcher inquired about mate characteristics and religious preferences through an adjusted version of Gough's 1973 Marital Preferences Questionnaire (See Appendix E). The questions were to evaluate whether significant differences exist between male and female Pentecostals' adherence

to scriptural teachings; and whether Pentecostal biblical teachings influenced one's selection of their mate. About 10 minutes were required to complete the online survey; however participants were not timed.

Data Analysis

The data collected for both the demographic and mate characteristic portion of the survey were tabulated electronically then analyzed using descriptive univariate and bivariate analysis. For the demographic data, the univariate analysis method assisted the researcher to further conceptualize whether a particular group of individuals was more represented within the study "to make assertions about the causal processes that explain a particular relationship in the data" (Rubin & Babbie, 2007, p. 275).

The researcher further used SPSS-X for specific tabulations. T-tests were used to determine differences between variables. Crosstabs, although not a statistical test, was used to help this researcher understand differences between males and females in this study and whether or not these differences show up as significant on a statistical test. Finally, Spearman correlations were run for the whole group, and separately for the men and the women. Correlations measure whether there is a significant relationship or association between two scales.

Limitations of the Study

There are limitations present in this study. There lies a threat to the internal validity within the research sample. Gender was not equally represented. Only 13 men participated in the study compared to 34 women participants. Additionally the sample population is relatively small with only 47

participants. Therefore, this study does not reflect a balanced gender ratio; and the small sample affects validity of the study. Findings from the current research reflects only those perceptions of the population studied and cannot be generalized to the larger group of Pentecostal believers.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

The current study was designed to identify the effects of religiosity on mate selection among Pentecostal church adult attendees. For purposes of this study, religiosity refers to any values, beliefs, and practices learned from one's faith or religion. The term Pentecostal is unique to this research because it utilizes the scriptural meaning of the word. The Pentecostal church is governed by the instructions from the Bible. The teachings admonish believers to develop their spiritual relationship with the Lord and seek His will for anything, including marriage and be equally yoked (joined with other believers like his/herself).

This research was guided by the following five research hypotheses. This chapter first will discuss population demographics and then will address each research hypothesis, and its statistical findings separately.

1. Religiosity is a significant predictor for mate selection among Pentecostal adults. (faith)
2. Pentecostal men express a greater preference for religiosity in a mate than do Pentecostal women. (biblical teachings)
3. There is no relationship between professional status and mate selection among Pentecostal adults. (profession)
4. There is no relationship between age and religious preference in mate selection among Pentecostal adults. (age)

5. Pentecostal women are less likely than Pentecostal men to preference religious factors in mate selection. (gender)

Demographics

There were forty-seven participants in the current study. All participants self-identified as Black and of African descent. Both males (N = 13) and females (N = 34) participated in this study.

Hypothesis One

Religiosity is a significant predictor for mate selection among Pentecostal adults.

Findings

To determine the relationship between religiosity and gender, t-tests were used to determine if there were differences in faith and gender. There was a significant difference in faith by gender ($t=18.106$) = 2.537. $p = .021$, two-tailed). Males had a higher mean (1.54) than females (1.13). A higher mean on this variable indicates males rated this characteristic as less desirable than did females.

To further examine this variable, crosstabs were run on each variable by gender. In this case, crosstabs are frequencies of one variable such as faith by gender. This report reveals how many men and women gave each rating for each characteristic. It is not a statistical test, but can be a useful way to describe the data and help one understand whether differences exist between males and females or whether or not they show up as significant on a statistical test. An interesting observation occurred with this analysis on faith. While there was a

significant difference between males and females, all of the responses were in the very or somewhat desirable range. Therefore, while it may be more important to females (based on the t-test results), it is still at least somewhat important to both. More females indicated religiosity or faith was very desirable (87%) than males (46.2%). However, if you combine very desirable and somewhat desirable on this characteristic there are actually more women (100%) than men (96%) that find faith to be a desirable characteristic in their mate selection. The following table illustrates these points.

Table 1. Faith by Gender

		Crosstab			
		GENDER			
		male	female	Total	
FAITH	very desirable	Count	6	20	26
		% within FAITH	23.1%	76.9%	100.0%
		% within GENDER	46.2%	87.0%	72.2%
	somewhat desirable	Count	7	3	10
		% within FAITH	70.0%	30.0%	100.0%
		% within GENDER	53.8%	13.0%	27.8%
Total	Count	13	23	36	
	% within FAITH	36.1%	63.9%	100.0%	
	% within GENDER	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

Hypothesis Two:

Pentecostal men express a greater preference for religiosity in a mate than do Pentecostal women.

Findings:

T-tests were used to determine whether Pentecostal men have a greater preference for religiosity in a mate than Pentecostal women. The influence of

biblical teachings as the foundation for religiosity was measured by this variable. There was no significant difference by gender.

Crosstabs also were used to analyze biblical teachings and gender. In this case, biblical teachings and gender showed how many men and women gave each rating for each characteristic. While there was no significant difference in biblical teachings and gender, the crosstabs show more women who said biblical teachings was very desirable (45.8%) than men (30.8%). If you combine very desirable and somewhat desirable on this characteristic, there are actually more men (61.6%) than women (54.1%) that find biblical teachings a desirable characteristic in a mate. Interestingly, there were more men (38.5%) who found biblical teaching very undesirable than women (20.8%). It is possible that these findings suggest that men and women perceive biblical teaching in relation to religiosity differently and as such, evaluate its overall importance differently. This is shown in Table II below.

Table II. Biblical Teaching and Gender

			Crosstab		
			GENDER		
			male	female	Total
BIBTEACH	very desireable	Count	4	11	15
		% within BIBTEACH	26.7%	73.3%	100.0%
		% within GENDER	30.8%	45.8%	40.5%
	somewhat desireable	Count	4	2	6
		% within BIBTEACH	66.7%	33.3%	100.0%
		% within GENDER	30.8%	8.3%	16.2%
	not certain	Count	0	3	3
		% within BIBTEACH	.0%	100.0%	100.0%
		% within GENDER	.0%	12.5%	8.1%
	somewhat undesirable	Count	0	3	3
		% within BIBTEACH	.0%	100.0%	100.0%
		% within GENDER	.0%	12.5%	8.1%
very undesirable	Count	5	5	10	
	% within BIBTEACH	50.0%	50.0%	100.0%	
	% within GENDER	38.5%	20.8%	27.0%	
Total	Count	13	24	37	
	% within BIBTEACH	35.1%	64.9%	100.0%	
	% within GENDER	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

Hypothesis Three:

There is no relationship between professional status and mate selection among Pentecostal adults.

Findings:

Again t-tests were run to determine if there were differences in professional status and mate selection by gender. There was no significant difference by gender. Likewise, crosstabs were run for each variable by gender. As mentioned earlier, crosstabs are frequencies of one variable, professional status in this case, by another variable, gender; and tell us how many men and

women gave each rating for each characteristic. While it is not a statistical test, it can be a useful way to describe the data and help researchers understand differences between these two groups and whether or not they show up as significant on a statistical test.

Hypothesis Four:

There is no relationship between age and religious preference in mate selection among Pentecostal adults.

Findings:

Spearman correlations were run for the whole group, and separately for men and women to determine whether a relationship existed between age and faith, or religiosity. Correlations measure whether there is a significant relationship or association between two scales. In this case it addresses whether the desirability of faith, or religiosity, is related to the age of respondents. No significant correlation was found when spearman correlations were run for the entire group. Spearman correlations were then run for just men, and again no significant correlation was found. Lastly, spearman correlations were run for women and again, there was no significant correlation. Tables III, IV, and V on the following page illustrate these findings.

Table III. Nonparametric Correlations Total (Men and Women)

			FAITH	AGE
Spearman's rho	FAITH	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.230
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.177
		N	36	36
	AGE	Correlation Coefficient	.230	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.177	.
		N	36	40

Table IV. Nonparametric Correlations (Men)

			FAITH	AGE
Spearman's rho	FAITH	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.154
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.616
		N	13	13
	AGE	Correlation Coefficient	.154	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.616	.
		N	13	14

Table V. Nonparametric Correlations (Women)

			FAITH	AGE
Spearman's rho	FAITH	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.272
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.210
		N	23	23
	AGE	Correlation Coefficient	.272	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.210	.
		N	23	26

Hypothesis V:

Pentecostal women are less likely than Pentecostal men to preference religious factors in mate selection.

Findings:

T-tests were run to determine if there were differences in religious factors such as biblical teachings, faith, and professional status in mate selection by gender. There were significant differences found between males and females although all the responses were in the very or somewhat desirable range. Therefore, while religious factors may be more important to females in this sample (based on the t-test results) it is still at least somewhat important to both. Findings for this hypothesis also are answered by the t-test and crosstabs for hypothesis Two. Additional data is contained in Table VI below.

Table VI. T-tests

Group Statistics					
	GENDER	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
BIBTEACH	male	13	2.85	1.819	.504
	female	24	2.54	1.668	.340
FAITH	male	13	1.54	.519	.144
	female	23	1.13	.344	.072
PROFESSIO	male	13	1.62	.506	.140
	female	22	1.73	.883	.188

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
BIBTEACH	Equal variance assumed	.506	.482	.514	35	.611	.304	.593	-.899	1.508
	Equal variance not assumed			.500	22.936	.622	.304	.609	-.955	1.564
FAITH	Equal variance assumed	14.274	.001	2.837	34	.008	.408	.144	.116	.700
	Equal variance not assumed			2.537	18.106	.021	.408	.161	.070	.746
PROFESSI	Equal variance assumed	1.376	.249	-.417	33	.680	-.112	.269	-.658	.434
	Equal variance not assumed			-.476	32.995	.637	-.112	.235	-.590	.366

Other Findings

There were four themes that stood out in the review of the data which had a higher than normal mean when compared to other characteristics. These characteristics included (1) biblical teachings concerning mate selection and then praying for her/him to be saved; (2) sexual intimacy before marriage [others focused], (3) premarital sexual relationships [mate focused], and (4) biblical teachings related to marrying an unbeliever.

The theme of biblical teachings concerning mate selection and then praying for her/him to be saved had a higher deviation between genders than any other characteristics. The researcher found this to be interesting because scriptural text states the importance of being joined with persons of same likeness because company of another faith will divide. Nevertheless, four of thirteen males in this study reported that selecting a mate and then praying for her to be saved is “very desirable”. Four other males considered it “somewhat

desirable”. Five of the thirteen male participants considered selecting a mate and then praying for her to be saved as “very undesirable”. This suggests that at least 62% of the men in this study found selecting a mate and then praying for her to be “desirable”.

The theme of being sexually intimate before marriage had the highest deviation among all characteristics. When genders were compared, both men and women had high means for this characteristic. The theme of premarital sexual relationships had the second highest deviation and mean when compared to all other characteristics for mate selection. The theme of marrying an unbeliever had the second highest standard deviation among all characteristics for mate selection within the study.

Respondents in this study had one thing in common. Both men and women had an equal mean for the characteristic of faithful. All respondents selected choosing a mate who is faithful as “very desirable”.

Summary of Findings

The purpose of this study was to examine whether the beliefs and values of specifically Pentecostal adherents are significant to contribute not only to every decision making factor, but particularly to their selection of a mate as scripturally instructed. Religiosity is an important value of Pentecostal adherents and through their biblical teachings is taught the importance of doctrines related to marriage. Marriage is God-ordained. Pentecostals are taught that the marriage relationship encompasses the deepest unity of man and woman in its social and physical expressions. The first woman was declared to be a suitable

helper for the man (Genesis 2:18), the perfect complement (Genesis 2:23). God intended them to share both blessings and responsibilities. Mutual esteem and self-giving love strengthen the marriage relationship. It is instructed that God intended this physical, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual union to be focused on one partner only. Findings from the Pentecostal believers in this study appear to value the religious doctrines of their faith and find these doctrines to be very to somewhat important in their selection of a mate. While levels of significance were not found in all variables, faith or religiosity was consistently found to be important to both the men and women in this study.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

The researcher's assumptions for this study were that religiosity plays an important role in mate selection for Pentecostal adults, that differences exist between Pentecostal men and women in the mate selection process, and that differences exist in professional status and mate selection. However findings from this study found significant differences only in faith and gender. While males in this study did rate faith as less desirable than did females, all male responses were within the very or somewhat desirable range. While faith did rank more important to females (based on the t-test results), it was still at least somewhat important to both men and women. These findings are consistent with the research findings of Evans & Evans (2006), Marks (2005), and Robinson & Blanton (1993) who found faith and religiosity to be significant determinants in mate selection and marital satisfaction. The common beliefs of sexual attraction, beauty, finances and professional status were not supported by this study. Although these variables were recognized by the study's participants, they did not reach levels of significance. What appeared most important to this study's population were their overall faith and commitment to biblical teachings and their cultural learning.

These findings, too, was evident in research by DeSteno & Salovey (1996) and Harris & Christenfeld (1998) who found cultural learning, faith and personal meaning as significant in mate selection. Physical attractiveness (Brase, Caprar & Voracek, 2004), partner fidelity (Hanko, Master & Sabini (2004), and intimacy (Robinson & Blanton, (1993) were referenced in the current study but did not reach the level of significance found by these researchers.

Professional status and age were not significant variables in this study. It appears that for the men and women in this study, mate selection and preference centered more on internal variables such as spiritual meaning, faith and commitment to God rather than external variables such as physical beauty, professional status, and age. The latter, age, was a somewhat surprising factor. One would surmise that with age comes maturity and that with maturity comes a different emphasis upon what is important in a life-long partner. The current study did not support this. Regardless of age the participants in this study maintained their commitment to biblical teachings, faith and their spiritual being as their most significant variable in mate selection.

The intent of this study was to examine mate selection among Pentecostal believers and to distinguish those variables relevant to mate selection. The results show similarities among Pentecostal believers and members of other faith groups, but clear distinctions in their [Pentecostal] commitment to faith. It is the researcher's belief that culture and biblical teachings become centerfold for Pentecostal believers and that external forces or variables are minimized. If this is correct, then the refusal of Pentecostal pastors to allow this researcher to

engage Pentecostal congregations is logical. To allow the researcher to introduce external variables that go against the biblical teachings of the Pentecostal faith is disallowed. This action supports faith, commitment and belief in God, which are all doctrines of Pentecostal teachings and enforces the importance of community and culture within the church.

This researcher made the assumption that religiosity, gender and professional status were significant variables for mate selection among Pentecostals, and was proven to be incorrect. The researcher submits that her assumption may not be that dissimilar from other clinicians or individuals who provide counseling to diverse groups. This being the case, it becomes important for us as clinicians and therapists to be sensitive to diverse cultures, religious beliefs, and biblical teachings and to not fall into the trap of false assumptions, which may hurt or impede the therapeutic process.

Lastly, it is important to document that the findings of this study are relevant to the population studied and may not be characteristic of all Pentecostal believers. The researcher further documents the threat to validity of these findings solely based upon the small sample size and imbalance in gender representation.

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APPENDIX A

INVITATION LETTER TO PARTICIPANTS

Initial Letter to Churches

Greetings to the Pastor and Potential Participants,

My name is Sanya K. Unis, and I am a second year graduate student at Smith College School for Social Work. I am conducting a research study to understand the effect of religiosity on mate selection among Pentecostal church adult attendees at ten (10) local congregations in Smyrna, GA. This study is grounded by the researcher's intent to understand the importance of religiosity in Pentecostal churches and the factors considered for mate selection. Research in this area will enhance the knowledge of pastors, ministers, social workers, counselors and parishioners as they counsel and advise members of the church.

The data collected will be used for my thesis. All data for this study, including any future presentations and publications, will be presented in a way that does not specifically identify any participants or their responses.

This letter is my attempt to make contact with and inform the Pastor/Bishop of the churches targeted for this study. I am requesting a meeting or telephone conversation with you to solicit your assistance in using your church as one of the Pentecostal churches within this study. I desire to speak with you in depth regarding this study and how the local church congregation may become involved. If you are interested in learning more about this opportunity and all that it entails, I am available to meet with you.

If you have any questions about this research or need to speak with me, I can be reached any time Mondays through Thursdays from 12:30 P.M. until 8:30 P.M. at (404) 541-3006 or by e-mail at sunis@smith.edu. You also may contact the Chair of the Smith College School for Social Work Human Subjects Review Committee at (413) 585-7974.

Sincerely,



Sanya K. Unis

APPENDIX B
QUESTIONNAIRE

The following questionnaire examines the influence of biblical teachings of the Pentecostal church upon Pentecostal churches adult attendees selection of a potential mate.

The survey has two sections. Section I asks demographic questions. Section II inquires about mate characteristics and their religious preferences through a modified version of Gough's 1973 Marital Preferences Questionnaire, with permission from Dr. Harrison Gough.

I. Section One – Demographics

Please answer the following questions by selecting the response that best describes you.

1. How old are you? (Please select the range that applies to you)

- Under 18
- 18 – 24
- 25 - 34
- 35 - 44
- 45 – 54
- 55 – 64
- 65 – 74
- 75 – 84
- 85 – 94

2. What is your gender?

- Male
- Female
- Other (please specify) _____

3. What is your race?

- Black/African American
- White/Caucasian
- Asian American
- Hispanic
- Latin American
- Caribbean American
- Other (please specify) _____

4. What is your marital status?

- Single
- Single and engaged
- Married
- Divorced
- Widowed
- Separated

5. What is your highest level of education completed?

- Junior High (middle school)
- Attended High School
- High School Graduate/GED
- Some College
- Associate Degree
- Bachelors Degree
- Masters Degree
- Doctorate

6. How often do you attend a fellowship?

- Do not attend
- Attend every service
- Every other service/Biweekly
- Other (please specify) _____

II. Section Two - Preferences concerning spouse

Please read the following list of characteristics. Select the characteristic you desire(d) in a potential spouse by choosing either 1) VERY DESIRABLE; 2) SOMEWHAT DESIRABLE; 3) NOT CERTAIN 4) SOMEWHAT UNDESIRABLE; or 5) VERY UNDESIRABLE

7. _____ Affectionate nature
- VERY DESIRABLE
 - SOMEWHAT DESIRABLE
 - NOT CERTAIN
 - SOMEWHAT UNDESIRABLE
 - VERY UNDESIRABLE
8. _____ Churchgoer
- VERY DESIRABLE
 - SOMEWHAT DESIRABLE
 - NOT CERTAIN
 - SOMEWHAT UNDESIRABLE
 - VERY UNDESIRABLE
9. _____ Faithful
- VERY DESIRABLE
 - SOMEWHAT DESIRABLE
 - NOT CERTAIN
 - SOMEWHAT UNDESIRABLE
 - VERY UNDESIRABLE
10. _____ Provider
- VERY DESIRABLE
 - SOMEWHAT DESIRABLE
 - NOT CERTAIN
 - SOMEWHAT UNDESIRABLE
 - VERY UNDESIRABLE

11. _____ Biblical teachings concerning selecting someone and then praying for her/him to be saved is

- VERY DESIRABLE
- SOMEWHAT DESIRABLE
- NOT CERTAIN
- SOMEWHAT UNDESIRABLE
- VERY UNDESIRABLE

Please rate the characteristic desired in a potential spouse. Select the characteristic you desire(d) in a potential spouse by choosing either 1) VERY DESIRABLE; 2) SOMEWHAT DESIRABLE; 3) NOT CERTAIN 4) SOMEWHAT UNDESIRABLE; or 5) VERY UNDESIRABLE

12. _____ Sexually intimate before marriage

- VERY DESIRABLE
- SOMEWHAT DESIRABLE
- NOT CERTAIN
- SOMEWHAT UNDESIRABLE
- VERY UNDESIRABLE

13. _____ Good moral character

- VERY DESIRABLE
- SOMEWHAT DESIRABLE
- NOT CERTAIN
- SOMEWHAT UNDESIRABLE
- VERY UNDESIRABLE

14. _____ Honest

- VERY DESIRABLE
- SOMEWHAT DESIRABLE
- NOT CERTAIN
- SOMEWHAT UNDESIRABLE
- VERY UNDESIRABLE

15. _____ Premarital sexual relationship

- VERY DESIRABLE
- SOMEWHAT DESIRABLE
- NOT CERTAIN
- SOMEWHAT UNDESIRABLE
- VERY UNDESIRABLE

16. _____ Biblical teaching regarding marrying an unbeliever is

- VERY DESIRABLE
- SOMEWHAT DESIRABLE
- NOT CERTAIN
- SOMEWHAT UNDESIRABLE
- VERY UNDESIRABLE

Please rate the characteristic desired in a potential spouse. Select the characteristic you desire(d) in a potential spouse by choosing either 1) VERY DESIRABLE; 2) SOMEWHAT DESIRABLE; 3) NOT CERTAIN 4) SOMEWHAT UNDESIRABLE; or 5) VERY UNDESIRABLE

17. _____ Water baptized

- VERY DESIRABLE
- SOMEWHAT DESIRABLE
- NOT CERTAIN
- SOMEWHAT UNDESIRABLE
- VERY UNDESIRABLE

18. _____ Boldness in declaring his/her faith

- VERY DESIRABLE
- SOMEWHAT DESIRABLE
- NOT CERTAIN
- SOMEWHAT UNDESIRABLE
- VERY UNDESIRABLE

19. _____ Born-again

- VERY DESIRABLE
- SOMEWHAT DESIRABLE
- NOT CERTAIN
- SOMEWHAT UNDESIRABLE
- VERY UNDESIRABLE

20. _____ Prayerful

- VERY DESIRABLE
- SOMEWHAT DESIRABLE
- NOT CERTAIN
- SOMEWHAT UNDESIRABLE
- VERY UNDESIRABLE

21. _____ Friend

- VERY DESIRABLE
- SOMEWHAT DESIRABLE
- NOT CERTAIN
- SOMEWHAT UNDESIRABLE
- VERY UNDESIRABLE

Please rate the characteristic desired in a potential spouse. Select the characteristic you desire(d) in a potential spouse by choosing either 1) VERY DESIRABLE; 2) SOMEWHAT DESIRABLE; 3) NOT CERTAIN 4) SOMEWHAT UNDESIRABLE; or 5) VERY UNDESIRABLE

22. _____ Sociable

- VERY DESIRABLE
- SOMEWHAT DESIRABLE
- NOT CERTAIN
- SOMEWHAT UNDESIRABLE
- VERY UNDESIRABLE

23. _____ Bible believer

- VERY DESIRABLE
- SOMEWHAT DESIRABLE
- NOT CERTAIN
- SOMEWHAT UNDESIRABLE
- VERY UNDESIRABLE

24. _____ Same Faith/Religion

- VERY DESIRABLE
- SOMEWHAT DESIRABLE
- NOT CERTAIN
- SOMEWHAT UNDESIRABLE
- VERY UNDESIRABLE

25. _____ Biblical teachings concerning marriage is

- VERY DESIRABLE
- SOMEWHAT DESIRABLE
- NOT CERTAIN
- SOMEWHAT UNDESIRABLE
- VERY UNDESIRABLE

26. _____ Good sense of humor

- VERY DESIRABLE
- SOMEWHAT DESIRABLE
- NOT CERTAIN
- SOMEWHAT UNDESIRABLE
- VERY UNDESIRABLE

Please rate the characteristic desired in a potential spouse. Select the characteristic you desire(d) in a potential spouse by choosing either
1) VERY DESIRABLE; 2) SOMEWHAT DESIRABLE; 3) NOT CERTAIN
4) SOMEWHAT UNDESIRABLE; or 5) VERY UNDESIRABLE

27. _____ Seek the scripture for edification/direction

- VERY DESIRABLE
- SOMEWHAT DESIRABLE
- NOT CERTAIN
- SOMEWHAT UNDESIRABLE
- VERY UNDESIRABLE

28. _____ Biblical teaching regarding living with my mate before marriage is

- VERY DESIRABLE
- SOMEWHAT DESIRABLE
- NOT CERTAIN
- SOMEWHAT UNDESIRABLE
- VERY UNDESIRABLE

29. _____ Professional

- VERY DESIRABLE
- SOMEWHAT DESIRABLE
- NOT CERTAIN
- SOMEWHAT UNDESIRABLE
- VERY UNDESIRABLE

30. _____ Communicator

- VERY DESIRABLE
- SOMEWHAT DESIRABLE
- NOT CERTAIN
- SOMEWHAT UNDESIRABLE
- VERY UNDESIRABLE

APPENDIX C

HUMAN SUBJECTS REVIEW COMMITTEE APPROVAL LETTER

January 24, 2008

Sanya Unis

Dear Sanya,

Your second set of revisions has been reviewed and all is now in order. You did an excellent job in defining religiosity as you will be using it for this study. It clarifies the whole project and makes everything come together. We are glad to give final approval to your study.

Please note the following requirements:

Consent Forms: All subjects should be given a copy of the consent form.

Maintaining Data: You must retain signed consent documents for at least three (3) years past completion of the research activity.

In addition, these requirements may also be applicable:

Amendments: If you wish to change any aspect of the study (such as design, procedures, consent forms or subject population), please submit these changes to the Committee.

Renewal: You are required to apply for renewal of approval every year for as long as the study is active.

Completion: You are required to notify the Chair of the Human Subjects Review Committee when your study is completed (data collection finished). This requirement is met by completion of the thesis project during the Third Summer.

Good luck with your project.

Sincerely,

Ann Hartman, D.S.W.

Chair, Human Subjects Review Committee

CC: Narviar Calloway, Research Advisor

APPENDIX D

PERMISSION TO USE QUESTIONNAIRE

To: Elizabeth Peele / IPSR / UCB

Oct. 30, 2007

From: Harrison Gough

Dear Elizabeth:

Please send an e-mail to Sanya K. Unis, telling her (1) that she has my permission to use the Marital Preference Questionnaire, and (2) that a copy of the instrument with scoring instructions will be sent by regular mail, on receipt (by you) of her address. She should make as many copies of the questionnaire as she needs for her study.

There are 76 items in the questionnaire, 55 on the first side and 21 on the back. I am FAXing these two sides to you.

The instrument is scored for 9 scales: (1) attractiveness, (2) compatibility, (3) conventionality, (4) creativity, (5) family orientation, (6) intelligence, (7) reliability, (8) status, and (9) vitality.

- (1) A: 7, 34, 44, 58, 64, 67, 75
- (2) C: 1, 3, 8, 11, 14, 18, 25, 26, 27, 43, 46, 56, 68, 70, 71
- (3) CV: 9, 23, 32, 50, 52, 59, 62
minus: 4, 54, 60
- (4) CR: 6, 12, 36, 41, 51, 66
- (5) FO: 24, 28, 31, 38, 48, 63, 73
- (6) I: 2, 19, 42, 45, 57
- (7) R: 15, 22, 33, 39, 40, 49
- (8) S: 5, 10, 29, 30, 61, 69, 74
- (9) V: 13, 16, 17, 20, 21, 35, 37, 47, 53, 55, 65, 72, 76

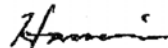
Scores are based on the sums of the ratings for each item, except for CV, where the sum of items 4, 54, and 60 is subtracted from the sum for the other CV items.

There is only one published article referring to the questionnaire:

Buss, D. M., & Schmitt, D. P. (1993). Sexual strategies theory: A contextual evolutionary analysis of human mating. Psychological Review, 100, 204-232.

However, the instrument has been used many times in studies at IPSR, with valid and reliable results.

Best wishes,



APPENDIX E
INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Dear Participant,

My name is Sanya K. Unis, and I am a second year graduate student at Smith College School for Social Work. I am conducting a research study to evaluate the effect of religiosity on mate selection among Pentecostal churches adult attendees who are affiliated with at least one of the ten (10) listed churches below or another Pentecostal organization. The data collected will be used for my thesis. All data for this study, including any future presentations and publications, will be presented in a way that does not specifically identify you or your responses.

If you agree to participate in this study, completing the online survey will take no more that 15 minutes. To qualify for participation in this survey you must be 18 years old or older, be literate in English language, affirm your belief in the occurrence of the Day of Pentecost that occurred after Christ ascended, and be an attendee or member of at least one of the listed churches or another Pentecostal organization:

Abundant Life Christian Center

Abundant Life Worship

Church of God of Prophecy

Church of the Holy Spirit Ministries

Church of the Living God

Cumberland Community Church

Faith Christian Center

Fellowship Christian Center

International Gospel Outreach Family Church

Milford Church of God

The survey includes 6 demographic and 24 five-scaled questions that pertain to characteristics desired in a potential spouse. This on-line survey was created through Survey Monkey, one of many web-based survey software. An on-line, also web based survey allows for creating surveys, electronic data distribution, collection, and tracking. It also provides for safe and entirely anonymous collection of data. After completing and submitting the survey, participants will not be able to withdraw from the study as the researcher will not be able to identify any one survey as belonging to any persons.

There are minimum risks to this study. Some participants may, however, experience discomfort from their reflection on personal beliefs or various aspects of their daily life and practices. A list of referrals for counseling is available at each participating local church should you feel the need to speak with a professional regarding your reactions to this survey. Your participation, however, also will be beneficial. Participation in this study will allow you to share the significance of religiosity and its effects upon your life and activities. You also will add to a body of knowledge that examines the importance of religiosity in mate selection. There will be no financial compensation to you, and no other benefits should be anticipated.

Your information will be protected by an anonymous distribution and collection of the data. No part of the results will identify you individually. Only individuals involved in the collection of the data and overseeing of the process, such as my advisor, will have access to the data. In publications or presentations, the data will be presented as a whole. All data and notes will be kept in a secure location for a period of three years as required by Federal guidelines. In any case, should the materials be needed beyond the three year period, they will continue to be kept in a secure location and will be destroyed when no longer needed.

Your participation is entirely voluntary. You may withdraw from the study at any time during the data collection process. If you choose to withdraw from the study, you may do so at this time by choosing not to proceed. Once you submit your survey, it cannot be withdrawn. In case you have further questions, or have any concerns about your rights or about any aspects of the study, you are encouraged to call or e-mail the researcher, Sanya K. Unis at (404) 541-3006 or sunis@smith.edu or contact the Chair of the Smith College School for Social Work Human Subjects Review Committee at (413) 585-7974.

SELECTING ACCEPT SIGNIFIES THAT YOU HAVE READ AND UNDERSTAND THE PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY, THAT YOU HAVE HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO ASK QUESTIONS ABOUT THE STUDY, YOUR PARTICIPATION AND YOUR RIGHTS, AND THAT YOU VOLUNTARILY CONSENT TO BEING A PART OF THIS STUDY.

Thank you for your time and willingness to participate in this research study. Do print a copy of this consent form for your records.

Sincerely,

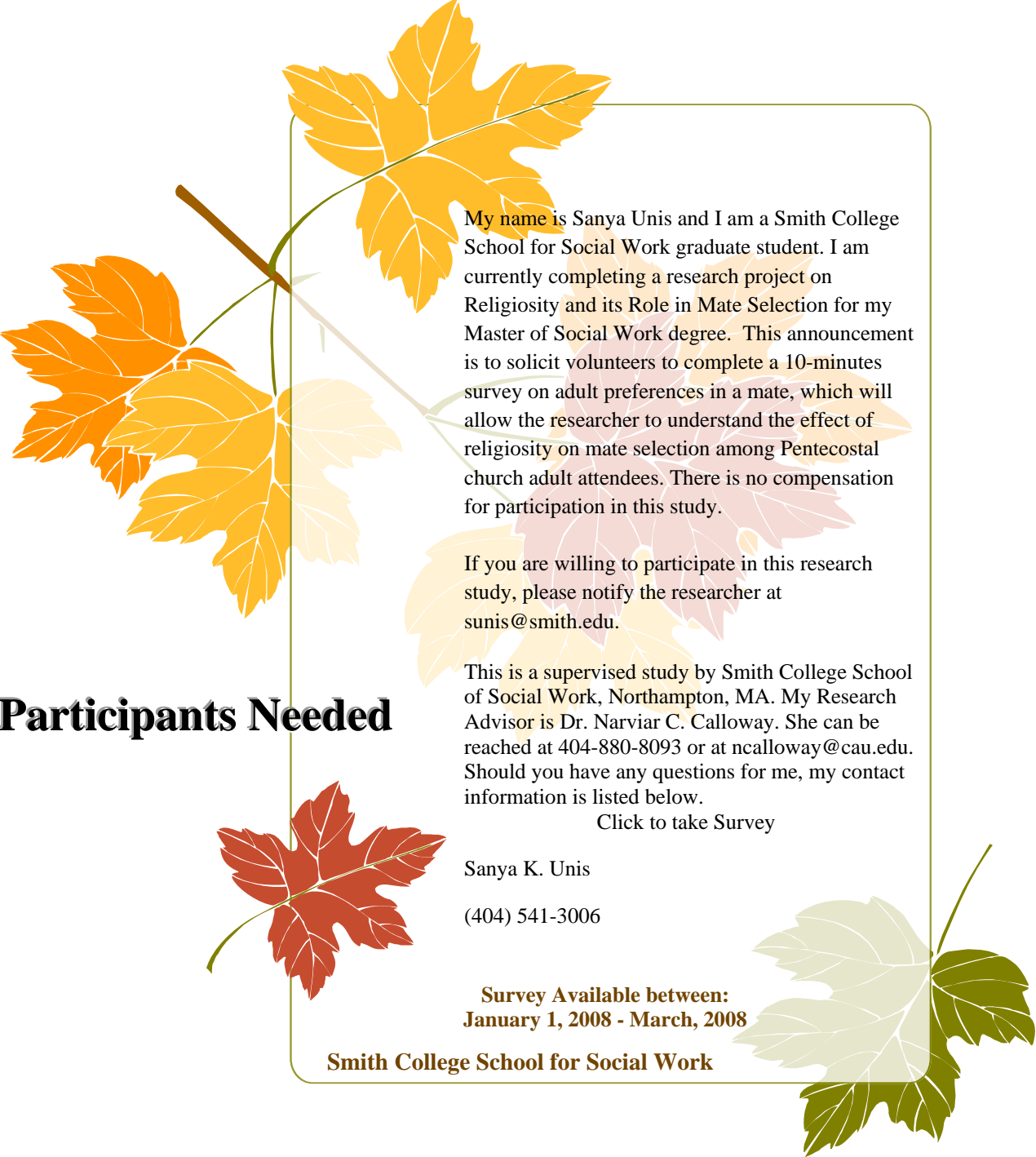
Sanya K. Unis

I ACCEPT

I DECLINE

APPENDIX F

FLYER



My name is Sanya Unis and I am a Smith College School for Social Work graduate student. I am currently completing a research project on Religiosity and its Role in Mate Selection for my Master of Social Work degree. This announcement is to solicit volunteers to complete a 10-minute survey on adult preferences in a mate, which will allow the researcher to understand the effect of religiosity on mate selection among Pentecostal church adult attendees. There is no compensation for participation in this study.

If you are willing to participate in this research study, please notify the researcher at sunis@smith.edu.

This is a supervised study by Smith College School of Social Work, Northampton, MA. My Research Advisor is Dr. Narviar C. Calloway. She can be reached at 404-880-8093 or at ncalloway@cau.edu. Should you have any questions for me, my contact information is listed below.

[Click to take Survey](#)

Sanya K. Unis

(404) 541-3006

**Survey Available between:
January 1, 2008 - March, 2008**

Smith College School for Social Work

Survey Participants Needed