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The relationship between denominational affiliation and spiritual health among weekly-churchgoing 13- to 15-year-old adolescents in England and Wales

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SUMMARY

This paper draws on John Fisher's formative definition of spiritual health as comprising good relationships within four domains (the personal, the communal, the environmental, and the transcendental) and uses the operationalisation of these constructs proposed by Francis and Robbins (2005). Comparisons are made between the responses of five groups of 13- to 15-year-olds who report weekly church attendance: 1,549 Anglicans, 1,458 Roman Catholics, 830 members of one of the Free Churches, 212 members of one of the Pentecostal Churches, and 212 Jehovah's Witnesses. The data demonstrate significant variations in the levels of spiritual health reported by weekly churchgoers according to denominational affiliation. The conclusion is drawn that denominational affiliation needs to be taken into account alongside frequency of church attendance in constructing a view of the relationship between Christian practice and spiritual health during the adolescent years.

INTRODUCTION

The state-maintained system of education in England and Wales has, from its very inception, been closely aligned with the Christian churches (Cruickshank, 1963; Murphy, 1971; Chadwick, 1997). Plans for educational reconstruction following the second world war through the 1944 Education Act included the statutory place for religious education and for daily collective worship within all state-maintained schools (Dent, 1947). By the time of the 1988 Education Reform Act, however, educational vocabulary and rhetoric was beginning to change. While religious education and collective worship remained a statutory requirement, the legislation also began to emphasise the spiritual dimensions of the curriculum (Department of Education and Science, 1989). According to the Education Reform Act, it became the responsibility of schools to promote 'the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at the school'.

This clause from the 1988 Education Reform Act has been cited in a number of subsequent Government circulars designed to encourage or to admonish teachers and educational administrators. Nowhere, however, in initial Government documentation was there any attempt to offer a definition of 'spiritual development'. In the absence of any agreed definition considerable literature has developed from a range of different perspectives. In a penetrating analysis of the situation which arose in educational debate following the 1988 Education Reform Act, Adrian Thatcher (1996:118) argued that 'accounts of "spiritual development" appear to have proliferated out of control'. Using Wittgenstein's model of language-games, Thatcher argues that there is a wide diversity of meanings attributed to the notion of spiritual development since a number of different language-games are being played by different players.

Spiritual health

Partly in reaction to the sometimes vague and imprecise ways in which the term 'spiritual development' has been used in recent years, another research tradition has set out to establish a more rigorous usage of the cognate term 'spiritual health'. At the forefront of this work within the educational arena is the Australian researcher John Fisher. Fisher set out both to establish a coherent conceptual model of spiritual health and to develop a set of reliable and solid psychometric instruments capable of operationalising that model (see for example, Fisher, 1998, 2000, 2001, 2004; Fisher, Francis and Johnson, 2000, 2002; Gomez and Fisher, 2003, 2005).

Fisher began his conceptual analysis by recognising that the concept of 'spiritual health' is doubly problematic in view of the way in which the two terms 'spiritual' and 'health' have themselves undergone considerable development in recent years. To begin with Fisher argues that classical definitions of spirituality tended to concentrate on the religious and the ecclesiastical, or on matters concerned with the soul. Current studies in spirituality, however, have tended to adopt much wider definitions, integrating all aspects of human life and experiences (Muldoon and King, 1995). For Fisher, a definition of spiritual health has to make sense within both sides of this divide.

Fisher proceeded to argue that there has been a similar widening in understanding of what counts as health. There has been a shift in emphasis in medicine introducing greater concern for the whole person, rather than just the treatment of disease. For Fisher, a definition of spiritual health needs to recognise the way in which the words 'health', 'healing' and 'wholeness' are all derived from the same root. He cites with approval the definition offered by Coward and Reed (1996:278) that 'healing is defined as a sense of wellbeing that is

derived from an intensified awareness of wholeness and integration among all dimensions of one's being'.

Prior to Fisher's work several attempts had been made to link the two concepts of spiritual and health, most generally within the idea of 'spiritual wellbeing'. For example, in setting out to define and measure spiritual wellbeing, Ellison (1983:332) suggested that spiritual wellbeing 'arises from an underlying state of spiritual health and is an expression of it, much like the colour of one's complexion and pulse rate are expressions of good (physical) health'. Ellison's (1983) Spiritual Well-Being Scale (The SWBS) stimulated a great deal of research during the 1980s. The measure proved to be useful both in population studies concerned with mapping individual differences in wellbeing and in clinical settings. The review of ten years work with this instrument, published by Bufford, Paloutzian and Ellison (1991) provided general support for the reliability and validity of the measure and for the usefulness of the construct over a wide range of studies. The main constraint on this instrument, and on the conceptualisation on which it builds, concerns the explicitly religious context in which it was shaped.

Fisher's aim was both to build on Ellison's helpful notion of thinking in terms of conceptually discrete dimensions of spiritual wellbeing and to develop a dimensional model of spiritual wellbeing which would value both religious and non-religious perspectives. His solution to this problem was to discuss spiritual health in four domains, and to develop a series of tools capable of assessing these four domains (including the SH4DI: the Spiritual Health in Four Domains Index).

Four domains of spiritual health

In developing his conceptual framework for spiritual health, Fisher drew on the discussion advanced by the National Interfaith Coalition on Aging (1975) which argued that 'spiritual health is the affirmation of life in a relationship with God, self, community and environment that nurtures and celebrates wholeness.' These four sets of relationships are also variously mentioned in contemporary discussions of spiritual health. For example, Hateley (1983) wrote about relation to self, integration and self-esteem; moral development, empathy in the community and religion; mystery of creation; relationship with God. Young (1984) mentioned the inter-relatedness of body, mind and spirit within the context of inner peace; relations with and love of others; relation with nature; God as the focus of belief. Goodloe and Arreola (1992) spoke of meaning and purpose, with self-transcendence; social and spiritual action with others; oneness with nature; disembodied spirits, abstract and personal relations with God. According to Hood-Morris (1996:440), 'the spiritual component includes transcendent and existential features pertaining to an individual's relationship with the self, others, and a higher being . . . coupled with interaction with one's environment.'

Working with these four sets of relationships, Fisher (1998) analysed the responses from interviews with 98 teachers in a range of state, Catholic and other non-government schools near Melbourne, Australia. On the basis of these analyses, Fisher proposed that spiritual health is a fundamental dimension of people's overall health and wellbeing, permeating and integrating all the other dimensions of health (including the physical, mental, emotional, social and vocational). In addition, Fisher (1998:191) argues that spiritual health is a dynamic state of being, shown by the extent to which people live in harmony within relationships in the following domains of spiritual wellbeing. First, the *personal domain* is concerned with internal relationships with the self. Second, the *communal domain* is concerned with external relationships with other people. Third, the *environmental domain*

concerned with relationships with the physical and human world on both local and global planes. Fourth, the *transcendental domain* is concerned with relationships with those aspects of life which transcend the ordinary everyday account of the physical environment. The transcendental domain embraces matters of ultimate concern, cosmic forces, transpersonal phenomena, and (in traditional theistic categories) God.

Measuring spiritual health

Fisher has offered a broad theory of spiritual health and advanced broad definitions of the four domains which he conceptualises as core to his model of spiritual health. Much of Fisher's subsequent research has concentrated on testing different operationalisations of this theory. For example, an early study reported by Fisher, Francis and Johnson (2000) described the Spiritual Health in Four Domains Index developed for use among teachers. Fisher (2004) described the Feeling Good Living Life Instrument developed for use among children as young as five years. It is recognised that, although such instruments provide only approximate indicators of the underlying constructs, the information generated offers useful insights into the spiritual health of groups and of individuals and provides reliable and valid predictors of a wide range of human individual differences.

Building on Fisher's pioneering work, Francis and Robbins (2005) attempted to operationalised the four domains of spiritual health within their survey conducted among nearly 34,000 secondary school pupils. From this questionnaire battery of 128 items, Francis and Robbins selected seven indicators for each of the four domains. At one level this is an inadequate sample of indicators to represent such broad conceptual categories. At another level, however, concentrating on a small number of well-chosen indicators permits proper care and due weight to be given to the discussion of each one. These four sets of seven items

provided the following operationalisations of the four domains.

The *personal domain* is concerned with what young people believe about themselves and with what young people feel about themselves. There are certain recurrent things that young people are likely to say about themselves when they are enjoying a good level of spiritual health within the personal domain. First and foremost, they are likely to affirm their self-worth and to put forward a confident and secure self-image. They are unlikely to endorse the first indicator in this section: 'I feel I am not worth much as a person.'

Young people who have developed a positive self-image and a high level of self-esteem are in the habit of trusting their own judgements and of placing confidence in their own abilities. While not shaping self-sufficient lives in an insular and threatened sense, they have grown to stand on their own feet. Such young people are unlikely to endorse the second indicator in this section: 'I often long for someone to turn to for advice.'

Young people who enjoy a good level of spiritual health within the personal domain are likely to be content with their lives and with their day-to-day experiences. Their perceived quality of life will be good and they are likely to endorse the third indicator in this section: 'I find life really worth living.'

School occupies a high proportion of the young person's life and defines a considerable part of their activities, experiences and relationships. Young people who enjoy a good level of spiritual health within the personal domain are likely to feel affirmed by the experience of school and to endorse the fourth indicator in this section: 'I am happy in my school.'

Spiritual health in the personal domain is inadequately conceptualised if the definition remains content with indicators of general personal happiness and quality of life. Spiritual health in the personal domain goes deeper than that as the individual life seeks meaning and purpose. Young people who enjoy a good level of spiritual health within the personal domain are likely also to endorse the fifth indicator in this section: 'I feel my life has a sense of purpose.'

Classic discussions of psychological wellbeing and psychological health speak in terms of balanced affect (Bradburn, 1969). On this account, good psychological wellbeing is defined in terms of the presence of positive affect and the absence of negative affect. In a similar way good spiritual health in the personal domain should be reflected in the absence of negative affect as well as in the presence of positive affect. Young people who enjoy a good level of spiritual health within the personal domain are unlikely to endorse the sixth indicator in this section: 'I often feel depressed.'

The ultimate indicator of negative affect in the personal domain is provided by life-denying and life-threatening suicidal ideation. The extreme precariousness of spiritual health in the personal domain is signalled by the young people who endorse the seventh indicator in this section: 'I have sometimes considered taking my own life.'

The *communal domain* is concerned with what young people believe about those with whom, in one sense or another, they share their lives. There are certain recurrent things that young people are likely to say about others when they are enjoying a good level of spiritual health within the communal domain. First and foremost, they are likely to affirm their relationships and to feel positively about other people. The three key areas of experience which access this

dimension of spiritual health among adolescents concern relationships with parents, relationships with friends, and relationships at school.

Young people who enjoy a good level of spiritual health within the communal domain are likely to feel at ease with their parents, feel that they can approach their parents and feel that they can trust their parents. They are likely to endorse the first two indicators in this section: 'I find it helpful to talk about my problems with my mother' and 'I find it helpful to talk about my problems with my father.'

Young people who enjoy a good level of spiritual health within the communal domain are likely to be supported and surrounded by sufficient friends whom they trust. The need for friends will vary from one young person to another depending on their basic personality profile, yet neither spiritually healthy introverts nor spiritually healthy extraverts thrive in isolation. Young people who enjoy a good level of spiritual health within the communal domain are likely to endorse the third indicator in this section: 'I find it helpful to talk about my problems with close friends.'

Young people who enjoy a good level of spiritual health within the communal domain are likely to have confidence in their interpersonal relationships. They are likely to approach other people with confidence and expect to find themselves accepted by others. They are unlikely to endorse the fourth indicator in this section: 'I am worried about how I get on with other people.'

Forming relationships with members of the opposite sex generates one of the major areas of trauma during adolescence. Young people who enjoy a good level of spiritual health within

the communal domain are unlikely to suffer excessive angst in this area. They are unlikely to endorse the fifth indicator in this section: 'I am worried about my attractiveness to the opposite sex.'

Since school is such a central part of life for young people the experiences of school are really formative in shaping spiritual health in the communal domain. Young people who get on well with their fellow pupils are well on the road to enjoying higher levels of spiritual health in the communal domain. It is for this reason that the sixth indicator in this section points in the direction of good spiritual health: 'I like the people I go to school with.' The seventh indicator in this section points in the direction of poor spiritual health: 'I am worried about being bullied at school.'

The *environmental domain* is concerned with what young people believe and feel about their connectedness with the natural, physical and human global environment. The environmental domain raises fundamental questions about global citizenship and about sustainable development. There are certain recurrent things that young people are likely to say about the world in which they live when they are enjoying a good level of spiritual health within the environmental domain. First and foremost, they are likely to recognise the importance and significance of global issues.

Young people who enjoy a good level of spiritual health in the environmental domain will be aware of the impact on the eco system of factors like industrial waste, intensive farming methods, and consumption of fossil fuels. They are likely to endorse the first indicator in this section: 'I am concerned about the risk of pollution to the environment.'

Young people who enjoy a good level of spiritual health in the environmental domain will have a view on matters concerned with international development, on fair trade and economic justice. They are likely to endorse the second indicator in this section: 'I am concerned about the poverty of the third world.'

A realistic view of life in the twenty-first century recognises the potential fragility of world stability. Conflicts continue to arise between nations as political power shifts across the globe. Global terrorism undermines hopes for world peace and stability. The third indicator in this section provides a measure of such global uncertainty: 'I am concerned about the risk of nuclear war.'

England and Wales have become fully multicultural societies. Many towns and cities are now rich centres for ethnic, cultural and religious diversity. Young people who enjoy a good level of spiritual health in the environmental domain are unlikely to endorse the fourth indicator in this section: 'There are too many black people living in this country.'

The ethical, political and economic arguments are well-developed on both sides of the contentious and divisive debate about immigration. An important insight into the young person's spiritual health in the environmental domain is provided by the fifth indicator in this section: 'I think that immigration into Britain should be restricted.'

Life in twenty-first century England and Wales remains subject to all kinds of social pressures and changes. Some may argue that England and Wales are becoming more violent societies and that changes in standards promoted by the media are at least partly responsible for normalising the acceptability of violence. Young people who enjoy a good level of

spiritual health in the environmental domain are unlikely to welcome growth in violence and may well endorse the sixth indicator in this section: 'There is too much violence on television.'

Young people who enjoy a good level of spiritual health in the environmental domain are likely to feel that their actions and their voices count toward making the world a better place in which to live. They are unlikely, therefore, to endorse the seventh indicator in this section: 'There is nothing I can do to help solve the world's problems.'

The *transcendental domain* is concerned with what young people believe and feel about those aspects of life which transcend the ordinary everyday account of the physical environment. The transcendental domain embraces matters of ultimate concern, cosmic forces, transpersonal phenomena, and (in traditional theistic categories) God. In some senses the transcendental domain is more complex to operationalise than the other three domains. The added complexity is a function of the way in which conceptualisation in this area is not independent of fundamental theological assumptions.

There are certain recurrent things that young people are likely to say about the transcendental domain when they are enjoying a good level of spiritual health within a social context that values a theistic interpretation of life. First and foremost they are likely to affirm the existence of God and to endorse the first indicator in this section: 'I believe in God.'

A religious view of the world is differentiated from a non-religious view in a number of ways. From a psychological perspective one of the most important differences concerns the nature of human life in general and the significance of human mortality in particular. A

number of religious worldviews offer the possibility or the promise of immortality and life beyond the grave. Young people who enjoy a good level of spiritual health in the transcendental domain conceived within a theistic context are likely to endorse the second indicator in this section: 'I believe in life after death.'

One of the important consequences of the experience of living in a pluralist, multicultural and multifaith society has been reflected in ways in which religious leaders have reflected on the positive synergies between faith traditions. Different faith traditions increasingly affirm what they share in common rather than what separates them. In a social and theological context of this nature, young people who enjoy a good level of spiritual health in the transcendental domain are unlikely to endorse the third and fourth indicators in this section: 'The Church seems irrelevant for life today' and 'The Bible seems irrelevant for life today.'

The range of spiritual ideas available to young people living and growing up in England and Wales is now very wide. Alongside the belief systems of the major world faiths, there exist the popular beliefs of a post-Christian culture and the assorted beliefs of the New Age perspective. From a traditional Christian theological perspective some of these beliefs would be regarded as less spiritually healthy than others. For example, young people who believe in apparently innocuous horoscopes may in fact be adopting a worldview which surrenders their locus of control to extraneous irrational forces. On this account, young people who enjoy a good level of spiritual health in the transcendental domain are unlikely to endorse the fifth indicator in this section: 'I believe in my horoscope.'

Other beliefs which may detract from mature acceptance of responsibility for the future and the development of a mature internal locus of control centre around forms of determinism.

On this account, young people who enjoy a good level of spiritual health in the transcendental domain are unlikely to endorse the sixth and seventh indicators in this section: 'I believe fortune-tellers can tell the future' and 'I believe it is possible to contact the spirits of the dead.'

Religion and spiritual health

In their book on *Urban Hope and Spiritual Health: the adolescent voice*, Francis and Robbins (2005) devoted five chapters to examining the relationship between self-assigned religious affiliation and spiritual health. These chapters were designed to compare with non-affiliated young people the profile of young Christians, young Muslims, Jews, Hindus, and Sikhs. There were insufficient young Buddhists in the database to facilitate a sixth chapter on this group. The findings from these five chapters made it clear that self-assigned religious affiliation is a significant predictor of individual differences across the four domains of spiritual health. This is an important finding, given the kind of data which is regarded as appropriate and acceptable to collect within the decadal census conducted in England and Wales in 2001 (Francis, 2003).

However, there are two major limitations with the analysis offered by Francis and Robbins (2005), which the present study now sets out to address. The first limitation concerns the failure to subdivide the major faith category 'Christian' into the finer categories of denominations (or groups of denominations). By treating all the Christian churches as one category, Francis and Robbins were following the steer of the Office for National Statistics in agreeing the categories for the national census. On the other hand, studies like Francis (2003) indicate that there may be greater variations within the Christian category (by denomination) than between the Christian category (considered as one group) and the non-affiliates. The

second limitation concerns treating religious affiliates within any one tradition as a homogenous group. A number of studies, like Francis and Kay (1995) and Gill (1999) make it clear that belief and practice interact with self-assigned religious affiliation to produce a more highly differentiated understanding of religion and to generate a more powerful prediction of personal and social values.

Against this background, the aims of the present paper are to examine and to illustrate some of the interactions between denominational identity and frequency of church attendance within Francis and Robbins' (2005) sample of nearly 34,000 adolescents. In order to do this comparison will be made between that relatively small subset of young people who attend church each week, according to the type of church they attended. The data allow comparisons to be made between those who identify as Anglican, Catholics, members of one of the Free Churches (including Baptist, Methodist and Presbyterian), members of one of the Pentecostal Churches (including Assemblies of God and Elim), and Jehovah's Witnesses.

METHOD

Sample

Data were provided from 163 schools throughout England and Wales, involving a proper mix of rural and urban areas, denominational and non-denominational schools, and independent and state-maintained schools. Participating schools were asked to follow a standard procedure. The questionnaires were to be administered in normal class groups to all year-nine and year-ten pupils throughout the school. Pupils were asked not to write their name on the booklet and to complete the inventory under examination-like conditions. Although pupils were given the choice not to participate very few declined to do so. They were assured of confidentiality and anonymity.

17

As a consequence of this process thoroughly completed questionnaires were processed for 33,982 pupils. Of these respondents, 51% were male and 49% were female; 53% were in year nine and 47% were in year ten. Of those educated within the state-maintained sector, 86% were in non-denominational schools, 9% in Roman Catholic schools and 5% in Anglican schools. Of the total sample of pupils, 10% were educated outside the state-maintained sector.

Instrument

Spiritual health. The questionnaire contained 128 items arranged for response on a five-point Likert-type scale (Likert, 1932): agree strongly, agree, not certain, disagree, and disagree strongly. Seven items were employed to assess each of the four domains of spiritual health.

Religious affiliation. Pupils were asked to identify their religious affiliation on a check list, including 'none', the major world faiths and the main Christian denominations.

Church attendance. Pupils were asked to rate the frequency of their church attendance on a five-point scale: never, once or twice a year, sometimes, at least once a month, and weekly.

Analyses

The present analyses were conducted only among the pupils who attended church every week and identified as affiliated to the Anglican Church (N = 1,549), the Roman Catholic Church (N = 1,458), one of the Free Churches (N = 830), one of the Pentecostal Churches (N = 212), or the Jehovah's Witnesses (N = 130). Within England and Wales as a whole the strongest denomination in terms of membership statistics remains the Anglican Church (Brierley, 2003). This situation is reflected in the current dataset among young people and for that

reason the weekly-churchgoing Anglicans have been taken as the normative base in the following analyses, against which the other denominational groups can be tested. In each case the statistical significance of the differences in responses between two denominational groups has been calculated by the chi-square statistic after collapsing the scores recorded on the five-point Likert-type scale into two categories, combining on the one hand the agree strongly and agree responses, and on the other hand the disagree strongly, disagree and not certain responses.

RESULTS

Roman Catholics

Table 1 compares the spiritual health indicators of weekly-churchgoing young Roman Catholics with weekly-churchgoing young Anglicans, across all four domains.

Within the personal domain, the responses of Catholics and Anglicans are quite similar. Two-thirds (68%) of Anglicans feel that their lives have a sense of purpose, and so do 68% of Catholics. Three-quarters (74%) of Anglicans find life really worth living, and so do 73% of Catholics. On the negative side, 13% of Anglicans feel that they are not worth much as a person and so do 11% of Catholics. Half (52%) of Anglicans often feel depressed, and so do 50% of Catholics. Just under a quarter (23%) of Anglicans have sometimes considered taking their own life, and so have 23% of Catholics. There are, however, significant differences in the responses of the two groups to two items in this section. On the one hand, Anglicans are more likely than Catholics to long for someone to turn to for advice (41% compared with 36%). On the other hand, Anglicans are more likely than Catholics to be happy in their school (80% compared with 76%).

Within the communal domain, once again the responses of Catholics and Anglicans are quite similar. Two-fifths (41%) of Anglicans are worried about their attractiveness to the opposite sex, and so are 39% of Catholics. Three-fifths (60%) of Anglicans are worried about how they get on with other people, and so are 58% of Catholics. Just over two-thirds (69%) of Anglicans find it helpful to talk about their problems with close friends (69%) and so do 67% of Catholics. One-third (33%) of Anglicans are worried about being bullied at school, and so are 33% of Catholics. There are, however, significant differences in the responses of the two groups to two items in this section, both of which suggest a lower level of spiritual health among the Catholics. While 57% of Anglicans find it helpful to talk about their problems with their mother, the proportion falls to 52% among Catholics. While 40% of Anglicans find it helpful to talk about their problems with their father, the proportion falls to 34% among Catholics.

Within the environmental domain stronger differences begin to emerge between Anglicans and Catholics. While 80% of Anglicans are concerned about the risk of pollution to the environment, the proportion falls to 70% among Catholics. While 65% of Anglicans are concerned about the risk of nuclear war, the proportion falls to 59% among Catholics. Consistent with this lower level of concern among Catholics is their higher level of powerlessness in respect of crises facing their world. While 14% of Anglicans feel that there is nothing they can do to help solve the world's problems, the proportion rises to 20% among Catholics. In other ways, however, the responses of the two groups are similar. Thus, 12% of Anglicans feel that there are too many black people living in this country, and so do 11% of Catholics. Just under one-third (32%) of Anglicans think that immigration into Britain should be restricted, and so do 30% of Catholics. A quarter (25%) of Anglicans consider that there is too much violence on television, and so do 23% of Catholics. Four-fifths (80%) of

Anglicans are concerned about the poverty of the third world, and so are 77% of Catholics.

Within the transcendental domain, differences between Catholics and Anglicans become more pronounced in two particular areas. First, Catholics hold a more negative attitude than Anglicans toward their religion. While 13% of Anglicans feel that the church seems irrelevant for life today, the proportion rises to 20% among Catholics. While 15% of Anglicans feel that the bible seems irrelevant for life today, the proportion rises to 24% among the Catholics. Second, Catholics are more likely than Anglicans to blend with their Christian faith wider beliefs in the supernatural. While 23% of Anglicans believe in their horoscope, the proportion rises to 31% among Catholics. While 13% of Anglicans believe that fortune-tellers can tell the future, the proportion rises to 16% among Catholics. In other ways, the two groups hold similar levels of belief: 81% of Anglicans and 83% of Catholics believe in God; 59% of Anglicans and 61% of Catholics believe in life after death; and 23% of Anglicans and 26% of Catholics believe that it is possible to contact the spirits of the dead.

Free Church members

Table 2 compares the spiritual health indicators of weekly-churchgoing young members of the Free Churches with weekly-churchgoing young Anglicans, across all four domains.

These data demonstrate that there are no significant differences between these two denominational groups recorded on any of the indicators within the personal domain. Within the communal domain, there is a significant difference between these two denominational groups on only one of the seven indicators. Members of the Free Churches are significantly more likely than Anglicans to find it helpful to talk about their problems with close friends (73% compared with 68%).

Within the environmental domain, the historic Free Church social conscience remains visible in the responses of young churchgoers. While 12% of Anglicans consider that there are too many black people living in this country, the proportion falls to 7% of Free Church members. While 32% of Anglicans think that immigration into Britain should be restricted, the proportion falls to 25% among Free Church members. While 25% of Anglicans consider that there is too much violence on television, the proportion rose to 31% among Free Church members. Compared with Anglicans, Free Church members are also less concerned about the risk of nuclear war (61% and 65% respectively).

Within the transcendental domain, Free Church members tend to be a little more traditional in their religious beliefs, compared with Anglicans. On the one hand, while 81% of Anglicans believe in God, the proportion rises to 84% among Free Church members. On the other hand, while 23% of Anglicans believe in their horoscope, the proportion falls to 18% among Free Church members.

Pentecostal Churches

Table 3 compares the spiritual health indicators of weekly-churchgoing young members of Pentecostal Churches with weekly-churchgoing young Anglicans, across all four domains.

Within the personal domain several of the indicators suggest that members of Pentecostal Churches enjoy a better level of spiritual health in comparison with Anglicans. While 68% of Anglicans feel that their life has a sense of purpose, the proportion rises to 84% among Pentecostals. While 52% of Anglicans often feel depressed, the proportion falls to 42% among Pentecostals. While 41% of Anglicans often long for someone to turn to for advice, the proportion falls to 32% among Pentecostals. On the other hand, Pentecostals are less

likely to be happy in their school (73% compared with 80% of Anglicans).

Within the communal domain, the data demonstrate no significant differences between the responses recorded by these two denominational groups.

Within the environmental domain, there are three significant ways in which the responses of Pentecostals differ from Anglicans, and these differences are consistent with the theological emphases of the Pentecostal Churches. First, Pentecostals are more critical of contemporary culture. While 25% of Anglicans consider that there is too much violence on television, the proportion rises to 46% among Pentecostals. Second, Pentecostals are more confident in the providence of God. While 80% of Anglicans are concerned about the risk of pollution to the environment, the proportion falls to 64% among Pentecostals. While 65% of Anglicans are concerned about the risk of nuclear war, the proportion falls to 43% among Pentecostals. Third, Pentecostals are more committed to a multi-racial expression of their faith. While 12% of Anglicans feel that there are too many black people living in this country, the proportion falls to 6% among Pentecostals.

Within the transcendental domain, distinctive emphases of the teachings of Pentecostal Churches become clearly visible in three ways. First, Pentecostal Churches emphasise orthodoxy of teaching. While 81% of Anglicans believe in God, the proportion rises to 94% among Pentecostals. While 61% of Anglicans believe in life after death, the proportion rises to 76% among Pentecostals. Second, Pentecostal Churches promote positive attitudes toward the faith. While 13% of Anglicans feel that the church seems irrelevant to life today, the proportion falls to 7% among Pentecostals. While 15% of Anglicans feel that the bible seems irrelevant to life today, the proportion falls to 7% among Pentecostals. Third,

Pentecostal Churches emphasise the clear boundaries between the Christian faith and alternative spiritualities. While 23% of Anglicans believe in their horoscope, the proportion falls to 2% among Pentecostals.

Jehovah's Witnesses

Table 4 compares the spiritual health indicators of weekly-churchgoing young Jehovah's Witnesses with weekly-churchgoing young Anglicans, across all four domains.

Within the personal domain, compared with Anglicans, Jehovah's Witnesses show significantly higher levels of positive affect and significantly lower levels of negative affect. While 68% of Anglicans feel that their life has a sense of purpose, the proportion rises to 80% among Jehovah's Witnesses. While 52% of Anglicans often feel depressed, the proportion falls to 38% among Jehovah's Witnesses. While 41% of Anglicans often long for someone to turn to for advice, the proportion falls to 23% among Jehovah's Witnesses. However, in spite of these better overall indicators of spiritual health in the personal domain, Jehovah's Witnesses feel less satisfied with their life at school. Thus 70% of Jehovah's Witnesses are happy in their school, compared with 80% of Anglicans.

Within the communal domain, Jehovah's Witnesses show significantly better levels of spiritual health than Anglicans in two particular ways. First, Jehovah's Witnesses display significantly lower levels of relational anxiety. While 41% of Anglicans are worried about their attractiveness to the opposite sex, the proportion falls to 30% among Jehovah's Witnesses. While 60% of Anglicans are worried about how they get on with other people, the proportion falls to 48% among Jehovah's Witnesses. Second, Jehovah's Witnesses experience significantly higher levels of support from their families. While 57% of

24

Anglicans find it helpful to talk about their problems with their mother, the proportion rises to 71% among Jehovah's Witnesses. While 40% of Anglicans find it helpful to talk about their problems with their father, the proportion rises to 59% among Jehovah's Witnesses. However, in spite of these better overall indicators of spiritual health in the communal domain, Jehovah's Witnesses feel less secure in their relationships at school. While 88% of Anglicans like the people with whom they attend school, the proportion falls to 82% among Jehovah's Witnesses.

Within the environmental domain, compared with Anglicans, Jehovah's Witnesses reveal a highly distinctive profile. First, Jehovah's Witnesses hold a significantly more negative attitude toward cultural norms. While 25% of Anglicans consider there is too much violence on television, the proportion rises to 66% among Jehovah's Witnesses. Second, Jehovah's Witnesses tend to hold the view that the future of the world is in God's hands rather than in human hands. Thus, while 65% of Anglicans are concerned about the risks of nuclear war, the proportion falls to 44% among Jehovah's Witnesses. While 14% of Anglicans feel there is nothing they can do to help solve the world's problems, the proportion rises to 28% among Jehovah's Witnesses. Jehovah's Witnesses are also significantly less in favour of immigration restrictions. While 32% of Anglicans think that immigration into Britain should be restricted, the proportion falls to 16% among Jehovah's Witnesses.

Within the transcendental domain, comparisons of the responses of the two groups highlight the theological teaching of the Jehovah's Witnesses. Here is a group of young people thoroughly committed to belief in God (95% compared with 81% of Anglicans). The kind of God in whom Jehovah's Witnesses believe is, however, quite different from the God of Anglicans. While 61% of Anglicans believe in life after death, the proportion falls to 22%

among Jehovah's Witnesses. While 13% of Anglicans consider that the church seems irrelevant for life today, the proportion rises to 33% among Jehovah's Witnesses. Here is a group of young people who are clear about what they do not believe in as well as what they do believe in. While 23% of Anglicans believe in their horoscope, the proportion falls to 8% among Jehovah's Witnesses.

CONCLUSION

This paper set out to examine the extent to which young weekly-churchgoers in England and Wales constituted a homogenous group, or the extent to which denominational identity served to define significant variations within this group. This problem was examined against issues proposed by Francis and Robbins (2005) as indicators of John Fisher's four domains of spiritual health among five subsets of weekly-churchgoing 13- to 15-year-old pupils: members of the Anglican Church, the Roman Catholic Church, the Free Churches, the Pentecostal Churches, and the Jehovah's Witnesses. The data have demonstrated that denominational identity does matter and that it is a mistake to regard young weekly-churchgoers as a homogenous group.

Taking weekly-churchgoing Anglicans as the norm, the data demonstrate that, according to Fisher's definition, levels of spiritual health vary from one denominational group to another and that this variation is consistent with the distinctive theological emphases of the denominations. Future research would be well advised, therefore, to resist the temptation to use frequency of church attendance as a proxy measure for individual differences in religiosity without at the same time allowing for denominational differences.

The major strength of the present study is that the pool of almost 34,000 young people

generated a sufficient number of weekly churchgoers to allow visibility for the smaller groups, like Jehovah's Witnesses. Nevertheless, other groups like the Free Churches and the Pentecostal Churches disguised the amalgamation of potentially quite different denominational profiles. For example, theologically Baptists, Presbyterians and Methodists may differ in ways highly relevant to shaping differences in specific aspects of Fisher's model of spiritual health. In spite of the overall sample size, not all of these individual denominations were sufficiently represented to permit individual analysis. This observation provides a valuable insight into the size database that would be needed to refine empirical analyses of the problem addressed by this study in the context of England and Wales where the proportion of the population attending church on a weekly basis is quite low.

The major weakness of the present study is that each of Fisher's four domains of spiritual health has been assessed by a small group of only seven items and that these items are hard pressed to cover the wide conceptual range embraced by Fisher's definition of spiritual health. Further work is now needed on generating more adequate measure of these domains appropriate for use among 13- to 15-year-old adolescents.

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Table 1 Weekly churchgoers: Anglican and Catholic compared

	Anglican %	Catholic %	X^2	P<
Personal domain				
I feel my life has a sense of purpose	68	68	0.0	NS
I find life really worth living	74	73	0.0	NS
I feel I am not worth much as a person	13	11	3.2	NS
I often feel depressed	52	50	1.6	NS
I have sometimes considered taking my own life	23	23	0.0	NS
I often long for someone to turn to for advice	41	36	7.3	.01
I am happy in my school	80	76	7.6	.01
Communal domain				
I am worried about my attractiveness to the opposite sex	41	39	0.9	NS
I am worried about how I get on with other people	60	58	0.8	NS
I find it helpful to talk about my problems with my mother	57	52	8.9	.01
I find it helpful to talk about my problems with my father	40	34	13.7	.001
I find it helpful to talk about my problems with close friends	69	67	0.7	NS
I am worried about being bullied at school	33	33	0.5	NS
I like the people I go to school with	88	89	1.2	NS
Environmental domain				
There are too many black people living in this country	12	11	1.1	NS
I think that immigration into Britain should be restricted	32	30	2.0	NS
There is too much violence on television	25	23	1.1	NS
I am concerned about the risk of pollution to the environment	80	70	39.1	.001
I am concerned about the poverty of the third world	79	77	3.5	NS
I am concerned about the risk of nuclear war	65	59	11.4	.001
There is nothing I can do to help solve the world's problems	14	20	22.1	.001
Transcendental domain				
I believe in God	81	83	3.0	NS
I believe in life after death	59	61	1.3	NS
The Church seems irrelevant to life today	13	20	22.8	.001
The Bible seems irrelevant to life today	15	24	40.3	.001
I believe in my horoscope	23	31	23.5	.001
I believe fortune-tellers can tell the future	13	16	5.9	.05
I believe it is possible to contact the spirits of the dead	23	26	2.3	NS

Table 2 Weekly churchgoers: Anglican and Free Church compared

	Anglican %	Free %	X^2	P<
Personal domain				
I feel my life has a sense of purpose	68	72	3.1	NS
I find life really worth living	74	72	0.8	NS
I feel I am not worth much as a person	13	12	0.3	NS
I often feel depressed	52	49	2.2	NS
I have sometimes considered taking my own life	23	23	0.0	NS
I often long for someone to turn to for advice	41	38	2.3	NS
I am happy in my school	80	78	2.2	NS
Communal domain				
I am worried about my attractiveness to the opposite sex	41	44	2.1	NS
I am worried about how I get on with other people	60	61	0.3	NS
I find it helpful to talk about my problems with my mother	57	56	0.4	NS
I find it helpful to talk about my problems with my father	40	37	3.1	NS
I find it helpful to talk about my problems with close friends	68	73	4.0	.05
I am worried about being bullied at school	34	34	0.0	NS
I like the people I go to school with	88	88	0.0	NS
Environmental domain				
There are too many black people living in this country	12	7	15.3	.001
I think that immigration into Britain should be restricted	32	25	14.3	.001
There is too much violence on television	25	31	10.2	.01
I am concerned about the risk of pollution to the environment	80	77	2.9	NS
I am concerned about the poverty of the third world	79	82	3.2	NS
I am concerned about the risk of nuclear war	65	61	4.5	.05
There is nothing I can do to help solve the world's problems	14	13	0.7	NS
Transcendental domain				
I believe in God	81	84	4.6	.05
I believe in life after death	61	64	2.4	NS
The Church seems irrelevant to life today	13	13	0.0	NS
The Bible seems irrelevant to life today	15	13	2.1	NS
I believe in my horoscope	23	18	8.2	.01
I believe fortune-tellers can tell the future	13	12	0.0	NS
I believe it is possible to contact the spirits of the dead	23	22	0.5	NS

Table 3 Weekly churchgoers: Anglican and Pentecostal compared

	Anglican %	Pentec %	X^2	P<
Personal domain				
I feel my life has a sense of purpose	68	84	22.5	.001
I find life really worth living	74	78	2.1	NS
I feel I am not worth much as a person	13	11	0.3	NS
I often feel depressed	52	42	7.9	.01
I have sometimes considered taking my own life	23	18	2.0	NS
I often long for someone to turn to for advice	41	32	6.2	.05
I am happy in my school	80	73	6.7	.05
Communal domain				
I am worried about my attractiveness to the opposite sex	41	46	1.8	NS
I am worried about how I get on with other people	60	59	0.0	NS
I find it helpful to talk about my problems with my mother	57	56	0.2	NS
I find it helpful to talk about my problems with my father	40	40	0.0	NS
I find it helpful to talk about my problems with close friends	69	69	0.0	NS
I am worried about being bullied at school	34	27	3.4	NS
I like the people I go to school with	88	87	0.1	NS
Environmental domain				
There are too many black people living in this country	12	6	5.7	.05
I think that immigration into Britain should be restricted	32	26	3.7	NS
There is too much violence on television	25	46	42.2	.001
I am concerned about the risk of pollution to the environment	80	64	27.9	.001
I am concerned about the poverty of the third world	79	76	0.9	NS
I am concerned about the risk of nuclear war	65	43	38.0	.001
There is nothing I can do to help solve the world's problems	14	11	0.9	NS
Transcendental domain				
I believe in God	81	94	24.3	.001
I believe in life after death	61	76	19.5	.001
The Church seems irrelevant to life today	13	7	7.8	.01
The Bible seems irrelevant to life today	15	7	9.8	.01
I believe in my horoscope	23	2	52.0	.001
I believe fortune-tellers can tell the future	13	12	0.0	NS
I believe it is possible to contact the spirits of the dead	23	23	0.1	NS

Table 4 Weekly churchgoers: Anglican and Jehovah's Witnesses compared

	Anglican %	Jehovah %	X^2	P<
Personal domain				
I feel my life has a sense of purpose	68	80	8.0	.01
I find life really worth living	74	79	1.6	NS
I feel I am not worth much as a person	13	15	0.3	NS
I often feel depressed	52	38	9.6	.01
I have sometimes considered taking my own life	23	21	0.3	NS
I often long for someone to turn to for advice	41	23	16.1	.001
I am happy in my school	80	70	8.6	.01
Communal domain				
I am worried about my attractiveness to the opposite sex	41	30	6.2	.05
I am worried about how I get on with other people	60	48	6.7	.01
I find it helpful to talk about my problems with my mother	57	71	9.6	.01
I find it helpful to talk about my problems with my father	40	59	17.8	.001
I find it helpful to talk about my problems with close friends	69	64	1.4	NS
I am worried about being bullied at school	34	28	2.1	NS
I like the people I go to school with	88	82	4.4	.05
Environmental domain				
There are too many black people living in this country	12	8	1.9	NS
I think that immigration into Britain should be restricted	32	16	14.0	.001
There is too much violence on television	25	66	98.8	.001
I am concerned about the risk of pollution to the environment	80	78	0.4	NS
I am concerned about the poverty of the third world	79	75	1.6	NS
I am concerned about the risk of nuclear war	65	44	24.6	.001
There is nothing I can do to help solve the world's problems	14	28	17.5	.001
Transcendental domain				
I believe in God	81	95	16.1	.001
I believe in life after death	61	22	75.6	.001
The Church seems irrelevant to life today	13	33	35.6	.001
The Bible seems irrelevant to life today	15	16	0.1	NS
I believe in my horoscope	23	8	17.2	.001
I believe fortune-tellers can tell the future	13	10	0.7	NS
I believe it is possible to contact the spirits of the dead	23	20	0.8	NS