THE EFFECTS OF A CONSERVATIVE THEOLOGICAL
EDUCATION ON CERTAIN PERSONALITY
VARIABLES

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THE EFFECTS OF A CONSERVATIVE THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION ON CERTAIN PERSONALITY VARIABLES

THESIS

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By

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The Existing Problem

The status of the psychology of religion is a present-day enigma. There are those who are ardent advocates of the thesis that religion and its tenets are beneficial to personality formation and integrated behavioral functioning. There are also those who promulgate the view that religious notions are detrimental to personality structure and healthy integration.

In order to bring the problem into clear focus, a few examples will be helpful at this point. Allport feels that religion must be given a hearing in its relationship to personality structure because "... subjective, personal, religious sentiments of mankind are very much alive and will perhaps always remain alive" (1, p. 3). Boisen adds to this by stating that "the capacity for religious experience is present in all men. Religion is thus a permanent component in the organization of the personality and also of society" (2, p. 247). In further elaboration of the benefits of religion, Allport sees religion as man's ultimate attempt to enlarge and to complete his own personality (1, p. 142.) Boisen's conclusion is that religion has a creative function.
which produces values and insights which demand translation into habit and custom.

Opposing voices, however, are heard. Perhaps the one carrying the greatest prestige is that of Sigmund Freud. Freud devoted a good deal of attention to the nature of religion. This is especially seen in Totem and Taboo (9), The Future of an Illusion (8), Moses and Monotheism (6), The Ego and the Id (7), and Civilization and Its Discontents (5). He regarded religious beliefs as "... illusions, fulfillments of the oldest, strongest, and most insistent wishes of mankind" (8, p. 30). Freud's conclusion with respect to religion was that it was "... the universal obsessional neurosis of humanity" which may be left behind when at last men learn to face the world relying no longer upon illusions but upon scientifically-authenticated knowledge. Fromm's words might also be cited in connection with this discussion.

Freud goes beyond attempting to prove that religion is an illusion. He says religion is a danger because it tends to sanctify bad human institutions with which it has allied itself throughout its history; further, by teaching people to believe in an illusion and by prohibiting critical thinking religion is responsible for the impoverishment of intelligence (10, p. 12).

By way of summary the problem emerges at this point in a clear fashion. Some psychologists, as illustrated by Allport and Boisen, view religion in its relationship to human behavior and development as beneficial. Others, as
epitomized by Freud, feel that religion has not done its job in these areas because it is built on illusion instead of reason and is, therefore, detrimental.

Early Theory and Studies

To select a date or event with which the history of the psychology of religion began would be artificial. The Bible is full of psychological comments on religion; and no century, country, or culture which has become self-conscious about religion is without its psychologists who have had something to say, more or less systematically, about this fascinating subject. Just as the modern study of psychology had its roots in philosophy, so does the psychology of religion. Socrates, Plato, Jeremiah, and Augustine are typical of some of the ancients who looked inward and reported the processes that they observed there. It was Edwin Diller Starbuck, however, who was destined to create the specifically psychological approach to the interpretation of religious phenomena. His thoughts were published in 1899 in a volume entitled The Psychology of Religion (21). The thrust of Starbuck's contribution was an empirical investigation of conversion and of religious development without crisis. His conclusion was that conversion was a predominantly adolescent phenomenon. It becomes necessary when the self that ought to be stands over against the self that is. He also mentioned that the religious life of mature persons who have been
converted in adolescence does not markedly differ from that of those whose religious development has been free from abrupt transitions (21, p. 125). Another interesting volume appeared in 1900 by Coe bearing the title, The Spiritual Life (3). His investigation studied the relation of temperament to the form or mode which religious experience assumes in the individual. In the book Coe was wise enough to seek the permanent value of a religious experience not in a temperamental mode but in ethical change for the better, loyalty to principle, the spirit of service, and devotion to the Kingdom of God. In 1902 William James' work on The Varieties of Religious Experience was published (13). Essentially, the contents of the volume revolved around a psychological interpretation of religious mysticism. James cites so many unusual cases of religious experience that the total impression which his book creates is that religion is an abnormal possession and venture.

These men are representative of the pioneers in the psychology of religion. Their efforts laid the foundations upon which a long succession of followers have built.

Theory for the Present Study

The theory for the present study grows out of a synthesis of several related theoretical positions. These three theoretical frameworks are the concepts of environmental press, learning theory, and field theory. Each of these theories
calls for some elucidation and discussion as to its main premise with respect to personality formulation.

The concept of environmental press was described in 1938 by the psychologist, Henry Murray (20, p. 7). The fundamental concept is that the characteristics, events, and practices of an educational institution added together constitute an educational press upon the students. Also included in this press would be the training received at the institution. The awareness of students about their educational environment constitutes a press in the sense of exerting a directive influence on their behavior.

Learning theory states that socialization is a learning process. According to this theory, all behavior is learned in accordance with certain principles. The type of personality an individual develops will depend upon what he learns. In turn, what he learns will be determined to a degree by the type of culture of which he is a part.

Human behavior is learned; precisely that behavior which is widely felt to characterize man as a rational being, or as a member of a particular nation or social class, is acquired rather than innate. To understand thoroughly any item of human behavior—either in the social group or in the individual life—one must know the psychological principles involved in its learning and the social conditions under which this learning took place. It is not enough to know either principles or conditions of learning; in order to predict behavior both must be known ... (18, p. 1).

The field theorists place emphasis on the present situation. The more immediate contemporary scene in which the individual finds himself—the roles which he has learned to
play, his "reference groups," his current interpersonal relationships—is stressed. Although the individual may have been considerably shaped by past events, he is seen as being able to be influenced by the present situation as far as personality is concerned.

For the purposes of the present study, the three related theories above served as a theoretical backdrop in order to examine the general problem which was introduced at the beginning of this discussion. That problem concerned the relationship of religion to personality formulation and expression.

To further understand why it was hypothesized that seminary training would be beneficial on certain personality variables, it is well to examine some of the views, ideas, and pronouncements as to the value of religion to personality and behavior.

There are many psychologists who testify that religious belief in a personal God and in a hope of personal immortality is psychiatrically dynamic. As far back as 1938 Hallington observed that "there has been of late a decided turning toward religion by practicing psychologists" (12, p. 17). Jung wrote of "the positive value of all religions" (15, p. 137). Jung approves religion as being an essential manifestation of psychic life. He sees in the religious function one of the most important elements of the human
psyche. Karl Menninger dealt with the problem of controlling and directing aggression and wrote, in *Love Against Hate*: "If religion enables us to do this realistically, it is no illusion and not a neurosis" (16, p. 191). William C. Menninger in an article on *Psychiatry and Religion* gave this testimony:

Undoubtedly, many people are helped to achieve a sense of relatedness through religious faith, providing a sense of importance, a sense of belonging, and a sense of participation (17).

Robert H. Felix also relates his studied opinion.

As a psychiatrist, it has long been apparent to me that the more we study the human personality from the medical viewpoint, the more we become aware of the importance of religious faith in maintaining mental and emotional health (4).

All of these references point out the effectiveness of religion in general in the area of prevention of mental illness and in the area of creative power within the personality.

The present study views conservative, Biblical, historic Christianity as possessing these benefits and values in a heightened sense. The students used in the analysis were trained in this type of theological setting. Before further pursuance of theoretical considerations it is well at this point to describe both the major and minor populations used in this study. The inclusion of the description of the North Texas State University graduate students will take on new meaning when the forthcoming hypotheses are considered. The subjects for the present study were selected from the student
bodies at North Texas State University and Dallas Theological Seminary. North Texas State University is a state school of approximately 10,000 students, located in Denton, Texas. It has an extensive undergraduate program of studies and graduate divisions in most departments.

Dallas Theological Seminary is a private religious school of approximately 330 students, located in Dallas, Texas. It is a graduate institution offering master's and doctor's degrees in theology and certain related areas. As to religious tradition, it is conservative in nature. It is denominationally unaffiliated.

At North Texas State University the subjects utilized were graduate students in the Department of Education who were enrolled in an evaluation seminar, which can only be scheduled by the student just prior to graduation. The students were all working toward the master's degree. The composition of the group was both male and female. This mixed nature of the group doesn't invalidate comparison of scores with the all-male seminary group because in the scores for the Guilford-Zimmerman male and female norms differed significantly only on the masculinity trait. All other norm scores for the various traits were very nearly alike (12, p. 7).
The seminary students tested were the entire senior class that had been in training for the ministry for a period of almost four years.

It is important now to view some of the beliefs and elements that the seminary students interacted with during their four-year training period. It is the perception and utilizing of these concepts that can promote change in behavior and personality variables. The very nature of this study makes it impossible to consider all of the tenets of orthodox Christianity; therefore, mention will be made only of some of the more important concepts. It is emphasized that all of these elements are a part of the perceptual field of the seminary students under consideration during their seminary career. An attempt will be made to demonstrate the psychological value of the concepts that are discussed.

The first matter to examine is the cognitive aspects of conservative Christianity. The psychological study of religious belief involves the fact that an individual believes such-and-such to be true and may act accordingly. The importance of religious beliefs lies in the fact that they often determine behavior. They may serve as motivating forces driving man into a complexity of behavioral events.

A belief that occupies a large portion of the belief system of conservative Christians is the acceptance of the Bible as revelation. It is held that the Bible is the
self-disclosure of God. Concomitant with this belief is the view that the Bible can give help for emotional problems and also that the acting upon various principles in the Bible promotes personality integration (19, pp. 15-26; 23, pp. 106-13). The Bible helps individuals to believe that the thrust of the universe is always in the direction of healing. The Bible emphasizes God's direct personal interest in the needs of every individual. The knowledge of God's active interest in one's life can assist the native powers of the mind to promote mental healing and personality growth. The Bible also sets man squarely in the present tense. Man is seen as owing responsibility for his life as it is right now, in the present. It has been said that the distinguishing characteristic of the neurotic personality is just this inability to live in the present. The neurotic fluctuates between the future and the past. In the future he expects to have his frustrations magically removed and to have the inner peace he cannot attain now. From the past arise all his problems, upon which he dwells continuously. The Bible, by contrast, ties us down firmly to the present. It is this hour, this day, this moment, for which we are responsible for adequate and constructive living. The Bible's call to honesty interacts with one of the most frequent sources of emotional conflict. Back of many emotional distresses is found the unwillingness to accept the self as it really is. Some men
are unable to love themselves as they are. The Bible's answer brings out that it is futile to pretend to be what one is not. God already knows the truth. Since the Bible teaches man to be himself because pretense before God is useless, he is able to sidestep self-deceit. Without self-deceit inner psychic conflicts are less likely to draw a person into neurotic involvement. Congruent with this is the Bible's witness to the forgiving grace of God. Back of many emotional conflicts is a rigorous, unbending judgment against oneself. A man may stand against himself with his unacceptable drives and impulses. It is the Bible's message of grace that draws off the strength of this condemnation of the self. When the distraught person can feel the permissiveness, the forgiving way in which God sees his life, there is room for self-fulfillment instead of self-condemnation. The Bible can also serve in a supportive role. It records the history of many individuals who have had the support of God in their struggles. Much encouragement can be gained from this record in the individual's present struggle. This record teaches that man is not foredoomed to failure in his struggle for maturity and, therefore, need not succumb to defeatism.

The Bible, then is the basis for a belief system which can effect behavior. This behavior in turn is integrative, and leads to mature personalities.
The second broad area to peruse is the affective aspects of conservative Christianity. Emotion is an integral aspect of a religious experience.

No experience is vital or dynamic without emotional support, and since religion is concerned with the deepest needs and highest worths of life, it will naturally be charged with emotional urgency (14, p. 73).

Religious feelings lead to changes in behavior. The more intense the religious feelings, the more intense the behavior. Religious experience includes feelings which are descriptions of our perceptual fields at a particular moment. Changes in behavior are the result of changes in the perceptual field.

There are several affective areas that the seminarians were continually interacting with during their four-year training period. These areas are emotional forces which can play a vital part in stabilizing and promoting personality growth.

The first affective sphere that might be considered has to do with the feeling of security. All individuals crave security. The reason for this craving is essentially a fear of what the morrow may bring forth. Conservative theology emphasizes that the Christian is not just a sport of chance driven hither and thither by the cross currents of a meaningless existence, but that God is concerned with all that concerns His children. Security for the Christian
means far more than physical food, clothing, and shelter. The concept of sonship or being a member of God's family brings a feeling of status, of belonging, of being wanted and loved. These feelings are both qualitatively and quantitatively different from those connected with biological needs. These feelings meet some of man's deepest psychological needs for security.

The need to love and to be loved is crucial for a healthy personality. Thwarting of needs of love can lead to maladjustment and personality constriction. Fromm states the need of humanity to love and to be loved in the following manner.

The deepest need of man, then, is the need to overcome his separateness, to leave the prison of his aloneness . . . Man—of all ages and cultures—is confronted with the solution of one and the same question; the question of how to overcome separateness, how to achieve union, how to transcend one's own individual life and find at-onement (II, p. 9).

Orthodox Christian theology affords an answer to the problem of overcoming separateness. The belief is that God has already answered the cry of man to be loved. God not only loves all mankind, but also he has demonstrated this love. This demonstration revolves around the redemptive work of Christ on the cross. God, on the cross, was doing His best by giving His best to demonstrate His love for the whole of humanity. The love of God as evidenced in the cross proves the worth of the individual. Christ's redemptive work was for all. God is seen as an approach object instead of
an avoidant object. An individual can experience this love of God by faith and can in turn love God. Thus, man's need to love and be loved is met.

These two examples are but representative of the affective ingredients of conservative training which can have effectual and beneficial results upon human personality and adjustment to reality.

It now remains to investigate some of the conative aspects of conservative theological training. There are certain acts performed in the conservative environment which are viewed as beneficial determinants of healthy personality. At the forefront is the act of prayer. As to the nature of prayer, it is a form of communication. Because prayer is this, it must be assumed that it is directed toward a person who can receive the message. Prayer, then, is not autosuggestion or talking to oneself. In the Christian framework prayer has the psychological by-product of supplying a sense of security. To be connected in one's thinking and actual experience with a source of unlimited power (God) through prayer is to feel a great measure of relief and security. The dynamics of prayer also afford a sense of worth. To have a direct, personal audience with God fosters feelings of worth. Added to this is the cathartic value of prayer. By confession and the reiteration of anxieties, aggression, etc., in prayer, a definite catharsis can take place and can counterbalance the detrimental opposite of repression.
There is yet another phenomenon which is to be considered under the conative classification. This is the act of worship in its various forms. The individual worshiper who is earnestly sincere lays aside the deceptions of daily living and tries to be honest with God and with himself. He shares with fellow worshippers a unity of purpose and rededicates himself to a new life. He meditates upon dynamic symbols and resolves to translate ideals into realities. Life can be reoriented and re-created in meeting the reality he calls God. Worship was an integral part of the training of the seminarians in question. A thirty-minute service every school day is integrated with the formal studies. This worship is seen as healthy and supportive to personality growth.

This somewhat lengthy emphasis has been given to theory for the present study in order that the reasoning behind the forthcoming hypotheses may be better understood.

Hypotheses

In view of the theory presented for the present study and the specific empirical findings of previous studies, the following hypotheses are submitted.

On The Guilford-Zimmerman Temperament Survey conservative theological students of Dallas Theological Seminary will evidence significant differences between the two time-separated test results on four of the ten traits measured.
It is hypothesized that:

a. At the end of the four-year conservative theological training period the seminary students will show a significant increase on the restraint score.

b. At the end of the four-year conservative theological training period the seminary students will show a significant increase on the emotional stability score.

c. At the end of the four-year conservative theological training period the seminary students will show a significant increase on the objectivity score.

d. At the end of the four-year conservative theological training period the seminary students will show a significant increase on the personal relations score.

e. In order to further investigate the effects of religion and specifically conservative Christianity, the after-training scores of the theological students will be compared with those of a group of North Texas State University education students who are near completion of the requirements for the master's degree. The hypothetical thrust is that in comparing the Guilford-Zimmerman scores on the ten traits there will be no significant differences between the mean scores of the two groups. The one exception could possibly be on the masculinity trait because the North Texas group is composed of both male and female. With no significant
differences, it will further extend the general theme that religion is not detrimental to personality growth and development.
CHAPTER BIBLIOGRAPHY


CHAPTER II

RELATED STUDIES

To better highlight the problem of this study, a survey of some of the prior research in the field is now in order. This research will add perspective to the specific problem with which this study contends. By way of review, this problem has to do with the effects of religious training on personality variables.

Results of previous research have often resulted in conflicts and divergency. Much of the research has shown the religious person to differ from the nonreligious. Sometimes, this has been in a deviant direction. Gregory found that the religious personality rated high on the California F Scale for Authoritarianism (6). Dreger produced results that showed the religious person as conforming and ego defensive while the nonreligious person was more independent (5). McCarthy used a battery of tests on a group of Catholic seminarians and came to the following conclusions:

a. On the Bernreuter Personality Inventory, the seminarian appeared more submissive, self-conscious, and more dependent on others for advice.
b. On the Bell Adjustment Inventory, the seminarian, though emotionally well adjusted, was more shy and retiring in social contacts.

c. On the Allport-Vernon Study of Values, religious interests were significantly above average and dominant; and political interests were average (9).

Kimber found Bible Institute students to have high social standards, a high sense of personal dignity, but a marked tendency to neuroticism (7). In a clinical study Lowe found that "dogmatic religious belief" is inversely proportional to the degree of genuine concern with social matters and that "reduced religiosity" implies a greater variety of interests, higher awareness of reality, more unconventionality, and more unresolved intrapersonal conflicts (8).

The following studies have been done on seminarians, and the results have differed in certain directions from the studies just considered. Burke, working with seminarians at Catholic University, administered to them the Bernreuter Personality Inventory, the Bell Adjustment Inventory, and the Allport-Vernon Study of Values (2). In general, the responses to the personality tests were not significantly different from average high school boys' scores used for comparison. With the exception of the California Test of Personality, the seminarians obtained scores which indicated
slightly better adjustment than average. In another comparative study Bier found that seminarians scored higher than the general population involved on all MMPI scales (1).

Ranck conducted a study in 1953-54 on the relationships between personality and theological attitudes and beliefs (11). Included in the study were religious conservatives. He found the conservatives to be genuinely autonomous individuals who exhibited attitudes of dependence upon and deference to a suprahuman object, who is primarily loved rather than feared. In evaluating the results of his work, Ranck offers the possible view that belief in and deference toward a suprahuman being does not necessarily decrease self-confidence, but rather in many instances tends to increase it. He further surmises that if this is the case, serious doubt is cast on the theoretical assumption of Freud and others that submission to a suprahuman personal authority necessarily tends to encourage crippling dependent and submissive interpersonal behavior.

There are several instances where the Guilford-Zimmerman has been specifically used with seminarians. One of these has been reported by Cockrum (3). This study utilized ninety-three Protestant ministerial students who were compared with counseling students and prospective teachers. The ministerial students and counseling students were very nearly the same, and only a few differences were noted
between the prospective teachers and the ministerial stu-
dents. The data showed that the seminary students fell
well within the middle range of healthy adjustment in all
areas of personality. Seminary students revealed a definite
trend toward sociability. They were inclined toward medi-
tative thinking. They were noticeably free from depression.
They were emotionally stable. Dreger (4), in comparing con-
servative seminarians with liberal, found few differences
in personality traits. Both groups were well within the
normal range. Only on religious items did the two groups
manifest consistent differences.

One other study that used the Guilford-Zimmerman is
that of Murray (10). Noting that some investigations with
religious individuals had revealed results in an unfavorable
direction on personality tests, it seemed possible in think-
ing that the years of training required of candidates for
the priesthood might be an explanation of the apparent
deviation. To obtain an empirical answer to the influence
of training on personality test results, four groups were
selected. The first group was Catholic men who received
none of the specific training required of priesthood candi-
dates and, hence, constituted the zero-training group.
Minor seminarians and major seminarians were the next two
groups at ascending stages of training for the priesthood.
The fourth group was the successful candidates already
ordained to the priesthood. His findings showed that with increased amounts of training for the priesthood there was an accompanying increased number of scales on the Guilford-Zimmerman showing significant differences from the college group, which always served as a basis for comparison. In most cases these differences were in a favorable direction.
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CHAPTER III

PROCEDURE AND MEASUREMENTS

The emphasis of the present chapter focuses upon two considerations: (a) procedural methods, and (b) instrument of measurement.

Procedural Methods

At the seminary the students were first approached by the Dean of Students concerning their willingness to participate in the project. After getting a good report from the Dean, the author of this thesis sent each senior a sheet of instructions regarding the taking of the Guilford-Zimmerman and a few explanatory remarks pertaining to the purpose of the thesis. A replica of these instructions is contained in the appendix. Out of a senior class of forty students, thirty-eight returned their completed Guilford-Zimmerman answer sheets.

At North Texas State University the teacher of the evaluation seminar gave the Guilford-Zimmerman during one of the regular class periods. His explanatory remarks were to the effect that the results would be used in a thesis to serve as a base of comparison with another group that had already taken the test. Out of a class of forty-one,
thirty-eight were present on the evening the test was given. This figure agreed exactly with the number of tests returned by the seminarians.

In reality, then, the only matching variable for the two groups was that their training for the master's degree was nearing completion.

Instrument of Measurement

For the purposes of this study, The Guilford-Zimmerman Temperament Survey was used. This test represents the last stage in the evaluation of material which was begun some years ago by Guilford in a factor analysis of personality inventories. Thirteen factors were developed by Guilford in this original factoring. The thirteen factors were first broken up to make three distinct tests. With the present test, The Guilford-Zimmerman Temperament Survey, the thirteen factors are back together again in new format, with new designations for some factors, and combining of a few factors, so as to now yield ten trait variables.

The Sheridan Supply Company first published this test in 1949; so it is recent as personality tests go. For this reason, perhaps, not much research has been published on its significance and utility. The test manual does not offer much in the way of corroboratory bibliography of studies done with the test. Only one form of the test is available. The test booklets are reusable. Thirty items
are assigned to each of the ten traits to be measured by the test. The test is applicable to both sexes, for high school seniors, college students, and adults. As has been stated previously, both sexes were included in the normative samples; and there are no marked sex differences in the scores except on the masculinity scale.

The Guilford-Zimmerman Temperament Survey consists of three hundred items to which the respondent answers in one of three ways: "yes," "?," "no." A brief description of the ten trait variables is to be found in the appendix. In general, optimal scores do not extend to the top of the scale but are at some moderate position between the mean and the top. Extreme positive qualities, or high scores, do not always indicate the best adjustment; but extreme negative ones, or low scores, are likely to indicate trouble. The test manual recommends that the test scores be entered into the Profile Chart for interpretational purposes. The overall impression is more helpful and valid than any single trait score.

By way of summary, several points can be made. Thirty-eight conservative seminary students were given The Guilford-Zimmerman Temperament Survey at both the beginning and near the completion of their training. Major hypotheses were made in connection with the students and certain personality variables as they interacted with their training and the
seminary environment over this four-year period. The
thrust of the hypotheses was that religion has a beneficial
effect on certain personality variables rather than a detri-
mental one. It was hypothesized that the seminary students
involved would show significantly different mean scores on
the restraint, emotional stability, objectivity, and personal
relations scores at the end of their training. Thirty-
eight North Texas State University graduate students were
also tested on the Guilford-Zimmerman. Their scores, which
were secured near the end of their graduate studies, were
used as a basis of comparison with the seminarians' scores.
The general hypothetical point to be made in this connection
was that comparable scores would emerge from the two groups,
which would further extend the view that religion is not det-
ritental to personality. Specifically, it was stated that
no significant differences in trait scores would be revealed,
the only possible exception being on the masculinity trait
because of the male-female composition of the North Texas
group.

Statistical procedure was that of analysis of mean
raw scores with subsequent analysis by Fisher's $t$ test.
CHAPTER IV

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The present study was undertaken to determine the effects of a four-year conservative theological education on certain personality variables. Thirty-eight students enrolled at Dallas Theological Seminary were given The Guilford-Zimmerman Personality Inventory at the beginning of their religious training and again near its completion four years later. The nature of the hypotheses stated that significant increases would be made on the restraint, emotional stability, objectivity, and personal relations scores. Theory suggested that these increases on the seminarians' scores would be due to the interaction of the students with a specific type of religious environment. In order to further the view that conservative religion, as exemplified at Dallas Theological Seminary, was not detrimental to personality growth and maturity, it was hypothesized that the Guilford-Zimmerman scores of the seminarians would yield no significant differences when compared with a group of graduate education students at North Texas State University. The scores used for comparison were those which were secured when both groups of students were near the end
of their graduate studies. This chapter will present the results of these hypothetical statements.

Traits Showing Significant Differences

It was hypothesized that the conservative seminarians would show significant differences at the end of their training on four of the ten Guilford-Zimmerman traits. These traits were restraint, emotional stability, objectivity, and personal relations. As it turned out, it was these traits that yielded a significant difference. Table I summarizes these differences.

TABLE I

TRAITS SHOWING SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES AT THE END OF SEMINARY TRAINING

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<td>18.66</td>
<td>23.18</td>
<td>4.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Relations</td>
<td>16.18</td>
<td>19.97</td>
<td>3.79</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Significant at the .01 level

In analyzing the results it immediately becomes apparent that the restraint score shows a significant difference but this difference is in the opposite direction than that
which was predicted. The decrease in score was significant at the .01 level. This finding is opposed to much of the empirical findings that were considered earlier. Much of the research has presented the conservative individual as serious-minded, deliberate, and more controlled than other comparative groups. In some instances the minister is viewed as one who lives in a private world of his own and one who is entirely "too serious" and "too sober." It often works out that a minister is so restrained that he automatically cuts himself off from the ebb and flow of the daily lives of his parishioners.

One of the major factors which led to the hypothesis that there would be an increase on this trait was the belief of the seminary that the Bible is infallible and authoritative. The thinking was that this cognitive aspect of the conservative environment would naturally lead to increases in restraint and sober-mindedness. In reflection, there may be several things relevant to the seminary environment which could possibly account for the decrease in score on this trait. The first thing that might be mentioned is the current emphasis of many of the professors that man is a social being, as well as a spiritual being. Their contention is that every aspect of man's being must be ministered to; hence, in many of its practical theology courses the seminary emphasizes "involvement" with people, recreation, and socialization. This teaching is reinforced by the many
ocial functions that transpire during the course of the school year. Although the specific reasons for the decrease in score may be difficult to account for, it is seen as a beneficial effect of seminary training, which will better prepare a prospective minister as he faces a church composed of real people who must be dealt with interpersonally.

The seminarians did experience an increase in the emotional stability score as predicted. This increase was significant at the .01 level. Higher scores on this trait are seen as signs of optimism and cheerfulness, evenness of mood, and composure. Lower scores would tend to indicate poor mental health in general, pessimism, feelings of guilt, and loneliness. The cognitive, affective, and conative aspects that are stressed at the seminary were viewed as directly opposed to the factors which lower scores on this trait tend to represent. It was, therefore, hypothesized that as the seminarians were immersed in teachings that tended to foster composure, security, and optimism, and as these teachings were internalized, there would be an increase in score on this trait. Results tend to confirm this thinking.

An increase in the objectivity score is also in line with the hypothesis that was made. Higher scores mean less egoism; low scores mean touchiness or hypersensitivity. Several factors led to the prediction that this trait would have an increase in score. First was the thrust of the
Biblical teaching which the seminarians receive that counteracts such items as egoism, self-centeredness, and hypersensitivity. This teaching is in the direction of being aware of and sympathetic with others. Higher scores also mean thick-skinnedness. It doesn't take long for the conservative seminarian to recognize that not all religious bodies agree with his particular doctrinal framework. These differences are seen in such courses as comparative religion and contemporary theology. He soon finds out that to be classified as a "conservative" means standing for and defending a certain body of beliefs. An extremely weak, sensitive, egotistic person could not survive the rigors of a four-year theological education with the above factors in effect. It was believed, then, that those who did complete their education in this distinctive type of atmosphere would be more objective. Data seems to extend this belief. The increase in score was at the .01 level.

The one remaining trait where increase was predicted was that of personal relations. This trait seems to represent the core of "getting along with others." A high score means tolerance and understanding of other people and their human weaknesses. A low-scoring person is not likely to "get along with others." A low score indicates fault finding and criticalness of other people and of institutions generally. Self-pity is also involved in a low score. The reasons for predicting a higher score was that the total
environment of the seminary is set against the things characterized by a low score. This would include the teaching and the example set by the leaders of the seminary. From both a doctrinal and practical standpoint, the factors which go to make up a high score on this trait are emphasized at the seminary. As Table I shows, the resulting difference in scores was significant at the .01 level.

Traits Showing No Significant Differences

No hypotheses were made in connection with six of the traits on the Guilford-Zimmerman. In studying the traits and the items which made up the traits in connection with a conservative theological education, it was believed that at the end of the four-year period of theological training no significant differences would appear in the test—post-test scores. A summary of the traits yielding no significant differences in trait scores can be seen in Table II.
TABLE II

TRAITS SHOWING NO SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES AT THE END OF SEMINARY TRAINING

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trait</th>
<th>Means</th>
<th>Differences</th>
<th>t Test</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1st GZTS</td>
<td>2nd GZTS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Activity</td>
<td>18.60</td>
<td>19.00</td>
<td>.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ascendence</td>
<td>17.00</td>
<td>17.00</td>
<td>00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sociability</td>
<td>20.57</td>
<td>19.91</td>
<td>.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friendliness</td>
<td>19.28</td>
<td>18.81</td>
<td>.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thoughtfulness</td>
<td>20.68</td>
<td>19.73</td>
<td>.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masculinity</td>
<td>20.00</td>
<td>19.71</td>
<td>.29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comparison of Trait Scores of Seminarians and Graduate Education Students

Primary thinking involved in running a comparison between the seminarians and the graduate education students was that if the religious training was in some way detrimental, wide divergences would appear in the trait scores of the two groups. The education students would tend to exhibit higher significant scores than the seminarians. A statistical comparison of the two groups is found in Table III.
### TABLE III

**COMPARISON OF TRAIT SCORES OF SEMINARIANS AND NORTH TEXAS EDUCATION STUDENTS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trait</th>
<th>Means</th>
<th>Differences</th>
<th>t Test</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sem.</td>
<td>N.T.S.U.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Activity</td>
<td>19.00</td>
<td>20.02</td>
<td>1.02</td>
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<tr>
<td>Restraint</td>
<td>16.78</td>
<td>19.41</td>
<td>2.33</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ascendence</td>
<td>17.00</td>
<td>17.12</td>
<td>.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sociability</td>
<td>19.91</td>
<td>20.68</td>
<td>.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional Stability</td>
<td>24.21</td>
<td>22.63</td>
<td>1.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objectivity</td>
<td>23.18</td>
<td>21.97</td>
<td>1.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friendliness</td>
<td>18.81</td>
<td>19.88</td>
<td>1.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thoughtfulness</td>
<td>19.73</td>
<td>17.86</td>
<td>1.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Relations</td>
<td>19.97</td>
<td>22.10</td>
<td>2.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masculinity</td>
<td>19.71</td>
<td>18.50</td>
<td>1.21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Significance at the .05 level

As can be readily seen, the North Texas students had only one significant trait score greater than the seminarians. This was on the personal relations trait and was significant at the .05 level. With only one significant difference, it seems safe to conclude that in actuality the groups exhibit approximately the same trait scores and no evidence appears from this comparison which would indicate any negative results to personality due to training in a conservative religious environment.
Viewing the results of the study as a whole, it is seen that three of the hypotheses were confirmed. Significant increases were seen on the traits of emotional stability, objectivity, and personal relations on the test post-test analysis. The one hypothesis not confirmed was that of an increased score on restraint. The significant decrease on this trait by the seminarians was viewed as beneficial. The comparative analysis of the seminarians with the North Texas graduate education students yielded no far reaching differences. Only on the trait of personal relations did the North Texas students show an increased significant score over the seminarians.

Assembling all of the results in one composite picture, one arrives at the conclusion that religion and religious training did not produce unfavorable results in this particular instance.
CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

The purpose of the present study was to examine in an empirical fashion the effects of religion and religious training on various personality traits. Existing prior research had produced wide differences in conclusions drawn. In some instances the "religious personality" was seen as somewhat below average and deviant on certain personality variables when compared with specified norm groups. Other group studies, however, pictured the religious individual as highly adjusted and in some cases achieving scores on personality inventories which were above the means of the norm or comparative group.

In order to re-examine the broad question of the religious influence on various personality variables in a specific fashion, thirty-eight conservative theological students of the Dallas Theological Seminary were utilized. These students were administered The Guilford-Zimmerman Personality Inventory at the beginning of their religious training for the ministry and again near the completion of that training four years later. The intention was then to note the changes on trait scores between the time-separated test--post-test situation.
Three related theoretical positions were brought together to serve as a theoretical backdrop for the study. These positions were the concepts of environmental press, learning theory, and field theory. It was surmised, as a result of synthesizing these three theories, that the students of the religious community as they interacted with their specialized type of environment would show differences in certain personality trait scores at the end of their training.

The hypotheses were of a nature which suggested that there would be significant increases on four of the Guilford-Zimmerman traits at the end of the four-year theological training period. The traits involved were restraint, emotional stability, objectivity, and personal relations. Findings indicated that there were significant increases at the .01 level on all of these traits except restraint. Final calculations indicated that there was a significant (at the .01 level) decrease in score by the seminarians on this score. This was viewed as a positive and welcome development. In order to further investigate the consequences of religious training, the scores of the seminarians on the Guilford-Zimmerman were compared with a group of North Texas State University graduate education students. Both groups were nearing completion of their graduate education. It was suggested that if religion did have a detrimental effect
on personality growth and development, the North Texas students would have significantly different, higher scores on some of the traits when compared with the seminarians' scores. As it turned out, the education students showed only one significant higher score than the seminarians. This was on the trait of personal relations and was significant at the .05 level.

Religion in many forms is prevalent in today's society. To many individuals it is a reality which can and does affect much of human behavior and attitudes. Because of this fact, the psychological concomitants of various styles and modes of religion must be researched and extensively studied. The present study has been an attempt to do this in a limited and introductory manner. The results have shown that religion, even conservative religion, is not necessarily harmful to full-bodied, healthy, personality development. On the contrary, religion properly used has a definite, constructive contribution to make in this important area of human concern.
APPENDIX A

Test Instructions

Dear__________________:

First, let me thank you for your willingness to retake The Guilford-Zimmerman Personality Survey. This is the same test that you took during your orientation period at the beginning of your seminary career. As touched upon by Dr. Evans in your Senior Preaching Class, this retest of the Guilford-Zimmerman is to ascertain if an extended seminary education produces any significant personality trait changes.

In taking this test, I wish you would give thought to the following considerations:

1. First, it is important for you individually to take the test. Since I am doing this for my Master's thesis at N.T.S.U., it is essential to have at least forty samples. There are exactly forty in your class. As you can see, I am counting highly on you to take the test.

2. Would you be gracious enough to sign your name to your test. This is so that the results of this test can be compared with the results of the test taken during orientation. Let me emphasize that no names will be used in the thesis.

3. It is hoped that this thesis may help the seminary in some way in its counseling and direction of future students. Because of this, I again appeal for your help in this project.

You may take the test at your leisure. If necessary, it can be taken at several different sittings. When you have completed the test, would you please return it, along with your answer sheet, to Dr. Evans' office. (I am anxious to commence analyzing the data and, therefore, hope that all the tests will be in within two weeks.)

May I say again that I am counting on your personal cooperation in this project. May the Lord guide you as even now you are probably working on your D.T.S. thesis and looking forward to graduation.

Sincerely,
APPENDIX B

Description of Guilford-Zimmerman Trait Variables

1. **G-General activity**

A high score on this variable indicates high drive, energy, and activity. If coupled with the right combination of other qualities, this is favorable for adjustment. It may then be regarded as a kind of catalyst. A low score may intensify other low scores. A very high score may indicate manic behavior, in which case there is usually much random behavior and wasted effort.

2. **R-Restraint**

A low score on this trait indicates the happy-go-lucky, carefree, impulsive individual; the other extreme on the test would be an over-restrained, over-serious individual. It is possible that a great deal of restraint coupled with a very high score on the previous "G" trait would indicate internal conflict and consequent danger to mental health.

3. **A-Ascendancy**

The positive elements of this trait would indicate leadership habits, ability to persuade others, and tendencies toward being conspicuous, and bluffing. Low scores are read as signs of submissiveness. Ascendancy is, however, a relative matter and varies with the subjects or personalities with whom personal contacts are required. Other test variables would clarify the desirable amount of this Ascendancy in a given testee.

4. **S-Sociability**

This trait was formerly called "social extraversion" and is opposite to shyness. High scores would manifest tendencies toward making many friends, entering into conversations, liking for social activities and contacts. Low scores indicate the withdrawn, reserved person who may be hard to know.
5. **E-Emotional Stability**

A high score here would be a sign of optimism and cheerfulness, evenness of mood, and emotional stability. A very low score is a sign of poor mental health in general, pessimism, feelings of guilt, loneliness or worry, in other words a neurotic tendency.

6. **O-Objectivity**

High scores mean thick-skinnedness; low scores mean touchiness or hypersensitivity. Suspiciousness or fancied hostility, and ideas of reference would be part of the negative or low-score side of this variable. Other test variables should be considered together with this score; particularly, a high score in thoughtfulness, otherwise the person may be so thick-skinned that he cannot appreciate another person's sensitiveness.

7. **F-Friendliness**

A high score may mean lack of fighting tendencies to the point of pacifism, or it may mean a healthy, realistic handling of frustrations and injuries. It may also mean an urge to please other; a desire to be liked. A low score means hostility in one form or another. A fighting attitude such as this, if under good control, could be a favorable quality. Low-scoring individuals may be those who like to dominate for their own satisfaction. Respect for others versus contempt for others would also be indicative of high and low scores, respectively.

8. **T-Thoughtfulness**

This trait was formerly considered to be "thinking introversion." High scores would be taken as meaning reflectiveness, meditativeness, philosophical inclinations, observance of others and self, and perhaps mental poise. Low scores would indicate tendencies toward overt behavior and disinclination toward reflection and planning. Such persons would probably be lacking in tact.

9. **P-Personal relations**

This trait was formerly designated "cooperativeness." High scores indicated tolerance of people and faith in social institutions. Low scores would be signs of
hypercriticalness of people, fault-finding habits, suspiciousness of others, and criticalness of institutions, as well as self-pity. Such a low-scoring individual is not likely to "get along with others." Whereas, a high score would indicate an ability to "get along with others" and understanding of others and their human weaknesses.

10. M-Masculinity

On the positive side, a high score in this trait means that the person behaves in ways characteristic of men and is more likely to be acceptable by them. A very high score may indicate someone unsympathetic and callous, or one attempting to compensate for some feminine tendencies or feelings of weakness in traits other than masculinity.
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