



Fra Selskabets bibliotek - forskningsnyt 2

Religious Doubt

Forfattere: Koosistra, W. P. & Pargament, K. I.

Titel: Religious doubting in parochial school adolescents

Bragt i: Journal of Psychology and Theology. 27 (1), 1999, p. 33-42

Christian counselors may wonder whether there has been much research on religious doubt, particularly among adolescents. William Kooistra and Ken Pargament recently surveyed 267 high school juniors from Catholic and Protestant parochial schools with respect to doubts they might have about various central teachings of Christianity, and they looked at whether doubts may be correlated with adverse life experiences, family environment, and emotional distress. Religious doubting was not uncommon among respondents, with 78% of teens indicating present doubts about various aspects of Christianity. Only 9% reported never having had religious doubts.

Concerning the research hypotheses, there was little support for a relationship between adversity in the three areas mentioned above and religious doubting. However, the researchers found higher correlations among protestant than Catholics, which was not a research hypothesis, but nevertheless an interesting finding. An additional finding was that Catholic teens reported higher ratings of insincerity and/or low commitment in their parents' religiosity than did Protestant teens. Protestants scored higher on additional variables, including frequency of church attendance, parents' church attendance, and intrinsic religiosity, which is a construct having to do with how much a person views religion as central in their lives and therefore personally meaningful.

The researchers suggest that doubts among adolescents may be most highly associated with adverse life events, conflictual family relationships, and emotional distress in religious cultures where religion is more of an essential part of one's personal, familial, and cultural identity. Christian counselors may agree with the researchers' conclusion that there may not be a compelling reason to doubt religious faith that is not personally meaningful to begin with.