

# CHRISTIAN VOCATION: DEFINING RELATIONS WITH IDENTITY STATUS, COLLEGE ADJUSTMENT, AND SPIRITUALITY

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A great deal of growth takes place during the college years. Christian college students may be involved in exploring their spirituality and in finding what God is calling them to do, their vocation, as well as in identity development. In this study one hundred twenty-eight women and sixty-three men ( $M$  age = 20.3 years,  $SD = 1.7$ ) from a Christian liberal arts college were surveyed. In general, identity development and greater understanding of Christian vocation were related; achieved identity statuses were positively correlated with a greater understanding of Christian vocation and diffused statuses were negatively correlated with an understanding of Christian vocation. Students who better understood their vocation also showed better adjustment to college. Greater spiritual vitality and commitment and secure spiritual attachment were related to greater understanding of vocation. Preoccupied spiritual attachment was negatively correlated with understanding vocation. Limitations and suggestions for further research are discussed.

Recently, Arnett (2004) proposed a theory of emerging adulthood, suggesting that our culture has created an extended time of transition between adolescence and adulthood. Arnett (2006) defines emerging adulthood as an "age of identity explorations" (p. 8). This period of time allows young adults to explore the world around them, decipher the possibilities in life and engage in a variety of activities and events in an effort to deter-

This research was funded, in part, by a grant from Vocare, Northwestern College's vocation project funded by a grant from the Lilly Endowment. Correspondence concerning the research should be addressed to Jennifer S. Feenstra, Ph.D.; Department of Psychology, Northwestern College; 101 7th St. SW; Orange City, IA 51041 or through electronic mail at [jfeenstr@nwcwiowa.edu](mailto:jfeenstr@nwcwiowa.edu)

mine who they are. For Christians in this stage of life, part of this exploration should include finding identity and calling in relation to God's will; that is, finding one's vocation (Feenstra & Brouwer, 2008).

Understanding of vocation is In the present study an understanding of vocation is defined as discovering one's identity, understanding the world, and discerning one's purpose in relation to God's will. This is different from religion orientation (Batson & Ventis, 1982) and faith development (Fowler, 1981) in that those concepts focus on ways of approaching religion or faith rather than how an individual might understand where they are in knowing God's call on their life. This definition of vocation draws on a historical understanding of the word, going beyond vocation as a career to vocation as calling. This way of thinking about vocation comes largely from that used by the reformers Luther (1523/1955) and Calvin (1546/1960), although it does not necessarily contradict Catholic theology (see Hardy, 1990, pp.67-76).

Christian colleges and universities generally strive to provide an environment which nurtures religious exploration and spiritual development. Researchers have investigated the development of Christian college students in accordance with a variety of variables such as views of self and God, forgiveness, and post-formal thought (Cook, Larson, & Boivin, 2003; Johnson, 1998; Lampton & Oliver, 2005). The concept of identity formation has received only limited attention (Foster & LaForce, 1999), particularly in relation to Christian vocation. The purpose of the present article is to investigate the connection between identity development in Christian college students and their understanding of vocation, as well as the correlation between vocational understanding, and spiritual development and college adjustment.

The definition of vocation used above focuses on bringing together individual identity formation and exploration of the world in order to understand and

discern God's will. Erikson (1950, 1959, 1968) conceptualized identity as the blending of past thoughts and experiences into a coherent whole, resulting in an increase in personal growth which is used to assess future decisions and personal life events or experiences. From Erikson's ideas and research on ego identity, Marcia (1966) developed 4 empirically measurable identity statuses. The identity statuses are (1) identity achievement (commitment to a set of choices following exploration of alternatives) (2) moratorium (current exploration with commitment not yet made) (3) diffusion (lack of commitment and exploration) and (4) foreclosure (commitment based on little or no exploration of alternatives).

Although Christian vocation has not been investigated in conjunction with identity development, vocation defined as work or career has. Research confirmed that students who reported identity achievement had greater occupational commitment and exploratory activity in understanding their future career than did students in moratorium or identity diffusion (Blustein, Devenis, & Kidney, 1989; Holland, Gottfredson & Power, 1980; Skorikov & Vondracek, 1998). A greater understanding of one's Christian vocation may involve a greater understanding of one's future work. It follows, then, that those who report a greater understanding of vocation will be more likely to report an achieved identity status. Likewise, those participants who fail to explore or make a commitment, those with a diffused identity status, will likely report a lower understanding of vocation. Participants who report moratorium status are unlikely to report a well developed understanding of vocation. Although exploration is taking place, no commitment is made; therefore a comprehensive understanding of vocation has not yet been achieved.

Research has also shown a trend in identity statuses and age. It is documented that in college populations an increase in age results in more reports of identity achievement and fewer reports of foreclosure and diffusion (Meeus, Iedema, Helsen, & Vollebergh, 1999; Meilman, 1979; Waterman, 1985a). Although some research indicates differences in men and women (Adams, Shea & Fitch, 1979), discrepancies in particular age groups (Campbell, Adams, & Dobson, 1984; Lewis, 2003), or no change at all across age groups (van Hoof, 1999), a review of the identity status literature suggests that generally individuals of older ages are more likely to show achieved identity status and individuals of younger

ages are more likely to show diffused identity status (Waterman, 1999a, 1999b). In the present study it is predicted that students in their fourth year of college will have a greater understanding of vocation, defined as a calling, than students in their first year.

The present study also proposes a correlation between understanding Christian vocation and positive adjustment to college. Researchers have documented various factors which affect adjustment and adaptation, including identity status (Hunsberger, Pratt, & Pancer, 2001; Kroger, 2000; Marcia, Waterman, Matteson, Archer, & Orlofsky, 1993). Additional research showed that students who reported achieved or moratorium identity statuses displayed more characteristics of adaptability than those students who reported diffused or foreclosed identity statuses (Adams, Bennion & Huh, 1989; Berzonsky & Kuk, 2000; Clancy & Dollinger, 1993; Marcia, et al., 1993). Likewise, research provides evidence that religion may play a role in identity development and as a result, adjustment (Barry & Nelson, 2005; Erikson 1965; Hunsberger, et al., 2001; Markstrom, 1999; Markstorm-Adams, Hofstra, & Dougher, 1994; Waterman, 1985b; Wulff, 1997). With both identity formation and religion contributing to the positive adjustment in college students, Christian vocation, a religious exploration of identity and purpose, is expected in the present study to positively correlate with adjustment to college for students at a Christian college.

In addition to correlations with identity development, adjustment to college, and age discrepancies, an association between spirituality and Christian vocation is proposed. Hall (2004) developed a theoretical framework to understand Christian spirituality and transformation based on the development and maintenance of significant emotional relationships. Combining psychoanalytic theories, attachment theories, and other research, Hall suggested that emotionally significant relationships motivate individuals in a fundamental way and provide for a particular type of development throughout the life span. The implicit relational representations that develop from these relationships provide the basis from which one understands and develops relationships with self and others throughout the life span (Beck, 2006; Bowlby, 1969, 1973, 1980; Hall, Brokaw, Edwards, & Pike, 1998; Kernberg, 2001; Winnicott, 1953, 1969).

Implicit relational representations are theorized to guide understandings of spiritual relationships.

Hall (2004) provides evidence that spiritual and psychological dimensions of a person are inseparable. He states, "the processes (i.e., the emotional appraisal of meaning) that govern one's relationship with God, a typical understanding of "spirituality," are the very same ("psychological") processes . . . that govern one's relationships with self and others" (p. 75). Thus, Hall suggests that through the use of referential activity (converting implicit relational representations to more accessible linear information such as words and images) and the application of other principles in his theory, one can better understand one's primary emotional experience of God and process spiritual experiences more fully in order to maintain spiritual growth and transformation.

Spiritual involvement, such as engaging in spiritual practices, participating in spiritual community, friendships, and mentoring relationships, is an intentional move to engage in psychospiritual growth. Such growth then increases the understanding of one's implicit relational representations, thus bringing Christianity into a more deeply understood, concrete existence. Hall suggests that greater religious involvement will result in a greater spiritual maturity.

Assessment of spirituality using Hall's model results in scores on 5 domains. The first two domains are spiritual meaning and vitality and spiritual commitment and community. The spiritual meaning and vitality domain involves the sense of meaning or purpose individuals have in their relationship with God and others and the feelings of closeness they feel to God. The spiritual commitment and community domain addresses how close and committed one feels to God, the spiritual community, and to faith. Because one may gain a better understanding of oneself and the needs of others through community and one's relationship with God both of these domains are expected to correlate significantly with understanding of vocation.

The last three domains are based on attachment theory. Processing spiritual experiences more fully will be easier for one with secure, positive relational representations from one's early caregiver experiences. Persons with secure attachment, as opposed to insecure attachment, will be able to better and more quickly integrate the benefits of spiritual practice into their psychological structure. Involving both the degree to which the individual feels a secure attachment to and forgiveness from God and the extent to which the individual forgives others, the domain secure spiritual attachment parallels the

idea of Christian vocation, specifically discerning one's calling in relation to God's will, which encompasses an understanding (and processing) of God's will for one's life.

In accordance with attachment theory, the association between religious involvement and spiritual maturity should be weaker for those with preoccupied and dismissing types of attachment. Individuals with these insecure attachment styles may experience a negative association between religious involvement and spiritual attachment. The fourth domain, preoccupied spiritual attachment, addresses the anxiety and fear in the individual's attachment to God. In the present study greater anxiety and fear are predicted to be related to a less comprehensive understanding of vocation. If one is preoccupied with fear and anxiety in one's relationship with God, identity growth and exploration may be restricted. The fifth domain, dismissing spiritual attachment, addresses the extent to which individuals minimize their relationship with God to be equivalent with other general relationships. It assesses the degree of confidence individuals have in their relationship with God, their use of spiritual practices and pursuit of spiritual questions as a way of processing painful emotions or as a quest (a goal in and of itself rather than to find answers). It is likely that an individual high in this spiritual domain will have a weak understanding of Christian vocation. Minimizing a relationship with God is not conducive to seeking God's calling, an understanding of vocation, and God's place in the world for that individual. In summary, we expect that students who have a greater understanding of vocation will also have greater spiritual meaning and vitality, greater spiritual commitment and community, and a more secure spiritual attachment. Greater understanding of vocation should, however, be related to lower preoccupied and dismissing spiritual attachment.

In response to the call for further empirical research in both emerging adulthood and the need for more information about how Christian college students understand vocation, we present a study engaging these paradigms. In accordance with identity development research, it is hypothesized that identity development and development of vocation will follow parallel paths. As an understanding of identity becomes more developed, an understanding of vocation will also develop. It is also hypothesized that students with a better understanding of vocation will show more positive adaptation to college. We

hypothesize that students in their fourth year of college will have a greater understanding of vocation than do students in their first year of college. Finally, students with greater spiritual meaning and vitality, spiritual commitment and community, secure spiritual attachment, and lower preoccupied and dismissing spiritual attachment will show more development in their understanding of vocation, particularly in relation to vocational understanding of God's purpose.

## METHOD

### *Participants*

All participants were students at a small Christian liberal arts college in the Midwest. Participants were randomly selected from a database of first year and fourth year students maintained by the registrar. One hundred and sixty participants completed a packet of questionnaires and an online survey. An additional 31 participants completed only the packet of questionnaires and 38 participants completed only the online survey, totaling 191 participants. Only those who completed both the paper-and-pencil survey and the online survey are included in the analyses (160 participants). Of those who completed the questionnaires and online survey, 108 (67.5%) of the participants were women and 52 (32.5%) of the participants were men. Average age of this group was 20.3 years ( $SD = 1.7$ ). Participants were fairly evenly distributed between first year students (46.9%,  $M$  age = 18.7,  $SD = .52$ ) and fourth year students (52.5%,  $M$  age = 21.8,  $SD = .95$ ). One participant did not indicate year in school. At the completion of the survey, participants were entered into a drawing for the chance to win \$100.

### *Procedure*

In the second half of the spring semester, following an initial email message describing the purpose and procedures of the study, participants were contacted individually by telephone. Participants were asked if they would be willing to fill out a packet of questionnaires and complete an online survey. If participants agreed, the questionnaires and information concerning the online survey were distributed through campus mail. Participants were asked to complete the surveys at their convenience and return them via campus mail. The packet of questionnaires contained questions about demographics and scales measuring vocation, identity, and adaptation to college. The online survey assessed spiritual transformation.

### *Materials*

Christian vocation was assessed using the Christian Vocation Assessment Scale (CVAS) (Feenstra & Brouwer, 2008). Consisting of three subscales, vocational identity, God's purpose, and confusion, this 19-item scale assessed the extent to which one understands one's Christian vocation. The present sample was used for confirmatory factor analysis on the scale. For the scale participants responded on a 1 (*not at all*) to 7 (*a great deal*) scale. The scale assesses overall understanding of vocation and 3 factors. The first factor include 4 questions, all of which focus on understanding one's individual identity. An example question for this subscale is "To what extent do you feel you understand your own purpose in life?" A second factor focuses on the individual's understanding of God's purpose for the world and one's life and includes 9 questions. An example of a question from this subscale is "To what extent do you feel you contribute to God's plan for the world?" The final factor involves confusion about vocation and includes 4 questions, such as "To what extent do you feel confused about where God might be leading you?" To find scores of each sub scale responses for each item were summed. Higher scores on the confusion subscale indicate greater confusion; for the other subscales higher scores indicate greater understanding of vocation. To find a total score the confusion subscale scores were reversed and all the items were summed, so that a higher score indicated a higher overall understanding of vocation. In the present study Cronbach's alphas for the subscales ranged from .78 to .87.

The Revised Version of the Extended Objective Measure of Ego Identity Status (Bennion & Adams, 1986) was used to measure ego identity status in both ideological domains (occupation, politics, religion, and philosophical lifestyle) and interpersonal domains (friendship, dating, sex roles, and recreation). Participants were asked to indicate on a 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 6 (*strongly agree*) Likert-style scale to what degree each item reflected their own thoughts and feelings. Eight items assess the ideological domain for each identity status (achievement, moratorium, foreclosure, diffusion) and the interpersonal domain for each identity status, for a total of 64 items. Bennion and Adams (1986) reported Cronbach's  $\alpha$  for all subscales between .58 and .80. In the present study most of the Cronbach's  $\alpha$  ranged between .60 and .85. However, the interpersonal moratorium domain Cronbach's  $\alpha$  was found to be

.40. Results dependent upon this particular domain should be interpreted with caution.

To measure adaptation to college, the Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire (SACQ; Baker & Siryk, 1989) was used. Assessing four areas of adjustment to college, academic, social, personal-emotional, and goal commitment-institutional attachment, the 67-item, self-report measure is scaled from 1 (*applies very closely to me*) to 9 (*doesn't apply to me at all*). In previous research alpha coefficients for the scale ranged from .77 to .95 (Baker & Siryk, 1989). In the present study Cronbach's  $\alpha$  ranged from .78 to .92.

The Spiritual Transformation Inventory (STI; Hall, n.d.) was used to assess spirituality. The STI provides a measure of the 5 domains of Hall's theory: spiritual meaning and vitality, spiritual commitment and community, secure spiritual attachment, preoccupied spiritual attachment, and dismissing spiritual attachment. Each domain of the STI contains a collection of subscales assessing parts of the overall domain. Twenty-four scales are grouped within 5 categorical domains. On most scales, participants were asked to respond to statements on a 1 (*very false of me*) to 6 (*very true of me*) Likert-type scale. However, the Prayer Type Frequency Scale measured on a 1 (never) to 7 (several times a week) Likert-type scale, and the Spiritual Practices-Frequency Scale, measured on a 1 (*more than once daily*) to 6 (*one a month or less*) scale.

The first domain, spiritual meaning and vitality, assesses the sense of purpose or meaning individuals have in their relationship with God and others. Subscales address constructs such as prayer type, spiritual practices, and feelings of closeness to, openness to and awareness of God. The second domain, spiritual commitment and community, assesses how close and committed one feels to God, the spiritual community, and faith. The final three domains assessed secure, preoccupied and dismissing spiritual attachment. Secure attachment assesses the degree to which individuals feel secure attachment to and forgiveness from God, as well as forgiving others. The preoccupied spiritual attachment domain includes fear and anxiety within attachment to God. Finally, the dismissing spiritual attachment involves the confidence individuals have in their relationship with God and the use of spiritual practices to work through issues. The alphas for the subscales in the present study generally ranged from .69 to .91, with the exception of the spiritual practices-motives scale,  $\alpha = .40$ .

## RESULTS

Pearson's correlations were performed to determine if identity development correlated with vocational understanding. Because the identity assessment provides separate scores for each identity status, ideological and interpersonal scores for each status were correlated with the vocation scale scores. Each identity status is discussed, in turn, below. Vocation correlated positively with both ideological and interpersonal identity achievement statuses, see Table 1. Specifically, the subscales of vocational identity and God's purpose were found to strongly correlate with both domains of identity achievement, with stronger correlations with individual vocational identity than with God's purpose. Additionally, the vocation subscale of confusion was negatively correlated with both domains of identity achievement. This suggests that students who have explored and come to conclusions about their identity (have an achieved identity status) also have a greater understanding of their Christian vocation.

Findings with regard to the connection of vocation and moratorium varied. The correlations between ideological moratorium and all subscales of vocation were found to be significant. As expected, a positive correlation was found between ideological moratorium and confusion. Interestingly, interpersonal moratorium was significantly correlated with only confusion and overall vocation. These findings suggest that students who are currently exploring their identity in relation to things like politics, religion and philosophy of life (ideological moratorium) are feeling less like they understand their vocation. Current exploration of things like friendships or sex roles (interpersonal moratorium) does not seem to relate as much to understanding vocation. Due to the low reliability of the interpersonal moratorium domain ( $\alpha = .40$ ), these results must be interpreted with caution.

In support of the hypotheses, the diffusion identity status correlated negatively with vocational identity, God's purpose, and the overall vocation score on both ideological and interpersonal domains. The significant correlations between both domains of diffusion and the subscale of confusion were positive. This suggests that students who do not know about their identity also lack understanding of Christian vocation.

Correlations between the identity status foreclosure and all score of vocation were also computed. The only significant correlation was also found between ideological foreclosure and God's purpose.

**TABLE 1**  
*Correlation Coefficients for the Identity Scale and the Vocation Assessment Scale*

	Achievement		Moratorium		Diffusion		Foreclosure	
	Ideological	Interpersonal	Ideological	Interpersonal	Ideological	Interpersonal	Ideological	Interpersonal
Identity	.46***	.31***	-.38***	-.12	-.34***	-.36***	-.08	-.01
God's Purpose	.32***	.23**	-.33***	-.11	-.46***	-.28**	-.15*	-.02
Confusion	-.24**	-.24**	.34***	.18*	.19*	.23**	-.12	-.09
Overall Vocation	.43***	.31*	-.46***	-.17*	-.44***	-.36***	.00	.05

\* $p < .05$ , two-tailed; \*\* $p < .01$ , two-tailed; \*\*\* $p < .0001$ , two-tailed. With a Bonferroni correction all correlations of  $p < .001$  are significant.

**Table 2**  
*Correlation Coefficients of Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire and the Vocation Assessment Scale*

	Identity	God's Purpose	Confusion	Overall Vocation
Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire				
Attachment	.40***	.40***	-.28**	.44***
Academics	.46***	.32***	-.31***	.43***
Social	.43***	.39***	-.26**	.42***
Emotional	.43***	.24**	-.27**	.35***
Total	.50***	.36***	-.32***	.46***

\* $p < .05$ , two-tailed; \*\* $p < .01$ , two-tailed; \*\*\* $p < .001$ , two-tailed. With a Bonferroni correction all correlations remain significant.

No other correlations were found to be significant between either domain of foreclosure and vocation. These results indicate that understanding of vocation has no relation to foreclosure (chosen identity without significant exploration).

To examine the hypothesis that vocation and adaptation to college would be related, Pearson's correlations were performed. As predicted, overall vocation was significantly correlated with students' adaptation to college. Results indicated that as an understanding of vocation increased so did students' adaptation to college, see Table 2. The subscale of vocational identity, God's purpose, and overall vocation correlated positively with all subscales of the SACQ. The subscale confusion was negatively correlated with all subscales of the SACQ. These correlations suggests that while understanding one's Christian vocation is positive for college adjustment, less positive adjustment is likely to be found in those who are confused about their vocation.

A *t*-test was performed to determine if there was a significant difference between first year and fourth year students in their understanding of vocation. Comparisons of vocational development between first year and fourth year students were varied. As predicted, fourth year students ( $M = 19.12, SD = 3.60$ ) reported a greater understanding of individual identity than did first year students ( $M = 16.96, SD = 4.06$ ),  $t(156) = -3.54, p = .001$ . Inconsistent with the hypothesis of the study, fourth year students ( $M = 45.46, SD = 8.18$ ) did not report a significantly different understanding of God's purpose than did first year students ( $M = 43.93, SD = 7.88$ ),  $t(151) = -1.17, p = .25$ . No significant difference was found on the subscale of confusion between first year ( $M = 17.18, SD = 4.07$ ) and fourth year students ( $M = 15.89, SD = 5.05$ ). However, the means indicate slightly more confusion for first year students than for fourth year students, a trend predicted by the hypothesis. Fourth year students ( $M = 95.29, SD = 17.07$ ) did not report significantly higher overall vocation scores than did

**Table 3**  
*Correlation Coefficients of the Spirituality Transformation Inventory and the Vocation Assessment Scale*

	Identity	God's Purpose	Confusion	Overall Vocation
Spiritual Meaning and Vitality	.48***	.72***	-.27**	.69***
Spiritual Commitment and Community	.32***	.56***	-.22**	.56***
Secure Spiritual Attachment	.42***	.52***	-.19*	.50***
Preoccupied Spiritual Attachment	-.26**	-.39***	.25**	-.37***
Dismissing Spiritual Attachment	-.05	-.04	.13	-.06

\* $p < .05$ , two-tailed; \*\* $p < .01$ , two-tailed; \*\*\* $p < .001$ , two-tailed. With a Bonferroni correction correlations greater than .25 (or less than -.25) are significant.

first year students ( $M = 90.80$ ,  $SD = 14.85$ ),  $t(148) = -1.71$ ,  $p = .09$ . Although not significant, the means indicate a general trend of higher scores of God's purpose and overall vocation for fourth year students than for first year students. Overall, it seems that fourth year students have a somewhat greater understanding of vocation in terms of a greater understanding of their individual identity, however, their understanding of God's purpose, confusion about vocation, and general understanding of vocation does not seem to benefit from their years in college.

Pearson's correlations were performed to investigate the relationship between spirituality and vocational development, see Table 3. For these analyses all 5 domains of the STI were correlated with each of the subscales of vocation and the overall vocation score. Results generally support the hypotheses. The spiritual meaning and vitality (SMV), spiritual commitment and community (SCC), and secure spiritual attachment (SSA) domains correlated significantly with vocational identity, God's purpose, and the overall vocation score. Results indicate that participants reporting greater spiritual meaning and vitality, greater spiritual understanding and commitment to community, and a greater sense of secure spiritual attachment are also reporting higher vocational understanding. The SMV, SCC, and SSA domains also significantly correlated with confusion; the negative correlations suggest greater confusion about vocation for those with lower scores on these domains.

As predicted by the hypothesis, the correlation between preoccupied spiritual attachment (PSA) and all vocation scores were significant. Results indicated that as preoccupation scores increase, an understanding of vocation decreases. However, as

confusion increases, so does preoccupied spiritual attachment. No significant correlations were found between dismissing spiritual attachment (DSA) and any of the vocation scores.

## DISCUSSION

Previous research has determined an extended developmental period of exploration and identity formation termed emerging adulthood (Arnett, 2006). The present study investigated emerging adulthood in Christian college students by investigating the relationship of Christian vocation with identity development, college adjustment, year in college, and Christian spirituality. Findings generally support the hypotheses, indicating the valuable place vocational exploration has in the time of emerging adulthood for Christian college students.

Results confirmed the hypothesis that identity development and development of vocation follow parallel paths. Generally, an understanding of vocation was positively correlated with achieved identity and negatively correlated with diffusion and moratorium identity statuses. As might be expected, the individual vocational identity was more closely associated with identity achievement than understanding of God's purpose. In addition, diffusion was related to a lower degree of understanding one's vocation and greater confusion. These results suggest that when Christian college students have explored and made commitments to particular identities they also have a greater understanding of their Christian identity and of God's purpose for their life. These findings were correlational in nature, so it may be that having a greater understanding of one's Christian

identity and God's purpose may impact identity development, that that identity is impacting vocational understanding or that some other factor is having an effect on both variables. Nonetheless, Christian colleges may want to promote exploration and commitment to identity, both specifically Christian identity and identity more broadly defined, as these seem to develop in tandem. For Christian college students such findings provide evidence of additional benefits for identity achievement; not only is one able to gain a sense of self or a sense of a purposeful career, but also a greater understanding of God's will and call for one's life.

Assessments of foreclosure identity status produced interesting results. With the exception of a significant and negative correlation with God's purpose and ideological foreclosure, no significant results were found within the interpersonal and ideological domains of foreclosure. Foreclosure, by definition, involves no exploration. The lack of significant results may be related to the likelihood that foreclosed individuals, because they have made a commitment without a time of exploration, have not considered their vocation and purpose in relation to God's will. One may expect to find that foreclosed individuals have a particular identity score on the CVAS due to a commitment to an identity status. However, a nonsignificant correlation in the present study suggests otherwise. One explanation may be that the CVAS conceptualizes identity differently than the OM-EIS; it assesses an understanding of one's identity, rather than a static identity status. While foreclosed individuals may commit to an identity status, their understanding of that identity may be limited by a lack of identity exploration, thus explaining the lack of a relationship between foreclosure and the CVAS subscale of individual identity. Vocation, by nature of the definition, involves exploration. Thus, foreclosed individuals are likely to not engage in exploration. This suggests that pushing students to commit to an identity without proper exploration may result in a less developed sense of Christian vocation. Further research investigating the relation of foreclosed identity statuses to vocation would provide insights to determine what is at work here.

All vocation scores significantly correlated with moratorium in the ideological domain, yet only the subscale confusion and overall vocation correlated significantly with moratorium in the interpersonal domain. Individuals reporting a moratorium status are considered to be searching or progressing

toward a commitment. Results of the present study indicate that during this time of searching, there is more confusion and less understanding of vocation. Feenstra and Brouwer (2008) have also documented a negative correlation between the CVAS and a scale assessing search for meaning in life. The results of the present study suggest that there is less understanding of vocation during a period of searching, particularly in areas of life relating to religion, politics, and philosophical lifestyle. Additionally, the nonsignificant results of the interpersonal domain of moratorium can be attributed to the fact that the CVAS does not address the components of the interpersonal domain such as friends, dating, sex roles and recreation.

Along with this finding with regard to moratorium, particularly interesting results are found in examining the pattern of correlations of vocation to the ideological and interpersonal domains of identity development. Results indicate that all ideological domains of the four identity statuses, with the exception of the correlation between ideological diffusion and confusion, correlate more strongly with all vocation scores than do the interpersonal domains. The construction of the extended version of the OM-EIS, used in the present study, may help explain these results. The goal of the extended version of the OM-EIS was to use Erikson's (1968) ideas that ideological commitment includes the formation of an individual or philosophical life-style (Grotevant & Adams, 1984). However, researchers designed the EOM-EIS to also include measurements of the ego identity status in interpersonal domains as well as ideological domains. Questions were added to the original measure to assess friendship, dating, sex roles, and recreation for the interpersonal domain and philosophical life-style for the ideological domain. The CVAS (Feenstra & Brouwer, 2008) is based on a historical and philosophical Christian view of vocation. Given its focus on ideological understanding of vocation it is not surprising that stronger correlations were found with the ideological domains of the identity scale. A comparison between the correlation of vocation and the extended version of the OM-EIS and the shorter version of the OM-EIS (Adams, Shea, & Fitch, 1979) may be interesting in future work.

As predicted, positive adjustment to college was associated with a greater understanding of vocation. Except for a negative correlation with confusion, all subscales and the total score of the SACQ correlated significantly and positively with all vocation scale

score. These findings were expected based on research on adjustment and its relation with identity and religion (Barry & Nelson, 2005; Berzonsky & Kuk, 2000; Hunsberg et al., 2001; Kroger, 2000; Markstorm, 1999).

Consistent with the predictions of the present study, fourth year students reported a greater understanding of individual vocational identity than did first year students. However, no significant differences were found between first and fourth year students for overall vocation, God's purpose, and confusion. Despite the lack of significance, fourth year students reported higher means for overall vocation and God's purpose, and lower means for confusion than did first year students. These findings may indicate maturation effects but could also be related to time at a Christian college where there is a focus on understanding one's vocation. A study assessing the vocational understandings of Christian students at secular colleges compared to students at Christian colleges would be helpful to explore the impact explicit focus on Christian vocation may have on students.

The results of the analyses regarding spirituality were generally consistent with the hypotheses. The SMV domain significantly correlated with all subscales of vocation and overall vocation. Results indicate that as a sense of spiritual meaning and vitality increased, so did an understanding of vocation. Likewise, the SCC domain and all parts of the CVAS were significantly correlated. Results provide evidence that spiritual service and community commitment are associated with an understanding of vocation. Exploration of the world as a means to understanding one's identity and God's purpose were part of the underlying concept assessed by the CVAS. Commitment to community and a greater sense of spiritual service should therefore positively affect understanding of vocation. Results were correlational in nature, so discerning whether understanding of vocation is affecting spiritual commitment or spiritual commitment is helping students better understand their vocation is an empirical question.

Correlations between the SSA domain and all domains of the CVAS were significant. As secure spiritual attachment increased, so did an understanding of vocation. Results support Hall's (2004) theory that an individual with secure attachment will be better able to process a spiritual experience and integrate it into their life than an individual with insecure attachment. The results from the present study suggest that individuals with secure spiritual attachment

report a more comprehensive processing or integration of Christian vocation into their lives than those who do not report secure spiritual attachment.

Further supporting Hall's (2004) theory, the PSA domain correlated significantly with all subscales of vocation and overall vocation. Negative correlations indicate that an increase in instability, disappointment, anxiety and fear, as well as an insecure attachment to God, are associated with a decrease in vocational understanding. Likewise, an increase in confusion is associated with an increase in the PSA domain.

No significant results were found for the DSA domain in accordance with any of the vocational scale items, including overall vocation. The DSA domain assesses the extent to which an individual minimizes one's relationship with God to be equivalent with other general relationships. Clearly, such an approach to God would hinder any sort of spiritual exploration and identity formation which the CVAS is designed to assess. Minimizing a relationship with God to be equivalent with other relationships dismisses the underlying concept of a deity or authority figure necessary to understanding of a call or will for one's life by that authority or deity. This call is what is assessed by the CVAS. Although a relationship was predicted, no significant results were found. Without the foundational understanding of a relationship which is different than other relationships, the individual may be unable to consistently answer questions about Christian vocation, thus the very low and non significant correlations between the DSA domain and the CVAS. Results with regard to spirituality and vocation suggest that Christian colleges would be well served to address issues of insecure spiritual attachment (preoccupied and dismissing attachment styles) not only to promote closer relationship with God in their students, but also to help students discover their purpose and identity in relation to God's will. Although students may not immediately see how addressing spiritual issues helps them understand what they will do with their lives, these findings suggest it does.

There are a few limitations in the present study which need to be addressed. The first is the collection of data from a small Christian college. It is necessary to consider the population used in the present study when generalizing to other populations. Secondly, data was collected by self-report; results may be affected by social desirability. The study, in particular results associated with identity development, is also limited by

the age range of participants. Data from high school students and older adults may give researchers a better idea of the development of identity which is occurring during emerging adulthood and its long term effects.

The present research sought to examine Christian vocation within the emerging adulthood period. Exploration and commitment were assessed in a variety of variables. Information provided in the present study not only supplies more research into the recent developing areas of both emerging adulthood and the Christian vocation concept, but provides direction in which to continue this area of research.

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