

**IS URBAN FATHERS' RELIGION IMPORTANT FOR THEIR CHILDREN'S  
BEHAVIOR?**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Previous research suggests that many men increase their religious involvement after the birth of a new child. Using data on low-income urban fathers from the Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study, this study extends this research by examining whether fathers maintain a higher rate of religious participation as children get older and how fathers' religiosity may influence children's behavior. Results suggest that although many urban fathers slightly increase their religious involvement after the birth of a child, most fathers attend religious services at a fairly consistent rate during the early years of their child's life. Although there is only limited evidence suggesting that fathers' religious involvement directly influences children's behavior, there is evidence that fathers' religiosity moderates the influence of other family characteristics on children; parental relationship quality and mothers' religiosity are associated with fewer problem behaviors among children when fathers believe that religion is important to family life. Results also suggest that having a Black Protestant father is associated with fewer externalizing problem behaviors among young children. Overall, this study suggests that religion may be a source of support that encourages urban fathers to be engaged in their family life and promote positive development among children.

Recent studies have increasingly focused on the role that fathers play in children's lives and reasons that may explain why fathers become more or less involved in family life. Studies

have found that employment status, co-parenting relationship quality, and attitudes about parenting all influence the degree to which fathers are involved in their children's lives (Lamb 1997; Amato and Rivera 1999; Sobolewski and King 2005). Research also suggests that having an engaged father is beneficial to children; youth who reside and/or interact frequently with their birth father are more likely to experience fewer behavioral and psychological problems, increased educational attainment, and higher well-being (Lamb 1997; Amato and Gilbreth 1999; Amato and Rivera 1999; Pleck 2007; Sarkadi et al. 2007).

Within the fatherhood literature, there is evidence that religion may be one important factor that leads men to become more involved in their children's lives. Being actively involved in a religious community may be beneficial to fathers (and families in general) by providing opportunities for families to interact with one another, resources for building and maintaining healthy relationships, parenting guidance and support, and a moral community that helps to enhance one's feeling of connectedness with others (Alwin 1986; Abbott, Berry, and Meridith 1990; Wilcox 2004; Edgell 2006). Indeed, recent research suggests that men increase their religious involvement after the birth of a child (Petts 2007), and religious participation appears to strengthen co-parenting relationships and encourage fathers to be involved in their children's lives, both of which are beneficial to children's development (Call and Heaton 1997; Bartkowski and Xu 2000; King 2003; Mahoney et al. 2003; Wolfinger and Wilcox 2008).

Although studies have linked fathers' religiosity to positive outcomes for adolescents (Wilcox 2002; King 2003; Regnerus 2003; Smith and Denton 2005), little is known about how fathers' religious beliefs and practices may influence early child development. Two recent studies provide some evidence that parents' religiosity is associated with greater self-control, development of a moral conscience, and fewer externalizing and internalizing behavior problems

(Bartkowski, Xu, and Levin 2008; Volling, Mahoney, and Rauer 2009). However, these studies are constrained by the use of small sample sizes and cross-sectional data.

The aim of this study is to use longitudinal data to provide a more comprehensive examination of the relationship between fathers' religiosity and early childhood outcomes. Specifically, this study focuses on three research questions. First, do fathers increase their religious involvement after the birth of a child and maintain a higher rate of religious participation as their children get older? Second, how do fathers' religious involvement, affiliation, and beliefs influence the behavior of their young children? Third, does fathers' religiosity moderate the relationships between paternal involvement, family structure, co-parenting relationship quality, mothers' religiosity, and early childhood behavior? Paternal religiosity may directly influence children's behavior; religious fathers may have greater access to networks of social support and control than nonreligious fathers, perhaps making them better able to provide their children with the guidance they need to develop in positive ways. Alternatively, religion may influence children's development by enhancing other family characteristics; religious fathers may be more involved in their child's life, have stronger bonds with the child's mother, and be more likely to be married to the child's mother than nonreligious fathers, all of which may lead to positive outcomes for young children.

Four waves of data from the Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study are used for this study. These data are useful in that fathers were interviewed shortly after the birth of their child and then again when the child was one, three, and five years old, allowing for an analysis of how fathers' religious involvement may change over the first five years of their child's life, and also whether fathers' religiosity influences children's behavior at age 5. Furthermore, children who grow up in low-income urban families are at the highest risk for having little or no involvement

with their fathers. By focusing on this population of fathers, this study explores whether religion may act as a resource that encourages urban fathers to be engaged in their family life.

### ***Fathers' Religious Participation***

Having a child is an important milestone in life that often causes men to reevaluate their priorities and become more committed to their families (Snarey 1993; Marsiglio 1998; Wilcox 2002). As part of this transition, many men become more involved in religion to provide a sense of meaning and purpose for this life event (Eggebeen and Knoester 2001; Palkovitz 2002; Petts 2007). In addition, religious organizations often provide child-rearing and parenting guidelines, as well as resources and support networks to help parents (Alwin 1986; Ellison and Sherkat 1993; Ellison et al. 1996). Although guidelines may differ between religious denominations, most religions place a strong emphasis on family life and provide teachings and support for families (Wilcox, Chaves, and Franz 2004; Edgell 2006). Urban fathers may be especially likely to turn to religion as a resource due to the availability and low-cost support that religious organizations provide (Wolfinger and Wilcox 2008).

New fathers may also increase their involvement in a religious community so that their children can have the opportunity to participate in rituals such as baptisms (Wilcox 2004). Even men who were not religious prior to becoming a parent often feel a desire to expose their children to religious teachings (Abbott et al. 1990; Palkovitz 2002). Therefore, many fathers become more active in a religious community when they have a new child to benefit themselves as parents as well as their children.

### ***Fathers' Religiosity and Child Behavior***

Religion may provide a number of benefits to men making the transition to parenthood, but fathers who increase their religious activity may do so, at least in part, to improve their

child's well-being. However, research on the relationship between parental religiosity and young children's well-being is scarce; only three studies have focused specifically on whether parental religiosity influences early child development. Strayhorn, Weidman, and Larson (1990) find that parental religiosity is associated with positive parenting practices and parents' well-being, but unrelated to children's behavior. In contrast, Bartkowski et al. (2008) find that parental religious participation, religious homogamy, and family discussions about religion are positively associated with pro-social behavior for young children. Moreover, Volling et al. (2009) find that children are more likely to develop a moral conscience (feel empathy towards others, be apologetic, etc.) when parents believe that religion plays an important part in their parenting. Given the lack of research on parental religiosity and child development, it is important to examine whether (and what aspects of) parental religion, and specifically fathers' religiosity, may influence early childhood behavior.

Paternal religiosity may be beneficial to young children for a number of reasons. Involvement in a religious community may help men become better fathers. Religion provides individuals with social support and control as well as a set of teachings and guidelines for how to live one's life, providing men with a sense of connectedness (Ellison and Levin 1998). This social control may be especially beneficial for low-income urban fathers, as it may help to prevent them from engaging in risky behaviors. Religion may also provide men with a sense of purpose and in life and a framework for understanding life's difficulties, all of which may increase men's well-being and reduce stress (Ellison 1991; Ellison and Levin 1998). By being involved in a community that provides meaning in life and resources to cope with struggles, religious men may be more prepared for the challenges of parenthood and better equipped to promote positive development among their children than nonreligious fathers.

Involvement in a religious community may also encourage men to be active and involved in their family life. Most religious institutions place a high level of importance on the family and promote strong family bonds (Bartkowski and Xu 2000; Wilcox 2002; King 2003; Edgell 2006). By adhering to religious messages about the value of family relationships, religious fathers may place a greater importance on family life, leading them to be engaged in their children's lives and less likely to abandon their family life (Dollahite 1998; Wilcox 2002; Palkovitz 2002). Furthermore, fathers who are religiously active are enmeshed in a social network that provides parenting support and guidance, encourages family interaction, and acts as an agent of social control, reinforcing parents' messages and promoting positive behavior among children (Abbott et al. 1990; Myers 1996; Pearce and Axinn 1998; Smith and Denton 2005; Edgell 2006). By being enmeshed within a moral community, placing greater meaning on family relationships, and being more committed to family life, religious fathers may be better equipped to provide children with the support and guidance needed to promote positive development than nonreligious fathers. Thus, I expect that *frequent religious participation and a high importance placed on religion among fathers will be associated with fewer behavior problems for young children.*

Although religious involvement may be beneficial to both fathers and children (Alwin 1986; Palkovitz 2002), these relationships may vary. For example, strict religious beliefs (e.g., religious texts should be followed literally) may not always be beneficial for children. Such beliefs may lead fathers to stress the importance of obedience and may increase the likelihood that fathers use corporal punishment to discipline their children (Ellison and Sherkat 1993; Ellison et al. 1996). This style of authoritarian parenting may reduce children's opportunities to develop their own sense of self-control and increase the likelihood of engaging in problem

behaviors (Baumrind 1991; Unnever et al. 2006). Thus, I expect that *strict religious beliefs among fathers will be associated with increased problem behavior among young children.*

The relationship between fathers' religiosity and children's well-being may also vary by religious denomination. Specifically, research suggests that Evangelical Protestants place a greater emphasis on involved parenting, child discipline, and traditional family structures than other religious groups (Wilcox 2002; 2004). Even though most religious traditions value family life, conservative theology places a particular emphasis on active fathering (Ellison et al. 1996; Bartkowski and Xu 2000; Wilcox 2004). As a result, Evangelical Protestant fathers are more likely to be warm and expressive towards their children and more likely to hug and praise their children than fathers of other religious denominations (Bartkowski and Xu 2000; Wilcox 2004). Although recent research suggests that unmarried Evangelical Protestant fathers are less involved in their children's lives than other unmarried fathers, no studies have explored how the frequency or quality of involvement among Evangelical Protestant fathers may influence early childhood behavior (Wildeman 2008). Thus, I hypothesize that *children reared by Evangelical Protestant fathers will experience the fewest behavior problems, whereas children reared by fathers with no religious affiliation will experience the most behavior problems.*

### ***Moderating Relationships***

Young children may receive direct benefits from having a religiously active father, resulting in fewer behavior problems. However, it is also possible that fathers' religiosity may moderate the influence of paternal engagement with children, relationship quality with the birth mother, mothers' religiosity, and family structure on early childhood behavior. For example, religion may 'sanctify' relationships, leading religious fathers to place a greater significance on their relationship with their child than nonreligious fathers (Mahoney et al. 2003). By finding

greater meaning in parent-child relationships, religious fathers may be more likely to interact with children in positive ways. Indeed, research suggests that religiously active fathers report higher levels of involvement with young children, increased parental supervision, and greater relationship quality with children (Bartkowski and Xu 2000; Roggman, Boyce, Cook, and Cook 2002; Wilcox 2002; King 2003). Furthermore, positive paternal engagement is associated with fewer behavioral and psychological problems among children, higher educational attainment, and greater social capital (Lamb 1997; Amato and Rivera 1999; Pleck, 2007; Sarkadi et al. 2007). Thus, I expect that *frequent involvement by religious fathers may be more likely to deter problem behavior among children than frequent involvement by nonreligious fathers because there is greater meaning and significance placed on these interactions.*

Religion may also help to sanctify co-parental relationships, leading fathers to place more importance on their relationship with the birth mother (Mahoney et al. 2003). Parental relationship quality is important to consider because the frequency and quality of contact that fathers (especially nonresident fathers) have with children is often influenced by the effectiveness of the co-parenting relationship. Stronger co-parenting relationships, or relationships in which parents agree and support one another on how children should be reared, can lead fathers to become more active in their children's lives and consequently improve their children's well-being (McHale 1995; Sobolewski and King 2005; Schoppe-Sullivan et al. 2008). Fathers who are religious may be more likely to work together with the mother to develop effective child-rearing strategies than nonreligious fathers. Indeed, studies suggest that religious involvement is associated with lower relationship conflict and higher marital happiness and stability (Call and Heaton 1997; Curtis and Ellison 2002; Wolfinger and Wilcox 2008; Lichter

and Carmalt 2009). Therefore, I expect that *parental relationship quality may be more likely to promote positive behavior among children when fathers are religious.*

Fathers' religiosity may also moderate the relationship between family structure and early childhood behavior. Young children are less likely to experience problem behaviors when residing with two parents, and also experience fewer problems when residing in a stable family structure throughout childhood (Cavanagh and Huston 2006). Fathers who are actively involved in a religious community are more likely to be resident, married fathers and less likely to divorce than nonreligious fathers (McCarthy 1979; Larson and Golz 1989). Furthermore, many religious traditions stress the importance of traditional values such as an opposition to premarital sex and a belief in the sanctity of marriage (Hunter 1983; Petersen and Donnenwerth 1997), both of which may increase the likelihood that religious fathers remain married to the birth mother and receive greater support from a religious community, as well as ensure that children grow up in a stable, intact family. Thus, I expect that *children residing with married fathers who are religious will display fewer problem behaviors than children residing with married fathers who are not religious. I also expect that children with nonresident religious fathers will display fewer problem behaviors than children with nonresident, nonreligious fathers as religion may encourage nonresident fathers to be involved in their children's lives.*

Young children may also benefit from residing in a household in which parents have similar beliefs. Children are more likely to internalize the values of their parents when their parents are providing a consistent message (Nelsen 1990). Furthermore, sharing religious beliefs may also reduce conflict between parents; religious institutions often provide resources to help individuals deal with conflict as well as encourage couples to compromise with one another (Ellison and Anderson 2001; Petts and Knoester 2007; Bartkowski et al. 2008). Religious

homogamy between parents may also increase the likelihood that families are attending religious services together and receiving the social support and control that religion provides (Abbott et al. 1990). As a result, fathers' religiosity may be more likely to promote positive development among young children when mothers are also religiously active. In contrast, religious differences between parents may have negative consequences for young children; religious heterogamy is associated with increased marital conflict (Curtis and Ellison 2002; Petts and Knoester 2007; Bartkowski et al. 2008). Such conflict is associated with greater family stress and an increased risk of relationship dissolution, both of which may increase the likelihood that children display problem behaviors (Grych and Fincham 1990; Lehrer and Chiswick 1993). Thus, I expect that *fathers' religiosity will be more likely to reduce problem behaviors among young children when mothers are also religious.*

## **DATA AND METHODS**

### ***Sample***

Data from four waves of the Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study (FFCW) are used in this study. This is a longitudinal, birth cohort study that follows 4,898 children born between 1998 and 2000. The FFCW is an urban study that is representative of all non-marital births in cities with populations of over 200,000, but there are also a sizeable number of married parents included in the study (22% of the couples are married at the baseline survey). Both parents were interviewed at the hospital shortly after the child's birth and then again for follow-up interviews approximately one, three, and five years after the child's birth. In addition, a subset of families participated in an interview at the three- and five-year follow-up that focused on the child's health, behavior, and well-being. Specifically, 4,798 mothers and 3,830 fathers in 20

cities were interviewed for the baseline survey, and retention rates for each of the follow-up interviews are over 80% (Reichman, Teitler, Garfinkel, and McLanahan 2001).

This study focuses on 1,503 families consisting of fathers who were interviewed at each wave and families in which the five-year child survey was completed. Of the 3,830 families in which fathers were interviewed at the time of their child's birth, 1,541 were excluded because fathers were not interviewed in each of the follow-up waves. An additional 633 were excluded because the 60-month child survey was not completed. Also, 81 families who were not part of the 18-city sub-sample were excluded because they were not asked all of the questions of interest for this study, and 72 families were dropped because fathers did not report their religious participation at each wave. Although these data are not generalizable to all families, the longitudinal nature of the data, the breadth of questions on early childhood behavior, and the variety of religious and relationship indicators make these data well-suited for an exploration of whether and how urban fathers' religiosity may influence early childhood behavior.

### ***Dependent Variables***

The two dependent variables used in this study are each taken from the Five-Year In-Home Longitudinal Study of Pre-School Aged Children. Children's behavior was measured using indicators from both the Child Behavior Checklist (Achenbach and Rescorla 2000) and the Adaptive Social Behavior Inventory (Hogan, Scott, and Bauer 1992). For each indicator, mothers report the extent to which the statement is true of the child's behavior (ranging from 0 = *not true* to 2 = *very true or often true*).

Externalizing Problem Behavior. Externalizing problem behavior is taken from mothers' responses to the aggressive and delinquency scales included in the survey ( $\alpha = .86$ ). The aggressive scale consists of 20 items about whether the child boasts, bullies others, destroys

things, threatens people, gets into fights, demands a lot of attention, and is unusually loud. The delinquency scale consists of 10 items that assess whether the child hangs around with others who get into trouble, sets fire, steals, swears, vandalizes, runs away from home, and cheats or lies. Responses to these 30 items are summed.<sup>1</sup>

Internalizing Problem Behavior. Internalizing problem behavior is taken from mothers' responses to the withdrawn and anxious/depressed scales included in the survey ( $\alpha = .75$ ). The withdrawn scale consists of 9 items that assess whether the child would rather be alone, refuses to talk, is secretive, is shy, sulks, is unhappy, is withdrawn, and stares blankly. The anxious/depressed scale consists of 14 items about whether the child complains of loneliness, cries a lot, feels inferior, feels guilty, worries, feels no one loves him/her, is nervous, and is suspicious. Responses to these 23 items are summed.<sup>2</sup>

### ***Independent Variables***

Religious Participation. How often fathers attend religious services is coded as a scale with the following values: 0 = *never*; 1 = *hardly ever*; 2 = *several times a year*; 3 = *several times a month*; 4 = *once a week or more*. The indicator of religious participation is taken from each of the four survey waves in order to assess changes in religious participation over time.

Religious Affiliation. Religious denominations are sorted into categories using the classification scheme created by Steensland et al. (2000), resulting in seven dummy variables: no religious affiliation (reference category), Evangelical Protestant, Black Protestant, Mainline Protestant, Catholic, other Christian affiliation, and non-Christian. Each of these variables is taken from fathers' responses at the third wave of data collection. In addition, a dummy variable is included to indicate whether fathers experienced a change in religious affiliation between the baseline survey and the three-year follow-up.<sup>3</sup>

Religious Attitudes. Two variables are taken from the three-year follow-up survey to indicate fathers' religious attitudes. First, religious salience indicates whether fathers use their religious faith as a guide for the way they treat their family. Responses range from 0 = *strongly disagree* to 3 = *strongly agree*. Second, a variable is included to assess theological orthodoxy. Fathers were asked the degree to which they agreed with a belief that is important to their religious denomination (responses range from 0 = *strongly disagree* to 3 = *strongly agree*). Protestants were asked whether they believed that the Bible is the inspired word of God and should be read literally. Catholics were asked whether they believed that the Eucharist is the real body and blood of Jesus Christ. Muslims were asked whether they believed that the Koran is the inspired word of God and should be read literally. Finally, Jewish fathers were asked whether keeping kosher is an important part of being Jewish.

#### *Moderating Variables*

Father Involvement. Father involvement is indicated by the number of days per week that fathers spent participating in eight activities (sing songs or nursery rhymes, hug or show physical affection, tell child that you love him/her, let child help with simple chores, play imaginary games, read stories, tell stories, and play inside with toys with child) with the child at the three-year follow up ( $\alpha = .83$ ). Responses ranged from 0 to 7 days a week, and the mean for the eight activities is used as the scale score.

Parents' Relationship Quality. Relationship quality is indicated by six statements taken from both mothers' and fathers' reports about the other parent (i.e., mothers reported about fathers and fathers reported about mothers). All statements are taken from the three-year follow-up survey (0 = *never* to 2 = *often*): (a) he/she is fair and willing to compromise, (b) he/she expresses affection or love for you, (c) he/she insults or criticizes you or your ideas (reverse

coded), (d) he/she helps you do things important to you, and (e) he/she listens to you when you needed someone to talk to, and (f) he/she understands your hurts and joys. The mean of each response is taken from both mothers' ( $\alpha = .86$ ) and fathers' ( $\alpha = .82$ ) reports, and the mean score of both parents' reports is used as the indicator of relationship quality.

Family Structure. Family structure is indicated by whether the father is married to the birth mother, cohabiting with the birth mother, or is a nonresident, unmarried father (reference group). A number of variables are also included to indicate transitions both in and out of these family structures between the baseline survey and the three-year follow-up survey.<sup>4</sup>

Mother's Religious Participation. This variable uses the same scale as fathers' religious participation, and the mean value from the first three waves is used to indicate mother's religious participation.

### ***Control Variables***

A number of variables that may alter the relationship between fathers' religiosity and early childhood behavior are also included as controls. Fathers' age is measured in years, and is taken from the three-year follow-up. A dummy variable is included to indicate the gender of the child (1 = *male*). Four dummy variables are used to indicate fathers' race: White (reference group), Black, Latino, and other racial group. Father's educational attainment indicates the highest level of education that the father has received by the third wave of interviews, and is categorized as (a) less than high school (reference group), (b) high school diploma, (c) some college,<sup>5</sup> and (d) four-year college graduate. Household income measures the amount of income within the household that the children resides at the three-year follow-up interview, and responses range from 0 = *No income* to 5 = *\$40,000 or more*. Fathers' reports of household income are used when the father resides with the child, and mothers' reports are used when the

child has a nonresident father or when the resident father does not report household income. Controls are also included for the number of hours fathers work per week, whether the focal child is the father's first child (1 = *yes*), and the number of additional children that the father reported at the three-year follow-up.

### ***Analytic Strategy***

A number of steps are taken to assess whether urban fathers maintain a higher level of religious participation five years after the birth of a child, and also whether father's religiosity is associated with early childhood behavior. First, group-based trajectory modeling is used to obtain estimates of fathers' religious participation over the first five years of their child's life. This method is a type of finite mixture modeling that uses maximum likelihood techniques to estimate each group's trajectory and the proportion of the sample assigned to each trajectory group (Nagin 1999; Jones, Nagin, and Roeder 2001; Nagin 2005). That is, all available data is used to identify common patterns of religious participation over time (e.g., fathers who consistently attend religious services, fathers who attend weekly when their child is born but then decrease over time, etc.) and the percentage of the sample that follows each trajectory. This method also assigns each individual a probability of following each identified trajectory (based on his specific responses) to identify the most accurate trajectory for each individual (Nagin 2005). For example, Respondent A reports attending services weekly at three time points and monthly at one time point. If the group-based trajectory model identifies three trajectories – never attending, moderate attendance, and frequent attendance – Respondent A may be assigned the following probabilities: 0, .10, and .90. This would indicate that he would be identified as a frequent attender, as there is only a small probability that he follows a trajectory of moderate attendance and no chance that he never attends religious services.

This methodology is useful for this study because it is able to uncover longitudinal patterns of religious participation without forcing the researcher to make arbitrary group cutoffs. Although these trajectories are only approximations, they are helpful in illustrating the different patterns of religious participation that urban fathers may experience in the years following a child's birth.

Because the measure of religious participation is a scale ranging from 0 to 4, a censored normal model is used to estimate the trajectories. A censored normal model assumes that the dependent variable is normally distributed, but also accounts for clustering that may exist at the maximum and minimum values of the scale. This model is appropriate for this study because the measure of religious participation is slightly skewed (approximately one-third of fathers report attending services weekly at the three- and five-year follow-up interviews). The basic model estimating each trajectory specifies the link between interview year and religious participation as a polynomial function:

$$y_{it}^j = \beta_0^j + \beta_1^j \text{YEAR}_{it} + \beta_2^j \text{YEAR}_{it}^2 + \beta_3^j \text{YEAR}_{it}^3 + \varepsilon_{it}.$$

In this model,  $y$  is the predicted rate of religious participation for person  $i$  in trajectory group  $j$  at time  $t$ ,  $\beta_0$ ,  $\beta_1$ ,  $\beta_2$ , and  $\beta_3$  are parameters that determine the shape of each trajectory, and  $\varepsilon$  is an error term for each group. Because a unique set of parameters are used to estimate each trajectory, the shapes of the trajectories can vary by group (Nagin 2005). A procedure in SAS (PROC TRAJ) is used to estimate trajectories of religious participation (Jones et al. 2001). Once the trajectory estimates are obtained, these estimates are used as the indicators of fathers' religious participation in the second part of the analysis.

For the second part of the study, Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression models are used. For each child outcome, variables are entered into stepwise models. First, I include all

measures of fathers' religiosity. The second model adds moderating and control variables. Finally, I test for interaction effects between fathers' religiosity and the moderating variables. Each interaction term is entered into the model separately, and a third model is presented that includes any interaction effects that are statistically significant.

### ***Missing Data***

Most variables have few, if any, missing values.<sup>6</sup> To preserve sample size, multiple imputation is used to account for missing data. Specifically, the *ice* and *micombine* commands in STATA are used for the analyses (Royston 2005).

## **RESULTS**

In order to obtain the correct model for group-based trajectory analysis, the researcher must specify the number of groups and the order of the trajectory (linear, quadratic, etc.) prior to estimating the models (Nagin 2005). BIC (Bayesian Information Criterion) statistics are used as the primary formal test to determine the optimal number of groups, but model parameters and researcher judgment are also helpful in specifying the correct form of each trajectory. The goal is to use a combination of researcher judgment and diagnostic statistical tests to determine a best-fitting model that conveys all of the substantive features of the data while remaining parsimonious (Nagin 2005).

Using BIC statistics and model parameters as a guide, a five-group model emerged as the best-fitting model; two of the groups follow quadratic trajectories, one group follows a linear trajectory, and two groups attend religious services at a constant rate.<sup>7</sup>

----- Insert Figure 1 About Here -----

Trajectories from the five-group model are presented in Figure 1. Consistent with previous research, most fathers experience at least a slight increase in religious involvement after

the birth of a child (Petts, 2007). However, only one group of fathers significantly increase their religious participation; 15% of fathers (increasing attenders) increase their religious participation from several times a year to several times a month in the year following their child's birth. These fathers continue to attend religious services more frequently over time, and attend religious services at least once a week by the five-year follow-up interview.

Results in Figure 1 also show that two groups of fathers experience slight changes in religious participation from year to year, but generally attend religious services at approximately the same rate during the first five years of their child's life. Specifically, the majority of fathers in this sample (51%) are classified as infrequent attenders, as they attend religious services several times a year or less throughout the early years of their child's life. In addition, 9% of fathers (monthly attenders) attend religious services at least a few times a month throughout the first few years of their child's life.

Finally, two groups of fathers maintain a constant rate of religious involvement during their child's early life; 11% of fathers attend religious services weekly, and 14% of fathers never attend religious services. Overall, results in Figure 1 suggest that although many urban fathers experience a slight increase in religious participation after the birth of a child, most fathers attend religious services at a fairly consistent rate throughout the first few years of their child's life.<sup>8</sup> The next stage of analysis examines whether these patterns of fathers' religious participation are associated with children's behavior.

----- Insert Table 1 About Here -----

Table 1 includes mean values within each trajectory group for all variables used in the analysis. These results provide some insight into the differences between fathers following unique patterns of religious involvement. On average, weekly attenders report higher levels of

father involvement, higher relationship quality, are more likely to be married, and have children who display fewer externalizing and internalizing problem behaviors than non-attenders and infrequent attenders. These results suggest that urban fathers who are actively involved in a religious community may be better equipped to provide children with the support and guidance they need early in life. Because the mean values for weekly attenders suggest that children of these fathers may experience the fewest problem behaviors, the remaining analyses focus on whether the other four trajectories of religious participation are significantly different from weekly attendance in predicting early childhood behavior.<sup>9</sup>

----- Insert Table 2 About Here -----

Results examining the relationship between fathers' religiosity and children's externalizing problem behavior are presented in Table 2. As hypothesized, results in Model 1 suggest that children reared by non-attenders ( $b = 2.30, p < .05$ ) and infrequent attenders ( $b = 1.70, p < .05$ ) are more likely to display externalizing problem behaviors than children of weekly attenders. Moreover, children who have an Evangelical Protestant ( $b = -1.74, p < .05$ ), Black Protestant ( $b = -1.49, p < .05$ ), or Catholic ( $b = -1.71, p < .01$ ) father are less likely to exhibit externalizing problem behaviors than children who have fathers with no religious affiliation. Taken together, these results provide some evidence that having a religious father may decrease the likelihood that young children experience externalizing problem behaviors.

When other variables are added in Model 2, many indicators of religiosity are no longer associated with children's externalizing behavior. However, there is still some evidence that parental religiosity may influence early childhood behavior for some denominations; having a father who identifies with a Black Protestant denomination reduces the risk of displaying externalizing problems ( $b = -1.43, p < .05$ ). This result highlights the social control that Black

Protestant churches may provide, especially in low-income communities (Johnson et al. 2000). Fathers may internalize the rules and guidelines that Black Protestant churches provide, and pass on these rules to their children. Furthermore, these rules may be reinforced by a larger religious community, decreasing the likelihood that young children engage in delinquent acts.<sup>10</sup>

Interaction terms are introduced in Model 3, and results provide some evidence that father's religiosity may enhance the influence of parental relationship quality on children's behavior. The interaction term in Model 3 suggests that relationship quality between parents is associated with fewer externalizing problem behaviors when fathers believe that religion provides an important guide for how to treat their family ( $b = -.99, p < .05$ ). Consistent with my hypothesis, religion may lead fathers to place greater meaning and significance on family relationships, and this commitment may be beneficial to the co-parental relationship. Moreover, parents who share a strong relationship may be more likely to provide social control and support for their children, reducing the potential for children to display externalizing problem behaviors.

----- Insert Table 3 About Here -----

Results examining the relationship between father's religiosity and children's internalizing problem behaviors are presented in Table 3. Overall, results are similar to those presented in Table 2. Children reared by fathers following a trajectory of infrequent ( $b = .90, p < .05$ ) or increasing attendance ( $b = .98, p < .05$ ) are more likely to exhibit internalizing problem behaviors than children reared by fathers who attend religious services weekly (Model 1). In addition, there is some evidence that theological orthodoxy is associated with increased internalizing problem behavior among young children ( $b = .30, p < .05$ ). Although these findings provide some evidence that fathers' religiosity is associated with internalizing problem behaviors, the results are no longer significant when other variables are included in Model 2.

Similar to the results in Table 2, parental relationship quality ( $b = -1.66, p < .001$ ) and mother's religious participation ( $b = -.25, p < .05$ ) are negatively related to children's internalizing problem behavior (Model 2). These results provide further evidence of the benefits of the co-parenting relationship and mother's religiosity for young children's well-being. Somewhat surprisingly, results also suggest that children who enter into a married family may experience an increase in internalizing problem behavior ( $b = 1.00, p < .05$ ), whereas children experiencing a divorce may experience a decrease in internalizing problem behavior ( $b = -1.95, p < .05$ ). These results suggest that simply residing with married parents may not result in higher well-being for young children. The stresses associated with transitioning into a new married family may increase internalizing problem behavior among young children, and children who reside in a stressful family environment may actually benefit from a parental divorce (Booth and Amato 2001).

Finally, results in Model 3 highlight the benefits of growing up in a family in which both parents are religious. The interaction term suggests that mother's religious participation is especially likely to reduce internalizing problem behavior among children when fathers also feel that religion is an important guide for how to treat their family ( $b = -.21, p < .05$ ). Once this interaction term is introduced into the model, the coefficient for mother's religious participation is no longer significant, suggesting that mother's religiosity is only beneficial to children when fathers also feel that religion is important. Being reared by two religious parents may increase social support for children, making them feel secure and reducing the likelihood that they experience internalizing problem behaviors.

## DISCUSSION

The two goals of this study were to examine whether urban fathers maintain a higher level of religious participation during the early years of their child's life as well as whether father's religious beliefs and practices were associated with early childhood behavior. Overall, results indicate only some support for the hypotheses, showing that most fathers maintain a fairly consistent level of religious participation when their child is young and that fathers' religiosity may help to increase family support and stability and reduce the likelihood that children exhibit problem behaviors.

One contribution of this study is the illustration of patterns of religious participation that urban men experience for five years following the birth of a child. Despite the stereotype that low-income urban fathers often retreat from family and community life, results suggest that most new fathers slightly increase their religious involvement in the year following their child's birth, and maintain a fairly consistent rate of religious participation (or non-participation) throughout the early years of their child's life. Men who significantly increase their religious participation (such as the increasing attenders in this study) may become more involved in religion in order to expose their children to religious beliefs and practices and set a good example for them (Palkovitz 2002). New fathers may also rely on religion after they transition to parenthood for support and guidance as they face new parental challenges during early childhood. Although there is no evidence suggesting that these patterns of religious involvement have a direct influence on children's behavior, a sizeable percentage of men remain actively involved in a religious community when they have a young child, perhaps to set a religious example for their child as well as to gain access to the support and guidance that religious institutions provide.

The second goal of this study was to examine whether fathers' religiosity was associated with early childhood behavior. For the most part, fathers' religiosity does not appear to have a direct influence on problem behavior among young children. However, results from this study provide two interesting and useful insights into the role of parental religion on early childhood development. First, there is some evidence suggesting that Black Protestant fathers may be especially likely to provide social control in a child's life. Most religious traditions provide standards and guidelines for how people should live their lives, and religious fathers likely pass on these teachings to provide structure in their children's lives. Due to the lack of resources that often exist in low-income urban areas, Black Protestant churches may focus on filling this need and providing social, emotional, and even financial support to its members. Indeed, research suggests that involvement in the Black church may be especially beneficial for youth residing in urban, low-income communities; fathers who belong to a Black Protestant church may provide their children with access to a moral community that helps to reinforce social control and deter children from engaging in delinquent activity (Johnson et al. 2000).

Results of this study also suggest that fathers may influence early childhood behavior indirectly by believing that religion is an important part of family life. Believing that religion is an important part of family life may lead urban fathers to place a higher value on family relationships (Wilcox 2002; Mahoney et al. 2003). Religious fathers may be more involved in family life and more considerate towards family members, which may increase social support and integration for young children and reduce the likelihood that they display problem behaviors. These fathers may be making the conscious decision to live out their religious beliefs and provide a positive influence on their children (Palkovitz 2002). As results from this study suggest, simply believing that religion is important does not appear to influence children's well-

being. Instead, religious fathers may improve their child's well-being by becoming active, involved fathers and setting a good example for their children (Palkovitz 2002).

In addition, fathers' religious attitudes appear to condition the influence of mothers' religious participation on early childhood behavior. Mother's religious participation is more likely to reduce problem behaviors among young children when also fathers reinforce and value this religious message. Children may be best able to benefit from the support and guidance that religious parents provide when they are receiving a consistent message from both parents.

Despite the numerous strengths in this study, there are also some limitations. One limitation is that the data used for this study are not generalizable to all fathers or families. The FFCW is an urban sample that includes an oversample of unwed and minority fathers. Furthermore, because this study is restricted to families in which fathers were interviewed at each wave of data collection, the sample is likely biased towards fathers who are more engaged in their family life, have higher SES, and are perhaps more religious than fathers who may have dropped out of the study.<sup>11</sup> Nevertheless, this longitudinal analysis provides an examination of how urban fathers' religiosity may influence young children, providing insight into a topic that has been understudied. Furthermore, the data focuses on families in which fathers are perhaps most likely to disengage from family life. This study suggests that religious institutions may help to promote positive outcomes for young children by providing a number of resources to these fathers, and researchers should continue to examine how various aspects of parental religiosity may influence early childhood behavior.

This study is also limited by the questions that are available. Ideally, it would be useful to analyze each measure of fathers' religiosity over time to see how changes or consistency in these responses may influence young children's development. Unfortunately, religious participation is

the only religion question that is asked of fathers in each wave. Religious affiliation is measured at two time points (baseline and three-year follow-up), and the other religious questions are only asked at the three-year follow-up. Thus, this study is designed to use as much of the data as possible while still allowing for a causal pathway between fathers' religiosity and children's behavior (by using wave three variables to predict child behavior at age five).

Finally, this study focuses primarily on the influence of fathers' religiosity on early child behavior. However, results from this study suggest that mothers' religiosity may also be important to consider. A full examination of the influence of mothers' religiosity on children is outside the scope of this study, but future research needs to consider how the larger religious family environment may influence early childhood behavior independently and in conjunction with other family characteristics.

Despite these limitations, this study contributes to the literature on family and religion by using longitudinal data to explore how urban fathers' religious beliefs and practices may influence early childhood behavior. This study highlights five trajectories of religious participation that fathers may experience after the birth of a new child. Furthermore, this study suggests that fathers' religious beliefs and practices may enhance family relationships and contribute to positive development among young children. Overall, results from this study provide further evidence that urban fathers may turn to religious institutions for support and guidance after having a child, and extends this knowledge by showing how fathers' religiosity may work in conjunction with other family characteristics to reduce problem behavior among young children. Future research should continue to explore how parental religion may shape children's lives from an early age and whether these experiences continue to shape outcomes as children transition into adolescence and later into adulthood.

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## NOTES

1. The full scale ranges from 0-45, but the measure used here is capped at 31 to reduce the problem of outliers.
2. The full scale ranges from 0-25, but the measure used here is capped at 18 to reduce the problem of outliers.
3. Using baseline indicators of religious affiliation and controlling for religious switching in later waves produces similar results as presented here.
4. Controlling for family transitions between the three and five-year follow-up surveys does not change the results of this study.
5. This category includes fathers who completed some type of trade school.
6. Variables for income, hours worked, and the religious attitude measures are missing in approximately 2% of cases. Mother's religious participation and the scale measures (father involvement and parental relationship quality) have a slightly higher number of missing values, ranging from 3 to 7 percent of cases. For the dependent variables, there are some cases (less than 4% of cases) in which one of the scale items are missing. These are included in the imputed models; sensitivity analyses suggest that there are no significant differences between the models presented and the models in which the imputed cases are dropped, and models using listwise deletion are similar to those presented here.
7. Other diagnostic tests suggest that this is a good-fitting model. For example, Nagin (2005) suggests that the average posterior probability (the average probability that each individual assigned to that group actually belong to the group based on their pattern of religious participation) for each group should be at least .70. The average posterior probabilities in this study are .92, .92, .81, .82, and .93.

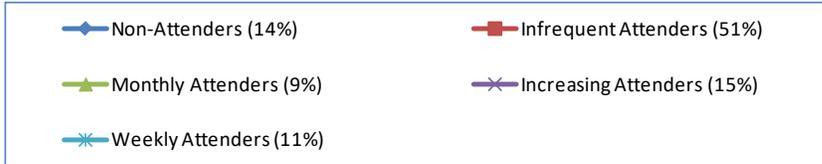
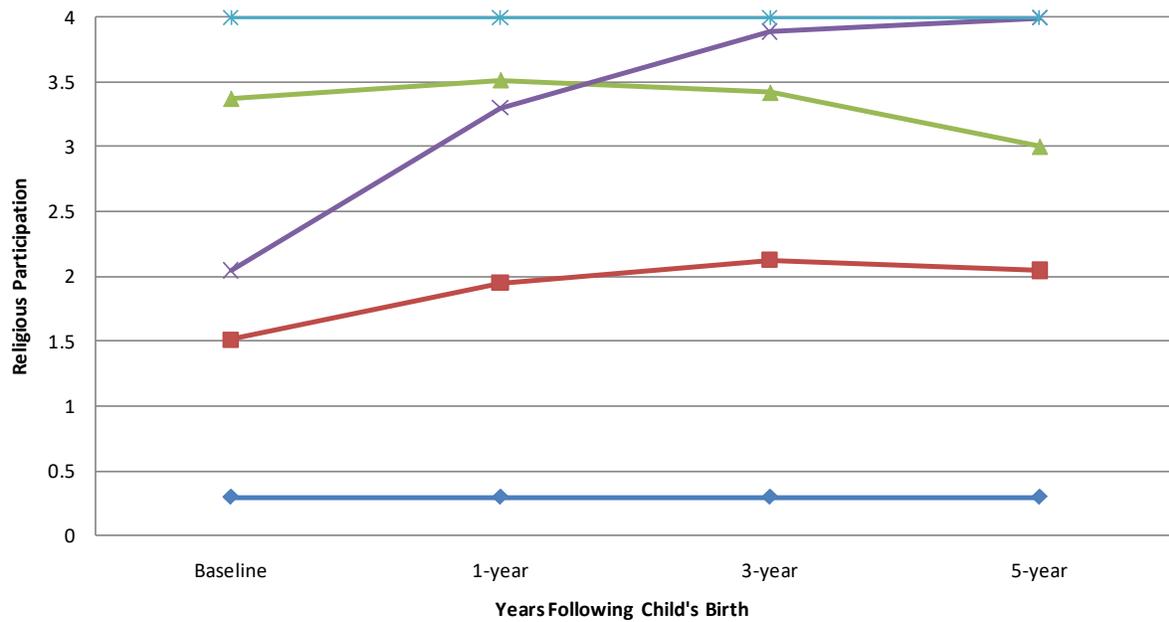
8. Supplementary trajectory models were examined to test whether there were differences between first-time fathers and fathers who already had children prior to the FFCW study. The shapes of the trajectories were almost identical for each group, although the percentage of fathers within each trajectory group varied between first-time fathers and fathers with other children.

9. Supplementary models using non-attenders as a reference group produced similar results as those presented.

10. Supplementary analyses suggest that multicollinearity is not a problem in any of the models.

11. Supplementary analyses suggest that the mean income in this sample is approximately \$5,000 higher than average income for all families at the three-year follow-up interview.

**Figure 1: Trajectories of Fathers' Religious Participation**



**Table 1. Mean Values of All Variables by Trajectory Group of Fathers' Religious Participation**

	Non- Attenders	Infrequent Attenders	Monthly Attenders	Increasing Attenders	Weekly Attenders
<b>Child Behavior</b>					
Externalizing Problem Behavior	13.20 <sup>ce</sup>	12.42 <sup>b</sup>	11.42 <sup>a</sup>	12.02	10.77 <sup>ab</sup>
Internalizing Problem Behavior	5.50 <sup>a</sup>	5.40 <sup>b</sup>	5.25	5.50	4.64 <sup>ab</sup>
<b>Father's Religious Characteristics</b>					
Evangelical Protestant	0.03 <sup>cde</sup>	0.06 <sup>e</sup>	0.08 <sup>ae</sup>	0.08 <sup>ae</sup>	0.16 <sup>abcd</sup>
Black Protestant	0.08 <sup>bcd</sup>	0.24 <sup>a</sup>	0.21 <sup>a</sup>	0.29 <sup>a</sup>	0.23 <sup>a</sup>
Mainline Protestant	0.01 <sup>b</sup>	0.05 <sup>a</sup>	0.04	0.03	0.03
Catholic	0.16 <sup>bcd</sup>	0.26 <sup>ac</sup>	0.39 <sup>abe</sup>	0.30 <sup>a</sup>	0.26 <sup>ac</sup>
Other Christian Affiliation	0.05 <sup>bcd</sup>	0.15 <sup>a</sup>	0.16 <sup>a</sup>	0.20 <sup>a</sup>	0.20 <sup>a</sup>
Non-Christian	0.04	0.04 <sup>b</sup>	0.05	0.05	0.09 <sup>b</sup>
Father Changed Religious Affiliation	0.39	0.37	0.35	0.33	0.31
Religious Salience	1.37 <sup>bcd</sup>	2.22 <sup>acde</sup>	2.64 <sup>abde</sup>	2.84 <sup>abc</sup>	2.86 <sup>abc</sup>
Theological Orthodoxy	1.49 <sup>bcd</sup>	2.20 <sup>acde</sup>	2.62 <sup>abe</sup>	2.69 <sup>ab</sup>	2.78 <sup>abc</sup>
<b>Moderating Variables</b>					
Father Involvement	4.36 <sup>a</sup>	4.31 <sup>b</sup>	4.45	4.48	4.46 <sup>ab</sup>
Parents' Relationship Quality	1.47 <sup>a</sup>	1.50 <sup>b</sup>	1.54 <sup>c</sup>	1.54 <sup>c</sup>	1.62 <sup>abcd</sup>
Married to Birth Mother (all waves)	0.21 <sup>ce</sup>	0.27 <sup>ce</sup>	0.40 <sup>abde</sup>	0.26 <sup>ce</sup>	0.63 <sup>abcd</sup>
Cohabiting with Birth Mother (all waves)	0.30 <sup>bcd</sup>	0.20 <sup>ae</sup>	0.16 <sup>ae</sup>	0.17 <sup>ae</sup>	0.06 <sup>abcd</sup>
Transition into Marital Relationship	0.13	0.11 <sup>d</sup>	0.11	0.19 <sup>be</sup>	0.11 <sup>d</sup>
Transition into Cohabiting Relationship	0.05	0.08 <sup>b</sup>	0.04	0.06	0.02 <sup>b</sup>
Transition out of Marital Relationship	0.03	0.02	0.01	0.01	0.02
Transition out of Cohabiting Relationship	0.25 <sup>a</sup>	0.25 <sup>b</sup>	0.18	0.25 <sup>c</sup>	0.15 <sup>abd</sup>
Mother's Religious Participation	1.70 <sup>bcd</sup>	2.46 <sup>acde</sup>	3.00 <sup>abe</sup>	3.21 <sup>abe</sup>	3.53 <sup>abcd</sup>
<b>Controls</b>					
Father's Age	30.39 <sup>ce</sup>	30.75 <sup>ce</sup>	32.81 <sup>abd</sup>	30.74 <sup>ce</sup>	34.13 <sup>ab</sup>
Child is Male	0.53 <sup>a</sup>	0.51	0.57 <sup>b</sup>	0.48	0.43 <sup>ac</sup>
Black	0.39 <sup>bd</sup>	0.51 <sup>ac</sup>	0.39 <sup>bd</sup>	0.53 <sup>ac</sup>	0.46
Latino	0.17 <sup>cd</sup>	0.21 <sup>cd</sup>	0.34 <sup>abe</sup>	0.31 <sup>abe</sup>	0.15 <sup>cd</sup>
Other Race	0.06 <sup>d</sup>	0.04	0.04	0.02 <sup>a</sup>	0.04
High School Education	0.32 <sup>ce</sup>	0.31 <sup>ce</sup>	0.21 <sup>abd</sup>	0.33 <sup>ce</sup>	0.22 <sup>abd</sup>
Some College Education	0.25 <sup>c</sup>	0.30	0.35 <sup>a</sup>	0.28	0.33
College Degree	0.12 <sup>a</sup>	0.13 <sup>ce</sup>	0.19 <sup>bde</sup>	0.12 <sup>ce</sup>	0.30 <sup>abcd</sup>
Household Income	3.36 <sup>e</sup>	3.55 <sup>e</sup>	3.59 <sup>e</sup>	3.34 <sup>e</sup>	3.92 <sup>abcd</sup>
First-time Fatherhood	0.50 <sup>ce</sup>	0.42	0.35 <sup>a</sup>	0.41	0.38 <sup>a</sup>
Number of Additional Children	1.46 <sup>de</sup>	1.61	1.64	1.75 <sup>a</sup>	1.82 <sup>a</sup>
Father's Hours Worked	32.13 <sup>cde</sup>	34.87	37.29 <sup>a</sup>	36.33 <sup>a</sup>	36.80 <sup>a</sup>
N	202	770	136	224	171

N = 1503

Note: Two-tailed t-tests used to determine differences between group means.

<sup>a</sup> = significantly different from Non-Attenders ( $p < .05$ ); <sup>b</sup> = significantly different from Infrequent Attenders ( $p < .05$ ); <sup>c</sup> = significantly different from Monthly Attenders ( $p < .05$ ); <sup>d</sup> = significantly different from Increasing Attenders ( $p < .05$ ); <sup>e</sup> = significantly different from Weekly Attenders ( $p < .05$ )

**Table 2. Results from Regression Models Predicting Externalizing Problem Behavior among Children at Age Five**

	1	2	3
<b>Father's Religious Characteristics</b>			
<i>Trajectory of Religious Participation</i>			
Non-Attendees	2.30 (0.94) *	0.24 (0.86)	0.17 (0.86)
Infrequent Attendees	1.70 (0.73) *	0.14 (0.63)	0.02 (0.64)
Monthly Attendees	0.69 (0.84)	-0.52 (0.78)	-0.63 (0.78)
Increasing Attendees	1.00 (0.79)	-0.17 (0.70)	-0.26 (0.70)
<i>Religious Affiliation</i>			
Evangelical Protestant	-1.75 (0.88) *	-0.56 (0.86)	-0.47 (0.86)
Black Protestant	-1.49 (0.65) *	-1.43 (0.65) *	-1.38 (0.65) *
Mainline Protestant	-1.40 (1.10)	0.30 (1.05)	0.40 (1.05)
Catholic	-1.71 (0.61) **	-1.12 (0.62)	-1.06 (0.62)
Other Christian Affiliation	-0.90 (0.68)	-0.76 (0.65)	-0.72 (0.65)
Non-Christian	-1.03 (0.98)	-0.36 (0.90)	-0.27 (0.90)
Change in Religious Affiliation	-0.04 (0.41)	-0.12 (0.39)	-0.14 (0.39)
<i>Religious Attitudes</i>			
Religious Saliency	0.24 (0.28)	0.26 (0.25)	1.71 (0.72) *
Theological Orthodoxy	0.27 (0.26)	-0.04 (0.24)	-0.04 (0.24)
<b>Moderating Variables</b>			
Father Involvement		0.06 (0.11)	0.07 (0.11)
Parents' Relationship Quality		-2.84 (0.54) ***	-0.61 (1.17)
Married to Birth Mother (all waves)		-0.58 (0.69)	-0.60 (0.69)
Cohabiting with Birth Mother (all waves)		-0.01 (0.66)	-0.02 (0.65)
Transition into Marital Relationship		0.42 (0.70)	0.41 (0.70)
Transition into Cohabiting Relationship		0.11 (0.85)	0.11 (0.85)
Transition out of Marital Relationship		-3.58 (1.24) **	-3.50 (1.24) **
Transition out of Cohabiting Relationship		-0.74 (0.57)	-0.74 (0.58)
Mother's Religious Participation		-0.33 (0.18)	-0.32 (0.18)
<b>Controls</b>			
Father's Age		-0.04 (0.03)	-0.04 (0.03)
Child is Male		0.79 (0.34) *	0.80 (0.34) *
Black		-0.03 (0.59)	-0.03 (0.59)
Latino		0.19 (0.58)	0.20 (0.58)
Other Race		-0.42 (0.98)	-0.40 (0.98)
High School Education		-0.73 (0.48)	-0.78 (0.48)
Some College Education		-1.11 (0.51) *	-1.14 (0.51) *
College Degree		-1.86 (0.71) **	-1.91 (0.71) **
Household Income		-0.37 (0.15) *	-0.37 (0.15) *
First-time Fatherhood		-0.98 (0.43) *	-1.00 (0.43) *
Number of Additional Children		0.19 (0.15)	0.17 (0.15)
Hours Worked		-0.01 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)
<b>Interactions</b>			
Religious Saliency x Relationship Quality			-0.99 (0.46) *
R <sup>2</sup>	0.02	0.10	0.10

\*p < .05; \*\*p < .01; \*\*\* p < .001

N = 1503

Note: Unstandardized regression coefficients are presented (standard errors in parentheses).

**Table 3. Results from Regression Models Predicting Internalizing Problem Behavior among Children at Age Five**

	1	2	3
<b>Father's Religious Characteristics</b>			
<i>Trajectory of Religious Participation</i>			
Non-Attendees	0.93 (0.52)	-0.68 (0.89)	-0.81 (0.59)
Infrequent Attendees	0.90 (0.37) *	-0.16 (0.43)	-0.39 (0.44)
Monthly Attendees	0.60 (0.49)	-0.37 (0.53)	-0.49 (0.53)
Increasing Attendees	0.98 (0.43) *	0.05 (0.47)	-0.06 (0.48)
<i>Religious Affiliation</i>			
Evangelical Protestant	0.05 (0.50)	0.48 (0.58)	0.48 (0.58)
Black Protestant	-0.41 (0.39)	-0.11 (0.44)	-0.10 (0.44)
Mainline Protestant	-0.88 (0.63)	0.05 (0.69)	-0.01 (0.69)
Catholic	0.10 (0.37)	-0.03 (0.41)	-0.05 (0.41)
Other Christian Affiliation	-0.34 (0.41)	-0.18 (0.44)	-0.20 (0.44)
Non-Christian	0.12 (0.58)	0.22 (0.60)	0.17 (0.60)
Change in Religious Affiliation	0.10 (0.24)	0.15 (0.26)	0.16 (0.26)
<i>Religious Attitudes</i>			
Religious Saliency	-0.21 (0.16)	-0.13 (0.17)	0.27 (0.25)
Theological Orthodoxy	0.30 (0.15) *	0.03 (0.17)	0.03 (0.17)
<b>Moderating Variables</b>			
Father Involvement		0.05 (0.08)	0.06 (0.08)
Parents' Relationship Quality		-1.66 (0.37) ***	-1.65 (0.38) ***
Married to Birth Mother (all waves)		-0.28 (0.48)	-0.24 (0.48)
Cohabiting with Birth Mother (all waves)		0.76 (0.45)	0.74 (0.45)
Transition into Marital Relationship		1.00 (0.47) *	1.03 (0.47) *
Transition into Cohabiting Relationship		0.41 (0.58)	0.40 (0.58)
Transition out of Marital Relationship		-1.95 (0.85) *	-1.91 (0.85) *
Transition out of Cohabiting Relationship		-0.43 (0.39)	-0.43 (0.39)
Mother's Religious Participation		-0.25 (0.12) *	0.21 (0.24)
<b>Controls</b>			
Father's Age		0.00 (0.02)	0.00 (0.02)
Child is Male		0.18 (0.23)	0.20 (0.23)
Black		0.05 (0.40)	0.00 (0.40)
Latino		1.27 (0.39) ***	1.23 (0.39) ***
Other Race		0.78 (0.68)	0.76 (0.68)
High School Education		-0.59 (0.32)	-0.57 (0.32)
Some College Education		-0.64 (0.34)	-0.61 (0.34)
College Degree		-0.44 (0.48)	-0.42 (0.47)
Household Income		-0.20 (0.10) *	-0.20 (0.10) *
First-time Fatherhood		-0.55 (0.28)	-0.53 (0.28)
Number of Additional Children		-0.01 (0.10)	-0.01 (0.10)
Hours Worked		-0.01 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)
<b>Interactions</b>			
Religious Saliency x Mother's Religious Participation			-0.21 (0.10) *
R <sup>2</sup>	0.01	0.08	0.08

\*p < .05; \*\*p < .01; \*\*\* p < .001

N = 1503

Note: Unstandardized regression coefficients are presented (standard errors in parentheses).