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Religious Orientation
Among Mormons

Michael E. Nielsen

Abstract

Richard Poll's Iron Rod-Liahona view of LDS religious orientation is addressed in a study of Utah and Illinois Mormons. Measures are developed, and discrete and continuous scaling is examined. Of the demographic variables considered, only age influenced participants' Iron Rod-Liahona score. The measures are compared to the views of religious orientation held by Allport and Batson. Significant correlations exist between the Iron Rod-Liahona orientations and most of the traditionally used measures, with Allport's Extrinsic orientation being an exception.

Using terms from the Book of Mormon, Richard Poll (1967, 1983) characterizes active and faithful members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS or "Mormon") as having either an Iron Rod or a Liahona approach to their religion. According to Poll, the Iron Rod saint considers the road to Eternal Life to be unambiguous; as in Lehi's dream of the iron rod, "the way was not easy, but it was clear" (Poll, 1967, p. 108). The Liahona saint has a different perspective. The Liahona described in the Book of Mormon "was a reminder of . . . temporal and eternal goals, but it was no infallible delineator of [the] course" (Poll, 1967, 108). For the Liahona saint, guidance depends on a variety of factors, such as one's worthiness to obtain revelation,
paralleling the experiences of Lehi and his followers in the *Book of Mormon*.

In the two decades since its inception, the Iron Rod–Liahona classification scheme has interested many Latter-day Saints. The concept was even considered important enough to deserve mention in the church's general conference (Lee, 1971, in Poll, 1983). The typology has continued to circulate among members of the LDS church; four republications of Poll's first (1967) article, and frequent mention of the idea in other LDS writings, indicate the continuing interest in Iron Rod and Liahona Mormons.

In spite of the interest that Poll's views have generated, empirical work on the topic is quite limited. Nielsen (1989) has examined the possibility of considering both Mormons and non-Mormons as using an Iron Rod or a Liahona approach to their religion. That study supported the distinction between the Iron Rod and Liahona religious orientations; a person may have either an Iron Rod or a Liahona approach toward religion, but is unlikely to strongly endorse both types of items. In addition, among Mormons, but not among non-Mormons, Liahona scale scores were related to another measure of religious orientation, Batson's Quest factor, often used in social psychological studies of religion.

While Nielsen (1989) included members of various denominations, the present research focuses solely on Mormons. More specifically, attention is directed toward the relationship between Iron Rod and Liahona religiousness. Poll considers the two to be discrete categories, while other theorists have indicated that the Iron Rod and Liahona may represent ends of the same continuum (Cornwall, 1988; Jacob, 1989). The purpose of this study is to examine Iron Rod and Liahona religious orientations among LDS church members using both discrete and continuous approaches. A second purpose is to consider how the constructs relate to traditional measure of religious orientation: Allport's Intrinsic-Extrinsic, and Batson's Means-End-Quest, religious orientations. The following is a brief discussion of these issues.
Discrete vs. Continuous Scaling

As stated in his 1967 paper, Poll believes that the Iron Rod and Liahona describe “two distinct types of active and dedicated Latter-day Saints” (p. 107). Later, however, Poll notes that there are “people who object to being pigeonholed, ... [who prefer] a continuum along which individuals may be categorized in terms of their interpretation and application of the gospel rather than being placed in a discrete category.” (Poll, 1983, p. 71). Indeed, in his 1983 paper, Poll describes three types of responses: those from “Liahonas,” those from “Iron Rods,” and from those “who object to being pigeonholed,” (p. 71) and who apparently recognize benefits in both approaches. Often, writers commenting on the typology advocate a continuum (e.g., Cornwall, 1988; Jacob, 1989). Clearly, many people view the Iron Rod–Liahona relationship as not simply an “either/or” relationship, but one in which there are varying degrees, with a gray area between the poles.

Traditional Measures

Social-psychological studies of religious orientation have emphasized Allport’s Intrinsic-Extrinsic view (Allport, 1950; Allport & Ross, 1967). Briefly stated, Intrinsic religiousness is religion that structures and endows meaning to all aspects of an individual’s life. In contrast, Extrinsic religiousness is used to fill needs of comfort and social convention. Well over 100 studies have compared the relationship between Intrinsic and Extrinsic religiousness, or how Intrinsic-Extrinsic religiousness may relate to other personality and behavioral variables (Donahue, 1985a, 1985b).

Batson (Batson & Raynor-Prince, 1983; Batson & Ventis, 1982) has modified the Intrinsic-Extrinsic typology by including a third orientation, Quest, on grounds that the concepts underlying Allport’s theory of mature religiousness are not completely realized in Allport’s scales. The Quest approach to religion emphasizes “an open, responsive dialogue with existential questions raised by the contradictions and tragedies of life” (Batson & Ventis, 1982, 152–54).
To this end, Batson adds four scales to Allport's Intrinsic and Extrinsic scales; these are the Internal, External, Orthodoxy, and Interactional scales. Briefly stated, the Internal scale is intended to measure a person's internal need for religious strength and direction. The External scale measures the influence of external, social factors on an individual's religious orientation. The Orthodoxy scale is a measure of Christian (Protestant) orthodoxy. Finally, the Interactional scale is intended to measure the Quest orientation described above. Factor analytic studies show that the Interactional scale defines the Quest orientation. The other scales most frequently load with the Intrinsic scale to form the End factor, with Allport's Extrinsic scale most strongly defining the Means factor.

In summary, the purpose of the present study is two-fold. First, Iron Rod and Liahona religious orientations among LDS church members will be examined using both discrete and continuous methods. Secondly, the relationship of Iron Rod and Liahona orientations to the approaches commonly applied in current social-psychological research will be considered.

Methods Used

Subjects

The 79 adult Latter-day Saints who participated in this study were residents of Utah (45) and Illinois (34). Participants were primarily from two wards in the Salt Lake Valley and one ward in Illinois; a second ward provided four of the Illinois participants. In six instances, a participant had recently (within five years) moved from Utah to Illinois. When it was known that a participant spent most of his or her life in Utah, but was then living in Illinois, that person was classified as a Utahn. Three additional participants did not complete all items on the questionnaire, and were excluded from the analyses.

Materials

Forty-five questionnaire items (Appendix A) were developed from statements in Poll's writings. Subjects also completed Allport's Intrinsic and Extrinsic scales, and Batson's Internal, External, Interactional, and Orthodoxy scales.
Method

Participants were informed that the questionnaire was made up of statements about religious beliefs, such as whether or not prayers are answered. They also were informed that there was no consensus regarding how the items should be answered, and that all responses would be confidential. All participants signed an informed consent statement. Participants first answered items regarding demographic variables, including age, state of residence, educational level, and gender, as well as indicating their level of interest and participation in religious activities. Participants then rated the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with each questionnaire item on a scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 9 (strongly agree), the format used by Batson and his colleagues.

Results

Responses to the questionnaire items were factor analyzed (varimax rotation). The first set of items identified by the factor analysis corresponds to the Iron Rod, eigenvalue = 4.35, alpha = .819. The items in this set are listed below. Preceding each item is the number indicated its relative position in Appendix A; following each item, in parentheses, is the loading of the item on the factor.

6. I find answers to my questions about the gospel through the scriptures, church leaders, and/or Holy Spirit. (.87)
7. The scriptures give definitive answers to important questions about today’s world. (.77)
4. On any question, the will of God may be obtained through the scriptures, church leaders, and/or Holy Spirit. (.77)
5. I try to obey a commandment even if I don’t fully understand it. (.75)
42. A true answer to every gospel-related question is available to me today through the scriptures, the church leaders, and/or the Holy Spirit. (.73)
36. My church leaders agree on doctrinal matters. (.65)
The second set of items identified by the factor analysis corresponds to Poll's Liahona, eigenvalue = 2.01, alpha = .719. The items in this set are listed below.

16. I frequently ponder questions that seem to have no answer. (.80)
23. I am intrigued by unanswered questions. (.74)
21. I would describe myself as being preoccupied with questions and skeptical of answers. (.74)
15. I wonder why, by a prayer of faith, one person will find a lost item, and in spite of a similar prayer, another will lose his eyesight. (.69)
44. I challenge the answers given to questions. (.65)

Next, participants' ratings of the Iron Rod and Liahona sets of items were averaged, giving each person a rating on the Iron Rod (IR) and on the Liahona (L) scales. Figure 1 shows frequency distributions of the Iron Rod (M = 7.36, S.D. = 1.39) and Liahona (M = 3.91, S.D. = 1.49) scales, respectively.

![Figure 1](image-url)  
**Figure 1**—Frequency distribution of subjects' mean Iron Rod (IR) and Liahona (L) scale scores.
Discrete Scaling

For analyses using the discrete categories view of Iron Rod and Liahona religious orientation, average item responses for each set were dichotomized into low (5.0 or less) vs. high (greater than 5.0) categories. Using this classification system, participants in this study include the combinations of high-low Iron Rod and Liahona religiousness shown in Table 1.

Table 1
High vs. Low Iron Rod and Liahona Orientations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Iron Rod</th>
<th>Low</th>
<th>High</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liahona</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Number of participants in each cell, using a dichotomous view of Iron Rod and Liahona religious orientation.

As Table 1 indicates, the majority of participants scored higher than the midpoint on the Iron Rod scale, and lower than the midpoint on the Liahona scale. Twenty participants are classified as either low or high on both scales.

To examine the relationship between the two scales and their items, Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was performed on each item with the discrete Iron Rod and Liahona classifications as between subjects factors. For each Iron Rod scale item, a significant main effect was found for the Iron Rod factor, no effect for the Liahona factor, and no significant interaction effect was found. Likewise, for each Liahona scale item, a significant main effect for Liahona score was found, and was most often unaccompanied by effects for either the Iron Rod factor or interaction term. There are two exceptions to this pattern. The first is item 21, which also showed
an effect for Iron Rod classification, F(1,75) = 6.49, p < .02. The second exception to the general pattern is item 23 which, in addition to a main effect for Liahona score, showed a significant interaction, F(1,75) = 4.49, p < .05. In this interaction, low Iron Rod/high Liahona persons agree more strongly, M = 8.33, with this item than do other participants, M = 4.17. However, this interaction must be regarded with a measure of caution, considering the very uneven cell sizes discussed above. Taken as a whole, these analyses indicate the Iron Rod and Liahona scores are not significantly predictive of one another.

Finally, an ANOVA was used to test for main effects of age, education, gender, Utah/Illinois residence, interest in religion, and participation in religious activities. None of these measures significantly influenced either Iron Rod or Liahona standing.

Continuous Scaling

The empirical nature of the Iron Rod–Liahona relationship can be demonstrated by subtracting each participant's Liahona average score from the Iron Rod average score. If participants generally view the Iron Rod–Liahona (IR-L) distinction as discrete, the scores that result will be concentrated toward the ends of the IR-L scale in a bimodal distribution. On the other hand, if scores are concentrated more toward the center of the scale, then this suggests that people tend to be partly Iron Rod and partly Liahona in their thinking. Figure 2 illustrates the resulting IR-L frequency distribution, scores for which range from -3.37 to 8.0, M = 3.45, SD = 2.42, alpha = .865. The theoretical range of the scale is -8.00 to 8.00, with a midpoint of 0.00. As Figure 2 shows, the distribution more closely resembles a normal curve than it does a bimodal curve; the Martinez & Iglewicz test confirmed the normality of the distribution.

The IR-L scores were used in tests for demographic differences. An ANOVA indicated a significant effect for participants age, F = 4.16, p < .01). A Fisher LSD test indicates that participants ages 26–35 score lower on the IR-L scale (M = 2.13) than other participants (M = 3.75). No other significant effects were found.
What other beliefs might be associated with an emphasis in one concept rather than the other? Some insight to this question is gained by examining the relationship of the Iron Rod and Liahona to the other items on the questionnaire. The item-total correlations are shown in Table 2. As Table 2 indicates, most of the questionnaire statements are significantly correlated with the Iron Rod, Liahona, and/or IR-L scales.

### Table 2

Correlations of Items with Iron Rod, Liahona, and IR-L Scales

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Iron Rod</th>
<th>Liahona</th>
<th>IR-L</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>.439**</td>
<td>-.382*</td>
<td>.500**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>-.225*</td>
<td>.298*</td>
<td>-.321*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>-.309*</td>
<td>.359*</td>
<td>-.409*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>.760**</td>
<td>-.195</td>
<td>.567**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>.730**</td>
<td>-.216</td>
<td>.563**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>.885**</td>
<td>-.401*</td>
<td>.772**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>.738**</td>
<td>-.266*</td>
<td>.599**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>.472**</td>
<td>-.179</td>
<td>.389*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>.644**</td>
<td>-.101</td>
<td>.439**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>.367*</td>
<td>-.005</td>
<td>.217</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>-.255*</td>
<td>.219</td>
<td>-.288*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>.276*</td>
<td>-.181</td>
<td>.277*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>-.175</td>
<td>.307*</td>
<td>-.298*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>-.457**</td>
<td>.439**</td>
<td>-.546**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Table 2 (Cont.)
Correlations of Items with Iron Rod, Liahona, and IR-L Scales**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Iron Rod</th>
<th>Liahona</th>
<th>IR-L</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>-.317*</td>
<td>.749**</td>
<td>-.662**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>-.255*</td>
<td>.810**</td>
<td>-.665**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>-.567**</td>
<td>.301*</td>
<td>-.523**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td>-.346*</td>
<td>.354*</td>
<td>-.427**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19.</td>
<td>.471**</td>
<td>-.383*</td>
<td>.520**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.</td>
<td>-.429**</td>
<td>.402*</td>
<td>-.507**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21.</td>
<td>-.322*</td>
<td>.747**</td>
<td>-.664**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22.</td>
<td>-.549**</td>
<td>.362*</td>
<td>-.551**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23.</td>
<td>-.180</td>
<td>.727**</td>
<td>-.568**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24.</td>
<td>-.550**</td>
<td>-.347*</td>
<td>.542**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25.</td>
<td>.369*</td>
<td>-.211</td>
<td>.350*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26.</td>
<td>.187</td>
<td>.208</td>
<td>-.023</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27.</td>
<td>.557**</td>
<td>-.221</td>
<td>.466**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28.</td>
<td>-.479**</td>
<td>.439**</td>
<td>-.559**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29.</td>
<td>-.216</td>
<td>.234*</td>
<td>-.275*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30.</td>
<td>-.540**</td>
<td>-.036</td>
<td>.338*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31.</td>
<td>.247*</td>
<td>-.054</td>
<td>.179</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32.</td>
<td>-.051</td>
<td>.219</td>
<td>-.169</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33.</td>
<td>-.355*</td>
<td>.345*</td>
<td>-.427**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34.</td>
<td>.065</td>
<td>.163</td>
<td>-.066</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35.</td>
<td>.087</td>
<td>-.051</td>
<td>.084</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36.</td>
<td>.702**</td>
<td>-.261*</td>
<td>.576**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37.</td>
<td>-.585**</td>
<td>.375*</td>
<td>-.579**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38.</td>
<td>.093</td>
<td>-.165</td>
<td>.160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39.</td>
<td>-.397*</td>
<td>.467**</td>
<td>-.528**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40.</td>
<td>-.057</td>
<td>.142</td>
<td>-.124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41.</td>
<td>.520**</td>
<td>-.234*</td>
<td>.452**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42.</td>
<td>.778**</td>
<td>-.254*</td>
<td>.615**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43.</td>
<td>.270*</td>
<td>-.134</td>
<td>.243*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44.</td>
<td>-.186</td>
<td>.656**</td>
<td>-.527**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45.</td>
<td>.292*</td>
<td>-.140</td>
<td>.260*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* \( p < .05 \) ** \( p < .0001 \) df=(79)

**Traditional Measures**

Using the discrete Iron Rod and Liahona scores as between subjects factors, ANOVAs were performed on responses to the Intrinsic, Extrinsic, Internal, External, Interactional, and Orthodoxy scales. No significant effects for Iron Rod or Liahona scores were found on the Extrinsic, External, or Interactional scales.

The remaining three scales, Internal, Intrinsic, and Orthodoxy, were influenced similarly by Iron Rod main effects. Iron Rod standing affected Internal scores, \( F(1,75) = 6.86, p < .05 \). High
Iron Rod scores were accompanied by high Internal scores ($M = 5.75$), while low Iron Rod scores were associated with lower Internal scores ($M = 4.98$). The same pattern occurred with Intrinsic scores, $F(1,75) = 6.20$, $p < .05$. High Iron Rod scores were accompanied by high Intrinsic scores ($M = 7.38$), while low Iron Rod scores were predictive of lower Internal scores ($M = 6.37$). Finally, in spite of the Orthodoxy scale containing items that do not concur with LDS doctrine, high IR scores were accompanied by higher Orthodoxy means ($M = 7.80$) than were low IR scores ($6.26$). There were no significant Liahona or interaction effects in these analyses.

Correlations of the Iron Rod, Liahona, and IR-L scales with the scales developed by Allport and Batson are presented in Table 3. Iron Rod scores significantly predict External, Orthodoxy, Intrinsic, and Internal scale scores. Liahona standing is significantly related to Interactional, External, Orthodoxy, and Intrinsic scores; the same pattern is present in IR-L scores, although the direction of the correlations is necessarily reversed. Extrinsic religiousness is not significantly related to Iron Rod, Liahona, or IR-L scale scores.

Table 3
Correlations of Iron Rod, Liahona, and IR-L with Traditional Measures of Religious Orientation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Iron Rod</th>
<th>Liahona</th>
<th>IR-L</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intrinsic</td>
<td>.305*</td>
<td>-.265*</td>
<td>.368*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extrinsic</td>
<td>-.201</td>
<td>.074</td>
<td>-.178</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal</td>
<td>.246*</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>.159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External</td>
<td>.465**</td>
<td>-.338*</td>
<td>.519**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interactional</td>
<td>-.221</td>
<td>.592**</td>
<td>-.526**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orthodoxy</td>
<td>.311*</td>
<td>-.290*</td>
<td>.384*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$df = 79$  
* $p < .05$  
** $p < .0001$
Discussion

Poll's Iron Rod–Liahona typology of church-going Latter-day Saints may be viewed in two ways. Poll originally conceived of it as a dichotomous relationship; others have advocated a continuum on which there may be a mixture of both characteristics present in an individual. While both approaches to the typology have some merit, a continuum may present researchers and practitioners with a more detailed picture of the dynamics present in a given person.

Many of the characteristics which Poll proposed to be typical of Iron Rod and Liahona church members are indeed significantly correlated with the Iron Rod and Liahona scales. Two of these correlations, in particular, deserve comment. Recently, a number of writers have been interested in a relationship between Mormonism and literalism (Crapo, 1987; Cummings, 1982; Hansen, 1981; Heeren, Lindsey, & Mason, 1984). The correlations of statements 12 and 31 with the Iron Rod scale show that an admitted tendency toward literalism in understanding the scriptures is moderately related to one's Iron Rod score. Liahona scores, however, are not significantly correlated with a literalistic interpretation of scripture.

The Iron Rod and Liahona are related to measures of religious orientation commonly used by social psychologists. In particular, the Iron Rod is positively related to measures of an intrinsic orientation toward religion—religion viewed as an end itself, and not as a means to some other goal. The Liahona is related strongly to the Interactional scale, and negatively related to the External, Orthodoxy, and Intrinsic scales. It is interesting to note that neither of Poll's types is significantly related to the Extrinsic orientation, that is, to religion used as a means to achieve some other goal.

This study seems to demonstrate applications of the Ninth Article of Faith, "We believe all that God has revealed, all that He does now reveal, and we believe that He will yet reveal many great and important things pertaining to the Kingdom of God." The LDS church membership includes some who emphasize the revelations that have already been received and the guidance that is provided by them. Others place greater weight on the potential in the LDS church to gain answers to their (as yet) unanswered
questions. Between these two poles are many who try to strike a balance between the revelations received and the revelations anticipated. As letters to the editor of *Dialogue* and Poll (1983) demonstrate, people see good, desirable characteristics associated with both the Iron Rod and Liahona approaches.

This is only a first step in understanding the concept of Iron Rod–Liahona saints. The following are a few possibilities for future research:

The processes by which one becomes more or less an Iron Rod or Liahona saint are not addressed by this work, but deserve attention. Interesting research could also be conducted regarding those people who agree with both Iron Rod and Liahona items. Do these people experience a conflict between the two views?

A variation of the Iron Rod–Liahona typology has been proposed by Jacob (1989). In addition to an Iron Rod–Liahona continuum, Jacob theorizes that a "charismatic" dimension, possibly orthogonal to the IR-L continuum, would enhance descriptions of Latter-day Saints. Jacob considers the Charismatic saint to be one who emphasizes a personal relationship with Christ and God. Furthermore, Jacob asserts that social and economic class would affect the relationship between the IR-L and Charismatic views. Research should be conducted to examine these possibilities.

A pragmatic vein of research might take a cue from Batson, who has examined behavioral implications of religious orientation. For instance, he and his colleagues have considered whether religiousness affects prejudice (Batson, Naifeh, & Pate, 1978), and helping another person in distress (Batson & Gray, 1981). Research along these lines could determine whether the different beliefs carry important behavioral consequences.

Finally, in this study, a conscious effort has been made to be faithful to Poll's original wording (perhaps, at times, to the detriment of item clarity). This has been done because the essence of what it means to be an Iron Rod or a Liahona saint may have changed in the 22 years since Poll's first article. For instance, the term "Iron Rod" is sometimes transformed to "Iron Rodder," with a clearly derogatory connotation; an example of this is Bagley's (1986) cartoon of an "Iron Rodder" grasping to a rod seemingly
tied in knots. Future research could consider whether the evaluative meaning of the terms has actually changed since Poll first proposed them as labels.

Michael E. Nielsen is with the Department of Psychology, Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, Illinois. He acknowledges the assistance of Liz Francis, Joe Hoeflich, Curt Lang, Karen Lang, Armand Mauss, Darlene Nehring, Walter Nehring, Connie Nielsen, Mark Nielsen, Sheila Nielsen, Richard Poll, Donald Smith, and particularly, Dr. Jim Fultz, under whose supervision this study was conducted.

References


Appendix A

1. Religion is a source of answers more than a source of questions.
2. An unquestioning attitude in gospel-related matters is a sign of a closed mind.
3. I am more likely to "prove all things" than to rely on faith.
4. On any question, the will of God may be obtained through the scriptures, church leaders, and/or Holy Spirit.
5. I try to obey a commandment even if I don't fully understand it.
6. I find answers to my questions about the gospel through the scriptures, church leaders, and/or Holy Spirit.
7. The scriptures given definitive answers to important questions about today's world.
8. Prayers are always answered.
9. God is intimately concerned with our daily lives.
10. God knows the solutions to all problems, but man's stubbornness prevents access to this knowledge.
11. No human is capable of transmitting the word of God so clearly that it can be understood by all people.
12. I accept the literal translation of the scriptures.
13. I would prefer to study than to rely on faith.
14. The church leaders are special witnesses of God, but leave many important questions uncertainly answered.
15. I wonder why, by a prayer of faith, one person will find a lost item, and in spite of a similar prayer, another will lose his eyesight.
16. I frequently ponder questions that seem to have no answer.
17. God is not intensely involved in our daily affairs.
18. Many people tend to develop answers where none exist.
19. I find more comfort in knowing that the church rests on a solid foundation of revealed truth than I do in the fact that God has not revealed the answer to every question.

20. The scriptures are a source of inspiration, but leave many questions unanswered.

21. I would describe myself as being preoccupied with questions and skeptical of answers.

22. Miracles are actually a matter of coincidence.

23. I am intrigued by unanswered questions.

24. I read the scriptures daily.

25. After death, previously unanswered questions will be answered.

26. The conflict between good and evil is due to mankind's nature.

27. Obeying God's will is easier for me if I make guidelines for myself to follow daily.

28. A true answer to every gospel-related question is not available to me today through the scriptures, church leaders, and/or Holy Spirit.

29. I try to obey a religious guideline only if I personally feel it to be true.

30. Criticism of church policies or programs can be called "evil-speaking of the Lord's anointed."

31. The scriptures should be interpreted literally.

32. The gospel is basically incompatible with science.

33. My occupation raises questions that challenge my beliefs.

34. A questioning attitude in gospel-related matters is a sign that one's faith must be strengthened.

35. I have suffered an emotional trauma or heartache at some point in my life.

36. My church leaders agree on doctrinal matters.

37. I have concealed doubts about my religion.

38. The conflict between good and evil is eternal.

39. Truth is elusive, and all answers to questions are subject to scrutiny.

40. I have read literature about my religion that did not present it in a favorable light.

41. God will never allow my church leaders to lead the membership astray.

42. A true answer to every gospel-related question is available to me today through the scriptures, church leaders, and/or the Holy Spirit.

43. The study of religion and/or religious history should emphasize church-approved sources and topics.

44. I challenge the answers for questions.

45. The answers to presently unanswered questions will be revealed.