AMERICAN MESSIANIC JEWISH IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT:

A GROUNDED THEORY STUDY

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ABSTRACT

Though the study of intersectionality has increased in the field of psychology over the past 15 years, the intersection of religious and ethnic identities has received little empirical attention. This grounded theory study explored the religious and ethnic intersectionality experiences of Messianic Jews. Messianic Jews are people who are ethnically Jewish, believe Yeshua (Jesus' name in Hebrew) is the Messiah of Israel and the Son of God, and consider themselves to be living within the framework of the Torah (Kollontai, 2004). A collection of 19 American Messianic Jewish autobiographical stories and the transcripts from eight semi-structured interviews with American Messianic Jewish adults were analyzed using grounded theory qualitative methods. The resulting theory proposes that Messianic Jews construct and maintain their identity through (a) meaningful experiences that support and validate their identity, (b) meaningful relationships that give a sense of group identity and belonging, and (c) meaningful reasons that give logical, theological, and historical justification for their identity. This

study also found that Messianic Jews can struggle in these three areas when there is a

lack of support or outright rejection of their identity.

APPROVAL PAGE

The faculty listed below, appointed by the Dean of the School of Education, have

examined a dissertation titled "American Messianic Jewish Identity Development: A

Grounded Theory Study," presented by William Matthew Anderson, candidate for the

Doctor of Philosophy degree, and certify that in their opinion it is worthy of acceptance.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

There has been increased interest in the study of intersectionality in psychology in the past 15 years. Intersectionality is the overarching title for analytic theories that explore the impact multiple social group identities have on individuals, relationships, and systems and how these social categories depend on each other for meaning (Choo & Ferree, 2010). Intersectionality was first developed by feminist and critical race theorists and has largely focused on the intersection of race, ethnicity, class, and gender (Cole, 2009). There has been a debate among intersectionality theorists on whether these three categories are sufficient, and some have argued that sexualities, age, nationality, and religion should also be studied within intersectionality research (Choo & Ferree, 2010). One of the intersectional identity experiences that has received little empirical attention is the intersection between ethnic and religious identities. The experience of racial/ethnic and religious intersectionality would be common in certain subpopulations in the United States. For example, refugee and immigrant groups, such as African Muslims or Vietnamese Buddhists, may experience discrimination due to both their racial/ethnic and religious identities. Also, racial/ethnic minorities who belong to a marginalized religious group, such as an African American Muslim or a Latino/a Jehovah's Witness, may also experience the intersection of racial/ethnic and religious identities in a way that is distinct from other adherents to their religion who belong to the majority racial/ethnic group. For this study, we explored the religious and ethnic intersectionality experiences of Messianic Jews.

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Messianic Jews are people who are ethnically Jewish and believe Yeshua, Jesus'

name in Hebrew and the name most Messianic Jews use, is the Messiah of Israel and the

Son of God (Yangarber-Hicks, 2005). For the rest of this dissertation I will use "Yeshua"

instead of "Jesus" to honor the preference among Messianic Jews for His Hebrew name.

Messianic Jews see themselves as part of a religious movement called Messianic

Judaism, which is comprised of congregations and organizations that believe Yeshua is

the Messiah and see themselves as a part of Judaism (Kollontai, 2004). In the latter half

of the twentieth century, there was a growth in the numbers of Jews who were becoming

Messianic Jews and the development of the Messianic Jewish movement (Juster, 2011).

Today, there are an estimated 150,000 to 350,000 Messianic Jews globally, with

Messianic congregations in the United States, South and Central America, Russia, and

Europe, and around 20,000 in Israel (Kjær-Hansen & Skjøtt, 1999; Posner, 2012; U.S.

Department of State, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, 2015).

In her article about Messianic Jewish identity, Yangarber-Hicks (2005) stated that

this identity is a misunderstood and under-examined expression of ethnic and religious

identity. The misunderstanding of Messianic Jewish religious and ethnic identity seems to

be rooted in the cultural concept of the incompatibility of Judaism and Christianity due to

theological differences and historical experiences of Christian anti-Semitism (Kollontai,

2004; Riggans, 1992). Messianic Jews' religious identity is historically and theologically

related to Christianity, which has historically been set in juxtaposition to Judaism

(Harvey, 2008). To many in the Jewish community, the Messianic Jews' religious beliefs

seem to be similar to those of Christianity. This similarity has made many in the Jewish

community believe that Messianic Jews have given up their Jewish identity, but to Messianic Jews, Jewish identity is something they highly value (Yangarber-Hicks, 2005; Yangarber-Hicks & Hicks, 2005). Therefore, the intersection of religious and ethnic identities for Messianic Jews often creates experiences of being misunderstood and rejected.

One Messianic Jewish author, describing her own experience, stated that she was often asked questions that evoked feelings of frustration and defensiveness, such as, "How did you become a Christian?" or "When did you convert?" (Yangarber-Hicks, 2005). She stated:

> Do I take the time to explain that I do not identify myself as a Christian or convert but rather a Jew who believes in Yeshua (Yeshua in Hebrew) as the Promised Messiah? By doing so, I risk being misunderstood and incurring the potential disapproval of the person asking the question. Or do I simply swallow my irritation and describe the story of coming to faith in the God of Israel and the Messiah that was sent to redeem the Jewish people and the rest of the world? (Yangarber-Hicks, 2005, p. 217)

The tension she described when confronted with questions like these seems to be rooted in not knowing whether her ethnic and religious identities together will be accepted. Her experience of having two marginalized identities, which are being Jewish in the United States and being a Messianic Jew among non-Messianic Jews, allowed for misunderstanding and rejection by the broader culture that does not have categories for understanding that Messianic Jews are Jewish and believe in Yeshua.

The experience Messianic Jews have of double rejection is based on their ethnic and religious identities. They experience being seen by the Jewish community as being too Christian to be Jewish and by the Christian community as being too Jewish to be

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Christian. Some in the Jewish community have even claimed that Messianic Jews are being used by Evangelical Christians to weaken Judaism, and some in the Christian community see Messianic Jews as a threat to current Jewish-Christian relations, therefore undermining both Judaism and Christianity (Kollontai, 2006). This double rejection due to their ethnic and religious identities could have a significant impact on their identity development experience.

Significance of the Study

Intersectionality is increasingly a topic of interest in psychology research due to psychologists' concern about the effects of differing marginalized statuses on mental and physical health outcomes (Cole, 2009). There have been many studies on the intersectionality of marginalized statuses such as race, ethnicity, gender, social class, and sexual identity, but religious and spiritual identities have not been examined in the multicultural psychology literature (Else-Quest & Hyde, 2016). Limited research exists on the effects of marginalized religious status that intersects with another marginalized status, and the few studies that explored this topic are not in the field of psychology (i.e., Bilge, 2010; Vakulenko, 2007). Therefore, this study will begin to fill the gap in the literature on religious ethnic groups by focusing on a severely underrepresented population using intersectionality as a framework and ground theory as the research approach.

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<center>**Intersectionality: Ethnic and Religious**</center>

Intersectionality

   Intersectionality is the overarching title for analytic theories that explore the impact that multiple social group identities can have on individuals, relationships, and systems and how the meaning of a person's social categories is shaped by all the social categories to which they belong (Choo & Ferree, 2010). Intersectionality is the recognition of the need to incorporate how multiple social group identities interact with each other. These interactions are important to take into consideration because people experience their multiple social group identities simultaneously (Cho, Crenshaw, & McCall, 2013). Therefore, the simultaneous experience of multiple identities means that there are interactive effects that must be taken into account to create more accurate descriptions of identity. The goal of intersectionality studies is to explain how these interactions create unique identities and to expand multicultural research beyond monolithic social categories (McCall, 2005). A monolithic view of social categories, which tends to be the approach used to conceptualize religious identity in psychology, is problematic because it causes the holders of that view to be blind to the unique experiences and needs caused by the intersection of social categories.

   Intersectionality is a universal experience because we all necessarily belong to a gender, race, social class, and other social groups, and the experiences related to and the meaning attributed to these social groups intersect in ways that shape all our identities. Crenshaw (1989) argued that intersectionality is a particularly important concept for understanding the identity experiences of people with multiple marginalized social group

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identities. The identity experience of those with multiple marginalized identities is different from those with one marginalized identity, because the discrimination and meaning-making experiences associated with each marginalized identity interact to create an identity that is distinct. Intersectionality is applying the concept that in regard to identity, the whole is not just a sum of its parts. In addition, the traditional understanding of racism and sexism has been shaped by those having one marginalized identity, such as the racial discrimination experienced by Black men and the gender discrimination experienced by White women. The focus on people who have had one marginalized identity has created theories that cannot adequately explain the identity experiences of those with multiple marginalized identities because it cannot capture the ways gender influences racial experiences or how race influences gendered experiences (Cole, 2009).

History of Intersectionality

Intersectionality roots may go back as far as the writings of Anna Julia Cooper (Cole, 2009). Cooper (1892/1988) wrote in 1892,

> I would beg, however… to add my plea for the Colored Girls of the South…there is material in them well worth your while, the hope in germ of a staunch, helpful, regenerating womanhood on which, primarily, rests the foundation stones of our future as a race. (p. 25)

In her book, *A Voice from the South*, Cooper argued for the importance of incorporating both gender and racial identity when responding to discrimination and when working to strengthen the African American community. These early 20th century voices of the Black community encouraged different social movements in the United States to consider integrating race, gender, and class issues into their social justice causes.

Through most of the 20th century, the feminist and civil rights movements constructed their theories and political activism from frameworks that understood gender and race as distinct issues (Carbado, Crenshaw, Mays, & Tomlinson, 2013). Kimberlĕ Crenshaw coined the term intersectionality in her 1989 article, "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory, and Antiracist Politics." As a Professor of Law at the University of California, Los Angeles, she was addressing how anti-discrimination law did not sufficiently account for the experiences of Black women because of legal analyses that had not taken both gender and race into consideration. She cited three cases in which Black women attempted to bring discrimination cases against their employers, and all three cases were dismissed because the courts were unwilling to acknowledge Black women as a distinct group from Female or Black workers that needed anti-discrimination protection (Crenshaw, 1989). In addition, she noted that both feminist and anti-racism theories do not account for the experiences of Black women and that this lack of understanding of Black women's intersectionality experiences allowed for their continued oppression (Crenshaw, 1989).

In her 1991 article, Crenshaw further refined her conceptualization of intersectionality by describing how domestic violence against women of color could be understood differently through the lens of intersectionality. Women of color in domestic violence situations are often trapped through poverty, child care responsibilities, and gender and racial discrimination in housing and employment; therefore, interventions designed from the perspective of white women would have limited efficacy (Crenshaw,

1991). She further argued that political actions to combat violence against women would have little effect for women of color until the feminist movement acknowledged the effects of race among women and that anti-racist political activism would be limited until there was an acknowledgment of intra-racial violence against women (Crenshaw, 1991). The 1989 and 1991 articles created significant change in feminist theory over the past 25 years, in which it is now widely accepted that intersectionality is essential to feminist thought (Davis, 2008).

Intersectionality has also been adopted and adapted by psychology and other social science fields to conceptualize the experiences of people with multiple social group identities and to increase awareness about how different theories, treatments, or policies may affect them in unintended ways (Carbado et al., 2013). Intersectionality gives psychologists a theoretical framework in which to conceptualize the experiences of people with multiple social group identities, but there is no agreed upon methodology about how to incorporate intersectionality into research (Cole, 2009). Intersectionality has been used as a guiding principle to encourage researchers to consider the effects that multiple social group identities have on individuals, relationships, and systems.

Criticism of Intersectionality

Though intersectionality is now more widely accepted as a construct in psychology and other disciplines, it has not been without criticism. One criticism of intersectionality has been the narrowness of the scope of its application because it seemed to be only applied to Black women or gender and race (Carbado, 2013). While it is true that Crenshaw (1989, 1991) first used intersectionality to describe Black women's

identity experiences, and that it was Black feminists who brought awareness that gender

and racial identities intersect to create unique identity experiences (Beale, 1970),

Crenshaw (1991) asserted that gender and race are not the only aspects that shape identity

and experiences of oppression. Rather, the multiple grounds of identity needed to be

considered when examining how people construct their social world. Therefore,

intersectionality from its inception was intended to expand the scope of how to

conceptualize identity by accounting for the effects of the intersection of multiple social

group identities.

Another criticism of intersectionality is that it is too ambiguous and open-ended to

have practical effectiveness as a theory (Davis, 2008), which leads to a problem of

infinite regress, meaning that social groups can be divided up to such a degree that there

are no groups left and group identities lose their meaning (Young, 1994). McCall's

(2014) response to this criticism was that intersectionality should move away from a pure

postmodern philosophy of science to a critical realism philosophy of science.

Postmodernism as a philosophy of science argues that we do not have access to an

objective reality because all truth claims are bound to human interpretation (McCall,

2014). McCall further argued that the influence of postmodernism leads to the

disavowing of the existence and meaning of social groups because of its singular focus on

the perception of the individual. This is problematic for intersectionality because it argues

for the existence and impact of multiple social groups. McCall proposed that critical

realism philosophy of science is the solution to this problem. Critical realism is a

philosophy of science that believes that reliable and reasonable access to objective reality

exists, but that the interpretation of the real world is always through the subjective perceptions of the observer (Barad, 1996). The effect of a critical realistic philosophy of science is that social groups can be understood as being real and having real impact on people. The application of critical realism would limit the overly ambiguous and open-ended nature of intersectionality by giving scientists a way to examine if intersectionality's claims plausibly represent real experiences.

Effects of Intersectionality

In intersectionality research, there have been three main ways to understand the effects of the interaction of multiple social categories (Else-Quest & Hyde, 2016). The first is additive effects, which is when the power or oppression experienced by each social category a person belongs to is added together. An example would be a Black Mormon who experiences both the oppression of being Black and being a Mormon, but Collins (2002) warns that an over-focus on additive effects can lead to the placing of groups on hierarchies of oppression, which fosters competition and leads to disunity. The second type of effect is multiplicative effects, which is when belonging to one social group amplifies the privilege or oppression associated with another social group to which a person belongs. An example of multiplicative effects could be for a lesbian whose experiences of heterosexism are intensified by sexism. The third is intersectional effects, which are when a unique experience of power or oppression comes out of the intersection of two social group identities (Else-Quest & Hyde, 2016). An example of intersectional effects are the unique oppression experiences of Muslim women in the United States who tend to be perceived by the broader culture in a way that is distinct from Muslim men and

non-Muslim women (Nadal et al., 2015). Else-Quest and Hyde (2016) argued for the examination of all three effects in intersectional research, which they termed a broad intersectional approach. In light of Else-Quest and Hyde's suggestions, the current study took into consideration how the intersection of Messianic Jews' ethnic and religious identities may have additive, multiplicative, and/or intersectional effects.

Intersectionality Research

Intersectionality has had a theoretical influence on counseling psychology. There have been two multicultural content analysis studies on counseling psychology journals. Lee, Rosen, and Burns (2013) found that 1.8% of all articles in the Journal of Counseling Psychology (JCP) from 1954 to 2009 and 5.7% of the articles related to multicultural issues in JCP ($n = 69$) used intersectionality as a theoretical concept. Reimers and Stabb (2015) examined JCP and The Counseling Psychologist (TCP) from 1996 to 2011 to study the amount of attention given to the intersection of race, class, and gender in the field of counseling psychology. They found that out of the 1,440 articles, only 15 (<1%) articles examined race, class, and gender in a way that accounted for the effects of their simultaneous interaction. They also found there was a significant increase of race, class, and gender intersectionality articles in the last five years from the previous ten years. Both articles identified that the intersectionality articles used intersectionality to try to understand how the interactions of multiple identities affected counseling process and outcomes, psychological process and interventions, or vocational concerns (Lee et al., 2013; Reimers & Stabb, 2015). These two multicultural content analysis studies signify

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that intersectionality is an accepted theoretical concept in counseling psychology and that increasing attention has been paid to this important construct in recent years.

The focus of intersectionality has primarily been on the intersection of race and gender with no consideration of religious identity. Lewis and Neville (2015) used intersectionality as a theoretical concept in the development of a gendered racial microaggressions scale for Black women. Intersectionality was used to define the central construct the scale was attempting to measure, gendered racial microaggressions, which is defined as "subtle and everyday verbal, behavioral, and environmental expressions of oppression based on the intersection of one's race and gender" (Lewis & Neville, 2015, p. 292). Most studies on the intersection of race and gender use intersectionality as a theoretical framework to conceptualize the core constructs measured in the study (Bowleg, Teti, Malebranche, & Tschann, 2013; Capodilupo & Kim, 2014; Levant & Wong, 2013; O'Brien, Blodorn, Adams, Garcia, & Hammer, 2015). In the current study, the intersectionality of ethnicity and religious identity is used to aid the conceptualization of the core constructs.

There has been limited research on intersectionality incorporating religion. One study found that religious/spiritual and LGBTQ identities interact in ways that create positive personal and spiritual growth (Rosenkrantz, Rostosky, Riggle, & Cook, 2016). The participants were 314 adults who identified as LGBTQ. Their ages ranged from 18 to 68, and they lived in the United States and 17 other countries. Twenty-nine different religions or sects of religions were represented in the sample. Many (45%) participants reported that experiencing feelings of love and acceptance in religious communities aided

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in the development of a positive LGBTQ identity. Many (43%) other participants identified that their LGBTQ identity led to finding a deeper meaning and purpose in religious identity (Rosenkrantz et al., 2016).

In a qualitative study examining the influence of race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, and religion, the authors analyzed data from six previous qualitative studies of women, LGBT people, Filipino Americans, multiracial people, and Muslims ($n = 80$). One of the findings of their analysis was that women of color and Muslim women experienced microaggressions because of their gender and racial or religious identities (Nadal et al., 2015). Muslim women reported having experienced others who assumed they lacked agency because they were being forced to wear a hijab, which is a type of Muslim women's head covering (Nadal et al., 2015). The Muslim women reported experiencing more harassment than Muslim men because their hijab made them more identifiable as a Muslim (Nadal et al., 2015). The interaction of gender and Muslim identity created greater levels of harassment for Muslim women. Taking a singular identity perspective on Muslim women does not sufficiently encapsulate the additive oppression experiences that the interaction of their religious and gender identities have on their lives. The findings of these articles highlight the effects that the intersection of religious and other social group identities have on individuals, which sets the stage for the current study's examination of the intersection of ethnic and religious identity.

Ethnic and religious intersectionality has had very limited examination in the psychological intersectionality literature. An ethnographic case study by Park (2012) is an example of how the interaction of ethnicity and religion creates unique identity

experiences. The study examined Black college students' cross-racial interactions at Christian ministries at a traditionally White university. The author found that the participants shared a religious identity with their White Christian peers, but their differing racial identities created experiences of unique cross-racial interactions, along with experiences of isolation and marginalization (Park, 2012). The students attending the Christian ministry had a shared religious identity that created an opportunity for unique cross-racial interactions, but their shared religious identity did not eliminate the racial/ethnic identity differences between the Black, White, and Asian students. When the Christian ministry discussed racial tensions in the greater culture, such as when a Black student experienced a hate crime on campus, the Black students reported feeling they had to work hard to help the White and Asian students understand the Black student's perspective and bring healing to the Christian ministry's community (Park, 2012).

The Black students reported having to sacrifice creating friendships with other Black students at the university because of the time spent developing friendships with White and Asian students at the Christian ministry, which increased feelings of isolation and reinforced their sense of minority status (Park, 2012). These cross-racial interactions also fostered an increased individual and relational empathy among all the students attending the Christian ministry (Park, 2012). These unique cross-racial interactions are an example of how ethnic and religious identities interact because they are experiences that are unique to Black Christians who were involved in a mostly White ministry. These identity experiences were different from those of other Black students at that campus or non-Black, Christian Students involved in the ministry.

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The intersectional nature of ethnic and religious identity is likely also true for Messianic Jews. The intersection of their ethnic and religious identities likely influences the experiences in both Jewish and Christian contexts. Intersectionality gave a theoretical framework through which to conceptualize how these experiences may shape Messianic Jewish identity.

History of Jewish and Christian Relations

The history of Jewish and Christian relations is a critical context through which to understand Messianic Jewish identity because the general Messianic Jewish conceptualization of their identity is linked to the first century of the Common Era. Yangarber-Hicks (2005) described the common Messianic Jewish perspective on their history, which sees the Messianic movement not as a new religious movement but one that began over 2,000 years ago at the time of Yeshua. It is also understood that Yeshua and his first followers lived in a Jewish religious and cultural context and understood themselves as being a part of the Jewish people. A prominent leader and theologian in the Messianic Jewish movement, Dr. Daniel Juster (2011), stated that the Yeshua-following Jews of the first and second century maintained a Jewish identity and practice along with believing that Yeshua was the Messiah and the Son of God. These first- and second-century Jewish followers of Yeshua serve as a historical model for understanding how Messianic Jews' ethnic and religious identities can coexist.

The earliest followers of Yeshua were Jewish and understood themselves to continue to be Jewish as they followed Yeshua, who was claiming to be Israel's Messiah. Two main groups of Jews who followed Yeshua existed in the two centuries after Yeshua

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(Juster, 2011; Williamson, 1982). The main group that Messianic Jews identify with were the Nazarenes. The Nazarenes identified as Jews and lived by Jewish law while believing that Yeshua was the Messiah and the Son of God, and they followed the teachings of the early Apostles (Marcus, 2006; Pritz, 1988). The next group was the Ebionites. They identified as Jews and lived by Jewish law but did not believe in the divinity of Yeshua and did not accept the teachings of the Apostle Paul. They rejected the teaching of Paul because he advocated for Gentiles (referring to people who are not ethnically or religiously Jewish) to not have to abide by all aspects of Jewish law (i.e., circumcision) to be followers of Yeshua (Bauckham, 2003; Marcus, 2006). By the end of the fourth century of the Common Era, there no longer existed communities of Jews who identified as Jewish and believed Yeshua to be the Messiah (Pritz, 1988). The history of their extinction is explained in the following paragraphs.

There were two main causes of the extinction of the Jewish communities that followed Yeshua and maintained their Jewish identity. The first is the two Jewish revolts against the Romans. The first Jewish revolt against Rome began in 66 of the Common Era and ended with Vespasian and Titus destroying the Jewish Temple in 70 CE (Josephus, 2012). The destruction of the temple was a significant blow to Jewish religious practice and identity. For the Jewish followers of Yeshua, it was both a vindication and defeat. The destruction of the temple was a vindication of Yeshua's prophecies about its destruction (Matthew 24:1-2), which had a legitimizing effect upon their belief that Yeshua was the Messiah. The temple was also the main point of connection between the Jews who followed Yeshua and the rest of the Jewish

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community, because most acts of Jewish worship centered on the temple (Bauckham, 2010). Due to Yeshua's prophecy about the destruction of the temple, the Jewish followers of Yeshua fled to Pella, which is in modern day Jordan, before the Roman siege of Jerusalem (Marcus, 2006). The move to Pella saved the communities of Jewish followers of Yeshua, but some in the Jewish community began to see them as traitors because they did not take part in the revolt (Bauckham, 2010). The destruction of the temple and the flight of the Jewish followers of Yeshua to Pella drove a wedge between the Jewish followers of Yeshua and the rest of the Jewish community.

The second Jewish revolt was the Bar Kochba Revolt in 133 CE, which brought heavy Roman persecution of the Jews throughout the empire. Bar Kochba was the military and political leader of the final Jewish revolt in Judea (Eshel, 2006). This uprising caused a greater split between the Jewish followers of Yeshua and the rest of the Jewish community, because Bar Kochba was proclaimed to be the Messiah, which the followers of Yeshua could not accept. Again, their lack of participation in the revolt led to more animosity between the Jewish followers of Yeshua and the rest of the Jewish community (Marcus, 2006).

The second challenge to the continued existence of communities of Jewish followers of Yeshua was the acceptance of Gentiles into the community of the followers of Yeshua without the need to become a Jew (i.e., circumcision). The Jews of the first century understood all people as divided into two groups—the Jews and the nations (i.e., Gentiles)—and there was a widely held ancient theological assumption that a person would worship the gods of their geographical location and ethnic group (Mitchell, 2006).

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When a Gentile in the first century decided to follow the God of Israel, he or she had two options. One was to become a Jew and convert to Judaism, and the second option was to become a "God-fearer." God-fearers were Gentiles who worshiped the God of Israel, had a positive relationship with the Jewish community, and participated in some of the Jewish religious rituals, but did not go through a conversion, which limited their participation in Jewish temple-based rituals (Davila, 2005).

As the teachings of Yeshua began to spread beyond the land of Israel, particularly through the missionary journeys of Paul, the number of Gentiles becoming followers of Yeshua began to increase exponentially. After Paul's Damascus road experience and his subsequent change from a persecutor of the Nazarenes to a fellow follower of Yeshua, he went throughout the northern Mediterranean to bring the teachings of Yeshua to the Diaspora Jews and God-fearers (Mitchell, 2006; Skarsaune, 2008). Initiated by his mission to the Gentiles, there was a demographic shift to a Gentile majority among the followers of Yeshua in the second century (Marcus, 2006; Mitchell, 2006; Skarsaune, 2008). The second-century demographic shift and the political and cultural fallout of the Jewish revolts led to the dwindling of the Jewish followers of Yeshua until they vanished from the historical record in the fourth century (Bauckham, 2010; Marcus, 2006).

During the decline in the numbers of Jewish followers of Yeshua, there was also a theological shift in Gentile Christianity that further solidified its counter-distinction to Judaism for the next two millennia. The theological shift was the development of a supersessionist theology. Supersessionism refers to theologies that claim that God rejected the Jewish people and that the Gentile Church has replaced them as God's

chosen people (Soulen, 1996; Williamson, 1982). These theologies further argue that God has given the blessings and promises that were for the Jews to the Church because of the Jewish rejection of Yeshua as Messiah (Skarsaune, 2008). Many of the early Gentile Church Fathers held this theological stance, such as Ignatius of Antioch, Justin Martyr, and Origen, who were heavily influential in the medieval Church. The modern Western Church is still influenced by their beliefs today (Martyr & Slusser, 2003; Wilson, 1989).

Many Jewish, Messianic Jewish, and Christian academics and theologians argue that supersessionist theology opened the way for future Christian anti-Semitism. Rosenberg (1986) argued that the history of Christian persecution of the Jews shows that supersessionist theology leads to anti-Semitism. The argument for the link between supersessionist theology and anti-Semitism is that if Israel is no longer a part of God's plan of salvation, it is because they were unfaithful to God. It then follows that if they are unfaithful to God, there is a collective guilt on the Jewish people, which was a belief held by many early Gentile Church fathers (Fredriksen & Irshai, 2006; Juster, 2011; Wilson, 1989).

This belief in the collective guilt of the Jews would grow into contempt, persecution, and murder over the intervening centuries. It began with Constantine banning certain Jewish religious practices just like he banned pagan or other non-orthodox Christian practices. Constantine's actions against the Jews were escalated by his successors with the banning of inter-marriage, serving in the military, and having certain occupations (Fredriksen & Irshai, 2006). Throughout the last two millennia, leaders of most countries where Christianity became integrated into the governmental structure

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sanctioned the oppression of Jews. The anti-Judaism and anti-Semitic sentiments would often escalate to violence and murder—typified in the pogroms of Russia and the Spanish Inquisition. The oppressive and violent history of Christian anti-Semitism has had a lasting effect on American cultural views of Jews (Pargament, 2007). A psychological study found that anti-Judaism and anti-Semitism still impact the meaning some Christians associate with Jews. In a study of 139 undergraduate students, Pargament (2007) found a significant positive relationship between perceptions of Jews as desecrators of Christianity and anti-Semitic beliefs, while Christian love—the belief that God loves the Jews and all people—was found to have a negative relationship with anti-Semitic beliefs. The results of this study give supporting evidence that beliefs among Christians, such as Jews are desecrators of Christianity, can lead to anti-Semitic beliefs.

It is important to note that not all Christian groups or individuals have held to a supersession theology. The supersession theology would have been anathema to the Nazarenes and other early Jewish followers of Yeshua. Examples of Gentile Christian groups that did not hold to supersessionist theology were the Puritans and the Catholics under Pope John Paul II. The Puritan theologian Thomas Draxe (1608), in his commentary on Romans 11, exemplified the Puritan understanding of the Jews continuing to be the people of God because of the everlasting covenant He made with Abraham. Pope John Paul II, while speaking at the synagogue in Mainz, Germany, stated that God has never revoked His covenants with the Jews. While speaking to Israel's Chief Rabbis, he stated that Jews and Christians should work together to remove any anti-Jewish sentiments among Christians and anti-Christian sentiments among Jews

(Pontifical Biblical Commission, 2001). Though an increasing number of Christians do not espouse supersession theology, the Jewish thinker Kendall Wyschogrod argued that the Church will not have truly left behind supersession theology until the Jews within the Church are encouraged to affirm their Jewish identity and keep the covenantal expectations in the Torah (Wyschogrod, 2004). Most Messianic Jews would agree with Wyschogrod's conclusion and would see their movement and their identity as being about Jews who believe in Yeshua still affirming their Jewish identity and keeping the covenantal expectations of the Torah (Rudolph & Willitts, 2013).

This history of Jewish and Christian relations provides the context in which modern American Messianic Jewish identity developed. This history has led to a majority of non-Messianic Jews and Christians understanding their religious and ethnic identities to be mutually exclusive—meaning one cannot be both a Jew and a Christian. This cultural sense of mutual exclusivity of Jew and Christian likely creates conflicts internally and interpersonally for Messianic Jews (Yangarber-Hicks & Hicks, 2005). At the same time, we have seen how historical events have also created a space for Messianic Jewish identity that did not exist in earlier times. It is within this historical milieu that Messianic Jews understand their own religious and ethnic identity.

Identity Research

Erick Erikson was the first psychologist to construct a comprehensive theory of identity development. Erikson understood identity as encapsulating all aspects of self-knowledge and being the foundation of behavior, emotions, and cognitions (Broderick & Blewitt, 2014; Erikson, 1968). Erikson's theory (as cited in Karkouti, 2014) stated that

identity formation happens by the resolution of psychosocial conflicts through regulating

internal behavior and external environment. All people experience external social and

environmental influences and internal psychological influences that come into conflict,

and in the resolution of these conflicts over our life span we develop our sense of identity

(Erikson, 1968). Erikson saw the formation of identity as important because it leads to the

development of an ideological worldview, either religious or political, the choice of an

occupation that is socially meaningful and personally expressive, and the development of

gender identity and sexual orientation (Waterman, 1982). Erikson's ideas that there is a

developmental process through which we construct our identities and that there are

positive impacts on our lives when we have developed identities has been the foundation

of subsequent identity development theories for particular social groups. For the purposes

of this study, we will discuss Jewish identity, Messianic Jewish identity, and multiracial

identity theories and research as they pertain to Messianic Jewish identity development.

Jewish Identity

In order to create a framework to understand American Messianic Jewish identity,

American Jewish identity must first be examined. In their phenomenological study of

Jewish identity, Friedman, Friedlander, and Blustein (2005) stated that the ethnic identity

of American Jews is complex, multidimensional, and highly personal, and that it is

strengthened by the individual's connection to both the cultural and the religious

expressions of Jewish identity. The ethnic and religious dimensions of American Jewish

identity create a unique complexity rarely found in other ethnic or religious identities

(Feher, 1998). Another factor increasing the complexity of Jewish identity has been the

need for Jews to continually adapt to new geographical, cultural, and political environments due to their history of diaspora. In addition, with the increased freedom from persecution that Jews have experienced in America and the West, there has been increased diversity in the expression of Jewish life, particularly in the area of religious identity (Herman, 1977).

Historically Jewish identity has been bound to religious belief (i.e., Judaism), and in the modern Jewish American experience, Judaism still plays a significant role. There are three main denominations in Judaism (Reform, Conservative, and Orthodox), and their adherence to traditional practices and moral codes varies, with Reform being the least, Conservative being moderate, and Orthodox being the most adherent. There also exists a great diversity within each of these denominations. Several studies have indicated a strong relationship between Jewish religious observance and strong Jewish identity (Friedman et al., 2005; Klaff, 2006; Levine, 1986). In particular, Friedman et al.'s (2005) qualitative analysis of interviews of 10 Jewish adults living in the northeastern United States found those who held to more Orthodox views and practice reported a higher connection with their Jewish identity than those who were less or not affiliated with Judaism. These findings speak to the strong connection between Judaism and Jewish identity.

The other aspect of Jewish identity is Jewish ethnic identity. Ethnic identity simply put is a sense of connection to a group through a common history that binds a group together (Alba, 2006). Jewish ethnic identity, therefore, is the sense of common connection to other Jews through a shared history and culture. American Jewish ethnic

identity has been developed through the shared history of Jewish people in America, and this common history has been handed down as Jewish culture, with its many expressions through food, language, mannerisms, perspectives and other cultural norms. Horowitz (2002), in her review of 30 years of Jewish identity research, argued that the modern American Jewish identity includes whatever is meaningful to the individual. In other words, American Jews choose from many different Jewish cultural expressions to construct their sense of being Jewish. The construction of a Jewish identity includes a connection to Jewish ethnic identity, and the constructed Jewish identity may or may not include a Jewish religious identity, depending on the meaning the person attributes to Judaism.

The unique connection of ethnicity and religion within this identity brings about potential conflicts that do not arise within most other ethnic groups. Kollontai (2004) stated that it is acceptable in the modern Jewish community to express Jewishness through the ethnic dimension devoid of the religious/spiritual dimension: "It is only when the individual Jew takes on a new spiritual identity that problems arise" (p. 198). It is this problem that Messianic Jews face in their relationship with the Jewish community. Understanding the complexity of Jewish identity due to its ethnic and religious components is important for this study because we needed to allow the participants to explain their understanding of Jewish identity.

Messianic Jewish Identity

One of the earliest scholarly examinations of the Messianic Jewish experience was B.Z. Sobel's 1974 book, *Hebrew Christianity: The Thirteenth Tribe.* Sobel was a

non-Messianic Jew who became interested in and studied the movement called Hebrew Christianity. Hebrew Christianity was the name of the Christian evangelistic and congregational movement that sought to evangelize among the Jews and create a space for Jewish ethnic identity within Christianity (Darby, 2010). Hebrew Christianity began in the 1809 founding of the London Society for Promoting Christianity Amongst the Jews and the 1925 development of the International Hebrew Christian Alliance (Darby, 2010). Most of Sobel's (1974) work was not focused on identity, but he did identify an important distinction about how the Hebrew Christians understood themselves. They did not see themselves as leaving their Jewish ethnic identity behind when they became Christians, but saw their Christian faith as enhancing their Jewish ethnic identity (Sobel, 1974). Hebrew Christians held to their Jewish ethnic identity while holding to a Christian religious identity. On the other hand, Messianic Jews hold their Jewish ethnic identity and a Jewish religious identity because they still see themselves as a part of Judaism (Kollontai, 2004). Holding on to both a Jewish ethnic and religious identity, while believing that Yeshua was the Messiah and Son of God, creates the potential for interactions that shape Messianic Jewish identity in ways different from non-Messianic Jews, Christians, or Hebrew Christians.

The study of Messianic Jewish identity has been minimal in the field of psychology. I have been able to find only two articles published in psychology journals on the topic. One is a theoretical article aimed at beginning to lay the framework for understanding Messianic Jewish identity (Yangarber-Hicks, 2005). The author argued that the identities of Messianic Jews are shaped by the same influences that shape

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American Jewish identity, which are Judaism and Jewish ethnic identity. In addition, she argued that Messianic Jewish identity is also shaped by Protestant Christian theology and practice; in particular, the influence of the Charismatic movement within Christianity (Yangarber-Hicks, 2005). In addition to the religious and cultural influences of Judaism and Protestantism, Yangarber-Hicks argued that the experiences of misunderstanding and rejection from both Christian and Jewish communities create psychological and spiritual difficulties for Messianic Jews.

The other article is an exploratory examination of the identity and therapy experiences of Messianic Jews. The authors developed open-ended questions and Likert-type scales to collect quantitative and qualitative data (Yangarber-Hicks & Hicks, 2005). The participants consisted of both Jewish ($n = 30$) and Gentile adults ($n = 45$). For the purposes of this study, only the results pertaining to the Messianic Jews were reviewed. The participants were asked how their relationships with family and friends were affected by their becoming Messianic Jews and their Messianic congregation attendance. The study found that after Messianic Jews took on their messianic religious identity, many suffered family and friendship loss, though many experienced the rebuilding of family relationships over time (Yangarber-Hicks & Hicks, 2005). In addition, the respondents were asked about the effects of their Messianic Jewish religious identity on their ethnic identity, other aspects of their life, and their sense of belonging to the Jewish or Christian communities. A third of the Messianic Jews reported that their transition to becoming a Messianic Jew led them to be "more Jewish," and another third reported that it was the spiritual change after becoming a Messianic Jew that strengthened their Jewish identity.

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The last third reported a myriad of ways their Messianic Jewish religious identity had affected their ethnic identity, such as becoming more tolerant, new religious practices, and increased interest in Israel (Yangarber-Hicks & Hicks, 2005). A number of the Jews in this study (18%) also reported feeling little to no place in the Jewish community after becoming a Messianic Jew, and many felt that the Christian Church had much to learn about Messianic Jews and the Jewish heritage of Christianity. The authors concluded that many Messianic Jews do not feel fully a part of the Jewish or Christian community because they have a strong sense of being different or being perceived as different from non-Messianic Jews or Christians (Yangarber-Hicks & Hicks, 2005). The Messianic Jewish sense of being different from non-Messianic Jews or Christians speaks to the unique and distinct identity they are likely constructing from the intersectionality of their religious and ethnic identities.

Casting the net beyond psychology journals, there are a few books and articles in the fields of anthropology and religious studies that examined the identity experiences of Messianic Jews. Many of these studies focused on the tension between the Jewish and Christian aspects of Messianic Jewish identity and examined how this tension shaped their identity (Cohn-Sherbok, 2000; Feher, 1998; Harris-Shapiro, 2000; Lipson, 1980; Kollontai, 2004, 2006). Lipson (1980) conducted an early anthropological study of Messianic Jewish identity by observing a Jews for Yeshua group over a six-month period. He concluded that Messianic Judaism was a "deviant" Jewish group that brought together different aspects of culture (Christian, Jewish, and 60s counter-culture) to create a new identity that gives meaning to its adherents. Lipson's (1980) description of Messianic

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Judaism is quite critical, and he rejected Messianic Jewish assertions that they are a form of Judaism.

Feher's (1998) analysis of Messianic Jewish identity came out of three years of participant observation at a Messianic synagogue. She noted that Messianic Jews seem to be continually working out their identity because of their attempts to incorporate Jewish and Christian cultural aspects into their identity. She argued that in their attempt to take on an identity that straddles the fence between the traditionally mutually exclusive Jewish and Christian groups, they created a third distinctive identity. The new Messianic group identity created new identity markers and cultural norms that distinguished them from Jews and Christians. Similar to Lipson, Feher (1998) did not believe that Messianic Judaism was a form of Judaism but a distinct ethnic and religious identity.

Harris-Shapiro (2000) conducted an ethnographic study of Messianic Jews through participant observation of a Messianic Jewish synagogue. She argued that the explanation that Messianic Jews are ethnically Jewish and religiously Christian was overly simple. The Messianic understanding of the Godly-self stems from Evangelical conceptualizations but is shaped by Jewish culture and traditions. She argued that the participants in her study experienced many aspects of their Jewish identity being encouraged, altered, or rejected through the negotiating of Messianic Jewish identity. Harris-Shapiro's (2000) position on whether Messianic Judaism is a part of the greater Jewish community was that many within the modern Jewish community have positions and practices that are not within the bounds of traditional Judaism, and Messianic Jews are just another one of these groups; therefore, they should be accepted as part of the

Jewish community. Harvey (2008) made the statement that Harris-Shapiro seemed to be arguing that the Jewish community should be more accepting of Messianic Jews because of the diversity that already existed within accepted Jewish identity.

Cohn-Sherbok (2000) took Harris-Shapiro's argument further and stated that there is no consistent way to justify the rejection of Messianic Jews from the Jewish community while accepting the plurality that exists in the modern Jewish community. He stated that the only way to heal the divisions that have plagued the Jewish community is to have a framework for harmony that includes Messianic Jews. Kollontai (2004) also argued for the acceptance of Messianic Jews within the Jewish community because "Jewish history…demonstrates that Judaism and Jewish identity have not been monolithic in content or character" (p. 203). In other words, the rejecting of Messianic Jews as being Jewish is ignoring the multifaceted nature of Jewish identity (Kollontai, 2004).

In her study of Messianic Jewish religious identity, Kollontai (2006) interviewed 60 Messianic Jews about their views of Judaism and Christianity. Participants reported that they rejected traditional Judaism because they felt it was spiritually lacking and unfulfilling but maintained the observance of festivals and valuing of family and community because it creates a sense of belonging and identity. They also reported rejecting traditional Christianity because of the latent anti-Semitism, the history of Christian persecution of Jews, and the lack of understanding of the Jewish heritage of Christianity. Kollontai (2006) argued that Messianic Jews hold to the core religious teachings in Christianity of the Messiahship of Yeshua, the incarnation, and biblical

authority because it answers many of the fundamental life questions about meaning, purpose, relevance of their beliefs and practices, and connection with the Divine.

There has been a diversity of ways in which Messianic Jews have been studied in psychology and other academic fields. All of these previous studies grappled with different aspects of the ethnic and religious tension within Messianic Jewish identity. None of these studies attempted to develop a theory of Messianic Jewish identity development through an empirical examination. The goal of the current study was to develop a theory of how Messianic Jews make meaning out of the intersection of their religious and ethnic identities. A potential framework for understanding how Messianic Jews make meaning of their identities is multiracial identity theory.

Multiracial Identity Research and Theory

Yangarber-Hicks (2005) stated, "the experiences of biracial individuals may provide a useful framework for understanding the phenomenon of Jews believing in Yeshua" (p. 130). Theories about the experience of having to reconcile and make meaning out of seemingly conflicting racial identities may guide the theory generating process for Messianic Jewish identity development. Research on multiracial identity began in the 1960s, and the focus of the research was on people with one White and one Black parent. Through the 1980s, much of the research had been pathology-based, meaning the researchers were examining only how multiracial identity was detrimental to psychological wellbeing; but beginning in the 1980s some researchers began rethinking how a healthy multiracial identity is developed (Rockquemore, Brunsma, & Feagin, 2008). The modern view of multiracial identity is that differing racial identities can be

reconciled with positive psychological effects, and that multiracial identity can be understood through an intersectionality framework.

In a qualitative investigation into the racial identity development of multiracial people, researchers interviewed 10 multiracial individuals from various mixed backgrounds (Miville, Constantine, Baysden, & So-Lloyd, 2005). Miville et al. (2005) identified four themes related to multiracial identity development, which were: encounters with racism, reference group orientation, the "chameleon" experience, and identity development in context: critical people, places, and periods. The encounters with racism theme identified how experiences of racism increased the participants' awareness of one or more of their racial identities. The reference group orientation theme identified how multiracial individuals tended to publicly identify with one of their racial/ethnic groups, though personally, they may identify with their multiracial identity. The "chameleon" experience theme identified how many participants reported creating strategies to allow them to fit into multiple racial/ethnic or cultural groups. The identity development in context: critical people, places, and periods theme identified how important relationships, accepting places, and certain developmental periods greatly affected the participants' multiracial identity development (Miville et al., 2005). Messianic Jews may report similar themes about experiences that shaped their identity because of their experiences reconciling their ethnic and religious identities.

Studies have indicated that there are positive psychological effects associated with having an integrated multiracial identity. Jackson, Yoo, Guevarra, and Harrington (2012) examined the relationships between multiracial identity, psychological adjustment, and

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perceived racial discrimination via an online survey of 263 multiracial adults. The results

of the survey indicated that strong multiracial identity moderated the relationship

between psychological adjustment and perceived racial discrimination (R^2 = .18, F(3,

205) = 15.09, p < .05). These findings raise the question of whether similar buffering

effects may also be found for Messianic Jews who have a strong sense of their Messianic

Jewish identity.

Along with empirical studies, there are many different theories about multiracial

identity development, and each one has different variations on the stages of the journey

towards healthy multiracial identity. Shih and Sanchez (2005) suggested that many of

these theories have two common elements. The first is that all the theories state there is a

stage in which multiracial individuals experience tension and conflict about their multiple

racial identities. The second is that these theories propose that the final stage is when the

individual is able to accept, value, and integrate all aspects of their multiracial identity

(Shih & Sanchez, 2005). Between the first stage and the final stage are different

challenges that have been identified that multiracial people have to overcome in order to

reach the final stage. Some of these challenges may inform the process through which

Messianic Jews journey to accept and value their Messianic Jewish identity.

One challenge identified by Shih and Sanchez (2005) is the need to justify

identity choices. Multiracial people experience societal pressure to explain and justify

their identity to the monoracial majority, who rarely experience having to justify their

ethnic identity. In a similar way, Messianic Jews may experience the need to justify their

intersecting religious and ethnic identities. Forced choice dilemmas is another challenge

multiracial people face in which they are forced to choose one of their racial identities over the others (Standen, 1996). Messianic Jews may also experience the pressure to choose their ethnic or religious identity over the other because of fear of rejection in certain situations. A third challenge that multiracial people experience is double rejection, which is the experience of being rejected by the majority group and minority groups (Poston, 1990). Messianic Jews also experience being rejected by both the Christian and Jewish communities (Yangarber-Hicks & Hicks, 2005). Similar to multiracial people, these three and other challenges that Messianic Jews experience likely shape their development towards accepting, valuing, and integrating all aspects of their ethnic and religious identities.

My own experience as a multiracial individual has given me some insight into the experience of having to make meaning of intersecting identities that seem mutually exclusive to the greater society. Messianic Jews share this experience, though it is different in meaningful ways. Multiracial individuals do not have a choice in the multiple social categories they belong to, while Messianic Jews do have a choice in their religious identification (Shih, Bonam, Sanchez, & Peck, 2007; Yangarber-Hicks, 2005). Along with that, physical characteristics, such as skin color and hair would likely not be as important for Messianic Jews as it would be for multiracial individuals (Rockquemore & Brunsma, 2002; Yangarber-Hicks, 2005). These differences in experiences constitute a potential limitation of using multiracial identity theories to inform the development of Messianic Jewish identity development. Another potential limitation is a weakness of some multiracial identity theories, which is that they suppose a singular resolution to the

integration of multiple ethnic identities. Root (1999) suggested that there are multiple ways that multiracial identity conflicts can be solved. This limitation is important to keep in mind during the construction of a theory of Messianic Jewish identity development so as to not be limited to one way of making meaning out of their intersectionality experiences. Instead of developing a linear, stage model, a non-linear model was developed in which different domains were identified. Growth in these domains led Messianic Jews to progress towards a place of acceptance, valuing, and integrating all aspects their identity.

Multiracial theories, in particular the common elements and challenges identified by Shih and Sanchez (2005), added concepts to the core framework of the study—intersectionality. The concepts from multiracial identity development theories would lead a researcher to expect that most participants would have experienced challenges relating to their ethnic and religious identities and would be at different points on the journey towards accepting, valuing, and integrating all aspects of their Messianic Jewish identity. I was intentional about being open to discovering other aspects and challenges that would be unique to the Messianic Jewish experience.

Theoretical Framework

According to Maxwell (2013), the theoretical framework is a network of theories, constructs, and assumptions that shape your qualitative research. The theoretical framework can be understood as the lens through which a researcher asks questions about the phenomenon (Malterud, 2001). Describing the type and role of the theoretical framework is important for maintaining validity in qualitative research (Kvale, 1996). It

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is the set of knowledge that I bring that informs how the phenomenon is conceptualized. This set of knowledge creates a tentative theory for understanding what the phenomenon is, how it works, and why (Maxwell, 2013). Therefore, the theoretical framework that I bring into the research must be adaptable to the demands of data. The theory is created for understanding the data—not the data for confirming the theory.

As a part of my theoretical framework, I brought three main assumptions into this grounded theory qualitative research. First, I assumed that there is difficulty in reconciling Jewish ethnic identity with a theology that is closely aligned with Christianity (i.e., believing that Yeshua is the Messiah). Second, I assumed that reconciliation of Jewish ethnic identity and believing that Yeshua is the Messiah is possible. Third, I assumed that in this reconciliation there is a unique identity experience that is different from the identity experiences within Judaism or Christianity. My experiences as a Gentile member of a Messianic Jewish Congregation and a multiracial person, who has experienced reconciling cultural and racial differences within my identity, gave me an empathetic outsider perspective on Messianic Jewish identity. These experiences led me to choose intersectionality as the primary theory in my theoretical framework.

Purpose of the Study

The current study is a grounded theory qualitative research study. Grounded theory focuses on inductive strategies to generate theory, rather than using a priori assumptions to deduce a theory (Patton, 2015). The theories generated by grounded theory produce frameworks for further research (Creswell, 2013). The purpose of this grounded theory study was to generate a theory about how the intersectionality of ethnic

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and religious identities shape the self-identities of Messianic Jews. The unit of analysis for this study was Messianic Jewish adults, who live in a Midwestern, United States metropolitan area and a Northeastern, United States metropolitan area. The general definition for intersectionality of ethnic and religious identities is how people with ethnic and religious identities that are seen as incompatible or mutually exclusive by the broader culture make meaning out of the interaction of their identities.

Research Questions

The aim of this research was to generate an emerging theory about how Messianic Jews make meaning out of the intersection of their ethnic and religious identities. The research team analyzed the data gathered through a document analysis and in-depth interviews to discover the mechanisms and processes that allow them to make meaning out of their ethnic and religious identities. My central question and sub-questions are as follows:

How do Messianic Jews experience the intersectionality of their religious and ethnic identities?

a) How do they make meaning of the process of becoming a Messianic Jew?

b) How do they make meaning of their involvement in the Messianic movement or membership in a Messianic Synagogue?

c) How do Messianic Jews make meaning out of Jewish and Christian history and theology?

d) How do they understand their current relationship to the greater Jewish community and Christian community?

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CHAPTER 2

MANUSCRIPT

There has been increased interest in the study of intersectionality in psychology in

the past 15 years. Intersectionality is a concept used to describe analytic approaches that

consider the meaning and impact multiple categories of social group membership have on

individuals (Cole, 2009). One of the intersectional identity experiences that has received

little empirical attention is the intersection of ethnic and religious identities. This study

focused on the intersection of ethnic and religious identity experienced by Messianic

Jews, who are an under-examined and misunderstood religious and ethnic group

(Yangarber-Hicks, 2005).

Literature Review

Messianic Jews are people who are ethnically Jewish and believe Yeshua (Jesus'

name in Hebrew and the name most Messianic Jews use) is the Messiah of Israel and the

Son of God (Yangarber-Hicks, 2005). For the rest of this article I will use Yeshua instead

of "Jesus" in honor of the preference among Messianic Jews for His Hebrew name.

Messianic Jews see themselves as a part of a religious movement called Messianic

Judaism, which is comprised of congregations and organizations that believe Yeshua is

the Messiah and see themselves as a part of Judaism (Kollontai, 2004). In the latter half

of the 20th century, there was a growth in the numbers of Jews who were becoming

Messianic Jews and the development of the Messianic Jewish movement (Juster, 2011).

Today, there are an estimated 150,000 to 350,000 Messianic Jews globally, with

Messianic congregations in the United States, South and Central America, Russia, and

Europe, and around 20,000 in Israel (Kjær-Hansen & Skjøtt, 1999; Posner, 2012; U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, 2015). The purpose of this study was to explore the religious and ethnic intersectionality experiences of Messianic Jews and to develop a theory of Messianic Jewish identity development.

Intersectionality

Intersectionality is the overarching title for analytic theories that explore the impact multiple social group identities have on individuals, relationships, and systems and how these social categories depend on each other for meaning (Choo & Ferree, 2010; Cole, 2009). These interactions are important to take into consideration because people experience their multiple social group identities simultaneously (Cho, Crenshaw, & McCall, 2013). The simultaneous experience of multiple identities means that there are interactive effects that must be taken into account to create more accurate descriptions of identity.

The construct of intersectionality was first introduced by Kimberlĕ Crenshaw in her 1989 and 1991 articles, in which she addressed how anti-discrimination law did not sufficiently account for the experiences of Black women because they did not take both gender and race into consideration (Crenshaw, 1989, 1991). Prior to that and through most of the 20th century, the feminist and civil rights movements constructed their theories and political activism from frameworks that understood gender and race as distinct issues (Carbado et al., 2013). The concept of intersectionality in her 1989 and 1991 articles was adopted into feminist thought and created significant change in feminist theory over the past 25 years, and it is now widely accepted that intersectionality is

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essential to feminist thought (Davis, 2008). Intersectionality has also been adopted and adapted by psychology and other social science fields because it gives a theoretical framework in which to conceptualize the experiences of people with multiple social group identities (Carbado et al., 2013; Cole, 2009). Else-Quest and Hyde (2016) stated that there are additive, multiplicative, and intersectional effects within intersectionality and that all should be examined in intersectionality research. In light of Else-Quest and Hyde's suggestions, the current study examined how the intersection of Messianic Jews' ethnic and religious identities may have an additive, multiplicative, and/or intersectional effects.

The focus of intersectionality has primarily been on the intersection of race and gender. For example, Lewis and Neville (2015) used intersectionality as a theoretical concept in the development of a gendered racial microaggressions scale for Black women. Most studies on the intersection of race and gender use intersectionality as a theoretical framework to conceptualize the core constructs measured in the study (Bowleg et al., 2013; Capodilupo & Kim, 2014; Levant & Wong, 2013; O'Brien et al., 2015).

There has been limited research on intersectionality incorporating religion. In one qualitative study examining the influence of race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, and religion, the authors found that women of color and Muslim women experienced microaggressions because of their gender and racial or religious identities (Nadal et al., 2015). Specifically, Muslim women reported having experienced others who assumed they lacked agency because there was an assumption that the women were being forced

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to wear a hijab, which is a type of Muslim women's head covering (Nadal et al., 2015). The Muslim women also reported experiencing more harassment than Muslim men because their hijab made them more identifiable as a Muslim (Nadal et al., 2015). The interaction of female and Muslim identity creates greater levels of harassment for Muslim women. This study highlighted the effects that the intersection of religious and other social group identities can have on individuals. Another study found that religious/spiritual and LGBTQ identities interact in ways that create positive personal and spiritual growth (Rosenkrantz et al., 2016). Forty-five percent of participants reported that religious communities aided in the development of a positive LGBTQ identity, and 43% of participants reported that their LGBTQ identity led to a deeper meaning and purpose in their religious identity (Rosenkrantz et al., 2016).

In the current study, the focus was on ethnic and religious intersectionality. Ethnic and religious intersectionality has had very limited examination in the psychological intersectionality literature. An ethnographic case study by Park (2012) examined Black college students' cross-racial interactions at Christian ministries at a traditionally White university and found that the participants shared a religious identity with their White Christian peers, but their differing racial identities created experiences of unique cross-racial interactions, along with experiences of isolation and marginalization (Park, 2012). These unique cross-racial interactions showed how ethnic and religious identity interacted. Being a Black Christian involved in this mostly White ministry created identity experiences that were different from the other Black students or non-Black, Christian Students. The intersectional nature of ethnic and religious identity is likely also

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experienced by Messianic Jews. In the current study, intersectionality gave a theoretical framework through which to conceptualize how these experiences may shape Messianic Jewish identity.

History of Jewish and Christian Relations

The history of Jewish and Christian relations provides the context in which modern American Messianic Jewish identity has developed. This history has led to a majority of non-Messianic Jews and Christians understanding their religious and ethnic identities to be mutually exclusive—meaning one cannot be both a Jew and a Christian. This sense of mutual exclusivity comes from the history of Christian anti-Semitism over the last 1,800 years. This history has had a lasting effect on American cultural views of Jews. In a study of 139 undergraduate students, Pargament (2007) found a significant positive relationship between perceptions of Jews as desecrators of Christianity and anti-Semitic beliefs. Though many Christians throughout the last 2,000 years have not held beliefs or acted in anti-Semitic ways, the effect of these persecutions has been to make Christianity and Judaism culturally mutually exclusive. This cultural sense of mutual exclusivity of Jew and Christian likely creates conflicts internally and interpersonally for Messianic Jews (Yangarber-Hicks & Hicks, 2005).

In addition, Messianic Jews also see their religious identity rooted in the history of the first century Jewish followers of Yeshua. Yangarber-Hicks (2005) described the common Messianic Jewish perspective on their history: "The Messianic movement is over 2000 years old, as Yeshua and his disciples lived and taught in a Jewish religious and cultural context, bringing the Good News of salvation primarily to all layers of

Jewish society" (p. 128). A prominent leader and theologian in the Messianic Jewish Movement, Dr. Daniel Juster (2011), stated that the Yeshua-following Jews of the first and second century maintained a Jewish identity and practice along with believing that Yeshua was the Messiah and the Son of God. These first- and second-century Jewish followers of Yeshua serve as a historical model for understanding how Messianic Jews' ethnic and religious identities can coexist.

Identity Research

   Jewish identity. In order to create a framework to understand American Messianic Jewish identity, American Jewish identity must first be examined. In their phenomenological study of Jewish identity, Friedman, Friedlander, and Blustein (2005) stated, "American Jews' ethnic identity is complex, multidimensional, and highly personal, its strength depending on the individual's identification with both the cultural heritage and the faith" (p. 82). The ethnic and religious dimensions of American Jewish identity create a unique complexity rarely found in other ethnic or religious identities (Feher, 1998). Increasing the complexity of Jewish identity has been the need for Jews to continually adapt to new geographical, cultural, and political environments due to their history of diaspora.

   Jewish identity has two main components: an ethnic and religious identity. Historically Jewish identity has been bound to religious belief (i.e., Judaism), and in the modern Jewish American experience Judaism still plays a significant role (Klaff, 2006; Levine, 1986). Jewish ethnic identity also plays a significant role in Jewish identity, and in modern American Jewish context, a Jewish person can accept their ethnic identity and

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reject the Jewish religious identity. Though a Jewish religious identity is not required, a strong connection to Judaism tends to strengthen Jewish ethnic identity, which signifies the unique relationships between the ethnic and religious in Jewish identity (Friedman et al., 2005).

The unique connection of the ethnic and the religious within this identity brings about potential conflicts that do not arise within most other ethnic groups. Kollontai (2004) stated that it is acceptable in the modern Jewish community to express Jewishness through the ethnic dimension devoid of the religious/spiritual dimension: "It is only when the individual Jew takes on a new spiritual identity that problems arise" (p. 198). It is this change of spiritual/religious identity that causes problems for Messianic Jews in their relationship with the Jewish community.

Messianic Jewish identity. The study of Messianic Jewish identity has been minimal in the field of psychology. There have been two articles published in psychology journals on the topic. One is a theoretical article aimed at constructing a psychological theory for understanding Messianic Jewish identity (Yangarber-Hicks, 2005). The author argued that the identities of Messianic Jews are shaped by the same influences that shape American Jewish identity, which are Judaism and Jewish ethnic identity. In addition, she argued that Messianic Jewish identity is also shaped by Protestant Christian theology and practice; in particular, by the influence of the Charismatic movement within Christianity (Yangarber-Hicks, 2005).

The other article is an exploratory examination of the identity of Messianic Jews. The authors developed open-ended questions and Likert-type scales to collect

quantitative and qualitative data (Yangarber-Hicks & Hicks, 2005). The participants

consisted of both Jewish (*n*= 30) and Gentile adults (n= 45). For the purposes of this

study, only the results pertaining to the Messianic Jews were reviewed. The study found

that after Messianic Jews took on their Messianic Jewish religious identity, many

suffered family and friendship loss, though many experienced the rebuilding of family

relationships over time (Yangarber-Hicks & Hicks, 2005). In addition, the respondents

were asked about the effects of their Messianic Jewish religious identity on their ethnic

identity, other aspects of their life, and their sense of belonging to the Jewish or Christian

communities. A third of the Messianic Jews reported that their transition to becoming a

Messianic Jew led them to be "more Jewish," and another third reported that it was the

spiritual change after becoming a Messianic Jew that strengthened their Jewish identity.

The last third reported a myriad of responses, such as becoming more tolerant, new

religious practices, and increased interest in Israel (Yangarber-Hicks & Hicks, 2005). A

number of the Jews in this study (18%) also reported feeling little to no place in the

Jewish community after becoming a Messianic Jew, and many felt that the Christian

Church had much to learn about Messianic Jews and the Jewish heritage of Christianity.

The authors concluded that many Messianic Jews did not feel fully a part of the Jewish or

Christian community because they had a strong sense of being different or being

perceived as different from non-Messianic Jews or Christians (Yangarber-Hicks & Hicks,

2005).

Beyond psychology studies, there are several books and articles in the fields of

anthropology and religious studies that examine the identity experiences of Messianic

Jews. Many of these studies focus on the tension between the Jewish and Christian aspects of Messianic Jewish identity and examine how this tension shapes their identity (Cohn-Sherbok, 2000; Feher, 1998; Harris-Shapiro, 2000; Lipson, 1980; Kollontai, 2004, 2006). In her study of Messianic Jewish religious identity, Kollontai (2006) interviewed 60 Messianic Jews about their views of Judaism and Christianity. Participants reported that they rejected traditional Judaism because they felt it was spiritually lacking and unfulfilling, but they maintained the observance of festivals and valuing of family and community because it creates a sense of belonging and identity. They also reported rejecting traditional Christianity because of the laden anti-Semitism, the history of Christian persecution of Jews, and the lack of understanding of the Jewish heritage of Christianity (Kollontai, 2006).

All the studies discussed attempt to grapple with the ethnic and religious tension that exists within Messianic Jewish identity. The goal of the current study was to explain how Messianic Jews make meaning out of the intersection of their religious and ethnic identities. The results created a framework for understanding how Messianic Jews make meaning of their identities.

Multiracial identity research and theory. Yangarber-Hicks (2005) suggested that multiracial identity development theories could provide a framework for understanding the identity development experiences of Messianic Jews. Multiracial identity development theories about the experience of having to reconcile and make meaning out of seemingly conflicting racial identities may guide the theory generating process for Messianic Jewish identity development. In an qualitative study, Miville,

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Constantine, Baysden, and So-Lloyd (2005) identified four themes related to multiracial identity development: (a) encounters with racism; (b) reference group orientation, which is about how multiracial individuals tend to publicly identify with one of their racial/ethnic groups but personally identify with their multiracial identity; (c) "chameleon" experience, which is creating strategies to fit into multiple racial/ethnic or cultural groups; and (d) identity development in context: critical people, places, and periods, which is how important relationships, accepting places, and certain developmental periods greatly affected the participants' multiracial identity development. Messianic Jews in Miville et al.'s study reported similar themes about the experiences that shaped their identity because they were reconciling their ethnic and religious identities.

Along with empirical studies, there are many different theories about the development of multiracial identity. Shih and Sanchez (2005) suggested that many of these theories have two common elements: first, all the theories claim that there is a stage in which multiracial individuals experience tension and conflict; and second, these theories propose that the final stage is when the individual is able to accept, value, and integrate all aspects of their multiracial identity (Shih & Sanchez, 2005). Similar to multiracial identity development, Messianic Jews may experience similar common elements in the development of their Messianic Jewish identity development.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this study was to generate an emerging theory about how the intersectionality of ethnic and religious identities shape the self-identities of first

generation, adult, American Messianic Jews. In particular, this study explored how Messianic Jews make meaning of the process of becoming a Messianic Jew, how their relationship to the Jewish, Christian, and Messianic Jewish communities impacts their Messianic Jewish identity, and how Messianic Jews make meaning out of Jewish and Christian history. This study sheds some light on the experiences of Messianic Jews, who are a misunderstood and under-examined group (Yangarber-Hicks, 2005).

Methodology

Rationale for Grounded Theory Method

Grounded theory was the research methodology used for this study because it focuses on inductive strategies to generate theory, rather than using a priori assumptions to deduce a theory (Patton, 2015). Glaser and Strauss (1967) developed grounded theory as a means of inductively discovering a theory in qualitative data. Glaser and Strauss wanted to develop a method for examining the meanings created through these interactions in order to understand how groups define their realities (Fassinger, 2005). Grounded theory focuses on inductive strategies to generate theory because the inductive procedures of grounded theory allow researchers to produce theories that arise out of the data collected from the participants; these theories are therefore rooted in their context (Fassinger, 2005; Patton, 2015).

There has been little empirical investigation of the identity experiences of Messianic Jews or religious and racial/ethnic intersectionality. Therefore, grounded theory was an appropriate qualitative research tradition for this study because it led to an

emerging theory about the religious and ethnic intersectionality experiences of Messianic Jews.

Participants

There were two data sets used for this study: 19 video transcripts and eight interview transcripts. Two data sets were used for the development of crystallization, which is the use of different types of data sources to create a multifaceted presentation of the phenomenon of interest (Ellingson, 2009). Crystallization increased the validity of the results because the perspectives in the video transcripts and the interviews together allowed for a thicker description of Messianic Jews' identity development experiences than if only interview or video data had been used.

Video participants. Five women and 14 men were featured in the 19 videos selected. The people in the videos selected were determined to be first generation Messianic Jews because they discussed how their parents were not Messianic Jews. They were determined to be United States residents by the content of their video identifying that they were raised in the United States or that most of the experiences they shared took place in the United States. Their ages were not disclosed in the video; therefore, the research team determined that the people in the videos selected were adults by their appearance and the content of their story describing adult activities, such as leaving the home of their parents.

Interview participants. The interview participants were eight adult, American Messianic Jews. They ranged in age from 49 to 84 ($M = 66$, $SD = 9.53$). Three of the participants were women, and five were men. At the time of the interview, two of the

participants lived in the Northeastern United States, five lived in the Midwestern United States, and one lived in the Southwestern United States. Five of the participants were currently married, two had experienced a divorce, and one had experienced the death of a spouse. The amount of time that they self-identified as Messianic Jews ranged from more than 40 years to less than 10 years.

Procedure

The videos of Messianic Jews telling about their experiences of becoming Messianic Jews were in the public domain. The video series is called "I Met Messiah" and was created and posted on the internet by a Messianic Jewish ministry called One for Israel. In the videos, the participants discussed the struggles they had with accepting that Yeshua is the Messiah, how they overcame these struggles, and their new identity as Messianic Jews. The videos were critical friend reviewed for evangelism and increasing understanding of the Messianic Jewish experience. The primary author contacted One for Israel by email asking to use the transcripts of the videos in a study on Messianic Jewish identity. One for Israel willingly gave the transcripts of 48 videos to the primary author to use in this study. Nineteen of the 48 videos were selected based on the people in the videos being first generation, adult American Messianic Jews and the videos containing discussion of their ethnic and religious identities.

The videos were first viewed by the coders, and then the transcripts were open coded before the interviews were conducted to gain some preliminary concepts to help guide the data gathering process for the interviews. Open coding is grounded theory's initial analytic process in which the data are divided into units of meaning and labeled

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(Fassinger, 2005). After open coding of the video transcripts, the research team updated some of the questions on the interview protocol in order to capture data related to themes that were beginning to emerge in the video transcripts. In addition, the dissertation committee made additional suggestions for changes and agreed to the final version of the interview protocol used in the interviews.

All interview participants met the following inclusion criteria: (a) 18 years of age or older, (b) self-identified as a Messianic Jew, and (c) raised in a non-Messianic Jewish household. Messianic Jews for this study are defined as people who grew up in a family that identified as Jewish, self-identify as Jewish, and self-identified as Messianic Jews as an adult. The participants were limited to people who were raised in non-Messianic Jewish families because their experiences with Messianic Jewish identity would likely be different from those who grew up in Messianic Jewish families. Eight participants were chosen because Patton (2015) stated that a minimum of six were needed; eight were chosen to meet and slightly exceed the minimum.

Recruitment of participants was based on the inclusion criteria and conducted using snowball sampling, relying on the primary author's connections within Messianic Congregations and Organizations. Theoretical and purposeful sampling were both employed in the recruitment of interview participants in order to have some age, length of time as a Messianic Jew, and geographical variance in the sample. The sampling was purposeful in that the participants were selected based on having experienced the phenomenon being studied and were able to articulate it (Creswell, 2013; Patton, 2015). A recruitment script was developed to standardize the recruitment process (see Appendix

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A). The participants were given a written informed consent form (see Appendix B), and a demographic form (see Appendix C) No incentive was offered.

Each of the eight participants was interviewed once, and all interviews were recorded using a digital recorder. The length of the interviews ranged from 22 to 85 minutes, with the median being 60 minutes and the average length being 55 minutes. The interview lengths varied because the participants took differing amounts of time to discuss the topics in the interview protocol. All eight interviews were conducted over a three-month period; four participants chose to do the interview in person, and four chose to do the interview via telephone. The interviews were conducted at the preferred time and location of the participant. The researcher was the sole interviewer for all participants. The interviewer was a doctoral student in counseling psychology and had six years of therapy experience at the time of the interviews. The interviewer had never met five of the interviewees before the interview, and three were acquaintances of the interviewer prior to the interview. The interviewer built rapport with the participants by explaining the purpose of the study was to increase understanding of experiences of Messianic Jews, answering their questions, and sharing that the interviewer is a Gentile member of a Messianic congregation. It seems that the participants saw the interviewer as a partial insider because of the interviewer's experiences within Messianic Judaism as a Gentile. His experience within Messianic Judaism gave the participants a sense that the interviewer had some understanding of their experience, and being a Gentile encouraged them to explain more of their Jewish identity experiences.

The interview was guided by a semi-structured interview protocol (see Appendix D). The questions were developed from the statement of purpose, the literature reviewed, and the initial analysis of the video transcripts. The recordings were transcribed verbatim into a Word document by the researcher and two members of the research team. The transcript of their interview was returned to each participant for a participant check, which was an opportunity for the participants to clarify anything they had discussed. Most participants made little or no changes to the transcripts. One participant included an additional paragraph describing how she believed her becoming a Messianic Jew "extended" her Jewish identity rather than doing away with it. After the participant feedback had been returned and added to the transcripts, the data from the interviews were entered into QDA Miner Qualitative Text Analysis Software. QDA Miner assisted with managing the textual data, coding, and codebook for this study.

Researchers

A research team was used to increase the validity of the analysis process by making sure the researcher's assumptions were rigorously examined (Patton, 2015). The assumptions and expectations of the team were bracketed before initiating analysis (Hill, Thompson, & Williams, 1997). The bracketed assumptions and expectations were that (a) family background would significantly influence ethnic and religious identity; (b) identity development happens in stages and is linear; (c) Messianic Jewish ethnic and religious identities were assumed to be in conflict with each other because of the historical animosity between Judaism and Christianity; and (d) participants would report experiences of misunderstanding and rejection by both Christians and Jews. The research

team discussed how some members of the team would take the spiritual experiences of the participants at face value, while some of the members would tend to look for psychological explanations for the supernatural experiences. The research team decided to interpret the spiritual experiences by how the participants used them to make meaning of their Messianic Jewish identity.

The research team consisted of six members. The researcher was a 31-year-old multiracial (Caribbean Black and United States White) male doctoral student in Counseling Psychology. He grew up in a non-denominational Charismatic Christian Church and now is a Gentile member of a Messianic Jewish congregation. The other four members of the research team were Master's students in a counseling program: a 29-year-old Jewish male, who grew up in a Reformed Jewish congregation and now identifies as being secular Jewish; a 25-year-old White male who was raised in a Baptist Church and continues to identify as a Baptist; a 25-year old White female who grew up going to Catholic Church and still identifies as a Catholic; a 31-year-old Korean American male who was raised in a Presbyterian church and now belongs to a church that is affiliated with Charismatic Christianity; and a 59-year-old White male who grew up as a Southern Baptist and then converted to Catholicism as a young adult. Over time this team member began to explore other religions and spirituality, and he now identifies as a Buddhist.

The primary researcher had prior experience on qualitative research teams and was trained in grounded theory research methods through an advanced qualitative research graduate class. The team was trained as a group in grounded theory by the

primary researcher using materials from the graduate level qualitative research class. In addition, the team read two recently published articles that utilized the grounded theory approach to ensure that everyone on the team was comfortable with its application. Each member of the team participated in coding a transcript from the "I Met Messiah" videos to practice coding, and after coding had been completed, the primary researcher discussed the process with the research team and answered any questions. After this period of training, the team members were divided into pairs, and each pair was given six transcripts to first code independently and then meet to discuss to consensus. The consensus codes were entered into a qualitative analysis software. After the interviews had been conducted and transcribed, the pair-based coding was conducted on the interview transcripts. The coded video and interview transcripts were both placed into one data set for the rest of the grounded theory analysis. Throughout the data analysis, the research team gave their feedback to the theory development. Their knowledge of the data was important for validity.

Data Analysis

The documents and interviews were analyzed using a Straussian approach to grounded theory. As stated earlier, the first step in this process was open coding, which is the dividing up of the data into units of meaning and giving labels (Fassinger, 2005). The units of meaning were then compared to one another and grouped into conceptual codes (Grbich, 2013). After the interview data was subsequently open coded, the conceptual codes from the documents and interviews together were used in the next stage of the grounded theory analysis. Some examples of conceptual codes used in the current study

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were "Experiences of dissatisfaction with traditional Judaism" and "Messianic Jews having to explain and justify their identity."

The next step in grounded theory analysis was axial coding. Axial coding is the process of grouping the conceptual codes into larger "key" categories with related conceptual codes and checking these relationships with the data (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). The constant comparison is to continue until theoretical saturation has occurred, referring to a point at which the description of the key categories is sufficiently dense and complex, and when no new information is being discovered that adds to the description (Fassinger, 2005; Glaser & Strauss, 1999). The process of theoretical saturation allowed for the development of the key categories, which were the building blocks of the emerging theory of Messianic Jewish identity development. Some examples of axial codes used in the current study were "Experiences that maintain Messianic Jewish identity" and "Family and friend relationships."

Theoretical memos were used by the research team to aid the analysis process. Theoretical memos are the documenting of the researchers' theoretical ideas as they emerge during the data gathering and analysis process (Strauss, 1987). Memo writing is an important technique for grounded theory analysis because it assists with the development of conceptual codes by capturing the researchers' ideas of the themes and patterns in the data as they are coding (Charmaz, 2014). At the completion of the analysis, the ideas captured in theoretical memos are then used in the development of the theory. As themes and patterns began to arise during the analysis, the team members

recorded their ideas in theoretical memos; these ideas aided the discovery of the theory of Messianic Jewish identity.

The final stage of grounded theory analysis, called selective coding, was led by the researcher with feedback and input from the research team. Selective coding is the process by which a theory emerges through unifying all the key categories around a "core" category (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). The three selective codes that arose from the current study were how Messianic Jews make meaning of the intersection of their ethnic and religious identity through (a) meaningful experiences, (b) meaningful relationships, and (c) meaningful reasons.

After the final stage of the analysis was concluded, the results were written up. In order to increase the validity of the results, the write-up was reviewed by Dr. Natalia Yangarber-Hicks, who is a Messianic Jewish psychology professor. She was chosen as a subject matter expert to be a critical friend reviewer of the results. A critical friend reviewer is a trusted person who asks critical questions, offers additional perspectives, and gives critiques of a qualitative study (Patton, 2015). Her feedback was that the results of the study were comprehensive and meaningful, and they matched the major themes she had seen in other Messianic Jewish narratives. One theme she thought was missing from the results was the experience of some Messianic Jews of continuing loss and mourning over the separation they experienced from the Jewish community by becoming Messianic Jews. After this feedback, the primary researcher reviewed the data and found no reference in the data sets about continuing loss and mourning about the separation the participants experienced from the Jewish community. This may be due to the interview

questions not eliciting those types of responses. The feedback from the subject matter expert was incorporated into this study to increase the validity of the results.

Results

The video and interview transcripts were analyzed, and three selective codes were found, with three to four axial codes establishing each selective code (see Table 1). The selective codes represent the emerging theory of American Messianic Jewish identity development. The following section is organized into three parts describing the three selective codes, and the axial codes are described in subsections. The names of the interview participants have been changed to pseudonyms to protect their identity..

The emerging theory that arose from the Messianic Jewish stories and interviews the team analyzed dealt with the intersectionality of their Jewish ethnic identity and their religious identity in three main areas. They constructed and maintained Messianic Jewish identity through (a) meaningful experiences that support and validate their identity, (b) meaningful relationships that give a sense of group identity and belonging, and (c) meaningful reasons that give logical, theological, and historical justification for their identity. All three areas of support can be areas of struggle when there is a lack of support or outright rejection.

Meaningful Experiences (Selective)

Findings indicated that there are many experiences that played a role in the development and maintenance of participants' Messianic Jewish identity. Most

Table 1
Selective, Axial, and Open Codes

Selective	Axial	Open
I. Meaningful Experiences	Dissatisfaction Experiences	Experiences of Dissatisfaction with their pre-Messianic Lifestyle
		Experiences of Dissatisfaction with Traditional Judaism
	Adoption of Identity Experiences	Experiences of Dissatisfaction with non-Jewish Religions Supernatural Experiences
		Critical Life Experiences
		Participants Life Style Changes after Becoming a Messianic Jew.
	Experiences that Maintain Identity	Experiences of Anti-Semitism
		Conflict with the Culture of Origin.
		Forced Choice Dilemma Experiences
II. Meaningful Relationships	Family and Friend Relationships	Discussing their Jewish Family Background
		Family's Response to the Participant becoming a Messianic Jew
		Family/Friends Experiences as Messianic Jews
	Relationship with the Christian Community	Experiences w/ Christians – Before Becoming a Messianic Jew
		Experiences w/ Christians – After Becoming a Messianic Jew
		Dissatisfaction with the Christian Community's Support of their Messianic Jewish Identity
	Relationship with the Jewish Community	Experiences w/ Jewish Community – Before Becoming a Messianic Jew
		Experiences w/ Jewish Community – After Becoming a Messianic Jew
		Experiences of Family/Jewish Community Rejection for Becoming a Messianic Jew
		Participants' Statements about their Fear of Rejection by their Jewish Family and the Jewish Community
	Relationship with the Messianic Jewish Community	Experiences w/ Messianic Jews – Before Becoming a Messianic Jew
		Experiences w/ Messianic Jews– After Becoming a Messianic Jew
		Dissatisfaction with the Messianic Jewish Community's supports their Messianic Jewish Identity
III. Meaningful Reasons	Doubts about Messianic Judaism and Christianity	Hesitation/Doubt about Messianic Judaism
		Reasons for Rejecting Christianity
		Reasons for Rejecting Messianic Judaism
		Reasons from the Bible that Validated their Messianic Jewish identity
	Overcoming Hesitancy	The Reasons Coming from Yeshua being Jewish and the Messiah of Israel
		The Reasons they became a follower of Yeshua
	Maintaining and Strengthening Identity	Messianic Jewish Identity Integration
		Messianic Jews are having to Explain and Justify their Identity
		How the History of Jewish and Christian Relations Shaped their Understanding of their Identity

participants experienced dissatisfaction with traditional Judaism because it did not offer them a sense of meaning and spiritual fulfillment. Some experienced dissatisfaction with their secular lifestyle, meaning when they were living their life without being guided by religion or spirtuality. Meaningful experiences, such as supernatural encounters with dreams and visions, often led them on the journey towards their new identity. After adopting their Messianic Jewish identity, there were experiences, such as Christian anti-Semitism, that challenged their Messianic Jewish identity, but the positive experiences served as anchors that reinforced their identity when challenges to their identity would come.

Dissatisfaction experiences (axial). Experiences of dissatisfaction were common among the participants' stories. They often had experiences that led to their dissatisfaction with their traditional Judaism. For example, Mike, from one of the video stories, often felt that the practices he experienced in traditional Judaism were not able to bring lasting peace to his life. He reflected on the experience saying:

> I tried, I put the leather straps, the phylacteries on, I washed my hands, and then I would forget, and I'd feel guilty, and I realized, you know, you're just not good enough… or I'd fast on Yom Kippur, and the rabbi would say, "Your name is written in the Book of Life." I just remember feeling like, well first it wasn't bringing me peace, and second, how does he know?...If there is a God, he's going to sort of want more than just a fast one day a year or wrapping leather straps; he's going to want more than that.

Mike's dissatisfaction with traditional Judaism was a common theme among the participants. They often discussed how the traditional practices in Judaism became meaningless because of a lack of spiritual significance. The participation in religious holidays, synagogue services, and other practices of traditional Judaism would often be

described as feeling like religious ritual devoid of meaning. Some reported being totally

disillusioned with Judaism and God and became atheists or agnostics. Others reported

gaining a desire for a greater relationship with God that they would search for beyond

Judaism. A few mentioned having negative experiences with rabbis or other religious

leaders. Thom described an experience as a child after the death of his father, who was a

secular Jew, when his family asked an Orthodox rabbi to do his father's funeral. The

rabbi responded, "Now that he dies, you want to become Jews?" After this experience,

Thom did not want anything to do with Judaism until he became a Messianic Jew years

later. Dissatisfaction with traditional Judaism often led participants to search for other

ways to gain fulfillment and meaning.

One of the ways participants went searching for fulfillment and meaning was

through secular pursuits, such as becoming wealthy or gaining renown. The pursuit of

wealth or renown would lead to lifestyle dissatisfaction. Thom described his experience

with lifestyle dissatisfaction by saying:

> My goal in life was to earn a lot of money. Because if I had money, I would have
> power. If I had power, I would have influence….And I was talking with a
> respected businessman, and he was talking about meaning and purpose. And he
> said, "You have to have meaning and purpose in your life, and it's got to be more
> than money." That was shocking to me….It's kinda like…I got punched in the
> stomach, and I couldn't chase that anymore.

Thom's experiences were reflected in the stories of other participants. Some reported

having worked hard to pursue wealth and success and finding it meaningless and

spiritually empty. They were dissatisfied with how they were living and what they were

living for. Other participants, such as Betty, an 84-year-old woman who became a

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Messianic Jew in young adulthood, would search for meaning and fulfillment through hedonistic pursuits, such as partying, dancing, and substance use. Betty stated,

> I just felt an emptiness. And I remember we would go to dances…and I loved to dance, and I remember being in a crowd of people, having fun, and yet there was still a small voice inside of me saying, "What is this all about?" "What are you doing here?"

Other participants echoed her sentiment that their lifestyle had become meaningless. The experiences seeking pleasure for pleasure's sake left them longing for something with deeper meaning and purpose. The search led some to explore other religions besides Judaism or Christianity. Their exploration continued until they were presented with Messianic Jewish religious expression. Deborah, from one of the video stories, expressed how her dissatisfaction with other religions became evident when she was exposed to Messianic Judaism. Deborah stated, "Now I had read about Buddha and Krishna and all these other gods out there, but when he spoke these words of Yeshua, I knew it was a miracle, it was like God opened my eyes." Experiences of dissatisfaction in different areas of life encouraged many of the participants to begin their journey into a Messianic Jewish identity.

Adoption of identity experiences (axial). The participants spoke of significant experiences that led to the adoption of their Messianic Jewish identity. The experiences could be described in two ways: one type was a difficult life event, such as the loss of a loved one, a serious injury, or a mental health issue. Lance, from one of the video stories, discussed a difficult experience as a child. "When I was eleven years old, my mother contracted brain cancer. They had cut open her skull, and she died from that, shortly thereafter." Lance began to think about the afterlife and God, which began his journey

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towards becoming a Messianic Jew as an adult. As with Lance, the participants' difficult life events were catalysts for their search for meaning that led to the adoption of a Messianic Jewish identity.

The second type of experience leading to the adoption of a Messianic Jewish identity was a supernatural encounter. Every participant in this study mentioned supernatural experiences as a part of their journey to becoming a Messianic Jew. These supernatural experiences took on many forms, such as visions, dreams, encounters with supernatural forces, and life experiences that seemed to be ordained by God. Betty described a supernatural encounter with Yeshua:

> She (a roommate of Betty's) was praying Our Father and all of a sudden, I had my eyes closed, and I felt something take hold of my hand and raise my hand. And being a normal curious Jew, I opened my eyes to see who had a hold of my hand because I knew there was no one in the house but her and I. She was kneeling at the table, and there was no one there. But I felt the presence of someone holding my hand. And when I did, this warm feeling flooded over me, and I said: "Yeshua, I love you."

This supernatural encounter with Yeshua initiated Betty's journey to become a Messianic Jew because she had no doubts that he was God after this experience. Supernatural experiences such as Betty's often served as a catalyst for and confirmation of participants' adoption of a Messianic Jewish identity. These experiences seemed to serve as experiential foundations upon which participants' Messianic Jewish identity was built, a foundation that aided their identity's survival through the winds and rain of misunderstanding, rejection, and loss.

Experiences affecting maintainance of identity (axial). The participants in this study also described experiences that aided or made it difficult to maintain their

Messianic Jewish identity. Experiences that aided their Messianic Jewish identity were those that represented how becoming a Messianic Jew improved their lives. In one of the video stories, Dave talked about struggling with suicide in a conversation with a friend about life, God, and Yeshua. After he became a Messianic Jew, he stated,

> I was a new person, and I didn't want to kill myself anymore because I had an answer to the pain, and I was able to keep moving forward as I sorted my life out and found meaning and purpose with Yeshua.

The relief from depression and suicidal ideation that came from becoming a Messianic Jew became a source of support for his Messianic Jewish identity. The positive changes brought about by their Messianic Jewish identity serve as a strong support in the maintenance of participants' identity.

The experiences that made it difficult to maintain a Messianic Jewish identity were those that pitted their Messianic religious identity against their Jewish identity. Experiences of anti-Semitism were often connected to Christianity, which created this sense of incompatibility to being Jewish and being a Christian. Jeff, from one of the video stories, described an experience of anti-Semitism he had as a child that was similar to many experiences shared by other participants. Jeff stated:

> Three o'clock and we just happened to run into these Catholic school girls. They just started berating us. Calling us names and punching some of the other boys. And they were calling us "Christ-killers." The only kind of Christians, I'd imagined, were Catholics. I knew the Catholics knew the New Testament. That was their Bible. And I just felt that this was a very anti-Semitic book. This had nothing to do with Judaism. If anything, it had to do with beating up the Jews or getting the Jews.

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The anti-Semitism Jeff and many participants experienced made it difficult to reconcile their Jewish ethnic identity with a Messianic religious identity because of Messianic Judaism's historical connection to Christianity.

The participants also discussed the difficulties they experienced due to the mutually exclusive understanding of Judaism and Christianity in the broader culture. Mordechai, from one of the video stories, had a difficult time reconciling the fact that Yeshua was Jewish. Seeing Yeshua as a Jew did not fit his cultural narrative. Mordechai explained his struggle:

> Growing up, we always understood that we had our Bible and the Gentiles had their Bible – the New Testament – and that they were two completely separate books. Because the only people I knew who were believers in Yeshua were all people in our public school who were Italian Catholic I imagined that Yeshua was Italian and so the understanding that he's actually Jewish was a shock.

Mordechai's understanding of Yeshua and Christianity before becoming a Messianic Jew was common among the participants. Many discussed being shocked when they found out that Yeshua and his first followers were Jewish, and many stated that they had difficulty accepting that Jews could be followers of Yeshua because they had always been told that Jews are not followers of Yeshua.

The cultural narrative of mutual exclusivity of Jewish identity and following Yeshua made the maintenance of Messianic Jewish identity difficult after the participants became Messianic Jews. Miryam, a 65-year-old who became a Messianic Jew in young adulthood, expressed that she and her husband had difficulty explaining their Messianic Jewish identity to their children. She stated, "So when they (her children) became older they asked us, 'Well are we Christian or a Jew?'" The forced choice dilemma that

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Miryam and her children struggled with represents the power of this cultural narrative. The participants would use a combination of their meaningful experiences, meaningful relationships, and meaningful reasons to overcome the tension of this narrative and to bring a sense of wholeness to their Jewish identity and their Messianic Jewish religious identity.

Meaningful Relationships (Selective)

For the participants, meaningful relationships are important for the development and maintenance of their Messianic Jewish identity. Positive relationships create a sense of belonging through group identity and support, which is especially true for those who lost relationships with friends and family because of their Messianic Jewish identity. Negative relationships make holding on to their Messianic Jewish identity painful and costly. The participants discussed four main communities when talking about meaningful relationships: (a) family and friends, (b) Jewish Community, (c) Christian community, and (d) the Messianic Jewish community.

Family and friend relationships (axial). Family and friend relationships can make Messianic Jewish identity stronger if the family and friends are supportive or more difficult if there is rejection from the family or friends for their Messianic identity. Brian, from one of the video stories, described the experience of telling his parents about becoming a Messianic Jew:

> And at the end of that conversation, my mother, in only the way a Jewish mother could do, turned to me and she said, "Brian, you mean it's been a year since you had this experience with God? And while I don't think of it the way you think of it, I'm happy for you, I love you," and she gave me a big hug. My father was equally gracious but much more restrained. I'll never forget, he said, "I don't

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know why you're wrong, but I know you're wrong, and I'm going to have you
meet with a great Jewish rabbi to explain to you why you're wrong."

Brian's experience contained both acceptance and rejection of this Messianic identity.
His mother was happy for him, and his father wanted to show him how his new religious
identity was wrong. All the participants experienced different combinations of rejection
and acceptance from their family and friends. The reaction to the rejection was well
described by Jason, a 64-year-old who became a Messianic Jew in his late thirties, who
stated, "It hasn't been very well received in my family, at all. They haven't disowned me
or thrown me out, but it's close to off limits to talk about…which is disheartening." The
experience of being disheartened by the rejection of family or friends was common. Not
being able to talk or share about a significant part of one's identity with friends or family
is a painful cost for adopting a new religious identity. The participants who experienced
little to no rejection by family seemed to express less difficulty with making meaning out
of their Messianic Jewish identity because they had the acceptance or support from a
major faction of their support system.

Relationship with the Jewish community (axial). Many of the Messianic Jews
discussed how their connection to the Jewish community was a pivotal part of their
Jewish identity. Richard, from one of the video stories, discussed the importance of being
a part of the Jewish community as it relates to Jewish identity by saying, "We were very
proud of being Jewish – all my grandparents were Eastern European Jews...I was Bar
Mitzvahed in the Orthodox synagogue, as were my two brothers. That sense of Jewish
continuity and Jewish existence was very, very prominent." Richard's sense of Jewish
identity as tied to being a part of the Jewish community, such as being Bar Mitzvahed in

an Orthodox synagogue, was shared by many of the participants. The relationship to the Jewish community they highly valued became threatened by their adoption of a Messianic Jewish identity.

Dinah, a 68-year-old who became a Messianic Jew in young adulthood, experienced the rejection by the Jewish community that many of the participants faced. She said:

> That was hard. In the beginning, I still wanted to be hooked in with the Jewish community. In fact, I don't know how they found out that several of us were believers. I went to a service that was forming a group called Christians and Jews United for Israel. They were having lunch...I tried to join the group, and they wouldn't let me join. Here it was united for Israel, but they knew I was a believer so they wouldn't accept me.

Dinah's experience of rejection was common among the participants. Some were not allowed to participate in Jewish religious or cultural organizations. Others had meetings with Jewish religious leaders who were trying to convince them not to be a Messianic Jew. Most participants believe that their Jewish identity has been questioned or rejected by most of the Jewish community because of their Messianic identity.

A few of the participants did not experience rejection by the Jewish community. Gamliel, a 68-year-old who became a Messianic Jew in his fifties, said:

> I would say I haven't experienced rejection or hostility. But to the Jewish people, I have witnessed to have expressed tolerance. In other words, it's ok for you to be here for me to talk to you but, just so you know, you're not going to convert me. That's sort of the way it feels. There's no real rejection or anger so far.

Gamliel's experience of tolerance from those in the Jewish community seemed to result in less tension between his Jewish identity and his Messianic Jewish identity. In his interview, Gamliel did not discuss tension with the Jewish community, but he said that

his desire to connect with the Jewish community increased after he became a Messianic Jew. Most of the participants who did experience some level of acceptance by the Jewish community shared that their interest in connecting with the Jewish community increased when their Messianic Jewish identity was tolerated or accepted by people in the Jewish community.

Relationship with the Christian community (axial). The relationship Messianic Jews have with the Christian community is multifaceted. When participants experienced support from people in the Christian community, their Messianic Jewish identity was strengthened. The experiences of rejection or misunderstanding from people in the Christian community were a detriment to the Messianic Jewish identities of the participants. For many of the participants, the first introduction to a Messianic Jewish identity came from a Gentile Christian. Marion, from one of the video stories, spoke about her first introduction to Yeshua:

> When I was 10, they hired a housekeeper and cook named Belle. She loved God – she read her Bible all the time, and she was always there for me. I don't know what made me do it, but I asked her if you needed to believe in Yeshua to spend eternity with God, and she said, "Yes." I never forgot that conversation.

Marion's experience was common among the participants. They were introduced to Yeshua by a Gentile Christian, and they would find Yeshua and the Gentile Christian intriguing because of certain characteristics, such as being loving, compassionate, and spiritually fulfilled.

In addition to introducing the participants to Yeshua and the Bible, some Gentile Christians would value the participant's Jewish identity. Milton, a 49-year-old who became a Messianic Jew in young adulthood, spoke about one of these experiences:

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And it wasn't until I had met Luke and Esther, both of them are Gentiles. He … started talking to me and asking me questions about who my parents were, and I told him that my father was raised Orthodox, and he goes "Oh cool. You're Jewish, and you believe in Yeshua." You know, and it was like it was the first time anyone had in effect spoken blessing over my Jewish heritage and my Jewish identity.

The experience of his Jewish identity being valued by Gentile Christians led Milton to learn more about his Jewish identity and eventually take on a Messianic Jewish identity. Gentile Christians supporting Jewish identity was important because when some participants were first introduced to Yeshua, they tried to take on a Christian identity. When participants experienced Gentile Christians supporting their Jewish identity, it allowed them to work out how their Jewish ethnic identity and belief in Yeshua as the Messiah could fit together in a meaningful way. Messianic Judaism was the identity framework that brought their ethnic and religious identities together.

Though the support that some Gentile Christians gave for Messianic Jewish identity was beneficial, there were some Gentile Christians who either rejected or misunderstood Messianic Jewish identity. Levi, a 67-year-old who became a Messianic Jew in middle adulthood, experienced many negative encounters with the Christian community. He stated, "I've had a lot more negative feedback from the Christian community than I have the Jewish community…part of it is I'm visibly Jewish; I wear a kippah… I'm observant." Levi's experience was more intense than those of the other participants because of being the most visibly Jewish, but the experience of feeling their Jewish identity being rejected or misunderstood was common among the participants' stories. Miryam stated, "The churches I was going to I would get angry when the pastor would say something, and I would say wait a minute, this feels a little anti-Semitic to

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me." Expressions of supersessionistic theology or outright anti-Semitism by Christian pastors or congregants made the participants feel unwelcome in those congregations. Many had experiences of leaving churches they were attending because of feeling unwelcome. The experiences of being rejected by the Jewish community and the Christian community led many participants to feel that they could not be fully accepted in either of these communities. Therefore, many participants searched for belonging within the Messianic Jewish community.

Relationship with the Messianic Jewish community (axial). The participants' relationship with the Messianic Jewish Community often supported their Messianic Jewish identity because this new community was connected to their ethnic and religious identities. It could also be detrimental when the Messianic Jewish community was not adequately supporting their Jewish identity.

When they first encountered Messianic Jews and Messianic Jewish congregations, many participants discussed how they were surprised that there were other Jews who also believed in Yeshua and were amazed by the Jewish cultural expression in the congregational service. Gamliel reflected on his first experience visiting a Messianic Jewish congregation with a Christian friend:

> He says to me "Well, what about Messianic Jews?" I said, "What are those? I don't know what Messianic Jews are." He said, "Those are Jews who accept Yeshua as Messiah"…I found out there's this Messianic congregation… So, I reluctantly agreed… and it was just an amazing experience to me.

The amazing part of the experience for Gamliel was the Jewish nature of the Messianic Jewish service. He was "drinking in" the teachings on the Jewishness of Yeshua and the New Testament. Many of the participants had similar experiences. The expression of

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Jewish culture in the Messianic Jewish service helped the participants begin to integrate their Jewish identity and their belief in Yeshua as the Messiah.

All the participants found involvement in a Messianic Jewish congregation beneficial to their identity development, but two difficult issues regarding Messianic Jewish congregations were mentioned by the participants. The first difficulty was the high number of Gentiles in Messianic Jewish congregations. The presence of Gentiles in the congregations could be a challenge because the participants felt that sometimes they tried to "pretend" to be Jewish. Some of the participants found the Gentile use of Jewish identity markers as offensive because they seem to be appropriating Jewish culture. Miryam discussed her perspective on the Gentiles in Messianic Jewish congregations:

> For the most part, there are still more Gentiles than Jews in a messianic congregation… Knowing that (they are) a Gentile and (they are) celebrating the Jewish festivals, which is fine. But don't be wearing tallit and changing your name to a Jewish name and all that. That turns me off.

Maryam is fine with Gentile participation in Messianic congregations, but she finds Gentile appropriations of Jewish identity markers offensive. When participants experienced Jewish identity appropriations in Messianic Jewish contexts, they have found it difficult to participate in these congregations because it brought confusion about that Jewish identity.

One participant also discussed how important it was to him that there be Messianic Jewish congregations whose services were conducted in a way similar to traditional Judaism instead of having more of a Christian style religious service. Levi said:

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> While I recognize there is a place for more churchy congregations, for lack of a better word. There is also a need for less churchy ones, and there's not many of those around. I can count on one hand ones I know of. And that's a problem, you know because there's a pretty good-sized Jewish population that's not willing to walk into a church. They just aren't comfortable. With good reason, you know. I mean when I go to congregations, and they do things, and it makes me cringe.

Levi's concern about Jewish expression in Messianic Jewish congregations seems to come from a sense that many non-Messianic Jews would not feel comfortable in a context that feels like a church. His concern also seems to be rooted in the value he places in Jewish religious expression because for him it is deeply tied to Jewish identity. Though most of the participants spoke about valuing Jewish identity, Levi was the only participant who spoke about the importance of having more Jewish expression and less Christian expression in Messianic Jewish congregations. His perspective is representative of the deep connection between Jewish religious expression and Jewish identity found in previous studies (Friedman et al., 2005; Klaff, 2006; Levine, 1986).

Meaningful Reasons (Selective)

Many of the participants discussed the reasons they used to give meaning to their identity garnered from the Bible, theology, and history. Meaningful reasons gave Messianic Jews arguments that allowed them to overcome their prior hesitancy to believing in Yeshua and a sense of meaning and purpose regarding their Messianic Jewish identity. These reasons tend to be arguments for the legitimacy of their identity as Jews who believe in Yeshua. The reasons for their identity serve as protection from assaults against the validity of their identity as Messianic Jews.

Doubts about Messianic Judaism and Christianity (axial). Most of the participants described having concerns and doubts about Messianic Judaism and

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Christianity before they became Messianic Jews, and as part of their journey to becoming

Messianic Jews, they had to find reasons that overcame these concerns and doubts. The

reasons they were concerned and doubtful about Messianic Judaism and Christianity

were often because of the idea that Jews did not believe in Yeshua. Gamliel explained,

> Even among reformed Jews, you don't worship Yeshua….And you just know in your heart that believing and worshiping Yeshua as a Jewish God is not a Jewish thing. It's not something…I would lose my identity as a Jew if I did that.

The fear of losing one's Jewish identity was an often-cited reason the participants were

hesitant about becoming Messianic Jews because before becoming a Messianic Jew they

did not think one could be Jewish and believe in Yeshua.

Another reason often cited by the participants was that they could not believe in

Yeshua because he was the reason for the history of Christian anti-Semitism. Deborah

expressed this reason:

> I thought, "Oh my gosh, a Yeshua freak? This is no good." After all, I was raised in a home where Yeshua was never mentioned, in fact, if we said his name it was like saying the worst profanity, and we'd get our mouth washed out with soap. I was raised in a home where my mom was taught when she was a child that it was all Yeshua's fault that Jews had been murdered and persecuted throughout the ages and that Hitler was a Christian.

Deborah was expressing fear of belonging to a group that she believed was responsible

for the persecution and oppression of her people. For many of the participants, this fear of

belonging to a group that is responsible for anti-Semitism was a major hindrance to

becoming Messianic Jews. They had to overcome this fear by finding reasons that

showed that Yeshua and the first Messianic Jews were not anti-Semitic but were God-

fearing Jews who held on to their Jewish identity.

Overcoming hesitancy (axial). Discovering reasons that allowed them to overcome their hesitancy to becoming Messianic Jews was an important part of participants' identity development. Because their hesitancy was often based on fears of losing their Jewish identity or belonging to an anti-Semitic group, the factors that allowed them to overcome their fears were related to the Jewish identity of Yeshua and the Jewish nature of the New Testament.

The understanding of Yeshua being Jewish was uncommon for the participants before they became Messianic Jews. The realization that Yeshua was Jewish brought tremendous change in Mordechai's understanding of Yeshua. He initially thought that Yeshua would have been anti-Jewish because of all the Christian anti-Semitic behavior he had experienced and learned about, but as he learned of Yeshua's Jewish identity and how his life was foretold in the Hebrew Bible, his perspective of Yeshua changed. Mordechai explains how his perspective changed:

> This is not a person who is a renegade to our people. This was the One who was promised in our Bible. The fifty-third chapter of Isaiah – it is astonishing. If you would just read that chapter without the Bible being around it, you would say, "Uh! This is some Christian Bible – this is Yeshua." When you realize though that it's in the middle of our Bible, our Jewish Bible...

Mordechai's perspective change was similar to that of many other participants. The understanding of Yeshua as Jewish and as the One foretold in the Hebrew Bible became a reason that overcame many of the participants' doubts.

The other issue that made the participants hesitant was their understanding of the New Testament. Many were told never to read the New Testament, and that it was for Christians and not for Jews. Ari, from one of the video stories, described his first

experience reading the New Testament, stating, "When I read the New Testament for the first time – which I had not wanted to read – but when I read it, I was really just surprised and shocked that this was Jewish!" His expression of shock and surprise at the Jewish nature of the New Testament was common among the participants. Understanding the Jewish historical context of the New Testament became a reason for the overcoming of their doubts. The argument was if the writers of the New Testament were Jewish and wrote in a Jewish context, then it must also be acceptable for Jews today to believe what these Jews did 2,000 years ago. Therefore, the understanding of the Jewish nature of the New Testament became another reason that overcame many of the participants' doubts. These reasons allowed them to connect to the Jewishness of Yeshua and the New Testament in a way that bypassed the obstacle of the history of Christian anti-Semitism and the mutually exclusive understanding of Jewish and Christian identity.

Support and strengthening identity (axial). As the participants took on their Messianic Jewish identity, they developed reasons that supported and strengthened their identity. There were two main themes to the reasons: (a) reasons for how their Jewish identity was supported and strengthened by becoming a Messianic Jew and (b) the reasons for how their lives improved after becoming Messianic Jews.

Betty described how she understood her Jewish identity considering her Messianic Jewish religious identity. She said:

> People used to say to me all the time "Oh you converted." I would say "No, I am not converted, I am extended." You don't convert, you extend….You grow from that. That's all visible along the way. It's like walking up steps. The other thing I wanted to tell you are. Yeshua was born a Jew; he lived as a Jew, he died as a Jew. He will also resurrect as a Jew. We are no different than he.

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Betty's understanding of her Jewish identity reflected the perspective of most of the participants. Many expressed that they do not believe their Jewish identity was diminished in any way by becoming a Messianic Jew, and many even mentioned that they were more engaged with their Jewish identity after becoming a Messianic Jew. Some clearly stated that they do not identify as a Christian. Levi stated, "I don't identify as a Christian in any way. I identify as a Jew. I'm a Jewish believer, but I am a Jew." The distancing from a Christian identity was not expressed as strongly by the other participants, but many expressed having an identity distinct from Christian to some degree. Having a identity distinct from Christianity seemed to serve as another means to preserve their Jewish identity.

Most of the participants discussed how their lives improved after becoming Messianic Jews. Thom discussed the emotional healing he experienced after becoming a Messianic Jew:

> That hurt and that pain that I had over my father dying in my arms after the argument. I finally was able to put that to rest. And there was some real peace there. I guess for the first time, when you're forgiven, you're set free so that you can embrace the peace that God wants us all to have.

The emotional healing, freedom from addiction, restored relationships, and other improvements in their lives seemed to serve as strong reasons for their Messianic Jewish identity. The reasons seemed to be that what they believe as Messianic Jews must be true because of the positive effect it has had on their lives. Both the Jewish identity reasons and the improved life reasons serve as foundational reasons that sustain a Messianic Jewish identity.

Discussion

The results of this study provide insight into how Messianic Jews experience the intersectionality of their religious and ethnic identities. The grounded theory described in the purpose of the study was derived from eight interviews and 19 videos expressing the experiences of 27 American, adult Messianic Jews who were raised in non-Messianic Jewish families. The participants' discussion of their experiencs related to the intersection of their ethnic identity and their religious identity centered on three main facets that affect Messianic Jewish identity: experiences, relationships, and reasons. These three facets cover most of the psychological and social factors that shape identity development. Similar to Erikson's identity development theory, the resolution of the conflict between the internal and external tensions the participants experienced related to their ethnic and religious identities led to the development of their Messianic Jewish identity (Broderick & Blewitt, 2014; Erikson, 1968). The conflict was between the mutually exclusive understanding of Jewish and Christian identity within the Jewish community, Christian community, and the broader American culture and the Messianic Jews' desire to believe in Yeshua as Messiah and retain their Jewish ethnic identity. For American Messianic Jews, their religious and ethnic identity intersection is experienced simultaneously because the exclusive understanding of Jewish and Christian identity is pervasive in American culture (Cho et al, 2013).

The results of this study found that the Messianic Jews did have some similar identity development experiences to those experienced by the multiracial participants in Miville et al.'s (2005) study. The experiences of rejection or acceptance from the Jewish

and Christian communities significantly affected the identity development of the participants. The Messianic Jews also experienced identity development in context: critical people, places, and periods (Miville et al., 2005). In addition, the two common elements suggested by Shih and Sanchez (2005) also held true for Messianic Jewish identity development: (a) all multiracial identity development theories hold that there is a stage in which individuals experience tension and conflict about their multiple racial identities; and (b) the final stage is when the individual can accept, value, and integrate all aspects of their multiracial identity. All the participants described experiencing tension and conflict about their Jewish ethnic identity and believing in Yeshua, and all came to a place where they accepted, valued, and integrated the different aspects of their Messianic Jewish identity. The results showed that Messianic Jewish identity develops in a similar way to multiracial identity.

Meaningful Experiences

The effect meaningful experiences had for the development of the participants' Messianic Jewish identity reflect the findings of Friedman, Friedlander, and Blustein's (2005) phenomenological study of Jewish identity. Friedman et al. (2005) found that all their Jewish participants discussed how important formative childhood, adolescent, and young adult experiences were for the development of their Jewish identity. The impact of these experiences during formative times was found for the participants of this study. Most began their journey towards Messianic Jewish identity during young adulthood, and it was during this period that they had supportive and unsupportive identity development experiences.

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Many participants experienced dissatisfaction with traditional Judaism because it did not offer them a sense of meaning and spiritual fulfillment, and this finding is similar to the findings in Kollontai's (2006) study. Kollontai (2006) interviewed 60 Messianic Jews about their views of Judaism and Christianity and found that Messianic Jews rejected traditional Judaism because they believed it was spiritually lacking and unfulfilling. Kollontai (2006) also found that Messianic Jews maintained the observance of Jewish festivals and Jewish value of family and community because it allowed them to maintain a sense of their Jewish identity and a sense of belonging to the Jewish community. The findings of the current study again aligned with Kollonati (2006) in that both studies found that Messianic Jews had difficulty accepting traditional Christianity because of the history of Christian anti-Semitism. The dissatisfaction with traditional Judaism, the desire to maintain Jewish religious observance and identity, and the history of Christian anti-Semitism create intersectional effects, meaning that Messianic Jews have unique idenity experiences due to the intersection of these differnet experiences (Else-Quest & Hyde, 2016). Experiencing supernatural encounters and experiencing positive life changes helped them to adopt and maintain their Messianic Jewish identity.

Meaningful Relationships

Messianic Jews experienced both positive and negative impacts on relationships because of their Messianic Jewish identity. Many participants experienced lost or damaged relationships with family and friends in the Jewish community because of their Messianic Jewish identity. This finding was similar to a study that found Messianic Jews suffered family and friendship loss (Yangarber-Hicks & Hicks, 2005). The loss or

damaging of relationships within the Jewish community seems to be due to the mutually exclusive understanding of Jewish and Christian identity and the history of Christian anti-Semitism (Feher, 1998; Kollontai, 2004; Riggans, 1992; Yangarber-Hicks & Hicks, 2005). These two factors can make it difficult for a Messianic Jew's family and Jewish friends to understand their religious identity; they may see it as a rejection of their Jewish identity. When the participants did experience acceptance from the Jewish community, they had a greater ability to embrace their Jewish identity and feel a part of the Jewish community even while believing in Yeshua as the Messiah.

The participants experienced both supportive and unsupportive relationships from the Christian community. Supportive relationships with Christians often led to their adoption of a Messianic identity, and they would feel supported by their Christian friends when they would value them mutually as Jews and believers in Yeshua. Relationships with Christians would become unsupportive by putting the Messianic Jew in a forced choice dilemma (i.e., being forced to choose a Jewish or a Christian identity) or by expressing anti-Semitism. Experiencing forced choice dilemmas and anti-Semitism put a strain on the relationships with Christians and made the Messianic Jews who had these experiences limit their relationships with those Christians. This finding matched expectations from prior literature that proposed forced choice dilemmas or experiences of discrimination would have negative effects on people with intersectional identities, such as Messianic Jews (Standen, 1996; Yangarber-Hicks, 2005).

The relationship with the Messianic Jewish community helped the Messianic Jews regain a sense of belonging. Many Messianic Jews had lost a sense of belonging because

they did not fully feel a part of the Jewish or Christian community. The experience of double rejection was common among the participants, which had additive intersectional effects because their ethnic and religious identities added together and created more experiences of rejection (Else-Quest & Hyde, 2016). Their double rejection experiences were similar to those reported by multiracial people, as was hypothesized by Yangarber-Hicks (2005), because they experienced rejection from both groups with whom they shared an identity, Jews and Christians (Poston, 1990). The double rejection experiences made Messianic Jewish congregations a place they could find acceptance for both their religious and ethnic identities. These feelings of belonging and acceptance could be thwarted if they felt unable to express their Jewish identity in the congregation, such as if there were Gentiles appropriating their Jewish identity or if there was insufficient Jewish cultural expression in the congregation.

Meaningful Reasons

The meaningful reasons are the ideas that justify the bringing together of Messianic Jews' religious and ethnic identities. In order to come to a place of fully accepting their religious and ethnic identities, these participants had to overcome their fears of losing their Jewish identity and of what it meant to follow Yeshua in light of the history of Christian anti-Semitism. Most of the participants discussed discovering reasons that overcame their mutually exclusive understanding of Jewish and Christian identities. The results of this study confirmed Yangarber-Hicks and Hicks' (2005) hypothesis that the cultural understanding of the mutual exclusivity of Jewish and Christian identities creates conflicts internally and interpersonally for Messianic Jews.

The participants overcame the mutually exclusive understanding through learning about the New Testament and the Jewish identity of Yeshua. This finding confirms Rudolph and Willitts' (2013) claim that Messianic Jews see their identity as being Jews who believe in Yeshua, while still affirming their Jewish identity. Sustaining their Jewish identity while it intersects their religious identity was very important for the participants. Many reported that their Jewish ethnic identity became stronger after becoming Messianic Jews, which supports findings from a previous study of Messianic Jews by Yangarber-Hicks and Hicks (2005) and other studies that found religious observance having a strong relationship to ethnic identity among Jews (Friedman et al., 2005; Klaff, 2006; Levine, 1986). This finding shows there is a multiplicative intersectional effect because the participants' valuing of their ethnic identity was multiplied because of its intersection with their religious identity (Else-Quest & Hyde, 2016).

Limitations

The findings of this study should be considered in light of several limitations. The first is the limitation to whom the results may be applied.. The eight Messianic Jews who participated in interviews were in middle to late adulthood. The ages of the 19 Messianic Jews whose stories were used as document data were not reported by the video producer. A few appeared to be young adults, but the majority appeared to be in middle or late adulthood. Therefore, some of their experiences and meaning-making processes may not be applicable to younger Messianic Jews because they likely are further along in their Messianic Jewish identity development. In addition, middle to late adulthood Messianic Jews often began developing their Messianic Jewish identity in a different cultural

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context than younger Messianic Jews. In the last few decades there has been an improving relationship between Jews and Christians, and there has been increasing tolerance of Messianic Jews by the broader Jewish community. Therefore, the applicability of the results to younger Messianic Jews may be limited.

All the participants of this study were first generation, American Messianic Jews. Therefore, the results of this study would have limited applicability to second and third generation Messianic Jews. Furthermore, Messianic Jews in other cultures likely have other identity development experiences and make meaning out of the intersectionality of their ethnic and religious identity in different ways than American Messianic Jews. For example, in cultures where assimilation is not a significant concern, such as in Israel, the meaning making processes Messianic Jews use to bolster their Jewish identity would likely be different than those discussed in this study. In addition, the sample was comprised of participants whose ethnic background was European Jewish, and their identity development experiences would likely be different from Messianic Jews who come from Africa, Asia, or other non-European cultures. Messianic Jews with non-European Jewish backgrounds would have additional intersectional experiences because they would have experiences related to their racial identity along with their ethnic Jewish identity and their religious identity. Therefore, the results of this study are likely not applicable to Messianic Jews who live in other cultural contexts and who have non-European Jewish backgrounds.

There are some limitations in using the transcripts of participants who agreed to share their stories through public videos. These participants likely felt secure in their

Messianic Jewish identity and were therefore further along in their identity development. The video transcript data may have lacked some of the experiences of those who are currently struggling with their Messianic Jewish identity, but the effect of this on the validity of the results seems limited because the purpose of this study was to examine the meaning making process Messianic Jews engage in for their identity development. Messianic Jews who have become secure in their identity would be the best sources for understanding how Messianic Jews develop a secure ethnic and religious identity.

Another limitation of the study is the fact that interview participants were asked to provide retrospective accounts of their experiences. Retrospective accounts may not be objective because the meaning of memories can change over time; however, this limitation would have little impact on the validity of this study because the current study was examining the participants' meaning making processes.

Consistent with the Straussian approach to grounded theory (Corbin & Strauss, 1990; Fassinger, 2005; Glaser & Strauss, 1999), only one interviewer conducted all interviews; this may have limited the type of data collected in the interviews. The effect of this on the validity of the study seems limited because an interview protocol was followed that was developed through feedback from the dissertation committee and research team, which allowed for multiple perspectives to influence the data collected in the interviews. Another potential limitation was that four of the eight interviewees were acquaintances of the interviewer, which may have reduced their willingness to discuss certain topics. The effect of this on the results seems limited because the relationship the

interviewer had with those four participants also may have made them more comfortable and willing to share things they would not have shared with a stranger.

Lastly, a potential limitation is the ranges in the length of the interviews, from 22 to 85 minutes. The effect on the results seems limited because the same interview protocol was used for all interviews, which brought consistency to the data, and the average interview length was 55 minutes, which falls within the common qualitative interview length of 45 to 75 minutes.

Future Research

Future research is needed to understand what Messianic Jewish congregations do to foster Messianic Jewish identity and what is detrimental to Messianic Jewish identity. This research would allow Messianic Jewish congregations to improve at being places of support for Messianic Jews. Another area for future research is the identity development of Messianic Jews who grew up in Messianic Jewish families or who grew up in a Christian context and discovered their Jewish identity later in life. Both types of Messianic Jews would likely have different identity development experiences than the participants in the current study. Future research is also needed on the identity development experiences of Gentiles who are members of Messianic Jewish congregations. There are large numbers of Gentiles in Messianic Jewish congregations (Yangarber-Hicks, 2005). Therefore, it would be important to understand how these Gentiles' religious and ethnic identities are shaped through their involvement in a Messianic Jewish congregation. The understanding of Jewish and Gentile identity within a Messianic congregation would be a valuable topic for further research.

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Implications for Counseling

The findings of this study highlight the need for therapists who work with Messianic Jews to be aware of clients' unique identity development experiences due to the intersection of their religious and ethnic identity. Due to the limitations of this study, the following implications for counseling would be most applicable to first generation, American Messianic Jews who are in middle to late adulthood. When working with Messianic Jewish clients, Jewish counselors should not make assumptions about their clients' experience of Jewish identity because of their own Jewish identity experiences and knowledge of Judaism or Christianity (Friedman et al., 2005). Jewish counselors have an opportunity to show acceptance to their Messianic Jewish clients, who may have prior experience of rejection from people within the Jewish community. Non-Jewish counselors should examine themselves for any anti-Semitic sentiments or Jewish stereotypes and attempt to increase their cultural sensitivity toward Jewish culture, religion, and community issues (Kiselica, 2003). Non-Jewish and Jewish counselors should be aware not to put their Messianic Jewish clients into forced choice dilemmas, such as asking, "So…are you a Christian or a Jew?" Forced choice dilemmas are delegitimizing to Messianic Jewish identity and would likely damage the therapeutic relationship, and their clients' ability to process and develop their identity. Therapists need to be intentional to lead their Messianic Jewish clients from behind with open-ended questions about their identity, discovery, and meaning-making of their experiences.

Another important aspect therapists should consider is the level of the client's Messianic Jewish identity development because it would allow for the use of the

appropriate use of therapeutic interventions (Yangarber-Hicks, 2005). An example of using interventions appropriately would be if a client's presenting concern is managing relational difficulties with family and friends. The counselor would seek to understand how the client's Messianic Jewish identity may be related to experiences of rejection and would suggest coping strategies that support their Messianic Jewish identity. Possible coping strategies would be to encourage the client to engage with a Messianic Jewish congregation to build social supports for their Messianic Jewish identity or to encourage the use of Messianic Jewish religious observance, such as prayer and Sabbath observance, as a way to cope with the negative emotions and build meaning around their identity. The effectiveness of these coping strategies or any other therapeutic intervention depends on the level of the client's Messianic Jewish identity development.

In order to conceptualize a client's Messianic Jewish identity development, the results of this study would recommend that therapists would examine (a) the client's experiences around becoming a Messianic Jew, (b) how their Messianic Jewish identity has affected their relationships with their family/friends, Jewish community, Christian community, and Messianic Jewish community, and (c) the reasons they use to justify and validate their Messianic Jewish identity. These three ways for therapists to conceptualize Messianic Jewish identity development are similar to the ways to accurately conceptualize a Messianic Jewish client's experience suggested by Yangarber-Hicks (2005). These included examining the client's experiences with Judaism and Jewish culture and relationships with Jews and Messianic Jews. If therapists can curiously explore these areas of the Messianic Jewish client's experience, then they should be more

effective at building rapport and using interventions in a way that meets their Messianic

Jewish client's therapy goals.

APPENDIX A

RECRUITMENT SCRIPT

Hello, my name is _____. I am a graduate student at University of Missouri-Kansas City in the counseling psychology program. I am conducting research on the development of Messianic Jewish identity. The purpose of this study is to better understand the identity development experiences of Messianic Jews and how they make meaning out of their religious and ethnic identities.

Participants in this study will (a) be at least 18 years of age or older, (b) reside within the United States, (c) identify as Jewish, (d) self-identify as a Messianic Jew, and (e) have been raised in a non-Messianic Jewish household.

Participation in this research would include being individually interviewed. The interviews would last for approximately 45 to 75 minutes. The interviews would be conducted in person, via teleconferencing, or by phone, whichever is most convenient for you. If you choose to do the interview in person, we can meet at a location in which you would feel most comfortable.

If you have any questions or would like to participate in the research, I can be reached at *913-908-1434* or *andersonwm@umkc.edu*.

APPENDIX B

CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATION IN A RESEARCH STUDY

AMERICAN MESSIANIC JEWISH IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT:

A GROUNDED THEORY STUDY

La Verne A. Berkel, Ph.D. and William Matthew Anderson, M.A.

Request to Participate

You are being asked to take part in a research study. This study will be conducted at the location of your preference.

The researcher in charge of this study is La Verne A. Berkel. While she will run the study, other qualified persons who work with her may act for her.

The study team is asking you to take part in this research because you are an adult American Messianic Jew. Research studies only include people who choose to take part. This document is called a consent form. Please read this consent form carefully and take your time making your decision. The researcher or study staff will go over this consent form with you. Ask him/her to explain anything that you do not understand. Think about it and talk it over with your family and friends before you decide if you want to take part in this research study. This consent form explains what to expect: the risks, discomforts, and benefits, if any, if you consent to be in the study.

Background

      The subjects for this study are American Messianic Jews. The Messianic Jews asked to participate in this study are people who grew up in a family that identified as non-Messianic Jewish, they self-identify as Jewish, and they self-identify as Messianic Jewish. The subjects are limited to people who grew up in non-Messianic Jewish families because their experiences with Messianic Jewish identity would likely be different than those who grew up in a Messianic Jewish family.

      You will be one of about 8 to 15 subjects in the study, and they will meet individually for interviews at their preferred location.

Purpose

      The purpose of this study is to understand better the identity development experiences of Messianic Jews and how they make meaning out of their religious and ethnic identities. There has been limited empirical research on Messianic Jews. This study will expand the knowledge of Messianic Jews; in particular, how they experience their religious and ethnic identities.

Procedures

      Your participation in this research would include being individually interviewed. The interviews would last for approximately 45 to 75 minutes. The interviews would be conducted in person, via teleconferencing, or by phone, whichever is most convenient for you. If you choose to do the interview in person, we can meet at a location in which you would feel most comfortable.

The interviews will be recorded to allow for transcription. After the transcriptions are complete, the recording will be deleted, and any overtly identifying information will be removed to protect your privacy. The transcription document will then be sent to you for your review. You will return the document with any additional or clarifying comments.

If you agree to take part in this study, you will be involved in this study for 45 to 75 minutes for the interview and another 30 minutes to an hour for reviewing the transcription document.

Participation in this study is voluntary. You may refuse to participate in certain activities or answer certain questions. You may withdraw from the study at any time. Please contact the researcher you have been in contact via email or phone to inform us that you no longer want to participate in the study.

Interview

- Individual Interview via in-person, video conference, or phone

Follow-up

- A follow-up email with the transcription document.

An audio recording of interviews is required for participation in this study. If you agree to be audio recorded during the interview, please sign below

Name: _____ Signature:_____

Risks and Inconveniences

The main potential risk of participating in this study is the potential loss of confidentiality. The risk is if you share information in the interview that you would not want others to know. This risk is mitigated by removing any overt identifying information from the transcripts and by deleting the recording of the interview. You will also get an opportunity to review the transcripts to see if you are satisfied with its contents. You will be able to request any parts to be removed or changed to protect your confidentiality.

This research is considered to be minimal risk. That means that the risks of taking part in this research study are not expected to be more than the risks in your daily life. There are no other known risks to you if you choose to take part in this study.

Benefits

The main benefit of this study is that you and other people may benefit in the future from the information about Messianic Jews that comes from this study.

Fees and Expenses

There are no monetary costs to you for this study.

Compensation

¬¬There is no payment for taking part in this study.

Alternatives to Study Participation

The alternative to study participation is not taking part in the study. You do not have the option to be in the study and not be audio recorded.

Confidentiality

While we will do our best to keep the information you share with us confidential, it cannot be absolutely guaranteed. Individuals from the University of Missouri-Kansas City Institutional Review Board (a committee that reviews and approves research studies), Research Protections Program, and Federal regulatory agencies may look at records related to this study to make sure we are doing proper, safe research and protecting human subjects. The results of this research may be published or presented to others. You will not be named in any reports of the results.

Your privacy will be protected by meeting at a location of your preference for the interviews. You can refuse to answer any of the questions from the interview protocol that you do not want to answer. The digital recordings of the interviews will only be heard by members of the research team. After the recordings are transcribed, they will be deleted, and any overtly identifying information will be removed to protect your privacy.

Quotations from the interviews may be used in the writing up of the results. If you agree to the use of your quotations in the results of the study, please sign below.

Name: _____ Signature: _____

If you decided to withdraw from the study, any data collected before your withdrawal would not be used in the study.

The only reason that would cause the researchers to give information about you to a third party is in cases when there is reported current child or elder abuse and when there

is reported current homicidal or suicidal ideation, which are all mandatory reporting situations.

Contacts for Questions about the Study

You should contact the Office of UMKC's Social Sciences Institutional Review Board at 816-235-5927 if you have any questions, concerns, or complaints about your rights as a research subject. You may call the researcher, Dr. LaVerne A. Berkel, at 816-235-2444 if you have any questions about this study. You may also call her if any problems come up.

Voluntary Participation

Taking part in this research study is voluntary. If you choose to be in the study, you are free to stop participating at any time and for any reason. The researchers may stop the study or take you out of the study at any time if they decide that it is in your best interest. You will be told of any important findings developed during this research.

You have read this Consent Form, or it has been read to you. You have been told why this research is being done and what will happen if you take part in the study, including the risks and benefits. You have had the chance to ask questions, and you may ask questions at any time in the future by calling Dr. LaVerne A. Berkel at 816-235-2444. By signing this consent form, you volunteer and consent to take part in this research study. Study staff will give you a copy of this consent form.

_____   _____
Signature (Volunteer Subject)   Date

_____
Printed Name (Volunteer Subject)

_____   _____
Signature of Person Obtaining Consent   Date

_____
Printed Name of Person Obtaining Consent

APPENDIX C

DEMOGRAPHIC FORM

Instructions: *Please respond to each of the following questions.*

What is your age: _____

Gender: _____

Race or Ethnic Group/s you identify with: _____

What USA Geographic Area you live:

Northeast	◯
Midwest	◯
South	◯
Northwest	◯
Southwest	◯

APPENDIX D

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Intro: Thank you for being willing to participate in this research. As I mentioned before, I am studying Messianic Jewish identity. I will be asking you a few questions just to help guide our conversation.

What aspects of your identity are most salient for you? (To provide context, the interviewer could give examples of my multiple identities)

Do you identify as Messianic Jewish?

Did you become a Messianic Jew as an adult or did you grow up in a Messianic Jewish Family?

What were your experiences with becoming a Messianic Jew?

Did you experience tension or conflict with your Messianic Jewish identity, and if so what were your experiences?

Have you been able to experience a sense of acceptance and valuing of your Messianic Jewish identity, and if so what are your experiences?

What is your understanding of Christian and Jewish history?

How has it affected how you understand your identity as a Messianic Jew?

What has been your involvement in the Messianic movement?

In what ways have you felt accepted or rejected by this group?

How has it affected how you understand your identity as a Messianic Jew?

What have been your experiences with the greater Jewish Community?

I what ways have you felt accepted or rejected by this group?

How has it affected how you understand your identity as a Messianic Jew?

What have been your experiences with the Christian Community?

In what ways have you felt accepted or rejected by this group?

How has it affected how you understand your identity as a Messianic Jew?

Have you felt the pressure to explain or justify your identity to people from these groups, and if so what are your experiences?

Are there any last thoughts you would like to add?

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VITA

Matthew Anderson was born January 25, 1986, in Georgetown, Cayman Islands. He was educated at Maranatha Academy in Shawnee, Kansas. He then pursued undergraduate studies and was awarded a B.A. in Philosophy from Kansas State University in 2007. He later returned to academics to earn a Master of Arts in Counseling at MidAmerican Nazarene University in 2011 and is a licensed professional counselor.

In additional to the academic journey, Mr. Anderson has been involved in community and international service with such organizations as Mercy and Truth Medical Missions and the Church of the Nazarene. While volunteering with Mercy and Truth Medical Missions, Mr. Anderson led and organized a fundraising event to raise money for a water project in Mauritania, North Africa, and then spent four months in Mauritania completing the water project and helping manage medical teams. As a volunteer with the Church of the Nazarene, he co-taught workshops to help children of missionaries who were reentering the culture of the United States to go to college.

Mr. Anderson entered the University of Missouri at Kansas City Counseling Psychology Ph.D. program with a desire to learn more about psychological research and treatment and to receive therapist training. Upon completion of the Doctor of Philosophy degree, Mr. Anderson plans to bring his psychological training to his future work doing marketing, executive coaching, and business leadership.