

collected and finally selected to make up the MMPI, there were at least 19 relating to religion in one way or another:

	Male		Female	
	True	No answer	True	No answer
I am very religious (more than most people)	8	9	11	9
Religion gives me no worry	83	4	70	4
I go to church almost every week	42	3	52	4
I pray several times every week	50	3	83	2
I read in the Bible several times a week	21	5	30	3
I feel sure that there is only one true religion	49	8	51	11
I have no patience with people who believe there is only one true religion	56	4	47	10
I believe there is a God	92	5	96	2
I believe there is a devil and a hell in afterlife	63	14	67	14
I believe in a life hereafter	76	12	87	7
I believe in the second coming of Christ	57	18	68	12
Christ performed miracles such as changing water into wine	69	16	77	15
The only miracles I know of are simply tricks that people play on one another	37	10	27	14
A minister can cure disease by praying and putting his hand on your head	4	10	5	11
Everything is turning out just like the prophets of the Bible said it would	52	29	54	32
My soul sometimes leaves my body	8	18	5	12
I am a special agent of God	14	13	16	21
I have had some very unusual religious experiences	20	5	13	2
I have been inspired to a program of life based on duty which I have since carefully followed	42	14	50	15

I have listed these items to remind you again of the ones you cited, and I have added others that may further illustrate what I am saying. Now you have asked why we included these statements on religion among the possible symptoms of psychological maladjustment. Why should these items still appear in the MMPI?

In the first instance, the subject matter evidenced in the symptoms of depressed or otherwise mentally disturbed persons often largely centers in religion. There is a well-recognized pattern of psychological distortion to which we apply the term religiosity. When we use the word "religiosity," we indicate a symptomatic pattern wherein the process of an intercurrent psychological maladjustment is evidenced by extremes of religious expression that are out of the usual context for even the deeply religious person. A bishop friend of mine once illustrated the problem he sometimes had in this connection by his account of a parishioner who had routinely given a tithe as his offering toward support of the church, but who, within a few weeks, had increased the amount he gave until it was necessary for him to embezzle money for his weekly offering. Surely, my friend said, there is more here than ordinary devotion; there is something which should be considered from another frame of reference. In this anecdote there is an element of the symptomatic pattern, religiosity. But, as is true of nearly every other aspect of human personality to which the MMPI refers, no one item will ordinarily establish this distortion of the ordinarily meaningful position of religion. And no one item can be used to detect the problem as it occurs in various persons. Two persons rarely express even their usual religious feelings in identical ways.

It never occurred to us in selecting these items for the MMPI that we were asking anything relative to the particular religion of our patients. It obviously did not occur to us that there were other than the Christian orientation wherein religiosity might be observed. Because of this oversight on our part, several of our MMPI symptoms that we assumed were indicative of religiosity happen to be obviously related to the Christian religion, although we find that most persons simply translate to their own orientation if it is different. I should hasten to add that although these symptoms were hoped to be specific to persons who suffer from religiosity, they have not all turned out that way. Not every aspect of religion is at times a symptom of mental illness. Certainly it is obvious that there is nothing symptomatic in admitting to one's personal acceptance or rejection of several of the items. The point at which a group of items becomes consistent in suggesting symptoms is subtle to distinguish. As my bishop friend's story illustrated, it is not unusual that one contributes to religious work