Evangelische Theologie
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What Does It Mean to Be Spiritual, What to Be Religous?

Comparing Self-Identifications, Proportions, and Correlates Cross-Nationally

Constantin Klein & Stefan Huber

3rd European Conference on Religion , Spirituality & Health, Bern, May 17th-19th, 2012 (© 2012 Constantin Klein)

Religiosity in Modern Societies

The „Spiritual Revolution“– Fact or Fiction?

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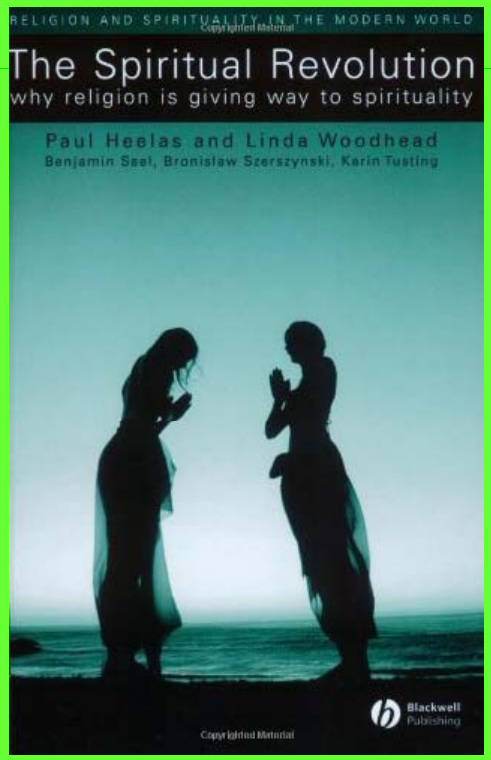
- “Spiritual Revolution”, “Spiritual Turn” (Heelas, Woodhead, Seel, Szerszynski & Tusting, 2005, Houtman & Aupers, 2007)



The Spiritual Turn and the Decline of Tradition: The Spread of Post-Christian Spirituality in 14 Western Countries, 1981–2000

DICK HOUTMAN
STEF AUPERS

This article uses data from the World Values Survey to study the spread of post-Christian spirituality (“New Age”) in 14 Western countries (1981–2000, N = 61,352). It demonstrates that this type of spirituality, characterized by a sacralization of the self, has become more widespread during the period 1981–2000 in most of these countries. It has advanced farthest in France, Great Britain, the Netherlands, and Sweden. This spiritual turn proves a byproduct of the decline of traditional moral values and hence driven by cohort replacement. Spirituality’s popularity among the well educated also emerges from the latter’s low levels of traditionalism. These findings confirm the theory of detraditionalization, according to which a weakening of the grip of tradition on individual selves stimulates a spiritual turn to the deeper layers of the self.

INTRODUCTION

The debate about religion, modernity, and secularization is livelier than ever since secularization theory, once sociology of religion’s proud theoretical flagship, has run into stormy weather. Once considered an empirically sound theory by the social-scientific community, many now feel that it has been exposed as a mere ideology or wish dream, intimately tied to the rationalist discourse of modernity (e.g., Hadden 1987; Stark and Finke 2000). Even one of its most prominent former spokesmen, Peter Berger (1967), has drastically revised his former position: “The assumption that we live in a secularized world is false. The world today . . . is as furiously religious as it ever was, and in some places more so than ever. This means that a whole body of literature by historians and social scientists . . . is essentially mistaken” (Berger 1999:2).

Because today’s rapid globalization of Islam and the evangelical Christian upsurge, especially in Africa, Latin America, and East Asia, fly in the face of the expectation that religion is doomed, Berger now considers the decline of the churches in many Western European countries the exception rather than the rule (1999:10). And, indeed, it is hardly contested that church membership, adherence to traditional Christian doctrines, and participation in church rituals relating to birth, marriage, and death have all declined considerably in those countries (e.g., Norris and Inglehart 2004). Precisely because of the one-sided attention to those processes of religious decline, however, the extent to which “new” or “alternative” types of religion blossom outside the traditional Christian realm is still quite unclear (Luckmann 2003; Knoblauch 2003; Stark et al. 2005).

Therefore, in the current article, we attempt to map and explain this “post-Christian” type of spirituality—i.e., not the spiritually inclined churched Christianity as discussed by Roof (1999) and Wuthnow (2003) for the United States, but spirituality standing on its own two feet and broken from the moorings of the Christian tradition. Indeed, in the United Kingdom nowadays,

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- “Spiritual Revolution”, “Spiritual Turn” (Heelas, Woodhead, Seel, Szerszynski & Tusting, 2005, Houtman & Aupers, 2007)

- but in most studies people express their spirituality in continuity with their religiosity (e. g. Zinnbauer, Pargament, Cole, Rye, Butter, Belavich, Hipp, Scott & Kadar, 1997; Marler & Hadaway, 2002)

What does it mean to be spiritual?

→ *Analyses on the basis of the Religion Monitor Survey 2008*

(Bertelsmann Foundation, 2007; 2009)

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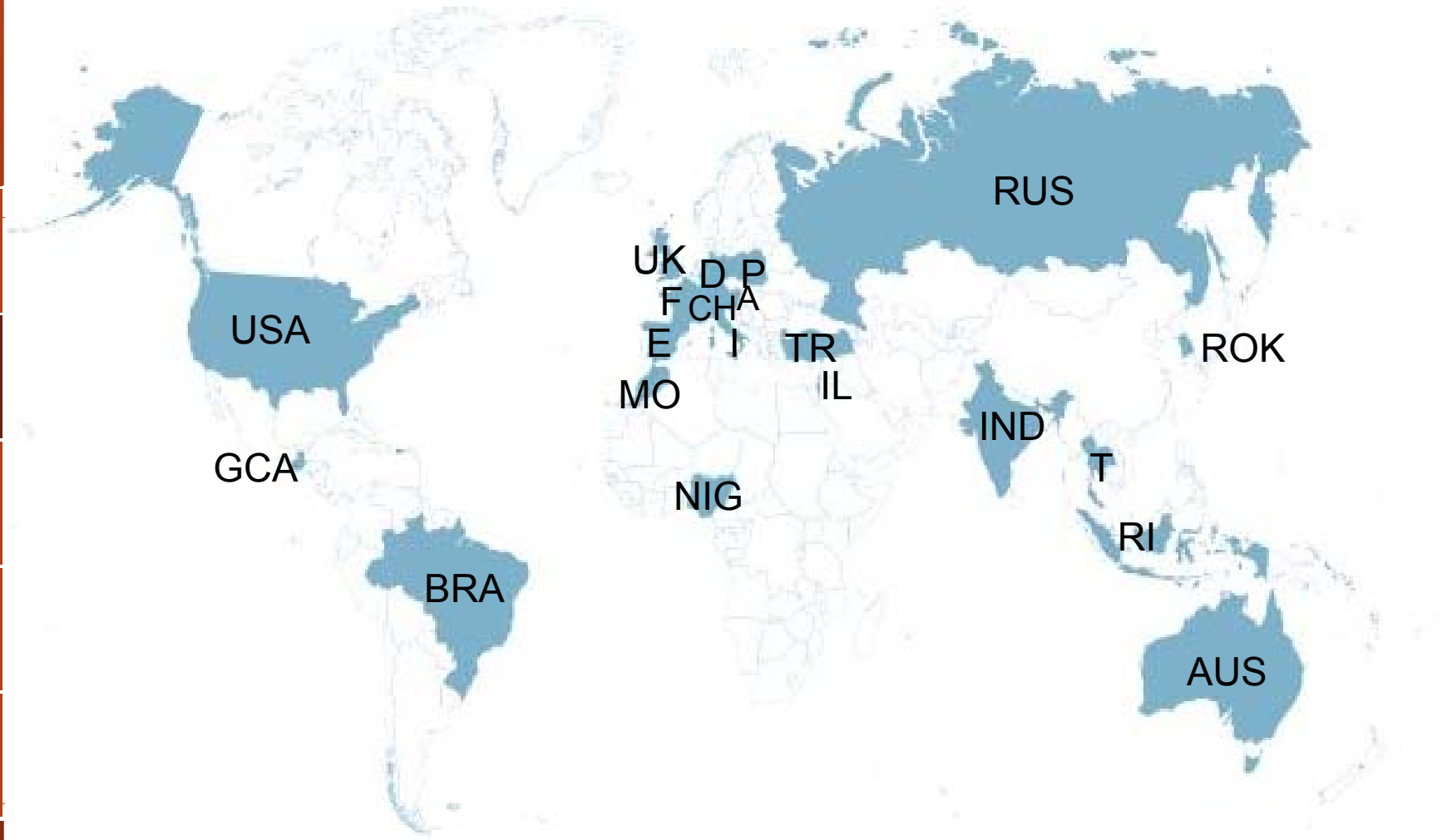
The Religion Monitor Survey

Representative Datasets (*n* = 1000) from 21 Countries



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		CONTENTS		
		Intensity/ Centrality/ Intrinsic Rel. Foundational semantics: Theistic	Pantheistic	**Intensity of specific religious subjects** (themes, schemas, attitudes, behavior styles)
CORE DIMENSIONS	**Intellect**	Interest in religious matters		Religious reflexivity; **religious quest**; theodicy; spiritual and religious books
	Ideology (belief)	Belief in God or something divine		**God-concepts**; world views; religious pluralism; religious fundamentalism; concepts of theodicy
	Public Practice	Church service, communal prayer temple visits, spiritual rituals		**Religious affiliation**; interreligious practice; religious network
	Private Practice	**Prayer**	**Meditation**	Obligatory prayers; family altar; contents of prayer
	Experience	**One-to-one experience**	**Experience of being at one**	Religious feelings
	Consequences	General relevance of religion to everyday-life		Relevance of religion in eleven areas of life (i.e. partnership, work, sickness)
CENTRALITY		Centrality-Scale (7 items)		**Religious and spiritual self-concept**

Spiritual and Religious Self-Concept

Operationalization

- All in all: How religious would you consider yourself to be?

  (not at all, a little, medium, fairly, or very religious)

- Putting aside whether or not you would describe yourself as a religious person, as how spiritual would you describe yourself?

  (not at all, a little, medium, fairly, or very spiritual)

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Spiritual and Religious Self-Concept

Typological Crosstabulation

INTENSITY		Ratings	Spiritual Self-Concept: LOW „not at all“ 1	LOW „a little“ 2	MEDIUM „medium“ 3	HIGH „fairly“ 4	HIGH „very“ 5	Sum
Religious Self-Concept	LOW	1	T1		T2	T3		
		2						
	MEDIUM	3	T4		T5	T6		
	HIGH	4	T7		T8	T9		
		5						
		Sum						

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Spiritual and Religious Self-Concept

U.S. Spiritual Self-Concepts

INTENSITY		Ratings	Spiritual Self-Concept: LOW „not at all“ 1	LOW „a little“ 2	MEDIUM „medium“ 3	HIGH „fairly“ 4	HIGH „very“ 5	Sum
Religious Self-Concept	LOW	1	12%		5%	8%		25%
		2						
	MEDIUM	3	3%		22%	12%		37%
	HIGH	4	1%		5%	32%		38%
		5						
		Sum	**16%**		**32%**	**52%**		100%

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Spiritual and Religious Self-Concept

U.S. Spiritual Self-Concepts

INTENSITY		Spiritual Self-Concept: LOW „not at all“ 1	LOW „a little“ 2	MEDIUM „medium“ 3	HIGH „fairly“ 4	HIGH „very“ 5	Sum
Religious Self-Concept: LOW	1	12%		5%	8%		**25%**
	2						
MEDIUM	3	3%		22%	12%		**37%**
HIGH	4	1%		5%	32%		**38%**
	5						
Sum		16%		32%	52%		100%

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Spiritual and Religious Self-Concept

Convergent and Divergent Religious-Spiritual Self-Concepts

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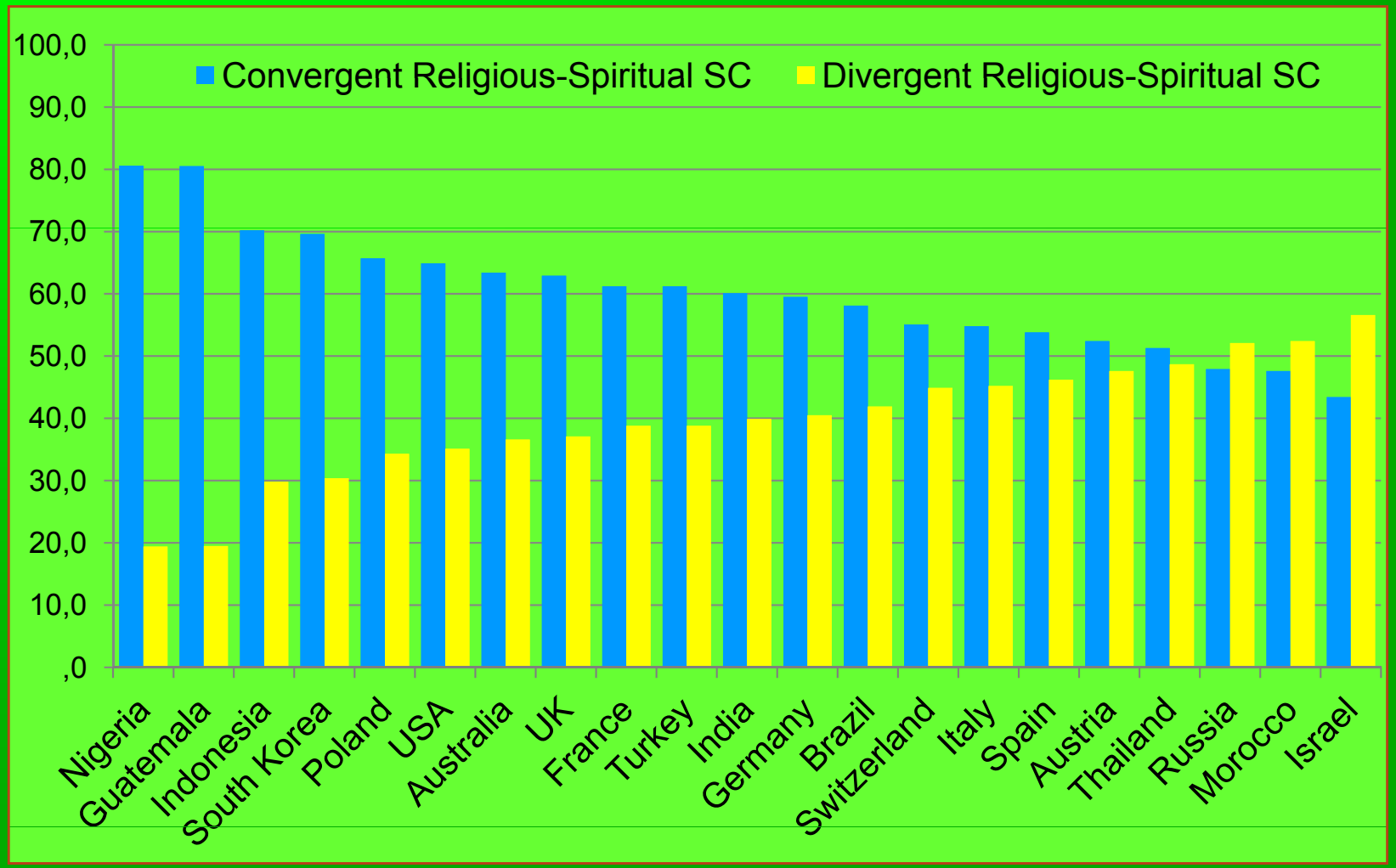
INTENSITY		Spiritual Self-Concept: LOW „not at all“ 1	LOW „a little“ 2	MEDIUM „medium“ 3	HIGH „fairly“ 4	HIGH „very“ 5	Sum
Religious Self-Concept: LOW	1	12%		5%	8%		25%
	2				**25%**		
MEDIUM	3	3%		**66%**	12%		37%
HIGH	4	1%	**9%**	5%	32%		38%
	5						
	Sum	16%		32%	52%		100%

Spiritual and Religious Self-Concept

Convergent and Divergent Religious-Spiritual Self-Concepts



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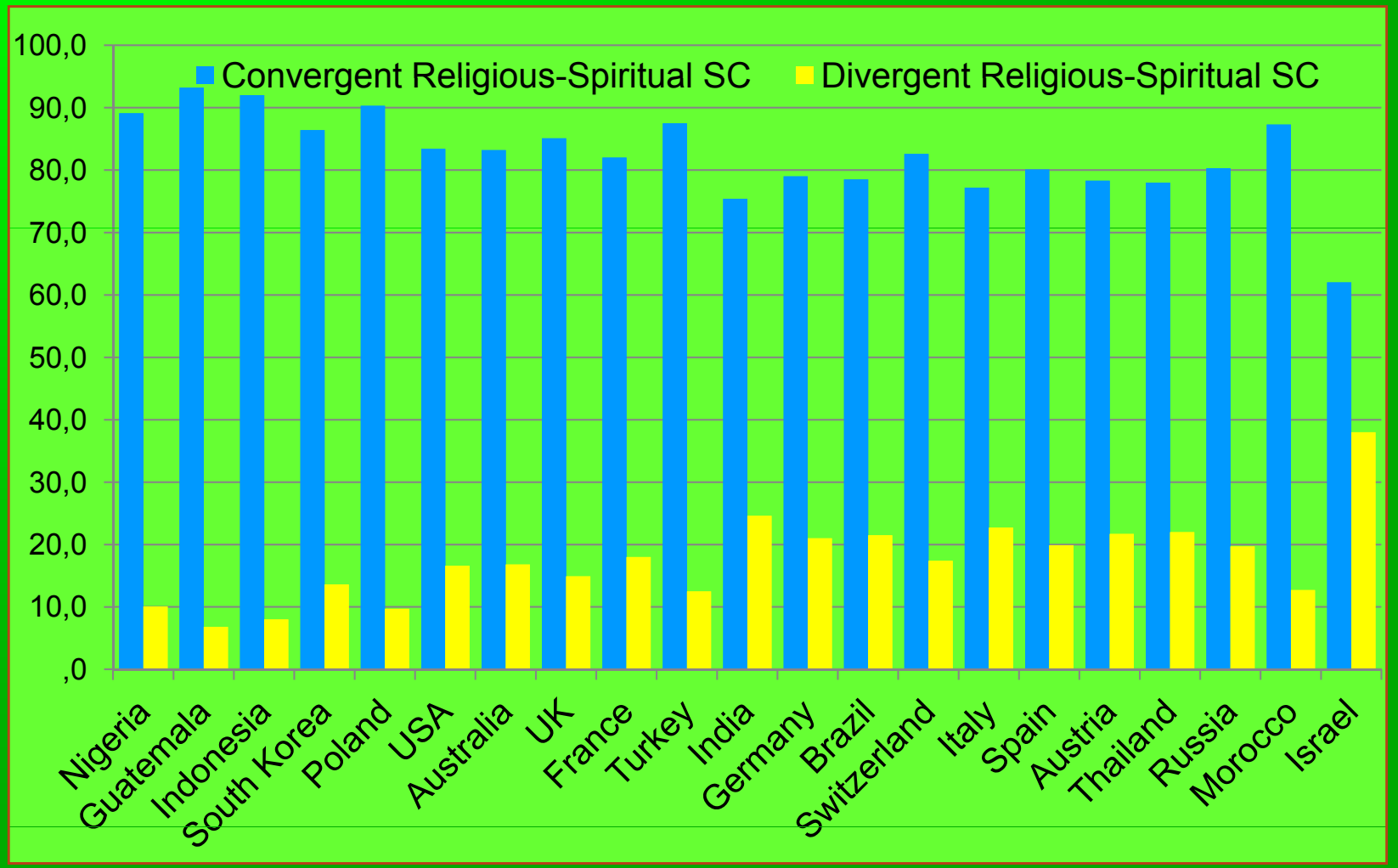
Convergent and Divergent Religious-Spiritual Self-Concepts



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Four Ideal Types

INTENSITY		Ratings	Spiritual Self-Concept: LOW „not at all“ 1	LOW „a little“ 2	MEDIUM „medium“ 3	HIGH „fairly“ 4	HIGH „very“ 5	Sum
Religious Self-Concept	LOW	1	**Neither religious nor spiritual**		5%	**Highly spiritual, not religious**		25%
	LOW	2						
	MEDIUM	3	3%		22%	12%		37%
	HIGH	4	**Highly religious, not spiritual**		5%	**Highly spiritual *and* religious**		38%
	HIGH	5						
		Sum	16%		32%	52%		100%

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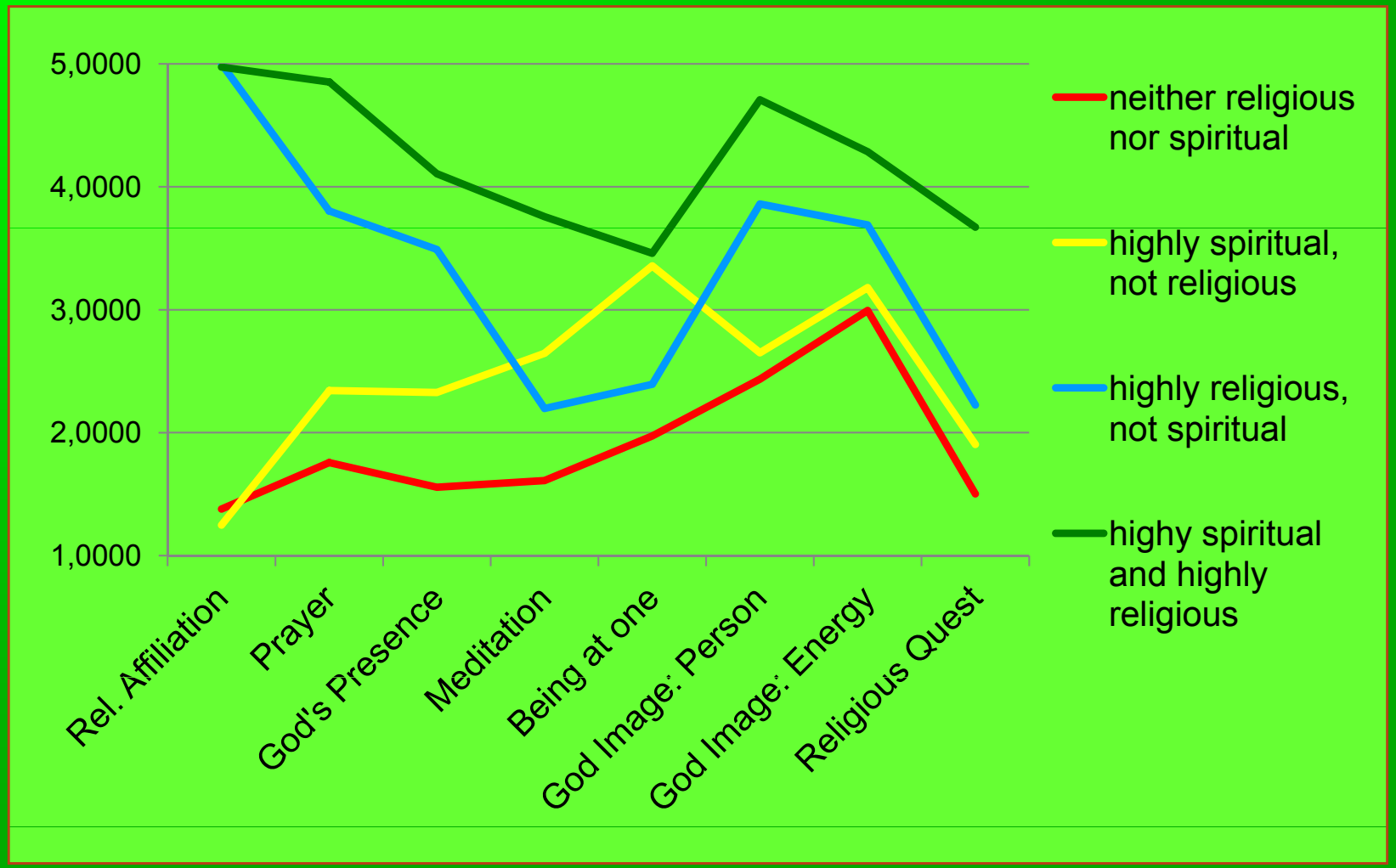
U. S. Findings



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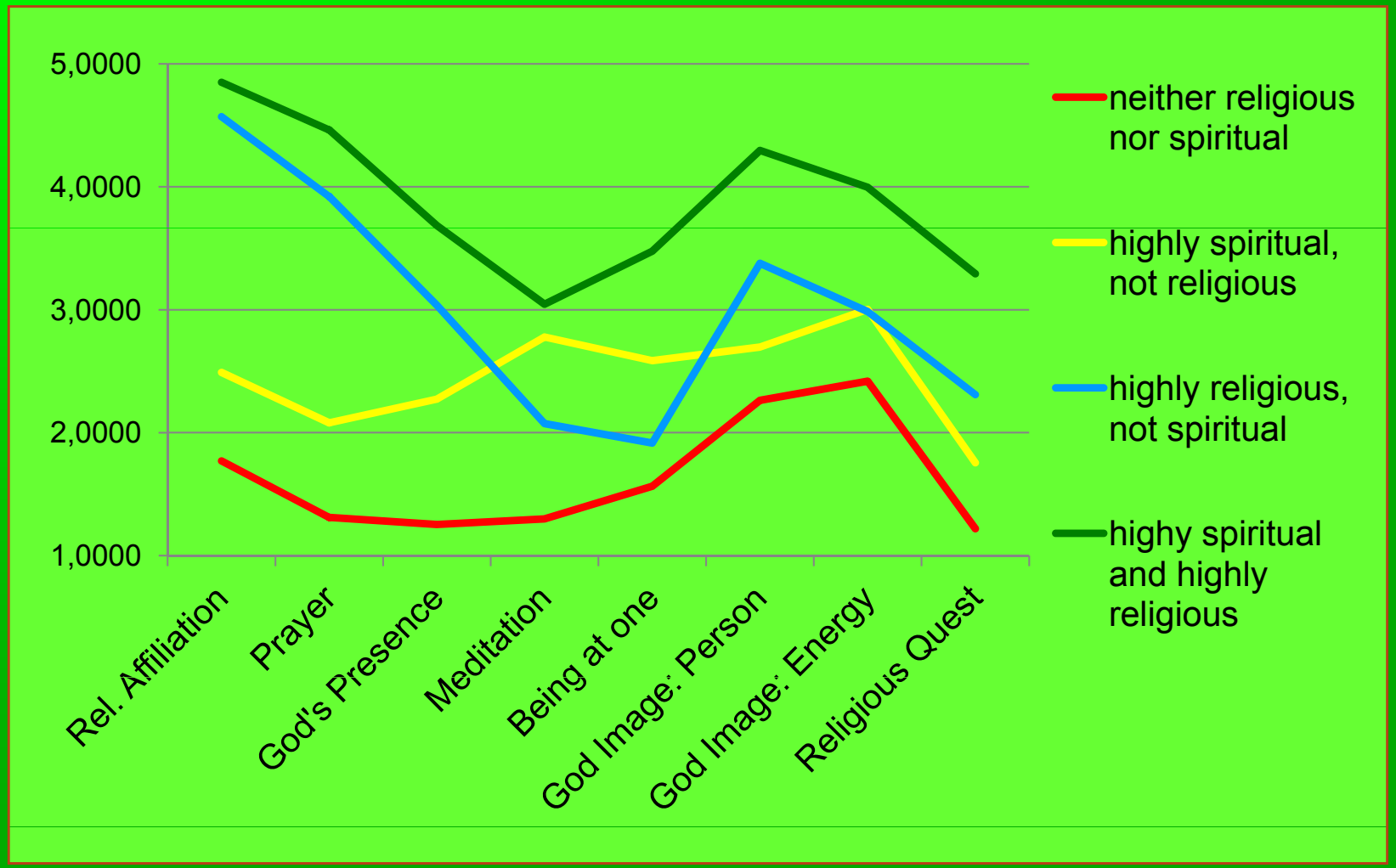
U. K. Findings



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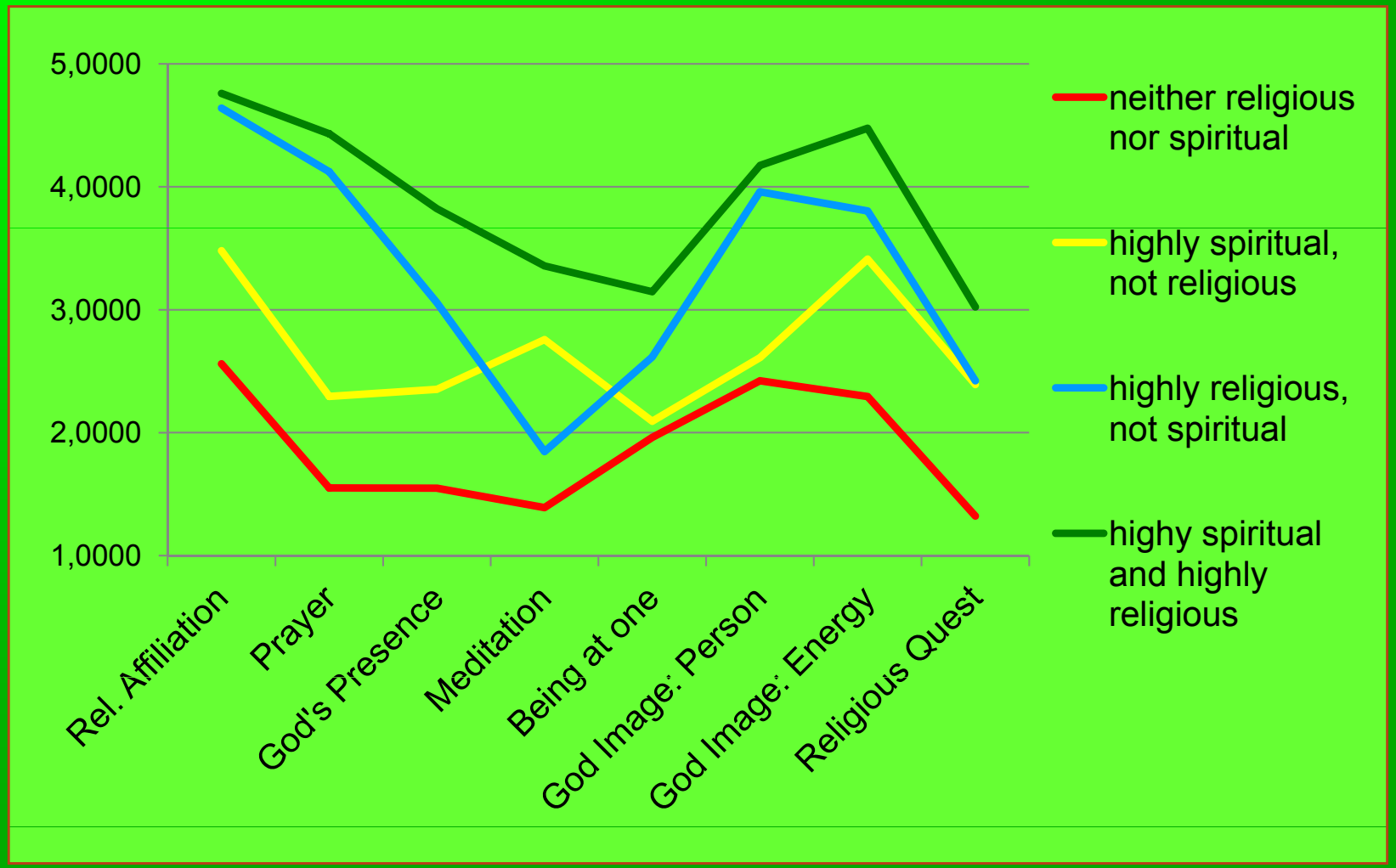
Findings from Germany



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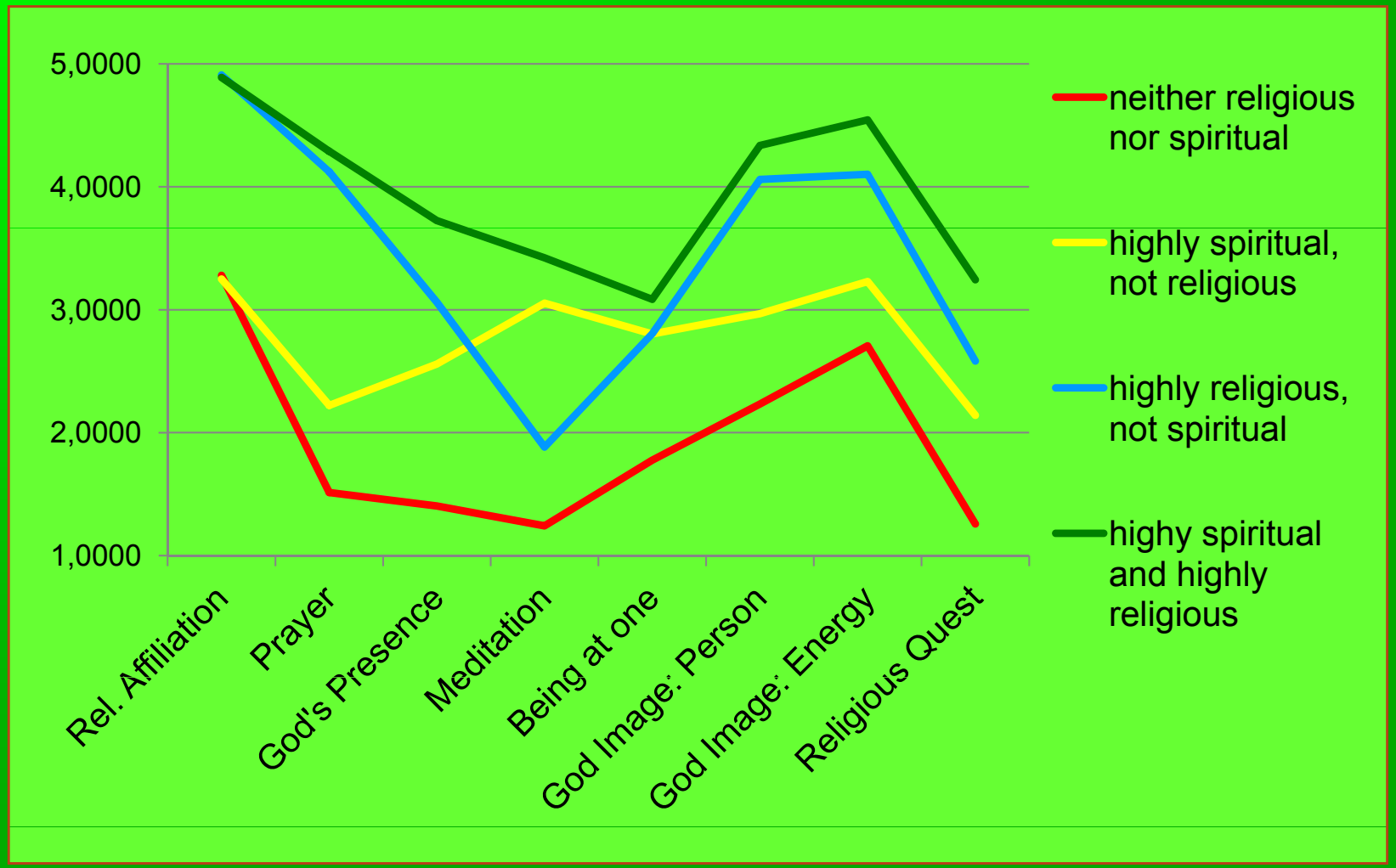
Findings from Austria



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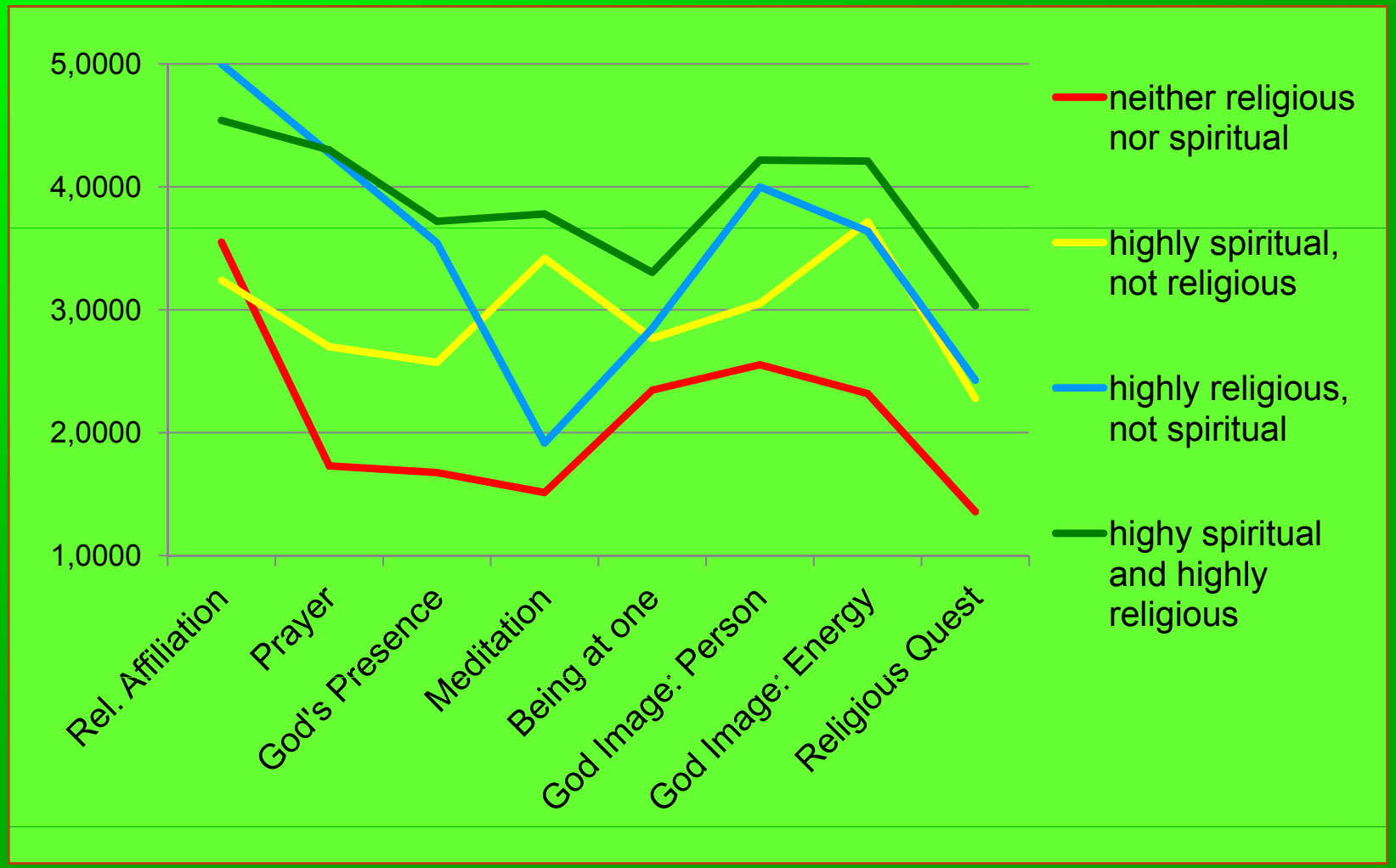
Findings from Switzerland



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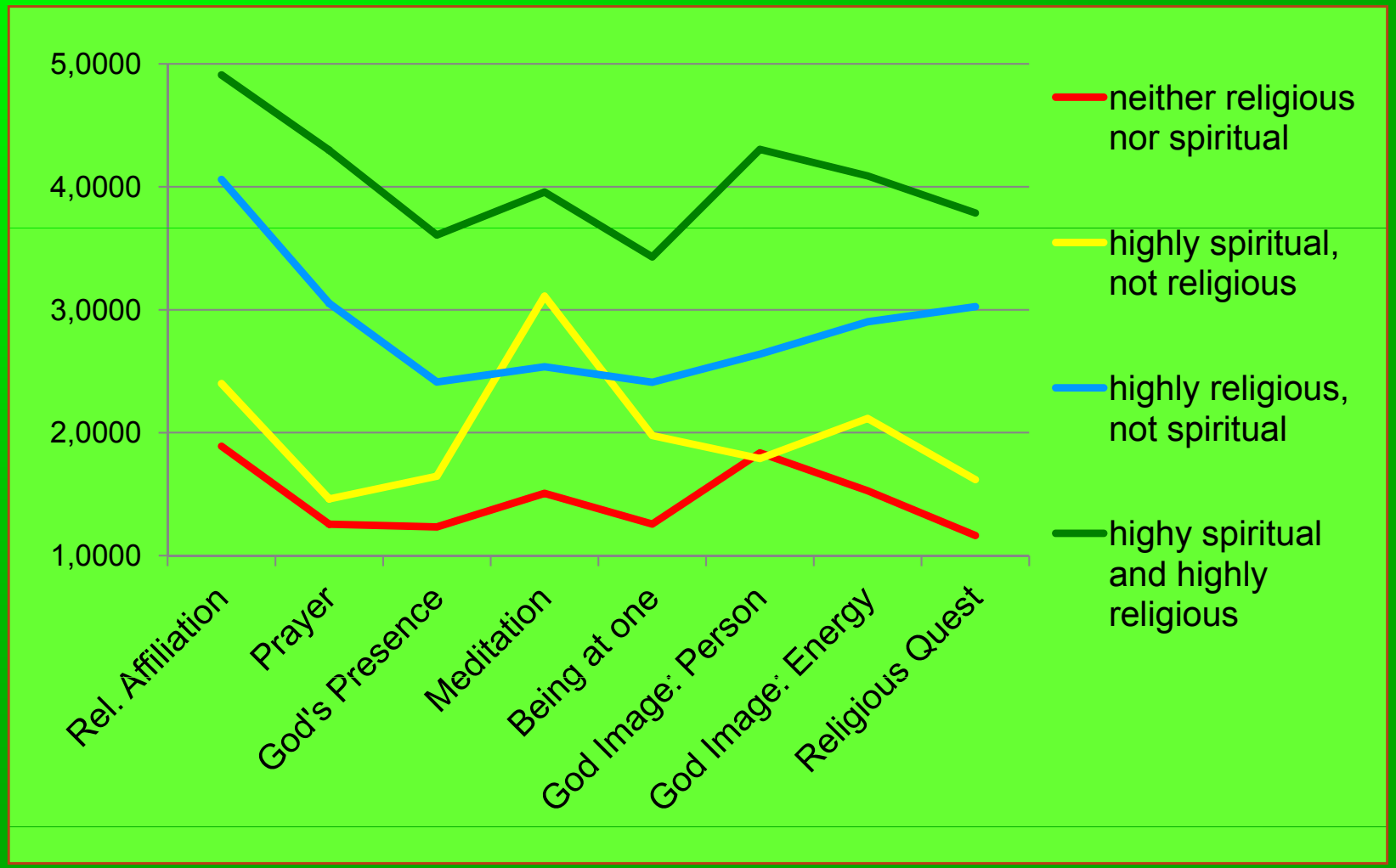
Findings from France



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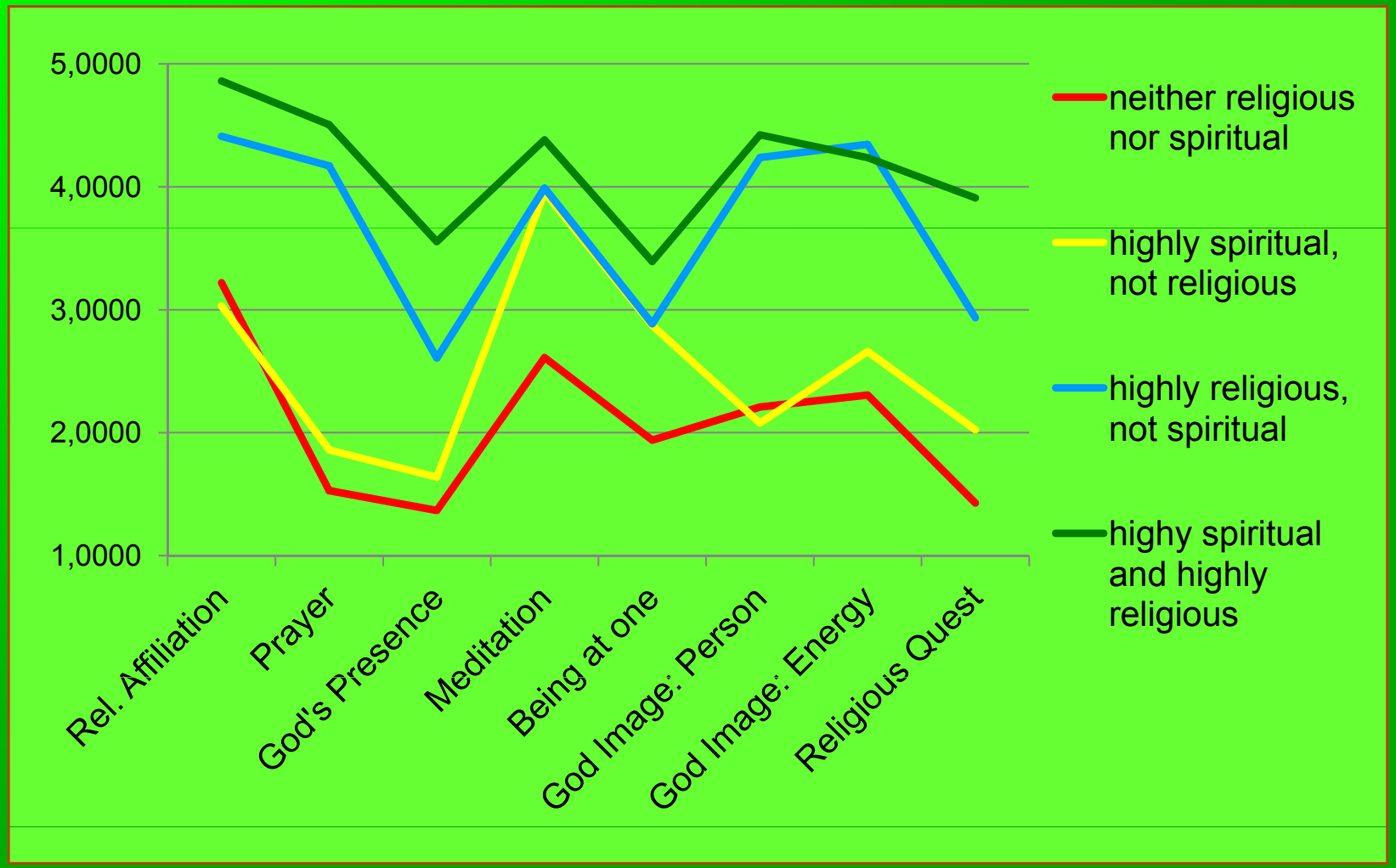
Findings from Spain



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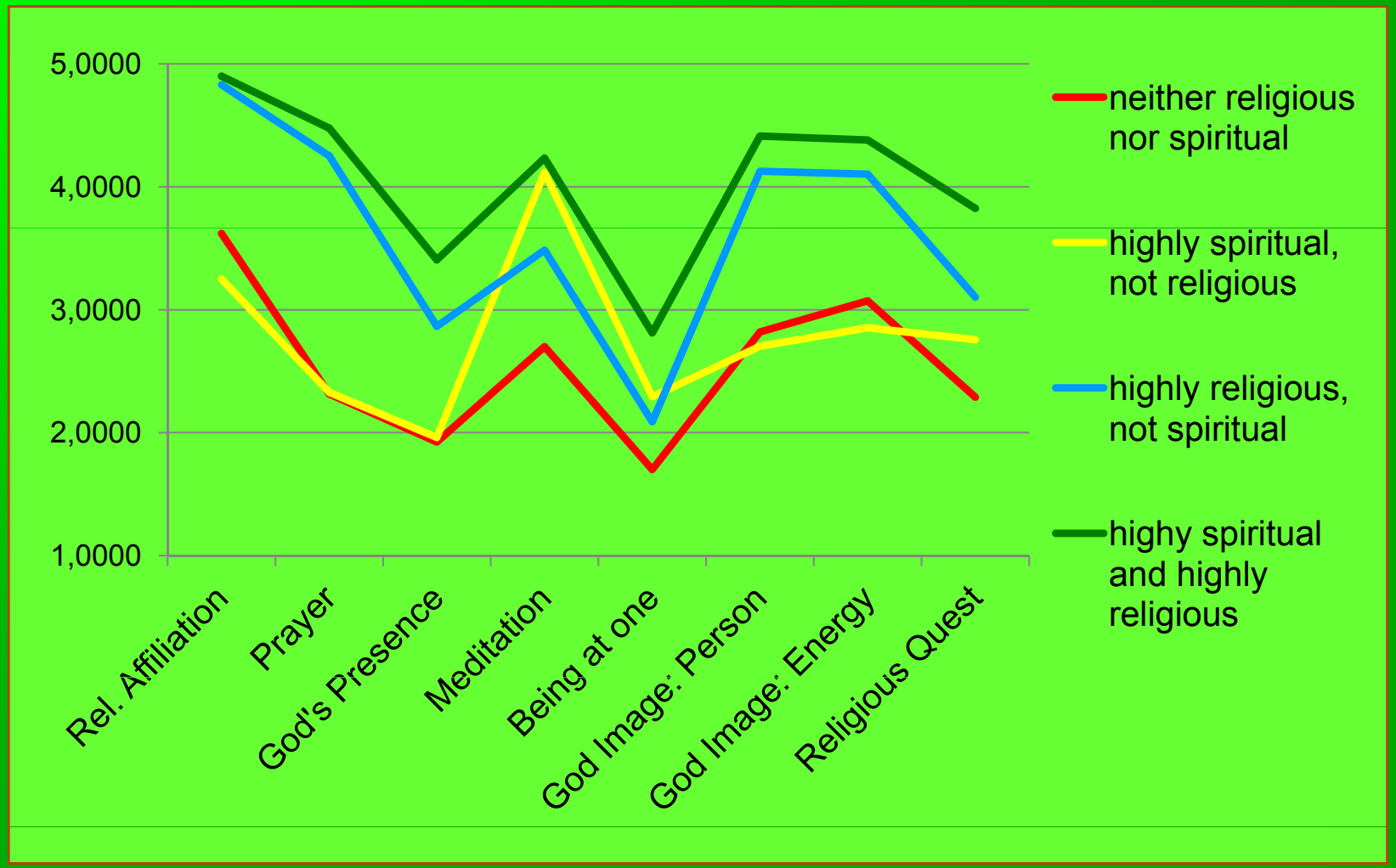
Findings from Italy



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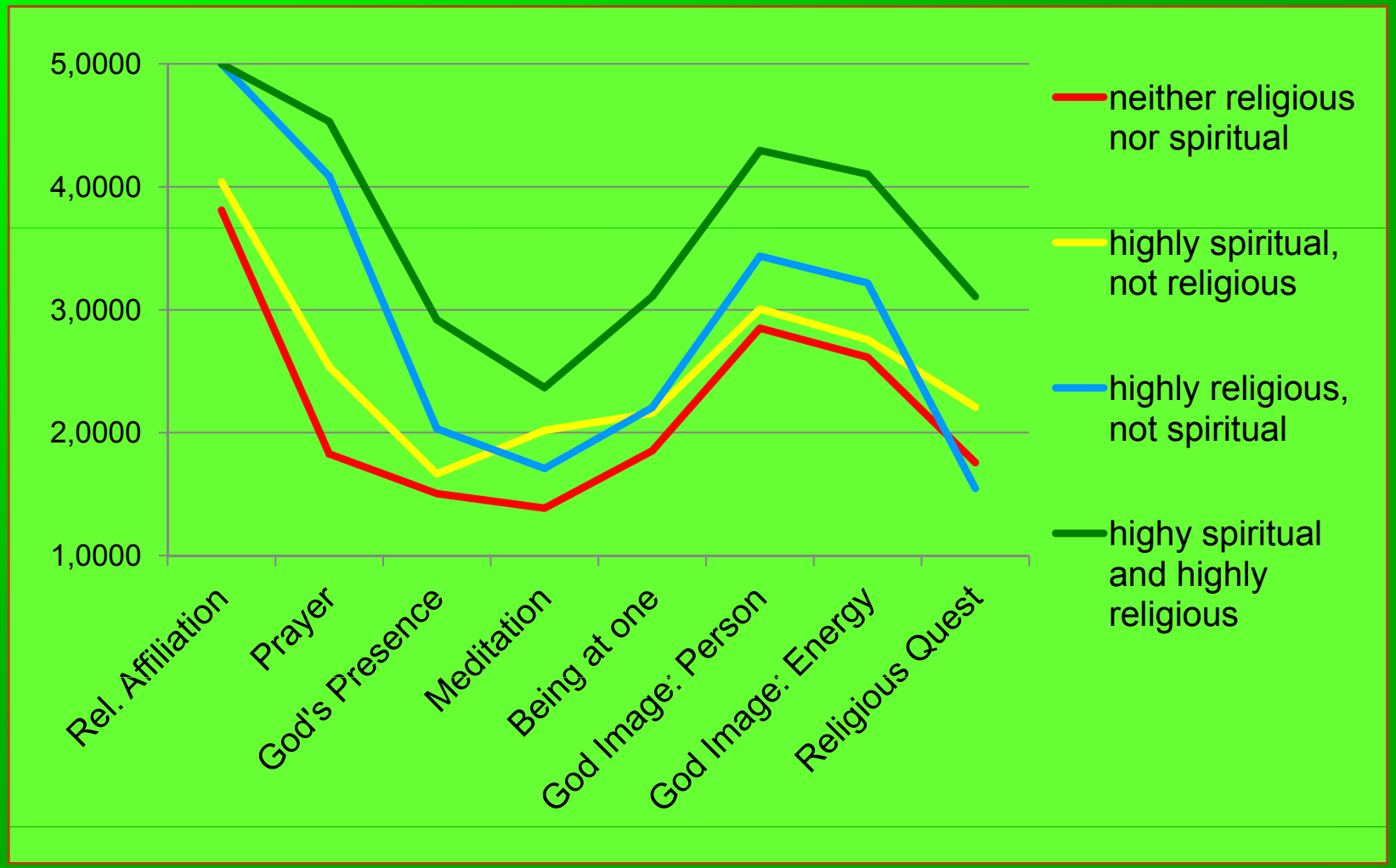
Findings from Poland



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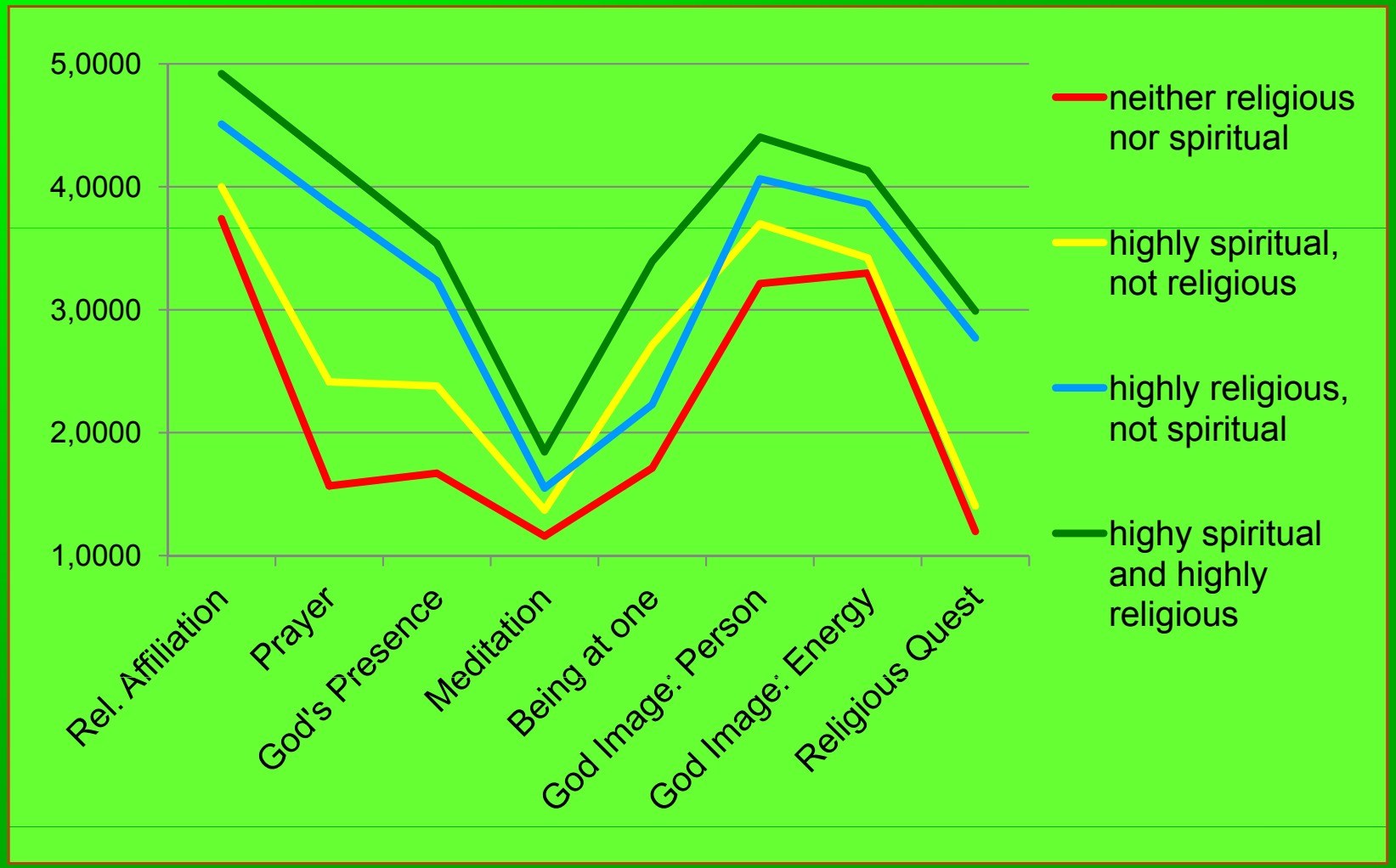
Findings from Russia



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Findings from Israel

Spirituality and Religiosity

Summary

1) the majority of people from 21 countries and all major religious traditions express convergent spiritual and religious self-concepts (except Israel)

2) in the western world, there are striking parallels between experiences and behavior of four ideal types of religious-spiritual self-concepts

Spirituality and Religiosity

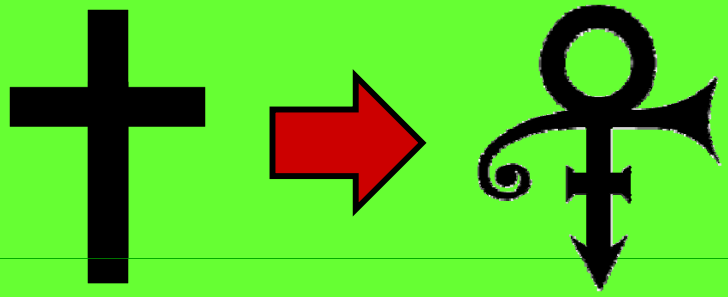
Conclusions

- if spirituality is used as distinctive term, it is only associated with a tendency to meditation

- apart from that, in most cases spirituality seems to be merely a synonym for what has previously been called religiosity

Take-Home-Message:

Spirituality = the phenomenon formerly known as religiosity



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Thank you very much!

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