



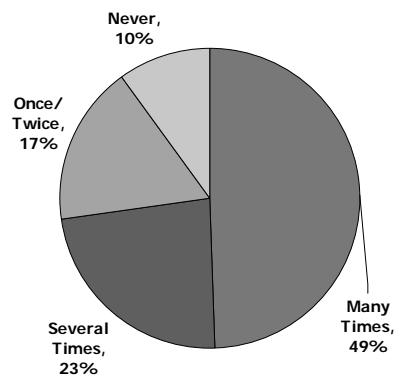
## The Experiential Dimension



## Experiencing God in the US

*U.S. News & World Report, May 6, 2002, p. 42*

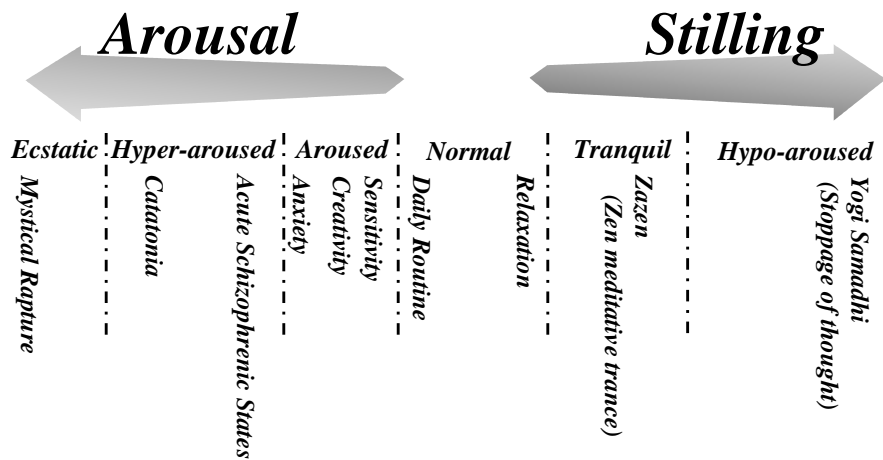
- Question: In general, how often would you say you have experienced God's presence or a spiritual force that felt very close to you?



## Varieties of Religious Experiences

- Ecstatic worship (1 Sam. 19:23-24)
- Spirit domination (Mark 5:1-20)
- Dreams and visions (Numbers 12:6; Acts 2:17)
- Direct experience of God (Numbers 12:6-8)
- Compelling convictions (1 Cor. 9:16)
- Meditative reflection (Ps. 48:9?)
- Emptiness (Genesis 2:21?; Acts 10:10?)
- Group experiences at festivals/rituals (1 Kings 18:19-40; Acts 2:1-4)
- Near-death and OBEs (1 Cor. 12:2)

## States of Religious Experience



# Dreams from God

(Breslin and Jones, *Understanding Dreams from God*, p. 8)

JOB 33:14-18 For God does speak—now one way, now another—though man may not perceive it. In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falls on men as they slumber in their beds, he may speak in their ears and terrify them with warnings, to turn man from wrongdoing and keep him from pride, to preserve his soul from the pit, his life from perishing by the sword.

God gives dreams for four reasons:

1. Turn people from wrongdoing.
2. Keep us from pride
3. Preserve our soul from the pit
4. Protect our lives

## Explanations of Possessive States

- **Physiological:**
  - Illness related
  - Fever induced
  - Epilepsy
  - Asthma
  - Short-windedness
- **Other**
  - Hypnotism
  - Drug-induced
  - Hyperventilation
  - Severe physical trauma
  - Sonambulance
- **Psychosocial:**
  - Psychological
    - Projection
    - Hysteria
    - Wish-fulfillment
  - Social
    - Social stress
    - Mob hysteria
  - Simulated
- **Spirit-related:**
  - Non-Christian views
    - Mystic state
    - Shaman's voyage
    - Mediumship
  - Christian views
    - Unholy spirit(s)
    - Holy Spirit

# Causes of Religious Experiences

- Middle level
  - Spirits

- Upper level:
  - Godly

## Mixed

- Lower level:
  - Biological
  - Psychocial
  - Trickery
  - Unexplained