This thesis aims to determine the association between religiosity and life satisfaction and to describe the different meanings and functions that religion has in the lives of older persons. Data from 2007 Philippine Longitudinal Study of Aging shows that older women are significantly more involved in religious activities than men. However, logistic regression models controlling for sociodemographic characteristics and health status show that religiosity does not have a significant effect on women’s life satisfaction. This is hypothesized to be due to the generally high levels of religiosity among women which may mask its effect on their life satisfaction. In addition, the 2007 PLSOA data covers only frequency of participation in religious activities and does not tackle the meaning that the respondents attribute to religion, which may be what contributes to their life satisfaction. In contrast to the women, prayer, participation in religious activities at home with family members, reading religious materials, and membership in religious organizations had a significant positive effect on the life satisfaction of older men.

Data from focus groups discussions and in-depth interviews suggest that religion is an important coping resource for both men and women. Various pathways linking religion and life satisfaction among the participants were identified. First, religion provides older persons with a sense of hope and strength which enables them to deal with their problems. It also imbues problems with a sense of meaning which allows the older persons to accept them. Religion helps reduce their fear of death through belief in the afterlife. It provides social support through friends from their religious congregation. It also serves as their guide in making decisions. Lastly, religion provides older persons with opportunities to be active even after retirement, giving them new roles to fill.