

CONVERSION, ALTERNATION, AND COMMITMENT

by

Irwin Roy Barker

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ABSTRACT

This thesis involves an attempt to appreciate the distinction between religious commitment and the various mechanisms whereby an individual may become religiously committed.

The question is asked whether those who have converted to a particular religious perspective relate to the demands of commitment differently than those who have been brought up in that religious tradition. The latter are referred to as 'alternators'. It is argued that conversion models in the social science literature have incorrectly equated conversion and commitment. It is demonstrated here that commitment can be seen to vary within, but not between, converts and alternators. Thus, the 'conversion' models fail to explain how religious commitment develops.

In an attempt to explain commitment, the social structural dynamics surrounding the religiously committed member are examined. It is proposed that commitment is affected by the internal dynamics of the religious community rather than the mechanisms by which one comes to be initially involved. Commitment is related to the extent to which the social structure surrounding one's identity as a believer is capable of insulating that believer from competing attractions

and conflicting expectations. A tight structure (normative expectations are 'imposed and received') invites greater conformity to religious norms, but carries with it the danger of commitment being behavioral only. A loose structure (normative expectations are 'proposed and interpreted') provides the opportunity and flexibility for attitudinal commitment, but carries with it the danger of deviance from religious norms. This conflict creates a dilemma for both the institution and the convert or alternator.

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Chapter I

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM AND HYPOTHESES

1.1 INTRODUCTION

There are two general objectives to this study. Firstly, an attempt is made to clarify the distinction between religious commitment and religious conversion. Secondly, a model of commitment is presented which seeks to locate commitment in the social structural dynamics of role complexity and role relatedness. Thus, this research is an attempt to link our understanding of conversion and commitment to some central sociological concepts.

The most common definitions of conversion center around the idea of identity change. Conversion implies a radical change in values, attitudes, and behavior, a break with the past, and a sense of adopting a new identity. In religious conversion, a new 'religious' identity is adopted. Whether this involves a change from one religious group to a different one or from a totally non-religious background, the key to conversion is that the past and the present identities are regarded as antithetical.

Identity refers to the definition of self implied by particular roles. The establishment of an identity involves both a recognition by the social actor that s/he is some

particular social object and the validation of that identity by others. Identity is thus, in Travisano's (1970:597) terms, "a validated announcement." Since each role has attached to it a particular identity, serving as a signal for the mobilization of specific role-expectations, each individual self is comprised of a number of different identities. These identities, in turn, vary in relevance. Travisano (1970) provides a distinction between general and independent identities. General identities are trans-situational, they provide an organizing principle or 'informing aspect' of one's life. Independent identities are situation-specific, they are not central to all interactions. Our analysis of religious change concerns changes in general identities.

Some recent work on conversion and identity change (Berger, 1963; Travisano, 1970; Glanz and Harrison, 1978) has suggested that a number of identity changes may be better described as identity 'alternations' than conversions. Alternation refers to a smooth transition in which a new identity develops naturally out of the old one. The old identity is not radically disrupted; minor rather than fundamental changes are experienced. Gordon (1974) has introduced the term 'consolidation' to describe identity changes midway between these two extremes of relatively minor changes in identity (alternation) and the more dramatic change implied by conversion. Consolidation involves an at-

tempt to integrate past and present identities without abandoning either.

These distinctions can help us to appreciate the range of religious changes that can occur. They can also give us a starting point for clearing up the lack of conceptual clarity between conversion and commitment that exist in the literature. 'Converts' are regarded as those who are most committed to a religious perspective; the path to conversion and the path to commitment are treated as synonymous. It is argued in this paper that conversion represents one path to commitment and that each of the types of religious change represent ways in which one can become committed to a religious perspective. Religious change, and conversion as the most dramatic type of religious change, can be defined as the process by which one comes to be committed to a particular set of religious norms.

Furthermore, it is argued that commitment to a particular set of religious norms varies in intensity. Individuals may conform or 'engage in consistent lines of activity' (Becker, 1960) for a number of different reasons. 'Commitment' is one mode of conforming, that is, what Merton (1957) and Coser (1975) call 'attitudinal conformity' as opposed to 'behavioral conformity'. Commitment is defined as the mechanism by which an individual conforms through identification with a set of normative prescriptions as part of the internal disposition of the actor. Commitment is distinguished

from compliance or behavioral conformity in which conforming behavior does not involve an internal disposition to act. Compliance is supported and maintained through external controls or sanctions. Commitment is regarded as supported and maintained through internal controls, allowing behavioral norms to continue to operate in the relative absence of sanctions or even the presence of pressures to deviate. Thus it is the internal disposition which separated 'compliance' from 'conviction' or commitment.

Variation in commitment, it is argued in this paper, is not a function of the process by which one comes to be a member of a particular religious group, but rather of the structure of role-relationships surrounding the new or altered identity. Role-relationships are measured in two ways: quantitatively, in terms of role-complexity, and qualitatively, in terms of role-relatedness. Boldt's (1978) distinction between 'tight' and 'loose' role relationships is employed in measuring the qualitative dimension. 'Tight' refers to role-expectations which are 'imposed and received' 'loose' refers to role expectations which are 'proposed and interpreted'.

The range of identity changes from alternation through consolidation to conversion is a question of how individuals become committed members. The question of how committed these members become is examined here in terms of the structure of role relationships. It is argued that loose/complex

role relationships provide a structure more amenable to attitudinal commitment (conviction) than do tight/simple ones.

The review of the literature is organized in terms of two objectives. The first section, 'commitment and religious change', deals with conversion and the various types of religious change. Conceptual difficulties are pointed out and the relationship between religious change and commitment is clarified. The second section, 'commitment and role-relationships' concentrates specifically on commitment and presents a model for understanding the way in which the structure of role-relationships provides a basis for different degrees of commitment to a religious perspective.

1.2 REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

1.2.1 Commitment and Religious Change

The general theme running throughout this section involves the failure in the conversion literature to provide a distinction between religious conversion and commitment. The tendency to treat conversion and commitment as the same variable stems from a confusion between conversion and lesser forms of identity change. Where this latter distinction is made, an untested assumption that only converts can be highly committed remains. The problems related to some current explanations of religious conversion are examined first.

Religious conversion is commonly regarded as a product of interaction with members of particular reference groups with whom one comes to identify. Here the confusion between conversion and commitment stems partially from a confusion between conversion and recruitment. Following that, the distinction between conversion and alternation set forth by Travisano (1970) is reviewed. This distinction, it is argued, refers to greater or lesser degrees of identity change and is useful to the extent that it appreciates the variability of religious change, but it is limited in its ability to explain the development of religious commitment. Finally, Lofland and Stark's (1965) model of cult conversion is discussed. The authors set forth the major variables in the 'commitment' process, but fail to recognize that the change being described can range from alternation to conversion. In other words, it is argued that what they call a 'conversion' is really a description of the process by which one may become committed. Thus, they fail to specify that the process by which one becomes a committed member must be distinguished from 'conversion' as only one of the motifs of identity change.

1.2.1.1 Conversion and Interaction

A major contribution to conversion literature involves the appreciation of the structure of interactions which contribute to the process of religious change. Hierich (1978:656) explains:

This kind of argument focuses upon circumstances that lead one to take a particular frame of reference seriously. Most typically, it involves an analysis of interpersonal influence... whereby inputs from others become so mutually consistent and reinforcing that one begins to see things through the other's eyes.

Griel (1977) argues that a person's world-view is in large part a function of one's reference groups. If perspectives are maintained by social relationships then when these relationships change, changes in perspective are likely to be concomitant. He remarks (1977:117): "conversion from one perspective to another can be expected to occur in those cases where an individual orients himself to a new reference group."

Anselm Strauss (1959:123) remarks that people sometimes appear ripe for conversion because their other loyalties have grown weak. Harrison (1974) points out that outside personal commitments must be minimized before conversion can occur. After recruitment, intensive involvement in the movement serves to attenuate outside ties. Balch and Taylor (1977:858) comment that "when a religious seeker has few social commitments and material possessions most of the major restraints against joining a religious cult are absent." On the other hand, Gerlach and Hine (1970:79) argue that contact between the pre-convert and the religious movement "almost always involves a significant pre-existing relationship of positive affect." This was found to be the basis of 'successful recruitment' in their Pentecostal study

(1968:23). Bibby and Brinkerhoff's (1973, 1974) findings have been fairly consistent with Gerlach and Hine. Evangelism is most successful through existent ties with family and friends. Thus, Harrison (1974), Greil (1977), and Balch and Taylor (1977) see conversion taking place when pre-existing ties have been severed. Gerlach and Hine's (1968, 1970) and Bibby and Brinkerhoff's (1974) findings do not necessarily imply the severing of ties. In fact, they see conversion as more likely to occur without a change in reference groups since the majority of new 'converts' have pre-existing ties to a reference group which shares that orientation to which they convert. It is necessary to appreciate the fact that both processes operate interactively.

However, one difficulty with the reference group model remains. There appears to be some ambiguity as to the direction of causation. Does the convert change reference groups prior to, or after conversion? When are outside ties weakened? The reference group model would hold that a weakening of outside bonds and a change in reference groups occurs before conversion since it is conversion which is being explained. We may inquire as to whether the religious change can occur first, and the weakening of outside bonds and the strengthening of within ties would follow as a consequence of that change or as justification or support for a decision previously made. Strauss (1976:257) stresses the active role of the religious seeker who "typically locates

himself within new situations intentionally so as to facilitate discovery of life-changing means." Heirich's (1978:673) suggestion that the impact of social networks is striking "for those already oriented to a religious quest" would appear to support such a contention.

This model, secondly, fails to distinguish between conversion and recruitment. Conversion seems to be implied by recruitment. This need not be the case. Bryan Wilson (1975:23) insists that conversion and recruitment are quite separate concepts. He suggests that conversion can take place without recruitment:

Evangelical sects often seek to recruit members by converting sinners. They usually subscribe to a theology that admits that at least in theory the sinner may be convicted of his sin and converted without being drawn into any particular movement.

Roger Strauss (1976:262-263) in pointing out that formal entrance should not be equated with conversion suggests the opposite, that recruitment may take place without conversion.

Such a conceptualization (of recruitment) represents an after the fact labelling of the seeker's passage into a new affiliation. It does not attempt to capture the process by which a creative individual actively engages in ongoing social enterprises.

Thus, not every case of recruitment represents a conversion.

While both Strauss and Wilson recognize that recruitment and conversion are distinct processes, they have not yet untangled conversion and commitment. They succeed in pointing out the distinction between recruitment and conver-

sion but they fail to distinguish between conversion and lesser forms of identity change by which one may become truly committed. Thus, the distinction between conversion and commitment is not made. Recruitment as a mechanism by which people become attached to social groups can involve conversion or alternation. It may even reflect simply 'accommodation' to friends, family, or a marriage partner (Bibby and Brinkerhoff, 1974; Greely, 1978) or denominational switching which may have little to do with identity change.

Kanter (1968:500) argues that "recruitment and retention are two analytically distinct problems, solved by different kinds of organizational strategies." Recruitment suggests the various processes by which one may become a member; retention implies the consistency or maintenance which characterizes commitment. Commitment involves the tendency to act in a way that is consistent with the norms and values of that group to which one is recruited.

The distinction between conversion and alternation, discussed below, is a useful starting point in helping us to appreciate the various mechanisms by which one can become committed. That is, it serves to outline the range of identity changes possible in the commitment process. However, it does not address the problem of how commitment is maintained.

1.2.1.2 Conversion and Alternation

Richard Travisano (1970) following from Berger (1963) provides us with an important first step in appreciating the variability of religious change: the distinction between conversion and alternation as qualitatively different types of identity changes. A conversion involves a radical change in identity.

Conversion is signalled by a radical reorganization of identity, meaning, and life... Such a change implies a change of allegiance from one source of authority to another... In conversion, a whole new world is entered, and the old world is transformed through reinterpretation (pp. 600-601).

An alternation, on the other hand, involves a much less drastic change. Alternations, he argues (1970:602):

involve identities which negate the old ones in a fully anticipated way. One identity grows naturally out of the other. Such changes cause little disruption in the lives of those involved.

Conversion, Travisano argues, is characterized by the negation of a former identity. "Typically, conversion can be thought of as embracing a negative identity." An alternation requires no such negation but, rather, involves the "transition to identities which are prescribed or at least permitted within the individual's established universe of discourse" (601). Travisano locates the distinction between conversion and alternation in terms of the extent to which old networks are relevant to the new identity. The relative ease or difficulty of the change, he argues (598):

depends upon how far afield one goes, that is on whether a new identity is irrelevant, related, or

opposed to old ones; on whether old relationships are unchanged, transformed, or destroyed. And it is on the interactional contingencies which make for relative ease or difficulty that our distinction between conversion and alternation rests.

This is where the distinction should remain. In arguing later that a 'convert' characteristically adopts a pervasive identity, making that identity central to almost all interactions (605), Travisano is really talking about the committed person, not necessarily the convert. By identifying the 'ubiquitous utilization of an identity' with conversion but not with alternation, Travisano implies that a converted person is more committed than an alternated person. I would contend that the pervasiveness of an identity to interaction can be true of the alternated identity as well. For a person who has been raised in an evangelical religious milieu, for example, the identity alternated through a fully anticipated 'born-again' experience can be equally pervasive. That person must respond to the demands of commitment as well. The implication that only converts can be committed stems from the observation that those who have adopted a totally new universe of discourse utilize that new identity in all their interactions. The subjective perception of the change is total, thus its utilization in all interaction is total. Travisano fails, however, to realize that the distinction between alternation and conversion need not apply to commitment. The ubiquitous utilization of an identity can apply to both conversion and alternation. In his con-

cluding remarks, Travisano ponders "ours is a day of alternation, but not of conversion." His closing comments on 'true believers' are meant to apply to converts. The fatal error lies in the assumption that only converts can be truly committed.

It is argued here that commitment to a religious perspective is not directly associated with the magnitude of the identity change since commitment involves the ability to sustain one's identity as a believer after recruitment (by whatever means) has taken place. Commitment depends, not upon whether one is converted or alternated, but upon the availability of plausibility structures to fortify the new or altered identity (see Berger and Luckmann, 1967). Plausibility structures refer to the validation of an identity by one's reference others. The 'announced' identity becomes situated in a reference group which functions to confer reality-status and provide a structure in which the new or altered identity becomes a working possibility. It is within these support structures provided by one's network of believers and others supportive of the changed identity that commitment can take place. If that can be demonstrated to be the case, then the distinction between conversion and alternation becomes a distinction inappropriately used to explain religious commitment. It can describe the processes or routes by which one comes to be committed and help us to appreciate the variability of the process of religious

change, but it fails to explain religious commitment itself. Thus we can ask in what sense the distinction is a 'qualitative' one as the title suggests.

A further modification of alternation and conversion suggested by Gordon (1974) demonstrates the quantitative rather than qualitative nature of the distinction between conversion and alternation. He introduces the term 'consolidation' as a type of identity change which combines two identities. An attempt is made to reconcile a past identity with a present one. Gordon discusses the example of the Jesus People who have come from conventional religious backgrounds, dropped out, and adopted a 'hippie' life-style. Their 'conversion' back to Christianity incorporates elements of both identities in a brand of worship and expression that places the hippie life-style with its characteristic music, dress, hair-style, and language within a traditional fundamentalist belief system. Adams and Fox (1972:55), while not using the term 'consolidation' report in their observations of Jesus People a type of change similar to that which Gordon describes. They remark:

They may welcome the Jesus trip as an expedient means of returning to middle-class values, while retaining peer approval. The religious fervor of the Jesus Movement provides a more socially acceptable way for them to resolve their conflict... One can gradually become oriented to the larger segments of the population without going too straight. In fact, few changes in life-style are required in the move from dope to Jesus.

The notion of identity consolidation midway between alternation and conversion demonstrates how the distinction becomes essentially one of degree. The distinction between conversion and alternation becomes more of a quantitative difference, expressing greater or lesser degrees of identity change, than a qualitative one. Furthermore, it becomes increasingly difficult for the social scientist to judge at what point a given individual has gone far enough afield in terms of changing reference groups, abandoning allegiances, or switching orientations in order for the change to be properly called a conversion. If we understand religious change as a process, at what point in one's conversion career does the religious seeker experience enough changes in order for the researcher to say that a conversion, rather than an alternation, has now taken place? Travisano notes (1970:598) "complete disruption signals conversion while anything less signals alternation." In speaking of degrees of identity change, or a continuum between conversion and alternation, is it any more appropriate to speak of greater or lesser alternations than it would be to speak of greater or lesser conversions?

A further difficulty with Travisano's distinction between conversion and alternation involves the failure to recognize that the time frame of the identity change may vary considerably. For Travisano, conversion implies a change that is not only dramatic but swift as well. While

the major indicator of conversion rests upon whether the past and the present are antithetical in some important respects, it is equally possible that a slower change, a sequence of alternations, could produce the same end result as a conversion with little disruption and minimal difficulty. Thus the 'ease or the difficulty' of the change depends not only upon 'how far afield one goes', but also upon how quickly the change was accomplished.

Finally, Travisano fails to appreciate the extent to which structural definitions of conversion or alternation may reflect the same subjective perception of change in the actor. One factor which may contribute to a disjuncture between subjective change and structural change involves the re-interpretation of pre-conversion events in the light of post-conversion experiences. The issue of the re-interpretation of the past raises a thorny methodological problem and will be discussed in more detail in the methodology chapter.

In brief, it is argued here that the distinction between conversion and alternation is useful primarily in helping us to predict the likelihood of changes that can occur. Since we expect alternations to be less problematic and more easily accomplished than conversions, we would expect conversions to be relatively rare. It also allows us to appreciate the range of possible changes involved in the process of becoming committed to a particular religious per-

spective. The distinction, however, does not provide for the assumption that conversion breeds greater commitment than alternation.

1.2.1.3 A Model of Cult Conversion

The Lofland and Stark (1965) model of cult conversion describes how, in fact, total commitment can result, but without respect to the variation in terms of identity change (conversion, consolidation, alternation). In other words, the conditions of the model could be applied to alternation as well as conversion. The model, presented below, maintains that for conversion it is necessary that a person:

1. Experience enduring, acutely-felt tensions;
2. Within a religious problem solving perspective;
3. Which lead to defining oneself as a religious seeker;
4. Encountering the cult at a turning point in one's life;
5. Wherein an affective bond to adherents is formed (or pre-exists);
6. Where extra-cult attachments are low, or neutralized;
7. And where, to become a 'deployable agent', exposure to intensive interaction is accomplished.

This model is an attempt to integrate three major explanatory themes which have emerged from the conversion literature. These are: (1) explanations in terms of deprivation or stress to which the religious change is a response (the

pathological model), (2) explanations in terms of socialization which pre-disposes some more than others to seek a religious orientation to life, and (3) a focus upon interactions with particular reference groups. This third theme focuses upon recruitment practices, the opportunity structure for interaction with members of the movement, and the loosening of outside bonds and commitments. The interaction model has been discussed in some detail above.

The pathological model of religious conversion represents a somewhat earlier paradigm. In general, the pathological models fail to explain why some people select a religious problem solving perspective while others select a secular solution. Although Glock (1973:212) discusses the conditions under which a religious resolution is more likely to occur, that is:

the nature of the deprivation is inaccurately perceived or those experiencing the deprivation are not in a position to work directly at the cause,

this explanation fails to appreciate how the social backgrounds of particular individuals influence which problem-solving perspective they may adopt. Furthermore, even if the response to deprivation is more likely to be religious under the conditions Glock outlines, the explanation is far from telling us what movement or group is the likely target for conversion. Harrison (1974:60) points out that:

No matter what strains and deprivations people feel, they will only find a movement's solution appealing if prior socialization or experience has led them to share its problem-solving perspective.

Stress and deprivation do provide some motivation to religious change, but the pathological model appears limited to explaining the motivation for religious change for those already oriented to a religious problem-solving perspective. It does not explain the conditions under which that religious premise is established. Thus, it fails to distinguish between conversion and alternation as the extent to which identity change has occurred, or the ease or difficulty with which that change was accomplished. Gerlach and Hine (1970) find deprivation and stress to be more usefully understood as facilitating factors which provide, under some conditions, the impetus for religious change. The direction of change can be examined in terms of recruitment practices operating through interaction and early religious socialization.

The Lofland and Stark model is a useful model of religious change in that it outlines variables explaining both impetus and direction of religious change and recognizes that change as a process. However, we are unsure of the extent of identity change since some or all of the conditions may pre-exist without necessitating any change in reference groups. In other words, the model may describe not only changes that are conversions but also those that are alternations. For example, for a person raised in a strongly religious home the background variables (1-3) could already be present. With the exception of a turning point, the situa-

tional variables (4-7) may already be present. A turning point is somewhat implied in acutely-felt tensions and these can occur relatively frequently in an individual's life. It is the subjective perception of those tensions and turning points which is significant for religious change. Stark himself admits (1965:19) that "various events or feelings are only religious if a person defines them as such." If this is true with respect to religious experiences, it is no less true with respect to feelings of tension and stress which occur within a religious framework where they can be defined as spiritual needs.

Richardson and Stewart (1977) suggest a connection between prior religious socialization and acutely-felt tensions. Lofland (1966:43) suggests that pre-converts' restriction to a religious problem-solving perspective rather than a psychiatric or political one could be due to their backgrounds in which they had "long been accustomed to defining the world in religious terms." The tensions and turning points can even be provoked within the context of the doctrines of sin, moral judgement, and eternal damnation. In this sense religion can create the very tensions it then seeks to alleviate.

The key to finding a distinction between conversion and alternation in the Lofland and Stark model is, I believe, in the ordering of the variables outlined in the model. Knowing exactly when a religious problem-solving perspective is

formulated is necessary to an understanding of the degree of identity change that has taken place. Likewise, knowing whether the various conditions outlined in the 'conversion' model are already established and operating before the religious change or are formulated in the process of religious change is a crucial consideration since these differences imply greater or lesser degrees of identity change, that is, conversion or alternation. Roger Strauss (1979:159) points out that each of the variables used to explain religious conversion is important only for those already involved in the process of religious seeking. In this sense, alternation and conversion represent different starting points for religious seeking.

Lofland (1977:817), in a re-evaluation of the earlier model has come to appreciate that the model had failed to take into consideration the active role of the convert as seeker. The conversion model implies a conception of converts as a "neutral medium through whom social forces operate... It is with such a realization," he writes, "that I have lately encouraged students of conversion to turn the process on its head and to scrutinize how people go about converting themselves." Likewise, Roger Strauss (1976:271) emphasises the active role of the seeker by attempting to understand not how the individual is converted by the religious group, but how "individuals generate, operate, and use the groups in the continual creation of their lives." Berger's (1963:63) comment that:

The experience of conversion to a meaning system that is capable of ordering the scattered data of one's biography is liberating and profoundly satisfying. Perhaps this has its roots in a deep human need for order, purpose, and stability...

sparks the suggestion that 'seeking' reflects some deep-seated human needs. The question remains not why people seek, but how they do so. If seeking is framed as an active human quest for a meaningful orientation toward the ultimate conditions of human existence, the distinction between conversion and alternation represents one solution as to the various ways seeking is constructed. The question of how far people seek, in terms of alternation or conversion, is answered in terms of what available tools are found in their social milieu to go about such a task. In other words, to conceptualize the seeker as active we must still appreciate that the seeker will seek in terms of what structural alternatives are open. The distinction between alternation and conversion highlights the range of how far different people search; the various explanatory models represent those tools employed. For some, those tools appear readily available; for others, no answers seem available in their existing universe of discourse. Seeking, as the 'active' side of recruitment, finally, must not only provide a way of appreciating the range of identity change possible (alternation, conversion), but it must also involve a distinction between the seeking process itself and subsequent commitment.

The point at which commitment becomes evident in the Lofland and Stark model is suggested in the seventh step. The first six steps lead to what Lofland (1966:60) calls 'verbal conversion'; with the addition of the seventh step, availability for intensive interaction, 'total conversion' takes place. Balch (1980:143) likewise sees intensive interaction as a necessary condition for the development of what he calls 'genuine conviction'. He found that:

When people join a religious cult they first change their behavior by adopting a new role. The changes may be sweeping and dramatic, but they are not necessarily supported by conviction. The boundless faith of the true believer usually develops only after lengthy involvement in the cult's day-to-day activities.

The implication of these findings is that commitment should be distinguished from the process (conversion or alternation) by which one enters the religious group. Thus, we can argue that the extent of identity change involved for entry into the religious group does not determine the extent of subsequent commitment. Berger and Luckmann (1967:158) remark:

To have a conversion is nothing much. The real thing is to be able to keep on taking it seriously, to retain a sense of its plausibility. This is where the religious community comes in. It provides the indispensable plausibility structure for the new identity.

The maintenance of a new or altered identity requires a structure to make it workable. And it is within that structure that commitment develops. The failure of the Lofland and Stark model to distinguish between alternation and con-

version (in the first six steps) results in a failure to appreciate that 'total' as opposed to 'verbal' conversion - accomplished in step seven - can, in fact, apply to either conversion or alternation. The same criticism applies to Balch's analysis. If the 'boundless faith of the true believer' develops only after intensive interaction in the cult's daily activities, then the 'genuine conviction' of the true believer can result from either conversion or alternation. Thus, in speaking of 'total conversion' or 'genuine conviction' one is really speaking of the committed person and not merely the convert.

1.2.1.4 Summary

In this first section of the literature review it has been argued that the relationship between conversion and commitment must be more carefully conceptualized. One step in setting forth such a distinction is to appreciate the variability of religious change. Conversion and alternation tell us how far afield the religious seeker has gone. They represent different paths by which individuals may become attached to a particular religious group. This distinction, however, fails to explain religious commitment itself since a person may be committed to a religious perspective independent of the mechanism by which they came to be attached to the religious group in which that perspective is embod-

ied. Thus a model of religious commitment independent of conversion versus alternation is required. Such a model is suggested in the second section. From the first section the basis of commitment appears at the 'end' of the 'conversion' process, the availability and intensity of interaction with other believers. In the second section of the literature review an attempt is made to describe how the structure of that interaction setting has a qualitative impact upon the nature of individual commitment.

1.2.2 Commitment and Role-Relationships

Commitment, it was argued, involves one type of a consistent line of behavior. It can be defined as the extent to which conformity to role-expectations flows from identification with those requirements as part of the internal disposition of the actor.

In his discussion of commitment, Becker (1960:33) comments that "people act consistently because activity of some particular kind is regarded as right and proper in their society and because deviations from this standard are punished." Kanter (1968:500) looks at commitment in terms of the way "individual interests become attached to the carrying out of socially organized patterns of behavior which are seen as fulfilling those interests, as expressing the nature and needs of the person." Becker accounts for commitment in terms of some external standard supported by sanctions.

Kanter accounts for it in terms of some internal standard reflecting personality needs. The question which deserves attention here is whether commitment refers to consistent behavior in accordance with some external standard or with some internal disposition. It should first be pointed out that commitment, in order to have some focus or direction, necessarily involves conformity to some standard. Religious commitment is examined in terms of conformity to a set of role expectations embodied in the religious group with which one affiliates. Secondly, beyond the narrower connotations of religious commitment, the type of conformity implied by commitment must be examined. It is necessary to look at what sets commitment apart from other types of conformity. This question can be examined in terms of Rose Laub Coser's (1975) discussion of two types of conformity.

Coser (1975) discusses two types of conformity, 'behavioral' and 'attitudinal'. Behavioral conformity refers to action in accordance with normative requirements which is not based on internal disposition. Attitudinal conformity refers to action in which individuals grant legitimacy to institutional norms and values. She sees a strong relationship between attitudinal conformity and complexity of role sets. Her analysis would suggest that attitudinal conformity is more appropriate for those for whom intensive interaction is balanced out by the opportunity to make independent decisions. Intensive interaction in a religious group may

tend to submerge the individual into a narrowly prescribed set of role expectations leaving little room for individual autonomy. As long as the structural constraints compel the individual to act in a given manner there is little opportunity to develop the intellectual flexibility which enhances attitudinal conformity. Those within a more complex role set, one which includes contradictory expectations, will be required to act on the basis of inner values. A more complex role set, in other words, exposes the individual to situations in which the normative requirements are not as clearly defined. This allows the actor to choose an appropriate course of action. The true test of a religiously committed person involves the extent to which performance is affected when those social controls supporting the role expectations are absent and the believer must perform that role without external support.

Coser's analysis is consistent with Kiesler's (1968:450) findings that "the less one is pressured to perform an act...the more one is committed to that behavior." Gerard (1968) feels that Kiesler is confusing commitment with conviction. Gerard identifies commitment with what Coser has called behavioral conformity. His own use of the term commitment refers to the cost implications of engaging in some behavior. Kiesler, he insists (1968:458) is referring, rather, to a "person's commitment to an attitude for which something like 'depth of conviction' is more appropri-

ate." Gerard's use of the term 'commitment' refers to behavioral conformity. And, insofar as it refers to behavioral conformity, we can agree with Gerard (1968:458) that:

If anything, commitment will be greater to the extent that the person had no freedom of choice since it is generally easier... for the person to change his behavior to the extent that he had freedom of choice in originally deciding whether or not to engage in it.

Kiseler's contention that a person will be 'committed' to the extent that freedom of choice in deciding whether or not to engage in conforming behavior is exercised is consistent with Coser's notion of attitudinal conformity.

In this research, commitment refers to attitudinal conformity. Commitment has been defined earlier as conformity through identification with a set of normative prescriptions (or proscriptions) as part of the internal disposition of the actor. Behavioral conformity is essentially compliance without inner commitment. This is referred to here as compliance. Attitudinal conformity is referred to as conviction. Thus greater or lesser commitment is characterized by variation in 'conviction' or 'attitudinal conformity'. It is argued here that the structure of the role relationships is important in influencing whether the individual is compliant or committed.

Boldt (1978) provides us with a distinction between 'tight' and 'loose' role relationships in reference to types of societies. An attempt is made here to apply the notion of tight and loose role relationships on the individual lev-

el of analysis. The two types of conformity, attitudinal and behavioral, are seen to fit the tight/loose dimension in terms of the structural potential for individual autonomy. In a structurally tight system of role expectations, role expectations are 'imposed and received' as opposed to expectations 'proposed and interpreted' in a structurally loose system. Where role expectations are imposed and received there is little opportunity for negotiation, improvization, and innovation. Individual autonomy, in terms of role performance, refers to "the ability/opportunity to pursue alternative courses of action" (1978:355). According to this theoretical perspective, the provision for individual autonomy creates a greater allowance for attitudinal conformity to develop. It should be pointed out that structural looseness also carries with it the possibility of no conformity or of dropping out of the organization. Likewise, in a structurally tight system of role relationships, individual autonomy is restricted and conformity tends to be behavioral rather than attitudinal.

Coser's notion of complexity of role set is a quantitative variable referring to the number of members of a role set and the number of conflicting expectations making role articulation more difficult. Boldt's tight/loose conception of role relatedness, on the other hand is a qualitative dimension referring to the nature of the bonds between and among roles (Boldt and Roberts, 1979:225). The tight/loose

dimension cross-cuts the complex/simple dimension in order to give us a model of types of conformity. This is illustrated in the chart below.

Types of Conformity		
Types of role sets		
	Simple	Complex
Nature of bonds between and among roles	Tight	Compliance, Behavioral conformity (dependent upon external controls)
	Loose	Conviction, Attitudinal conformity (internal disposition to act).

On the 'tight/simple' end of the continuum, role expectations are 'imposed and received' within a relatively simple role set. Here we expect compliant behavior (behavioral conformity) but less commitment (attitudinal conformity, or conviction). On the 'complex/loose' end of the continuum, role expectations are 'proposed and interpreted' within a more complex role set. Where conformity to normative requirements is maintained within this type of structure, we can expect a greater degree of commitment than where conformity is maintained within a tight/simple set of role re-

relationships. In other words, if conformity is maintained within a complex/loose structure of role relationships, since institutional support for conformity is minimized, the motivation to conform is more likely to be attitudinal.

It is important to stress that both conviction and compliance are to be seen as types of conformity. Compliance or behavioral conformity is understood to be dependent upon external controls. Conviction or attitudinal commitment is a type of conformity for which an internal disposition to act exists. It is not as dependent, then, upon external controls. Within any complex/loose structure of role relationships there is a greater strain toward deviance since institutional controls for conformity are minimal. Thus, within a complex/loose structure of role relationships, a lack of conformity implies no commitment at all. It is only where conformity is maintained within this type of structure that commitment can be said to be present. Thus, in this model of commitment, it is conviction rather than conformity which is seen to vary. Commitment involves the internal disposition to act in a manner consistent with the role expectations on the basis of the belief that those normative prescriptions are right and worthy of one's obedience. Consequently the norms can operate in the relative absence of sanctions and institutional controls.

1.2.3 Summary

The notion that religious 'conversion' involves only one of the ways by which an individual may become attached to a particular religious group suggests that conversion itself cannot be used to explain religious commitment. The realization that there exists a range of identity changes leading to religious commitment suggests that an independent measure of religious commitment is needed in order to explain how not only converts but alternators as well become committed members. Furthermore, it is recognized that commitment itself is variable ranging from higher to lower attitudinal commitment. It is argued that this variation in commitment is not a function of the magnitude of the identity change (ranging from conversion to alternation) but rather of the structure of the role relationships surrounding the new or altered identity. The work of Coser (1968) and Boldt (1978) suggests that a greater potential for attitudinal commitment exists where the structure of the role relationships provides for choice, autonomy, and individual interpretation.

In his study, Travisano uses a controlled comparison of converts (Hebrew Christians) and alternators (Jewish Unitarians). Holding ethnic background constant, he succeeds in demonstrating that converts have passed through a greater identity change than alternators. After noting that converts characteristically make their new identity central to most interactions, he hastens to the dubious conclusion that

converts make up society's true believers. He overlooks the fact that the demands of commitment between Christians and Unitarians may be significantly different.

In this research a comparison between converts and alternators is made to test whether they demonstrate any difference in levels of commitment. In this case, however, the constant is not what the identity change is 'from' but rather what it is 'to'. Alternators and converts who have experienced a similar religious change, that of finding a personal relationship with God through being 'born-again' in Christ, are chosen. The difference between them lies in the magnitude of the identity change, be it conversion or alternation.

Institutional definitions of alternation and conversion are chosen. Members of evangelical churches who have been raised in the evangelical Church tradition are used as examples of alternators. Those who have joined the evangelical Church from outside the evangelical Church tradition are used as examples of converts.

Here we are operating on the assumption that these institutional definitions of the magnitude of the identity change represent actual conversions or alternations. It is recognized that the institutional definitions may not correspond to the subjective perception of change felt by the actor. In fact, given the theological and subjective meaning of regeneration experiences within Evangelical Christianity,

it is highly likely that the majority of believers would perceive their change to be a religious conversion irrespective of how it is institutionally defined. It may be that a number of institutionally defined 'alternators' have a subjective perception of that change as a 'conversion'. Such a perception may also be socially supported by the reference group. An independent measure of conversion and alternation will permit the researcher to note the extent to which those institutional definitions of the magnitude of the religious change are consistent with the subjective perceptions of the change. The main purpose here, however, is to examine the extent to which institutionally defined changes of varying magnitude can be indicative of greater or lesser commitment. It is proposed that a better indicator of commitment can be found within the structure of role relationships. The variation in commitment within the institutionally defined groups of converts and alternators will be compared to the simple/tight complex/loose measure of role relationships. The expected findings are hypothesized below.

1.2.4 Hypotheses

It is hypothesized that:

1. There is no direct relationship between commitment and the magnitude of the identity change (conversion, alternation).

2. The variation in attitudinal commitment will be related to the structure of role relationships surrounding the new or altered identity. When conformity to the religious group norms is maintained within a complex/loose structure of role relationships we expect attitudinal commitment to be high. When conformity to the religious group norms is maintained within a simple/tight structure of role relationships we expect attitudinal commitment to be low.

For the first hypothesis the variation in religious commitment is examined in reference to converts and alternators. Within-group variation should be greater than between-group variation. For the second hypothesis the relationship between commitment and role relationships is examined. In order to compare attitudinal commitment with the structure of role relationships, structural tightness with respect to a particular religious norm is examined. Thus it is possible to measure the extent to which the network influences behavior specifically in terms of that norm. The proscriptive norm against drinking was chosen to test the second hypothesis. We expect that among non-drinkers attitudinal commitment to non-drinking will be higher where the structure of role relationships is characterized as more complex and loose.

The next chapter deals with methodology. The sample design is outlined and the major variables - structural tightness,

the magnitude of the identity change, and commitment - are operationalized. Some methodological issues raised with respect to interviewing religious converts and alternators are discussed. Subsequent chapters in the thesis deal with the data analysis, a description of the findings, theoretical implications of the findings, and suggestions for further research.

Chapter II
METHODOLOGY

2.1 SAMPLING PROCEDURE

The sampling frame consisted of a total of eight churches from evangelical Christian denominations in the city of Winnipeg. These were selected randomly from a total population of evangelical Christian church congregations. 'Evangelical' in this context refers to those denominations in which an experience of being 'born-again' (variously referred to as being 're-born', 'saved' 'accepting Christ') is regarded as normative for all members. A more complete description of the born-again experience is included in appendix B. Within an evangelical church an experience of spiritual regeneration is seen as a qualification for membership not only in the local church, but also for the Church in a universal and spiritual sense. Salvation through Christ introduces one into the 'family of God'.

One of the difficulties with using this type of sampling frame is that a born-again experience does not necessarily imply membership in an evangelical church. Institutional belonging (membership in an evangelical Christian church) is not necessarily implied in the 'spiritual belonging' of being born-again into God's family. A number of

persons involved in movements such as the charismatic renewal or Cursillo have maintained their belonging in more traditional non-evangelical church denominations while at the same time experiencing a spiritual re-birth akin to that preached among evangelicals. Other born-again Christians may attend an evangelical church without ever formally declaring membership. Thus, a sample taken from evangelical churches does not guarantee that every spiritually 'reborn' Christian has an equal chance of being selected for our sample. Only those who are institutionally defined as born-again believers (that is, institutionally defined through membership in an evangelical church) are eligible to be selected.

Since, however, we are operating within institutional definitions of converts and alternators, a sample which institutionally defines the born-again experience can be deemed appropriate. Furthermore, selecting respondents from within evangelical churches allows us greater control over the meaning of regenerative experiences for individual respondents since the question of personal salvation is a fundamental issue among evangelicals and not a matter of denominational distinctiveness. Thus, our sample consists of 'institutionally defined' born-again converts and alternators.

Secondly, it should be pointed out that the purpose of this research is not to report the frequency distribution of

the two types of religious change. It is recognized that since lesser forms of identity change are more easily accomplished and less problematic than greater changes, one would expect to find fewer conversions than alternations in a random sample. Therefore, an attempt was made to include in this sample an equal number of both converts and alternators. The task here is rather to appreciate the implications of identity changes of differing magnitude for commitment. The method employed is described below.

Respondents were selected randomly from church membership lists in only the first six of the eight churches selected. In these six congregations respondents were selected by choosing every Nth name on the list following a random first choice. We found from these random selections that approximately 65% of those selected met our institutional criteria for alternation (that is, they had been raised in evangelical churches, although not necessarily the one in which they currently held membership). In order to gain a relatively equal number of converts and alternators for comparative purposes, the pastors of the remaining two congregations were consulted to provide a listing of only those members who met our institutional criteria for conversion (that is, those who had joined the evangelical church from outside the evangelical tradition). Thus, in the last two churches, respondents were randomly selected from a list of converts only. For financial reasons and the goals of this

project it was determined that a sample of about 100 would be appropriate. Given the limitations of the sample size, the findings must be treated as suggestive only.

In the total sample, 45 converts and 48 alternators were selected. Two of the alternators had moved out of the city before the church membership lists were updated. Thus, in our final sample 45 converts and 46 alternators were interviewed. All of the alternators were taken from the first six churches. Converts were selected from all eight churches (21 were randomly selected from the first six churches, and, in the last two churches from which only converts were selected 24 respondents were chosen).

2.2 THE MAJOR VARIABLES AND THEIR INDICATORS

According to our first hypothesis, we expect to find no significant relationship between commitment and the magnitude of identity change (conversion, alternation). The second hypothesis holds that commitment will vary as a function of tight vs. loose role relationships. Where role relationships are characterized as tight we expect attitudinal commitment to be low; where role relationships are characterized as loose we expect attitudinal commitment to be high. In order to test these hypotheses, relationships between the following variables are examined: for the first hypothesis, commitment is examined in relation to the magnitude of the identity change (conversion vs alternation), for the second

hypothesis religious commitment is examined in relation to tight and loose role relationships. A copy of the questionnaire used is found in Appendix A.

2.2.1 The magnitude of the identity change

Berger (1963) points out that conversion involves a change in meaning systems while an alternation occurs within specific meaning systems. Our institutional definition of converts and alternators defines converts as those who have joined an evangelical church from outside the evangelical tradition. Alternators are those who have been raised within an evangelical tradition. For alternators, the expectation of a born-again experience is neither inconsistent nor proscribed within their existing universe of discourse. Rather, it is an expectation arising from their religious socialization. For converts, this born-again experience is one that must be discovered. It is not readily available as a part of their existing meaning system. Thus, a change in meaning systems is required for conversion. For alternation, it is not required that a new world of meaning be entered in order to become 'born-again'; rather it involves a consistent sequence of events within the existing meaning system.

In order to test the utility of the apriori institutional definition of conversion and alternation, structural and subjective measures of the magnitude of the identity

change are included in the questionnaire. Structural measures include measures of changes in social networks. Subjective measures include perceptions of spiritual well-being before and after the religious change and perceptions of the relative ease or difficulty of the religious change.

2.2.1.1 Changing Networks

The distinction between conversion and alternation is made by Travisano (1970:598) in terms of "whether old relationships are unchanged, transformed, or destroyed." The extent to which past ties are severed and new ones formed is useful in making a distinction between conversion and alternation since these relationships are the vehicles through which meaning systems are constructed and perpetuated. The extent to which relationships do change is a measure of the extent to which conditions 5 and 6 of the Lofland and Stark model (see page 17) pre-exist (alternation) or are formulated in the process of religious change (conversion).

Respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which both family and friendship ties were continual or disrupted in the course of their religious change (questions 30-65).

In the case of family members, respondents were asked to indicate whether their father, mother, spouse, and 'other family members' were born-again prior to the respondent's religious change. Since a respondent could have some other family members who were born-again and others who were not,

born-again family members and non-born-again family members were treated separately. Respondents were asked to indicate 'how many' of their 'other' family members were born-again or not born-again at the time of the religious change. Response categories were: all, most, 1 or 2, and none.

Respondents were asked how close they felt to each of these family members (including father, mother, and spouse) before the religious change. Response categories were as follows: (0) I was not very close to them, (1) I thought they were okay, (2) I liked them a lot, and (3) I felt very close to them. Secondly, they were asked whether their closeness to any of these family members changed as a result of the religious change. The extent to which their closeness changed as a result of the religious change was indicated along a five point scale:

I was much	It was about	I was much more
closer to them	the same	distant from them
5	4	3
		2
		1

Perceptions of closeness were compared to the frequency of interaction with family members. Respondents indicated how often they saw these family members both before and after the religious change. They were then asked to indicate whether any difference in the frequency of interaction was directly a result of the religious change, partly a result of the religious change, or unrelated to it.

These same questions were applied to friendship networks. Respondents were asked to indicate firstly whether 'all, most, some (about half), a few, or none' of their friends were born-again prior to the respondent's religious change. They were then asked to indicate closeness and frequency of interaction both before and after the religious change for these born-again friends. Likewise, respondents were asked to report whether 'all, most, some, few, or none' of their friends were not born-again prior to the religious change. Closeness and frequency of interaction both before and after the religious change were then measured for non-born-again friends.

For non-born-again family and friends, respondents were also asked how they felt these others would react to the religious change. In other words, respondents were asked to indicate not how these 'did' react to the religious change, but how the respondent felt, at the time, these others were going to react. Responses were as follows: They would (0) approve the change, (1) be indifferent to it, (2) have mixed feelings, (3) oppose it, and (4) strongly oppose it. Approval from born-again family and friends was considered to be universal and therefore a question measuring the reaction of born-again others was not included in the study.

Using these measures we have an indication of the extent to which both in-group and out-group ties among family and friends may have changed as a result of the religious change.

2.2.1.2 Perceptions of Spiritual Well-being

Secondly, the extent to which these changes of varying magnitude in the area of interpersonal networks may be consistent with changes of varying magnitude on the level of the individual's own perceptions of spiritual well-being both before and after the religious change was examined.

Respondents were asked to indicate along a series of seven point scales what they felt their life was like before and then after the religious change. Direction of change was indicated by an arrow. Questions included perceptions of religious change along the following dimensions (questions 21 to 25):

1. Belief in the existence or non-existence of God. Values are as follows: 01 Certain that God does not exist. 02 Quite certain that God does not exist. 03 Fairly certain that God does not exist. 04 Uncertain about the existence of God. 05 Fairly certain that God does exist. 06 Quite certain that God does exist. 07 Absolutely certain that God does exist. In this question respondents were asked to indicate how they felt about the existence of God before the religious change as opposed to how they felt after the religious change. For example, a change from uncertain (04) to absolutely certain (07) would be indicated by circling the values 04 and 07 and then drawing an arrow from 04 to 07 to indicate the direction that the change had taken. If a respondent was always 'quite certain' (06) about the existence

of God and this was unaffected by the religious change, the response would be indicated by simply circling the value 06 for both before and after the religious change.

2. Perceptions of satisfaction with life before and after the change. Values are as follows: 01 very miserable, 02 miserable, 03 Just Bearable, 04 Allright, 05 Fairly happy, 06 Quite happy, and 07 Very happy.

3. Changes in moral behavior before and after the change: Responses range from 'very sinful life' at one extreme of the seven point scale to 'very upright moral life' at the other extreme.

4. A sense of meaning and purpose to life before and after the religious change: Responses range from 'My life lacked meaning and purpose' at the low end of the seven point scale, to 'I had found the true meaning and purpose to life' at the high end of the scale. The response 'I felt uncertain as to the meaning and purpose of life' was located in the middle of the scale with a value of 4.

5. A struggle with sin before and after the religious change: Responses were indicated along a seven point scale with responses ranging from 'I felt my life was controlled by sin and evil' to 'I felt my life was controlled by God and His Holy Spirit' The response 'I felt my life was a struggle between good and evil' was placed in the centre of the seven point scale.

Respondents were also asked to indicate the extent to which religion had an influence on their attitudes and behavior while they were growing up and to what extent religion now had an influence on their lives. Response categories for both questions were as follows: (5) Very strong (4) Quite strong (3) Some (2) Slight (1) None.

These measures allow us to compare the changes in interpersonal networks with the more subjective changes in spiritual well-being involved in the process of religious change.

2.2.1.3 Cumulativeness of the transformation sequence

A third measure of the magnitude of religious change is suggested by Glanz and Harrison (1978:131). They point out that one fundamental difference between conversion and lesser forms of identity change involves the 'cumulativeness of the transformation sequence', "the degree to which the transformed individual and the significant others associated with the original identity define the new identity as a natural or predictable extension of the original identity." This involves questioning whether the individual and the significant others prior to the religious change had expected the religious change to occur (questions 27,32,41,50,60).

The respondent's own expectation of the change was measured by the following question: 'Six months before this change took place, had you ever expected that such a change

would ever take place in your life?' Response categories are as follows:

1. Yes, I definitely felt I would change.
2. Yes, I thought I might someday.
3. I doubted whether or not I would change.
4. I didn't think I would ever change.
5. It had never occurred to me that such a change would ever take place in my life.

To measure the extent to which significant others had expected the religious change to occur, respondents were asked to indicate whether each of the family and friends listed had expected the change to occur or were very surprised when this change took place. Responses were ranked along a five point scale ranging from 'expected the change to take place' (value=1) to 'was very surprised when this change took place' (value=5).

2.2.1.4 Other measures used

Another measure of the magnitude of the religious change was the respondent's perception of the suddenness of the change. It was felt that a conversion may be a less gradual change than an alternation. An alternation involves a less dramatic, and presumably a more gradual change than a conversion. Respondents were asked to indicate whether they felt the change was sudden (1) or gradual (2), and then asked to estimate, in months, over what time period the change took place (questions 26 and 27).

Finally, it was felt that an alternation would be perceived as an easier change than a conversion. If an alternation involves less disruption in terms of networks and greater continuity along the subjective dimensions of the change, it should be accomplished with less difficulty than should a conversion. Respondents were asked to indicate the relative ease or difficulty of the religious change along a five point scale ranging from very easy (1) to very difficult (5) (question 28). This question posed considerable problems for a number of respondents because it failed to differentiate between different aspects of the religious change which seemed to vary in terms of relative ease or difficulty. For example, for some respondents the influence of old friendships made the transition much more difficult, but at the same time the appeal of gaining a sense of forgiveness, peace, and order to life made the transition an easy one. For others, leaving behind an old network was easy while wrestling with the evangelical claim to unique truth made the decision difficult. Thus, the change may have been easy in certain respects but difficult in others for the same respondent.

2.2.2 Religious commitment: Attitudinal vs Behavioral

Behavioral and attitudinal commitment along a number of dimensions of religious activity is the next variable to be measured. These dimensions are discussed separately below.

2.2.2.1 Attendance

Respondents were asked to indicate how often they attended church services (questions 81, 82). Since it was felt that attendance may lapse during the summer months, especially for less committed members, attendance scores for 'during the summer' were measured apart from attendance scores for during the rest of the year. A second reason for separating summer from yearly attendance was that the interviews were conducted during the summer months and it was felt that responses to a single question on attendance may be biased in favor of summer church attendance or that the responses may be inconsistent with some respondents reporting summer attendance habits and others reporting an average attendance over the year. Response categories range from very infrequent attendance to attendance of three times a week or more.

As a way of evaluating whether this attendance is attitudinal, other independent measures of attitudinal commitment to church attendance were measured using a series of three semantic differential items polarizing an attitudinal with a non-attitudinal response. The items are discussed below:

1. I always find the services meaningful (attitudinal) vs. I am kind of 'just there' and don't pay too much attention to what is going on (non-attitudinal). To attend without feeling that the act of attending is personally meaning-

ful, or that the external act of attending but not the internal act of attentiveness is important implies a lack of attitudinal commitment. To be 'just there' implies that an outward act of conformity is more salient to the individual than the inner act implied in finding the services meaningful. Behavioral conformity requires nothing more than one's physical presence. The act of attending is sufficient. Attitudinal commitment implies that religious action must have meaning to the individual.

2. I would feel that I'd missed something valuable if I missed a church service (attitudinal) vs. 'People would ask questions if I missed one of the services'. Attitudinal commitment implies that one attends church because of an inner desire to attend rather than because of conformity to some external standard imposed by others. Thus, the concern of an attitudinally committed attender, should they fail to attend, is that by so doing they have done themselves a personal injustice. The sanction is self-imposed. If attendance is behavioral, then the concern of the absentee is that an external requirement has been violated and sanctions (applied by others) may follow.

3. 'I go to church because the Bible teaches that we ought to go' (attitudinal) vs. 'I go to church because I enjoy the fellowship with other Christians' (belonging). This dimension draws a distinction between attendance out of a sense of internal commitment (in this case to the teachings

of the Bible) and that of attendance out of a sense of belonging. Attendance in obedience to the teachings of the Bible implies an inner acceptance that church attendance is 'right'. The words 'ought to attend' are used in the question. Attendance out of a sense of belonging implies only that attendance is rational, an inner conviction concerning it's 'rightness' is not implied.

Following the semantic differential items, open-ended responses to the question of why the respondent attends church were recorded and examined for attitudinal as opposed to identificational or other non-attitudinal responses. Attitudinal commitment depends upon the actor's own assessment of his/her actions. There is less dependence upon role validation, "the successful anticipation of the behavior of relevant others within the range necessary for the enactment of one's own role" (Turner, 1962:29). Behavioral conformity implies an external source of religious activity. Inner commitment is steadier and more dependable while external conformity is always more uncertain since it is anchored in group membership.

2.2.2.2 Involvement

On the level of church involvement, respondents were asked to indicate whether they were involved in the functioning of the church in any way beyond attendance (questions 84 and 85). Similarly, active involvement in reli-

gious organizations outside their own local congregation was measured. It should be noted that this measure of commitment may be biased in favor of alternators. Converts may be in less of a position to assume leadership roles than alternators, especially for those converts who are relatively recent members. Alternators have grown up in the church and would be more likely to have been socialized to assume positions of leadership. They would also more likely have a better idea of what is expected in leadership roles. Furthermore, a stronger network within the church for alternators may provide a better opportunity for them to assume elected positions such as church deacon or elder.

2.2.2.3 Devotional Commitment

Measures of devotional commitment were used as an indicator of attitudinal commitment (questions 88 to 94). Devotional commitment is largely a private area of religious activity and as such is not subject to the same sanctions as externally observable religious behavior. Respondents were asked to indicate how regularly they spent time in private prayer and Bible reading, how much time was spent in these activities on those occasions when they did read the Bible or pray privately, and how salient these practices are to their lives. A question on 'other devotional material' was asked in terms of how many religious books they read during the past twelve months.

2.2.2.4 Recruitment

Travisano (1970) suggests that the salience of identities varies in terms of their utilization in interaction. What he calls the 'ubiquitous utilization of an identity' he assigns to converts, the 'true believers'. It is argued in this research, however, that for alternators, the identity of born-again believer can be equally salient and thus equally pervasive in interaction. An identity that is pervasive to all interactions implies attitudinal commitment because the identity is made relevant in situations in which social support is lacking. An identity which is utilized in specific interactions (that is, it is not trans-situational) suggests that its importance is limited to those areas in which it is utilized.

One measure of the extent to which the born-again identity is utilized only in interaction with other believers (implying behavioral conformity, operating only in the presence of social support) as opposed to its utilization in more diverse situations, including perhaps even those unfriendly to the born-again identity, involves a willingness to recruit others. The act of recruiting, or 'witnessing', requires that one chooses to make one's identity observable to others, to 'identify' oneself as a born-again Christian in interaction situations beyond the circle of the born-again community.

Respondents were asked to indicate whether they had personally tried to convert someone to their religious faith. Five categories of others were included: among members of their family, among friends, among co-workers, among neighbours, and among strangers. For each of these categories responses were: (0) no, I never have, (1) Yes, once or twice, (2) Yes, a few times, and (3) Yes, often.

2.2.2.5 Financial Contributions to the Church

Respondents were asked to indicate the amount given to the church as a percentage of their total income (questions 96-99). Since 10% commonly represents the 'tithe', an acceptable standard of giving, response categories were ordered in reference to the tithe. Response categories were: (1) Well below 10%, (2) Just below 10%, (3) About 10%, (4) Just above 10%, and (5) Well above 10%.

The measure of the extent to which this giving was attitudinal involved a series of eleven suggested 'reasons' why people give to the church from which the respondent was to rank order their three most common reasons for giving. These responses were either attitudinal, identificational, or rational. An attitudinal response is one in which giving depends upon the actor's internal convictions regarding the act of giving. Hence, giving does not depend upon external support or approval. An identificational response is one in which the act of giving depends upon group approval or

avoidance of negative sanctions. Responses in which the act of giving is supported neither because of a conviction that giving in and of itself is viewed as morally right (as in attitudinal giving), nor from a sense of group approval (as in identificational giving), are labelled as 'rational' responses. Response categories were as follows:

1. Attitudinal giving

- a) Giving to the Church is something that I enjoy doing.
- b) I give as an act of love toward God.
- c) I feel morally obligated to give to the Church.
- d) The Bible teaches that we ought to give.

2. Identificational Giving:

- a) Giving to the Church gives me a sense of belonging, of being a part of something.
- b) I give partly because of those who would know about it if I didn't give anything.
- c) I would feel that I wasn't doing my share if I did not give.

3. Rational Giving:

- a) The Church may as well get the money rather than the government. Donations can be counted as income tax deductions.
- b) It provides better facilities and a more comfortable atmosphere for worship.
- c) I can afford to give and so I feel I ought to.

- d) The money I give is used in support of a worthy cause.

The above items are randomly ordered in the questionnaire.

2.2.2.6 Proscriptive Norms

Commitment to prescriptive norms such as church attendance, involvement, giving, private prayer, and recruitment were examined above. Now we shall look at measures of the degree of attitudinal commitment to proscriptive norms. Two items were selected: non-drinking and lotteries. Major attention is paid to non-drinking.

Using a trichotomy employed by Campbell (1964) to measure internal commitment to non-drinking, a series of thirteen attitudinal, identificational, and rational reasons were listed. An attitudinal response is one in which abstinence from drinking depends upon the actor's internal convictions regarding drinking. Non-attitudinal responses could be either identificational or rational. An identificational response is one in which non-drinking depends upon group support or upon the presence of external sanctions against drinking. Rational responses include those in which drinking is viewed as harmful or undesirable in terms of the calculation of the costs of risk-taking. Respondents were asked to rank order the three most salient reasons why they did not drink.

Attitudinal responses to non-drinking were as follows:

1. It is against the moral teaching of the Church.
2. Drinking is a sign of personal weakness
3. Drinking is wrong in principle.
4. Decent people do not drink.

Identificational responses to non-drinking were as follows:

1. My parent(s) and/or spouse disapprove.
2. It is a bad example for the children or for the young Christians in the Church.
3. I do not drink because of the criticism I would receive.
4. My friends do not drink.

Rational responses to non-drinking were as follows:

1. Drinking is harmful to one's health.
2. Drinking costs too much money.
3. I do not like the taste.
4. I am afraid of getting into the habit.
5. Drinking can lead to broken homes and marriages.

These items were randomly ordered in the questionnaire.

Responses to an open-ended question asking for 'other reasons' for non-drinking were examined and coded as identificational, rational, or attitudinal.

Finally, respondents were asked to indicate both their own personal view and the perceived position of their Church on a series of attitude items dealing with drinking and lottery tickets. Responses were ordered along a five point

scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Attitude items for drinking were as follows (Currie, et al, 1980):

1. The use of wine in communion services is acceptable.
2. Drinking wine with meals at home occasionally is a practice that is quite acceptable.
3. It is alright to toast the bride and groom with a glass of wine at a wedding reception.
4. It would be better to teach our children moderation in drinking than to ban it totally.
5. It doesn't really matter whether a Christian drinks or not.

Attitude items for lottery tickets were as follows:

1. It is quite acceptable for Christians to purchase lottery tickets (Western Express, Loto Canada).
2. There is nothing wrong with buying raffle tickets (for example, Community Club 'win a car' draw, Grey Cup tickets).
3. The Church should take a strong stand against lottery tickets. (Scores were reversed on this last item in order that a higher score would consistently measure disapproval of lotteries.)

Attitudinal commitment is measured by the extent to which the respondent's personal view is consistent with the perceived position of the church.

2.2.3 A measure of structural tightness and looseness

The second hypothesis states that where networks are characterized as 'tight' we would expect high behavioral conformity but low attitudinal commitment. Where networks are characterized as 'loose' we expect high attitudinal commitment.

In order to test this hypothesis it was not considered useful to compare measures of religious commitment (such as attendance, giving, involvement, recruitment, etc.) with measures of network tightness reported 'after the religious change' since, in many cases, considerable time has elapsed since the religious change. The network strength reported at the time the religious change took place may be considerably different from what it is now and consequently measures of present religious commitment cannot be expected to be influenced by the structure of the network immediately following the religious change. Furthermore, converts in the sample would be expected to be reporting networks which were weakening around the time of the religious change. A pattern of forming and strengthening new networks among converts would be expected but the strength of an emerging network was not measured with the exception of those born-again others with whom the respondent had established relations before the religious change. There is no measure of closeness, interaction frequency, etc. for those born-again believers who became a part of the new network after the religious change (that is friends they had not had before the

change took place). Nor is there any indication of whether family members may have become born-again after the respondent's religious change. It should also be pointed out that the change in networks around the time of the religious change is itself a measure of conversion vs. alternation. These questions measure the extent to which old relationships are relevant to the new or altered identity.

However, a measure of the influence of the present network in reference to a particular norm is provided by the questions dealing with drinking. Since the attitudinal commitment items were asked only of non-drinkers, our test of the second hypothesis concerns non-drinkers only. This represent 76% (69 cases) of the total sample. Furthermore, by using only non-drinkers, behavior is held constant and the measures of tightness and looseness can be cross-tabulated with high and low attitudinal commitment. That is, each of the non-drinkers are conforming, by definition, to the non-drinking norm. Thus it is possible to examine the extent to which this conformity can be said to be attitudinal. The measures of network tightness are described below.

A measure of network tightness involves two dimensions: the complexity of the role set and the tightness of role relationships. Complexity of the role set is a quantitative dimension dealing with the number of roles incorporated into the role set and the extent to which those various roles may

represent conflicting expectations. Conflicting expectations refer here to conflicts which may exist within the particular role of born-again Christian by virtue of differing expectations held by members of one's role-set. Role relatedness, with respect to structural tightness or looseness, refers to the nature of bonds between and among roles. This is conceived in terms of the way role relations vary in their ability/opportunity for role expectations to be imposed and received (tightness) or proposed and interpreted (looseness).

Complexity of the role set was measured by the extent to which behavioral preferences are inconsistent within the role set. Tightness/looseness assesses the impact of each of these expectations in terms of closeness (Granovetter, 1973; Currie, et al, 1981) and the respondent's perception of the impact of the other's preference upon their own behavior.

The behavioral preference of each of the actor's associates is used to determine direction of influence. In this case the preference may favor drinking or non-drinking. Associates are listed in the following categories: (A) Father, (B) Mother, (C) Spouse/Fiancee, (D) Any other Family, (E) Your Pastor, (F) Any Christian Friends, (G) Any non-Christian Friends, (H) Any Members of Your Church, (I) Any Christian neighbours or co-workers, and (J) Any non-Christian neighbours or co-workers. The term 'Christian' refers

here specifically to 'born-again' Christians. These measures of the direction of the behavioral preference of each of the actor's associates are compared against the following measures determining strength of influence:

1. The strength of the behavioral preference. How strong is the approval or disapproval for drinking? For each category of others the respondent is asked whether their approval or disapproval, if they were to drink, would be strong (value=4), Some (value=3), Slight (value=2), or none (value=1).
2. Closeness. The closeness to the other is expected to affect the degree to which role expectations can be imposed. Response categories are as follows: I feel very close to them (value=3), I like them a lot (value=2), I think they are okay (value=1), and I am not very close to them (value=0).
3. Impact. The respondent is asked to indicate to what extent the approval or disapproval of others affects their own personal views on drinking. Responses for each category of others is as follows: 'Very much' (value=3), 'Some' (value=2), 'Very little' (value=1), and 'none at all' (value=0).

Thus a measure of both the direction of behavioral preference and the strength of those preferences is provided. The consistency of behavioral preferences in the direction of non-drinking measures the complex/simple dimension. Consis-

tent disapproval of drinking indicates a simple role set. The strength of those preferences is an indicator of tightness or looseness.

In the following section some of the methodological issues encountered in interviewing those who have experienced a religious change are examined.

2.3 METHODOLOGICAL ISSUES

2.3.1 Sociological vs. Exclusivist Religious Interpretations

One issue involves the interpretation of religious experiences. Believers will normally develop a series of causal arguments about how God has directed and changed their lives. The sociologist searches for a series of causal arguments based upon what is generally observable. This difference in perception between actor and observer is further complicated by the fact that members of a religious group often frame their experiences in a particularistic rhetoric which mystifies the observer. Terms and meanings fostered in that interaction setting make sense to the believer and serve to describe the chain of causal connections in which their experiences are understood by the religious community. An attempt must be made to understand the conversion language and to translate it into terms meaningful to the social scientific community while at the same time respecting and appreciating the beliefs and experiences reported by the subject.

Born-again evangelicals tend to view their interpretation of reality in totalistic non-pluralistic terms. Christ is the 'only way', the 'one way'. Their perception of religious truth, at least insofar as it relates to salvation in Christ, is regarded as the only valid and genuine basis for conversion. Secondly, given the meaning assigned to experiences of spiritual regeneration, most respondents describe their 'born-again' experience as a conversion regardless of how that change may be defined by the researcher. The distinction between alternation and conversion is, of course, a sociological and not a theological one and is therefore the subject of sociological testing. No attempt to discount the theological meaning of anyone's religious experience is intended. Such an effort would violate the limits of the discipline; sociology has no way of validating claims to ultimate religious truth. There is no way, sociologically, of determining whether someone is saved in Christ. The task of the sociologist is to examine the social contexts within which such perceptions arise.

Robert Bellah (1970) has formulated an orientation to this problem which suggests 'symbolic realism' as a basis for the social scientific study of religion. Symbolic realism is an attempt to "take seriously the non-cognitive symbols and the realms of experience they express" and thus to enter the world of the subjects without academic preconceptions or reductionist explanations. Robbins, Anthony, and

Curtis (1973) note that such an understanding implies a distinction between empathy and sympathy. The symbolic realist is empathetic but not necessarily sympathetic. They argue that such a distinction becomes problematic in research involving religious groups who regard their own conceptions as uniquely true. The sample used in our study consists of subjects who adhere to an exclusivist ideology in which, Robbins, Anthony, and Curtis contend, empathy would necessarily imply conversion. As far as highly sectarian groups are concerned, they argue, there is no valid distinction between empathy and sympathy. "To understand is to believe... One cannot be a symbolic realist if the esoteric meanings of the reality one is affirming deny the reality of symbolic realism" (1973:269-270).

Bellah (1974:487), in his rejoinder, agrees that the contrast between sympathy and empathy is essential to a symbolic realist position but takes issue with his critics over whether empathy would necessarily imply conversion to highly sectarian groups. "It is quite possible to understand that kind of orientation without sharing it." Bellah points out, moreover, that the symbolic realist position is more closely related to the interpretation of data than its use as a methodology of field research. "In the interpretation of data, to which the original formulation of symbolic realism was directed, such an existential understanding can be profoundly useful."

The concern in this present research on Born-again Christians involves this recognition that they regard their orientation in non-pluralistic terms. While this claim to unique truth can neither be verified nor disclaimed sociologically, an attempt is made to provide some generalizable notions about the nature of religious identity change as it exists among such religious groups.

2.3.2 Reinterpretation of the Past

A second problem relating to interviewing those who report experiences of religious regeneration arises around the actors' perceptions of their past. Berger (1963:36) notes that conversion involves a re-interpretation of one's past biography as much as it does a change of the present. This would, of course, apply to alternation as well. "As we remember the past", Berger (1963:260) writes, "we reconstruct it in accordance with our present ideas of what is important and what is not." Certain triggering events stand out in the believer's mind as the 'conversion' account is constructed. Those events are selectively remembered and assigned unusual significance. During the interviewing for this project, for example, it was noted that respondents were aware that they were re-interpreting the past. Many events and circumstances leading up to the religious change 'made sense' to them, only later, they affirmed. Many respondents felt that certain events and circumstances and the

relationships which may have developed out of these were evidences of God's 'leading' in their lives. They only recognized (or realized) that these were a part of God's leading in the light of the religious change which took place later. "Looking back", one respondent affirmed, "He (God) was there all the time." Other events which may be of interest to the researcher may have been erased from consciousness or considered trivial to the respondent. Beckford (1978:260) remarks:

Accounts of conversion are constructions (or reconstructions) of experiences which draw upon resources available at the time of construction to lend them sense. They are not fixed once-and-for-all descriptions of phenomenon as they occurred in the past. Rather their meaning emerges in the very process of construction, and this takes place in different times and in different contexts.

Furthermore, as Beckford found in his study of Jehovah's Witnesses, the religious group provides a set of conceptual tools for defining or redefining those experiences. Thus, the past is made to conform to a new theological understanding.

It is the nature of religious change that perceptions of reality change. The convert or the alternator both understand the past in a new light. Those perceptions have changed, experiences have been re-interpreted and are different in the sense that new meanings have been assigned to them. It is recognized that it is the perceptions of the nature of the religious change which provide its meaning. However, this methodological problem of the re-interpretation

tion of the past makes it difficult to conduct research on conversions and alternations which are, most frequently, events of the distant past for most subjects interviewed.

The next chapter involves the data analysis and presentation of the findings. Cross-tabulation of the major variables will be employed in the analysis. The strength of relationships will be indicated by the significance of the chi square for the various tables. A value of chi square beyond the .05 probability level is treated as not significant.

Chapter III

PRESENTATION OF THE FINDINGS

This chapter is divided into two sections. The first section deals with the hypothesis that no variation in commitment is expected between alternators and converts. Within this section, firstly, an attempt is made to characterize converts and alternators in terms of their religious background and the nature of the religious changes reported. This is followed by a discussion of the nature of family and friendship networks and the extent to which they are altered by the religious change. Finally, the first hypothesis is tested by comparing alternators and converts with reference to various measures of religious commitment. In the second section the second hypothesis is examined. This hypothesis is tested specifically in reference to commitment to non-drinking. The nature of commitment to non-drinking is examined with reference to interpersonal bonds.

3.1 COMPARISON OF ALTERNATORS AND CONVERTS

3.1.1 Characterization of Converts and Alternators

3.1.1.1 Religious Background

It must be recalled that our distinction between converts and alternators is an institutional one. That is, by defi-

nitition, converts are those members of evangelical churches who were not brought up in evangelical churches. Their membership is by proselytization rather than by birth. The normative expectation of a born-again experience was not a part of their religious upbringing.

Thus converts do not report evangelical denominations as their religion of upbringing. In the sample 38% (17) of the converts reported no religious upbringing. For the others, 13% were raised in Anglican churches, 27% reported United Church, 9% were of Roman Catholic background, and another 13% reported other non-evangelical religious backgrounds (mixed Roman Catholic and United, Jewish, Eastern Orthodox, and Jehovah's Witness).

Also consistent with the institutional definition, alternators consistently came from evangelical church backgrounds. Nine percent (4) came from homes in which only one parent was a member of an evangelical denomination. In these cases, they were brought up to attend an evangelical church.

3.1.1.2 The Religious Change

While 62% of the converts report some type of non-evangelical religious background, the conversion to evangelical churches was not typically directly from non-evangelical churches. Among converts, 73% reported a period of non-belonging. This was comprised of two groups. Some were con-

verts who had reported religion of upbringing as 'none' (38%); the others (35%) had dropped out of their non-evangelical churches prior to their conversion. Thus, the majority of the converts (68%) had converted during a time of no religious belonging. Some of those who had reported a period of no religious belonging had joined evangelical churches prior to their reported conversion. Only 22% (10) had converted directly from non-evangelical churches.

While the alternation experience typically took place without a change in religious affiliation (85%), in some cases the religious change involved a move back to evangelical affiliation after a period of no religious belonging.

Respondents were asked to indicate how many religious changes had taken place in their life. They were then asked to indicate which of these was the most salient religious change. Among converts 91% had reported 'salvation' as the most salient religious change. Upon examination of the type of most salient religious change among alternators, however, it was noted that 54% had reported a change other than the initial salvation experience as their most salient religious change. This second experience was most typically a 're-dedication' experience.

Thus we were led to propose two types of alternators. Type I involves the pure alternators, those who had reported the initial salvific experience as most salient and had experienced little disruption in their religious history.

Type II alternators, who had reported a subsequent 're-dedication' experience as more salient, are those who had experienced a lapse and subsequent restoration of either commitment, belonging, or both. Type II alternators appear to represent a case of identity change between pure alternation and conversion. Some comparisons between converts and the two types of alternators were made to test this assumption. The sample of alternators was divided into type I (21 cases) and type II (26 cases) alternators.

It was noted that the change reported as most salient took place much later in life among converts than among alternators. For converts, the mean age of the religious change was 27 ranging from conversion at age 12 to age 52. Among alternators the mean age of religious change was 16, ranging from age 5 to age 34. Controlling for the two types of alternators, the mean age of religious change for the type I, pure alternators, was 12 with a range from age 5 to age 18. Among the type II, re-dedicated alternators, the mean age of religious change was 20 with a range of 12 to 34 years of age. With respect to the age of religious change, then, type II alternators lie in between converts and type I alternators.

Among converts, it was mentioned, 73% had reported a period of no religious affiliation before the religious change. Among alternators, only 20% had reported such a

period in their lives. Almost all of these were type II alternators.

For the most part, converts did not report a strong influence of religion while growing up. Religion was reported to have had 'no influence' on their attitudes and behavior while growing up by 31% of the converts. Another 27% reported 'slight' influence, 27% reported 'some' influence, 9% reported that the influence of religion was 'quite strong', and 7% reported that it was a 'very strong' influence while they were growing up. Among alternators, 56% report that the influence of religion was 'very strong' and 42% report 'quite strong' while they were growing up. Controlling for the two types of alternators, the influence of religion was felt to be 'very strong' by 60% of type I and 52% of type II alternators. More type II alternators reported the influence of religion as 'quite strong' (48%) than did type I alternators (35%). Thus, the influence of religion growing up was reportedly high among both types of alternators. One may be led to ask why, if the influence of religion was equally strong for both types of alternators, did some drop out of the church and others remain? This is most likely due to the differential strength of influences counter to religious belonging or commitment.

Thus, in terms of periods of non-belonging as well as the age of religious change, type II alternation once again appears to represent a type of identity change somewhere in

between conversion and alternation. Type II alternation can be referred to as 'restoration' depicting an identity change that is neither an undisturbed alternation nor a transformation to a new identity. Restoration represents an identity change back to an identity which had previously lapsed in importance. 'Restorants' return to a formerly prescribed identity. It should be clear that restored identity does not represent a case of Gordon's (1974) identity consolidation in which an attempt is made to fuse a past identity with a present one. Restoration is more clearly a process of leaving behind the present identity (as in conversion) but returning with a fresh commitment to the past identity (unlike conversion).

3.1.1.3 Perceptions of Spiritual Well-being prior to the Change

Respondents were asked to indicate the nature of their religious change along a number of dimensions: belief in the existence of God, happiness with life, a sense of the meaning and purpose to life, moral behavior, and a struggle with sin. In each case respondents were asked to indicate along a seven point scale what they were like before, and then after, the religious change. This is an attempt to measure the more subjective dimensions of the religious change. The more objective dimensions of the change are examined in terms of reported changes in interpersonal networks.

In each case, converts have undergone more radical changes. The interpretation of the past identity by converts reveals a need to accomplish greater changes in order to approximate the 'ideal' score on these dimensions for an interpretation of their life 'after' the religious change. In other words what both alternators and converts changed 'to' is quite similar, the differences lie in what the religious change is 'from'. Tables 1 to 4 illustrate the respondents' perceptions of their lives 'before' the religious change.

TABLE 1

Belief in God before the religious change

	Converts	Restorants	Alternators
Belief in non-existence of God	13%	-	-
-			
Unsure	18%	8%	-
-			
Fairly certain God exists	13%	16%	5%
-			
Quite Certain	38%	12%	5%
-			
Absolutely Certain	18%	64%	90%
-			
	100%	100%	100%
	(45)	(25)	(21)

TABLE 2

Happiness with life before the religious change

	Converts	Restorants	Alternators
Very miserable to miserable	33%	28%	10%
Bearable to Alright	40%	28%	20%
Fairly happy	22%	20%	5%
Quite happy to Very happy	4%	24%	65%
	100%	100%	100%
	(45)	(25)	(21)

TABLE 3

Meaning and Purpose to life before the religious change

	Converts	Restorants	Alternators
Lack of meaning	40%	-	-
Uncertain	49%	59%	16%
Had found the meaning to life	11%	41%	84%
	100%	100%	100%
	(45)	(25)	(19)

The moral behavior dimensions (sinfulness before the religious change, struggle with sin before the religious

change) are presented below in mean scores. 'Sinfulness' refers to a perception of one's moral behavior before the religious change ranging from 'very sinful life' (score=1) to 'very upright moral life' (score=7). 'Struggle with sin' refers to a perception of one's moral condition prior to the change ranging from 'controlled by sin and evil' (score=1) to 'controlled by God and His Holy Spirit' (score=7).

Perceptions of moral life before religious change			
	Converts	Restorants	Alternators
Sinfulness (1-7)	3.84	5.20	5.88
Struggle with sin (1-7)	3.22	4.72	5.00

Perceptions of spiritual well-being after the religious change demonstrated no significant variation between or within groups along each of these dimensions. The difference lies in what the change was 'from' as opposed to what it was 'to'. Converts had undergone the most radical changes, restorants consistently lie in between converts and alternators, with alternators experiencing relatively minor changes.

3.1.1.4 Other dimensions of the religious change

Alternators were more likely than converts to report their religious change as a gradual one. A comparison between converts, restorants, and alternators in terms of the time period over which the religious change occurred is presented in table 5 below. On this measure, restorants do not consistently rank between converts and alternators.

	Converts	Restorants	Alternators
Over one year	9%	50%	67%
Over six months to one year	25%	38%	11%
Over one month to six months	36%	8%	11%
One month or less	30%	4%	11%
	100%	100%	100%
	(44)	(24)	(18)

Alternators were also more likely to have expected the religious change to occur (see table 6).

Finally, the religious change was accomplished relatively easier by alternators than restorants or converts. On a five point scale ranging from 'very easy' (score=1) to 'very difficult' (score=5) converts scored a mean of 2.82, restorants scored a mean of 2.08, and alternators scored a mean of 1.48.

TABLE 6

Expectation of change among identity change types

'Six months before the religious change': felt the change definitely would take place.....	Converts	Restorants	Alternators
-	9%	72%	88%
Felt a change might take place someday..	26%	24%	11%
-			
Doubted whether a religious change would take place.....	28%	4%	-
-			
The thought that such a change would ever take place had never occurred.....	37%	-	-
	100%	100%	100%
	(43)	(25)	(17)

To summarize, converts are characterized as having experienced more dramatic subjective changes than alternators. Conversions are less gradual than alternations; there is less of a personal expectation of a conversion than an alternation; and conversion is perceived to be more difficult than alternation. The extent to which these more subjective dimensions of the change are consistent with the more objective structural changes in the interpersonal networks of converts and alternators is discussed in the following section.

3.1.2 Changes in Networks among Converts and Alternators

3.1.2.1 Family Networks

In the following section, comparisons of converts and alternators were made without partitioning alternators into the two types discussed above. A pattern of strong support for the born-again experience from families of both types of alternators was observed. This pattern of support was lacking among converts. This support from parents for a born-again experience among alternators was demonstrated by the finding that 90% of alternators reported that their father is a born-again Christian and 96% reported that their mother is born-again. By contrast, 95% of fathers and 97% of mothers of converts were reported as 'not born-again'. The fact that the parents of alternators are themselves born-again is sufficient reason to assume that those parents would be supporting of the respondent's religious change. We cannot, however, infer that the non-born again parents of converts would not support such a change. In fact, however, only 5% of converts reported the father approving the conversion, and 14% reported that the mother approved the conversion. A number were 'indifferent' to the change (15% of fathers and 21% of mothers) or had 'mixed feelings' (31% of fathers and 36% of mothers). The change was 'opposed' by 28% of fathers and 12% of mothers, and it was 'strongly opposed' by 20% of fathers and 17% of mothers.

The parents of converts were as likely to know about the change as the parents of alternators. However, in the case of alternators, parents were as likely to be present as to be told about the change. There were no reported cases of either parent present for a conversion.

Among alternators parents had typically expected the change to take place. On the five point scale ranging from 'they expected the change to occur' (score=1) to 'they were very surprised when the change took place' (score=5), parents of alternators scored a mean of 1.63 (fathers) and 1.52 (mothers). Parents of converts were more surprised with the conversion, scoring a mean of 3.84 (fathers) and 3.85 (mothers).

Alternators felt closer to their parents as a result of the religious change more frequently than did converts. Among alternators, 48% felt that the change had brought them closer to their father. Only 20% of the converts felt closer to their fathers as a result of the religious change. Similarly, 48% of the alternators felt the change had brought them closer to their mother as opposed to 24% of the converts. In no cases reported did alternators feel that the religious change had led them further away from either parent. However, 15% of the converts reported that they were not as close to their fathers as a result of the religious change and 16% felt that the religious change had led them further away from their mothers.

In most cases, both converts and alternators experienced little change in frequency of interaction with their parents. Among alternators 95% reported no change in frequency of interaction with parents following the religious change. The few remaining reported that the differences were unrelated to the religious change. Among converts, 90% report no change in frequency of interaction with parents following the religious change. However, those who did report a change were more likely to feel that this change in frequency of interaction with their parents was attributable to the religious change. Furthermore, it was noted during the interviewing that a number of converts reported that although the interaction with parents had not changed in frequency (a quantitative measure), they felt that the quality of that interaction had diminished.

Thus, among alternators a pattern of strong support for the born-again experience was observed. The change had often improved relationships between the alternator and his/her parents. During the interviewing many alternators mentioned that the born-again experience had resolved conflicts at home. For converts; this support was generally lacking, the conversion did not generally improve relationships and in some cases introduced conflict.

As in the case of parents, a pattern of pre-existing support for a born-again experience among other family mem-

bers' of alternators was lacking among the converts in our sample.

When asked if there were 'any' members of their family who were not born-again at the time of the respondent's religious change, 98% of the converts as opposed to 39% of alternators responded affirmatively. Among converts 94% reported that all or most of their other family members were not born-again at the time of their religious change. Only 15% of the alternators reported that all or most of their family members were not born-again at the time.

Among alternators 93% responded affirmatively when asked if any other members of their family were born-again at the time of their religious change. Only 20% of the converts responded affirmatively. Most or all other family members were born-again at the time of the respondent's religious change for 84% of the alternators as opposed to only 6% of the converts. Thus, alternators were more likely than converts to have other family members who were born-again. The pattern of pre-existing support for the born-again experience is present much more strongly for alternators than for converts.

The born-again family members of both converts and alternators were equally likely to know about the religious change, but family members of alternators were more likely to be present (47% of the alternators and 25% of the converts responded that born-again family members were present

at the time of the religious change). In many cases alternators experienced changes at younger ages when they would be more likely to be still living at home and attending an evangelical church as a family. Thus, it is not unlikely that other family members would be present at the time of the religious change. Presumably because of the later age of conversion, converts reported less frequent interaction with born-again family members before the religious change than did alternators. However, converts more frequently reported feeling closer to born-again family members as a result of the religious change (70% of converts with born-again family members as opposed to 52% of alternators report feeling closer to these family members as a result of the religious change). Born-again family members of alternators were also more likely to expect the change than were born-again family members of converts. On the five point scale from an expected change (score=1) to one at which other family members were very surprised (score=5), born-again family members scored a mean of 1.65. For converts the mean score was 2.63.

Converts were more likely than alternators to have family members who were not born-again at the time of their religious change. As in the case of born-again family members, non-born-again family members were equally likely to know about the religious change, but in the case of alterna-

tors 27% reported that non-born-again family members were present at the time of the religious change. In many cases these were siblings who were experiencing some conflicts over the born-again experience and whose conflicts were later resolved. That is, although these family members were not born-again 'at the time' many alternators were quick to point out that these family members had since made a born-again commitment. None of the converts reported non-born-again family members present at the time of conversion. Again, this is likely due to the fact that alternators reported more non-born-again family members living with them at the time of the religious change. Over half (55%) of the alterators as opposed to 14% of the converts reported that they were 'living with' these non-born-again family members. Judging from the earlier mean age of alternation (16 for alternators as opposed to 27 for converts) many alterators were still living at home at the time of the religious change, and as suggested above, many of these not-born-again family members of alternators could be better described as 'not yet' born-again as opposed to 'not ever' born-again.

Non-born-again 'other' family members of alternators were more likely to expect the religious change than were the non-born-again family members of converts. On the five point scale from expectancy to surprise, the mean score for non-born-again family members of alternators was 1.72, not much different from the mean expectancy score of 1.65 for

born-again family members. Non-born-again family members of converts had a mean expectancy score of 3.95. They were much less likely than born-again family members of converts to expect the change (2.63). Thus, for all family members, while born-again family members of converts were more likely than non-born-again family members of converts (presumably because prospective converts would be more likely to talk about their religious needs to born-again others), generally, the change was expected much more frequently for alternators than for converts.

There is little difference between the reaction of non-born-again family members of alternators and those of converts to the religious change. The change was reported as 'approved' by 7% of the converts and 6% of the alternators. The change was reported as 'opposed' or 'strongly opposed' by 30% of the alternators and 28% of the converts. The majority were 'indifferent' or had 'mixed feelings'. However, since converts were more likely to have a greater number of non-born-again other family members than were alternators, the lack of support is more salient for converts than for alternators. In other words, the lack of support among alternators is more likely to be balanced out by strong support from the greater number of family members who are born-again.

Among converts, 21% reported feeling more distant from non-born-again family members as a result of the religious

change. Among alternators, 12% felt more distant. Surprisingly, 27% of the converts and 23% of the alternators report feeling closer to non-born-again family members as a result of the religious change.

As in the case of parents of alternators and converts, these observations of other family members demonstrate that for alternators there was a greater acceptance, expectation, and overall pre-existing family support structure for the religious change than for converts.

A similar set of questions were asked concerning the spouse at the time of the religious change. However, these responses were not as useful for analytic purposes since the majority of alternators who were married were already born-again before marriage (88%), and most had married a born-again partner. Thus, a comparison between converts and alternators is limited.

The following section deals with friendship networks around the time of the religious change.

3.1.2.2 Friendship Networks

Alternators are more likely than converts to have a stronger network of born-again friends prior to the religious change (table 7).

It is equally likely that the born-again friends be present or told about the religious change. Among converts 41% reported that they told their born-again friend about

TABLE 7

Born-again friends prior to the religious change

	Converts	Alternators
All	2%	10%
Most	2%	52%
Some	9%	29%
A few	51%	7%
None	36%	2%
	(100%)	(100%)
	(45)	(44)

the change and 59% report that the friend was present at the time. Among alternators, 32% report that they told their born-again friends about the religious change and 68% report that the friend was present at the time. Born-again friends of converts, however, were not as likely as born-again friends of alternators to expect the change to occur. The mean expectancy score (on the five point scale from expected to surprised) for born-again friends of converts was 2.63; for alternators, the score was 1.40.

Alternators reported feeling closer to their born-again friends before the religious change than did converts (see table 8 below). In fact, during the interviewing it was noted that a number of converts' 'friendships' with born-again others may better be described as 'latent friendships', someone the respondent knew but had had no occasion or basis for a friendship. After the religious change, a pattern

emerges in which converts report feeling closer to born-again friends as a result of the religious change more frequently than do alternators. More alternators than converts report an unchanged relationship. Table 8 below illustrates the perceptions of closeness to born-again friends among converts and alternators.

TABLE 8		
Closeness to born-again friends		
Closeness before the religious change	Converts	Alternators
Not very close	26%	8%
They were 'okay'	42%	23%
Liked them a lot	26%	61%
Felt very close	7%	7%
	(100%)	(100%)
	(43)	(40)
Closeness after (as a result of) the religious change		
About the same	13%	50%
Closer to them	62%	35%
Much closer	24%	15%
	(100%)	(100%)
	(43)	(40)

Frequency of interaction with born-again friends was unchanged for 81% of alternators as opposed to 58% of converts. Thus for alternators a pattern of stronger pre-existing support for the religious change is demonstrated. For converts, a pattern of initially weaker support followed by a strengthening of within bonds is noted.

As table 9 below illustrates, converts were more likely than alternators to have more non-born-again friends prior to the religious change.

TABLE 9		
Non-born-again friends prior to religious change		
	Converts	Alternators
All	33%	2%
Most	47%	14%
Some	16%	36%
A few	-	38%
None	4%	10%
	(45)	(42)

Non-born-again friends were equally likely to know about the religious change, although in the case of alternators the likelihood of friends being present was higher than the likelihood of the friends of converts being present. Again, as in the case of born-again friends, the non-born-again friends of converts were less likely to expect the change than were the friends of alternators. Non-born-again friends scored a mean of 4.32 for converts and 2.47 for alternators on the measure of expectancy of the religious change.

Converts also reported slightly more opposition and less approval for the change than did alternators. Among converts 5% felt the conversion was 'approved' by non-born-

again friends as opposed to 11% of the alternators. Non-born-again friends of converts 'opposed' (30%) or 'strongly opposed' (11%) the change more than did non-born-again friends of alternators (14% 'opposed' and 5% 'strongly opposed').

Perceptions of closeness to non-born-again friends before the religious change does not appear to differ substantially between converts and alternators (although it must be remembered that converts report a greater number of non-born-again friends). However, the perceptions of closeness after the change do differ between converts and alternators. Converts report feeling more distant from their non-born-again friends as a result of the religious change than do alternators. More alternators report unchanged relationships. Finally, more converts (49%) reported a change in frequency of interaction with their non-born-again friends than did alternators (36%).

These results demonstrate a pattern of weakening ties with outsiders for both converts and alternators. Since, however, converts have a greater number of outside ties prior to conversion, considerably more weakening of ties takes place with respect to converts. Converts are thus seen to be characterized by changing networks. Within group bonds are maximized and without bonds are minimized. For alternators, the change is much less disruptive to their social networks. Within-group bonds pre-exist and form a solid ba-

sis for the religious change. There is less of a need to seek new ties or to forge stronger within-group ties. For converts, a support structure to fortify the religious change must be created, thus a shift in interpersonal relationships is demonstrated.

Finally, these differences between converts and alternators on these more objective dimensions as well as the more subjective dimensions of the religious change reported earlier demonstrates a consistency between changes of differing magnitude in interpersonal networks and the degree to which the individual subjectively perceives change. These measures demonstrate the utility of the apriori institutional definition of converts and alternators. That is, the institutional definition of converts and alternators is consistent with subjective and structural criteria for the magnitude of the identity change. The relationship between these changes of differing magnitude and measures of religious commitment is discussed in the next section.

3.1.3 Religious commitment among converts and alternators

The first hypothesis states that there will be no significant difference between converts and alternators in measures of religious commitment. Various measures of religious commitment are employed as discussed in the methodology chapter (church attendance, involvement, devotional commitment, re-

cruitment, and financial giving). The various measures are discussed separately below.

3.1.3.1 Church attendance

On the eight point scale of church attendance, converts scored a mean of 7.02 and alternators scored a mean of 6.96 for measures of church attendance 'during the year'. Mean scores for attendance during the summer dropped down to 6.48 for converts and 6.57 for alternators. Converts appear to attend more frequently than alternators during the year, but less frequently than alternators during the summer. A greater consistency between summer and yearly church attendance is demonstrated for alternators than for converts.

Along attitudinal measures of church attendance, respondents were asked if they attended church partly out of pressure from others. Very few converts (11%) or alternators (13%) reported that they attended even 'partly' out of pressure from others. Some converts, however, during the interviewing had pointed out that they often experience pressure not to attend church. No alternators had stated that they experienced pressure to stay away from church services. For alternators there appears to be greater social support for church attendance while for converts it is more likely that some may be attending in spite of opposition. However, this was not measured in the questionnaire.

On the semantic differential items polarizing attitudinal and non-attitudinal commitment, there were no significant differences between converts and alternators. On the first item the attitudinal response 'I always find the services meaningful' (score=1) was polarized against the non-attitudinal response 'I am kind of "just there" and don't pay too much attention to what is going on' (score=5). Converts received a mean score of 4.35 and alternators scored a mean of 4.24 on this item. The value of chi square was not significant (significance of chi square was 0.699). On the second item, the attitudinal response 'I would feel that I'd missed something valuable if I missed a church service' (score=1) was contrasted with the non-attitudinal response 'people would ask questions if I missed one of the services' (score=5). The mean scores were 4.64 (converts) and 4.34 (alternators). The value of chi square was not significant (significance = 0.254). In the third item the attitudinal response 'the Bible teaches that we ought to go' (score=1) and the non-attitudinal (identificational) response 'I enjoy the fellowship with other Christians' (score=5), converts scored a mean of 3.15 and alternators scored a mean of 3.06. The value of chi square was not significant (significance = 0.558). Thus, there were no significant differences between converts and alternators along measures of attitudinal commitment to church attendance.

There was also an open-ended question asking respondents to indicate their reasons for attending church services. Eight common 'reasons' were noted. Since a respondent may have included more than one reason in his/her response, for each reason responses were coded as 0 (not mentioned) or 1 (if that reason was mentioned in the open-ended response). With the exception of one, the reasons were not significantly different.

A higher percentage of alternators mentioned:

1. Attending out of habit (alternators 11%, converts 5%).
2. Attending for fellowship and encouragement (alternators 48%, converts 33%).
3. Attending because of children (alternators 16%, converts 7%).
4. Attending to help or 'minister to' others (alternators 39%, converts 9%. This relationship was significant at .003 and is consistent with the observation that alternators would be more likely to be involved in the local congregation.

A higher percentage of converts mentioned the following reasons for church attendance:

1. As a learning experience (converts 35%, alternators 27%).
2. Obeying the Bible (converts 7%, alternators 4%).

3. Wanting to grow as a Christian (converts 28%, alternators 20%).
4. Wanting to worship God (converts 21%, alternators 14%).

Alternators scored slightly higher than converts in measures of religious involvement. No involvement (other than attendance) in the local congregation was reported by 40% of the converts as opposed to only 13% of the alternators. As was pointed out earlier, involvement might be expected to be higher among alternators because of their lengthier exposure to the functioning of the church. Converts held an average of 1.13 positions of active involvement while alternators held an average of 1.68 positions. In terms of involvement in religious groups, committees, etc., outside of one's local congregation, involvement was low for both alternators and converts. Alternators held an average of 0.42 positions of active outside religious involvement. For converts, the average number of such positions held was slightly higher at 0.52.

3.1.3.2 Devotional commitment

In measures of devotional commitment no significant differences were found between converts and alternators. The value of chi square for regularity of private prayer among converts and alternators was not significant (significance =

0.554). The value of chi square was not significant (0.359) for regularity of Bible reading. Mean scores (1-5) derived from these tables were 4.73 for converts and 4.70 for alternators for regularity of private prayer. Mean scores (1-5) for Bible reading were 4.62 (converts) and 4.71 (alternators). Similarly, scores on the salience of private prayer and Bible reading on a scale from 0 (unimportant) to 3 (extremely important) were not significantly different between alternators and converts.

The actual time spent in private prayer and Bible reading varied considerably within groups of converts and alternators, but the between group variation was not significant. Table 10 below illustrates this relationship.

TABLE 10				
Time spent in private prayer and Bible reading				
	Private Prayer		Bible Reading	
	converts	alternators	converts	alternators
1-5	11%	7%	16%	17%
6-10	25%	31%	24%	20%
11-15	30%	36%	18%	26%
16-20	11%	9%	16%	6%
21-30	18%	13%	16%	22%
over30	4%	4%	11%	9%
	(100%)	(100%)	(100%)	(100%)
	(45)	(46)	(45)	(46)

The chi square value for the relationship between time spent in private prayer and conversion/alternation was not significant (significance of chi square = .9065). The significance of the chi square value was .6544 for time spent in Bible reading. A measure of other devotional reading (devotional books read over the last twelve months) also revealed no significant difference between converts and alternators (see table 11). The value of chi square was not significant (significance = 0.614).

TABLE 11

Devotional reading among alternators and converts

Number of devotional Books read during last 12 months:	Converts	Alternators
none	11%	9%
1-3	30%	29%
4-5	11%	20%
6-8	16%	11%
9-12	25%	16%
13-18	4%	7%
Over 18	2%	9%
	(100%)	(100%)
	(45)	(46)

3.1.3.3 Recruitment

Measures of willingness to recruit others were broken down into five categories: family, friends, co-workers, neighbours, and strangers. Responses to the question 'Have you

personally tried to convert someone to your religious faith?' were coded as 0 (No, I never have), 1 (Yes, once or twice), 2 (Yes, a few times), and 3 (Yes, often). Mean scores for converts and alternators are presented in table 12 below. The significance of the chi square value for each of the categories is included in the table.

TABLE 12			
Recruitment of others among converts and alternators			
	Converts	Alternators	(Significance)
Family (0-3)	2.26	2.00	0.1736
Friends	2.37	2.34	0.7246
Co-workers	2.08	2.06	0.9261
Neighbours	1.44	1.45	0.8139
Strangers	1.14	1.23	0.8956

No significant differences between converts and alternators were found on measures of willingness to recruit others.

3.1.3.4 Giving

Both converts and alternators were equally likely to be regular financial contributors to the church and equally likely to report no social pressure to give. There was no significant difference between converts and alternators in terms of the percentage of income given to support the church. Among converts, 17% reported giving below 10% of their income, an-

other 68% gave 'about 10%, and 15% reported giving above 10%. Alternators demonstrated slightly more variation from the mean, with 25% reporting their giving as below 10% of their income, 47% reporting that they gave 'about 10%, and 27% giving above 10%.

From an open-ended question on why respondents give to the church, six common responses were noted. Since more than one reason might be cited by a given respondent, reasons for giving were coded as mentioned (1) or not mentioned (0) in the open-ended response. The reasons cited are as follows:

1. Giving as a habit taught in childhood was mentioned by 10% of the alternators and none of the converts.
2. Giving to keep the church running, to pay the bills, or to maintain the church building was mentioned by 22% of the alternators and 9% of the converts.
3. Giving to support missions and other evangelistic efforts was mentioned by 41% of the alternators and 33% of the converts.
4. Giving in response to a Biblical command was mentioned by 24% of the alternators and 16% of the converts.
5. Giving out of a sense of duty, obligation, or moral responsibility was mentioned by 17% of the alternators and 27% of the converts.

6. Giving out of a sense of gratefulness to God was mentioned by 37% of the alternators and 42% of the converts.

A measure of attitudinal commitment to giving was constructed in which respondents were asked to rank-order three reasons from a list of eleven reasons for giving. The items used are discussed in the methodology chapter. No significant differences between converts and alternators was found. An attitudinal first choice was selected by 69% of the converts and 67% of the alternators. The second ranked choice was an attitudinal one for 47% of the converts and 52% of the alternators. The third ranked choice was an attitudinal one for 44% of the converts and 48% of the alternators.

To summarize, no significant relationship between religious commitment and the magnitude of the identity change (conversion, alternation) was found in terms of commitment to the prescriptive norms of church attendance, devotional commitment, recruitment, and giving. A tendency for more alternators to be involved in the local church and to be more concerned about attending in order to help or to 'minister' to others was noted. More converts find themselves in learning roles than in serving roles. However, the findings demonstrate strong support for the first hypothesis that no significant differences in religious commitment is to be expected between alternators and converts.

The final two measures of commitment deal with commitment to proscriptive norms. The items selected involve attitudes toward drinking and lotteries.

3.1.3.5 Commitment to proscriptive norms

Respondents were asked to rank from a list of thirteen 'reasons' for non-drinking, the three most important reasons why they did not drink. The responses attitudinal and non-attitudinal response categories (see page 57) were randomly ordered in the questionnaire. Responses were converted into an attitudinal non-drinking score according to the way the respondent ranked attitudinal and non-attitudinal (rational and identificational) responses. A score of 0 indicates no attitudinal responses, a score of 1 indicates a second or third ranked attitudinal response, and a score of 2 indicates a first ranked attitudinal choice. No relationship between attitudinal commitment and alternation/conversion was found for this measure (significance of chi square was .9484). Among converts, 53% scored 0, 31% scored 1, and 16% had a score of 2. Among alternators, 56% scored 0, 29% scored 1, and 16% scored 2.

Responses to an open-ended question of other reasons for non-drinking were scored as attitudinal (score=1) or non-attitudinal (score=0). On this measure, alternators demonstrated significantly greater commitment to non-drinking than did converts (62% of converts as opposed to 39% of

alternators had non-attitudinal responses to the open-ended question). It is likely that more alternators have been consistently socialized to non-drinking because of the evangelical tradition within which they were raised. Alternators have a more consistent, if not more prolonged exposure to a religious tradition of abstinence.

On items dealing with attitudes toward drinking, respondents were asked to indicate on a five point scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree both their personal view and what they consider to be the 'official' view of their church on that item. A deviance score was calculated for each item by subtracting the respondent's personal view from the perceived position of the Church to measure the extent to which converts or alternators deviated in their own attitudes from the perceived position of the church. The findings can be summarized in the following manner. First, for both converts and alternators, the mean scores for respondents was always more lenient than the mean scores for the church position. Secondly, alternators appeared to be more intolerant of drinking than did converts. Thirdly, alternators perceived the church to be more intolerant than did converts. Finally, alternators demonstrated less deviation from the perceived position of the church than did converts. Mean scores and deviance scores among converts and alternators for each item are presented in table 13 below. The significance of the chi square values from the bivariate ta-

bles out of which these mean scores were derived is included.

TABLE 13

Attitudes toward drinking among alternators and converts

Mean scores on a five point scale from 'strongly agree' (1) to 'strongly disagree' (5) are used.

	Converts	Alternators	(significance)
1. The use of wine in communion services is acceptable.			
Personal view	3.31	4.12	.006
Church position	4.20	4.48	.314
Deviance score	.89	.37	
2. Drinking wine with meals is a practice that is quite acceptable.			
Personal view	3.32	4.04	.043
Church position	4.00	4.48	.023
Deviance score	.68	.12	
3. It is alright to toast the bride and groom with a glass of wine at a wedding reception.			
Personal view	3.33	3.91	.163
Church position	4.16	4.23	.384
Deviance score	.83	.38	
4. It would be better to teach our children moderation in drinking than to ban it totally.			
Personal view	3.96	4.20	.680
Church position	4.27	4.31	.771
Deviance score	.31	.11	
5. It doesn't really matter whether a Christian drinks or not.			
Personal view	3.52	3.85	.335
Church position	3.93	3.98	.774
Deviance score	.41	.13	

The first two items, the use of wine in communion and the use of wine at home showed significant differences between converts and alternators. These two items are important in that they represent different types of drinking sit-

uations. According to Currie, et al (1980), wine at communion represents a 'passive' drinking situation while wine at home represents an 'active' drinking situation that an individual could avoid. Thus, in both active and passive drinking situations, alternators appear to be less deviant than converts. This lends support to the contention that converts are not more committed than alternators. If anything, alternators demonstrate greater commitment and less deviance in their attitudes than converts.

Respondents were also asked to indicate both their personal view and that of the church on a series of attitude items concerning lottery tickets. Responses range from 'strongly agree' (score=1) to 'strongly disagree' (score=5). On the last item 'the church should take a strong stand against lottery tickets', the scores are reversed in order that a higher score consistently indicates opposition to lotteries. As in the case of non-drinking, a deviance score is calculated by subtracting the respondent score from the perceived position of the church. Table 14 below illustrates that, as in the case of non-drinking, alternators demonstrated less attitudinal deviance from the perceived position of the church.

To summarize, despite the differences between converts and alternators with respect to the dynamics of the reli-

TABLE 14

Attitudes toward lotteries among converts and alternators

1. It is quite acceptable for Christians to purchase lottery tickets (Western Express, Loto Canada).

	Converts	Alternators	Significance
Personal view	3.86	4.33	.140
Church position	4.24	4.27	.176
Deviance score	.37	-.05	

2. There is nothing wrong with buying raffle tickets (for example, Community Club 'win a car' draw, Grey Cup tickets)

	Converts	Alternators	Significance
Personal view	2.96	3.52	.120
Church position	3.53	3.80	.232
Deviance score	.58	.27	

3. The church should take a strong stand against lottery tickets.

	Converts	Alternators	Significance
Personal view	3.24	3.47	.301
Church position	3.47	3.68	.643
Deviance score	.22	.21	

gious change, on each of the measures of commitment to prescriptive norms (attendance, involvement, private prayer and Bible reading, recruitment of others, and financial giving) no significant differences between converts and were demonstrated. These findings were summarized earlier. Regarding commitment to non-drinking, however, some differences between converts and alternators were observed. Alternators demonstrated greater attitudinal commitment and less deviation in their attitudes toward non-drinking than did converts. Thus, strong support for the first hypothesis is demonstrated with respect to both prescriptive and proscriptive norms.

3.2 ATTITUDINAL COMMITMENT AND NETWORK STRENGTH AMONG NON-DRINKERS

According to the second hypothesis, the variation in attitudinal commitment will be related to the structure of role relationships surrounding the new or altered identity. When conformity to the religious group norms is maintained within a complex/loose structure of role relationships we expect attitudinal commitment to be high. When conformity to the religious group norms is maintained within a simple/tight structure of role relationships, we expect attitudinal commitment to be low. This hypothesis was tested with reference to drinking norms. Attitudinal commitment to non-drinking will be low where networks are characterized as tight. Where networks are characterized as loose, attitudinal commitment is expected to be high.

In order to test this hypothesis, the analysis consists only of the non-drinkers in the sample. This makes up 76% (N=69) of the total sample for which we have measures of the degree of attitudinal commitment to non-drinking. Those who did drink could not complete the questions concerning commitment to non-drinking. The advantage of using only non-drinkers is that, by virtue of being non-drinkers, conformity to the non-drinking norm is held constant. Thus it is possible to examine the relationship between attitudinal commitment and network strength.

Two different types of measures of attitudinal commitment were employed. The first type included two measures.

The first measure was calculated from the selection of ranked reasons for non-drinking from a list of thirteen attitudinal or non-attitudinal responses. The second was attitudinal or non-attitudinal responses to an open-ended question concerning 'other reasons' for not drinking. The second type of measure involved a deviance score calculated by subtracting the individual score on non-drinking attitude items from the perceived official position of the church on the same items. Since the analysis consists only of non-drinkers, conformity is held constant. In this context, if the respondent is attitudinally deviant, then commitment is behavioral but not attitudinal. Attitudinal commitment implies a consistency between behavior and attitudes. In each of the measures of attitudinal commitment to follow, they will be cross-tabulated with measures of strength of approval or disapproval from others, closeness to those others, and the extent to which the respondent feels that the approval or disapproval of others affects their own personal views on drinking.

3.2.1 Attitudinal Scores on Non-drinking

Responses to the measure of attitudinal commitment to non-drinking using a series of thirteen rational, identificational, or attitudinal 'reasons' for non-drinking were converted to scores of 0 (no attitudinal responses), 1 (a second or third ranked attitudinal response, and 2 (a first

ranked attitudinal choice). In the sample of 69 non-drinkers, 41% (28) scored 0, 39% (27) scored 1, and 20% (14) received a score of 2.

Strength of approval or disapproval of drinking was calculated from the strength of the behavioral preference (0-3), the closeness to those significant others (0-3), and the impact that the approval or disapproval of significant others is perceived to have upon the respondent's view of drinking (0-3). Finally, the consistency of disapproval within networks was calculated by the ratio of the strength of disapproval to the total (strength of disapproval + strength of approval). Thus, a higher ratio indicates greater consistency of disapproval. Consistent disapproval from significant others indicates structural tightness. According to the second hypothesis, attitudinal commitment should be lower under conditions of structural tightness. Conversely, attitudinal commitment should be higher where disapproval/approval from significant others is mixed. The hypothesis, however, was not supported. It was found that those who had higher scores on attitudinal commitment also reported more consistent disapproval would be forthcoming from others if they were to drink. Table 15 below illustrates the mean strength of disapproval and approval for drinking across measures of attitudinal commitment.

Responses to the open-ended question of 'other reasons' for not drinking were coded as 0 (non-attitudinal) or 1 (at-

TABLE 15			
Approval/disapproval of drinking			
	Low commit- ment (0)	Medium (1)	High Commit- ment (2)
Mean strength of disapproval	36.20	37.32	42.05
Mean strength of approval	18.29	11.48	11.81
Consistency of disapproval	.664	.765	.781

titudinal) responses. Using this measure, it was found, once again that higher scores on attitudinal commitment were consistent with perceptions that there would be more consistent disapproval from significant others if the respondents were to drink.

To summarize, it was found, contrary to our expectation, that those who demonstrated greater attitudinal commitment to non-drinking perceived more consistent disapproval from others if they were to drink. This is consistent with the finding that alternators were more likely to be attitudinally committed to non-drinking than converts. It is suggested that this may be explained by the fact that alternators may be more likely to have a consistent disapproving network than converts.

3.2.2 Attitudinal deviance scores and network disapproval

Respondents were asked to indicate both their own personal view and the perceived 'official' position of the church on a number of attitudinal items related to non-drinking. The difference between these two scores constitutes a deviance measure for each item. It was reported earlier that converts tended to be more deviant in their attitudes than alternators. This finding was significant only in respect to the first two items (wine at communion and wine at home); beyond that, both groups were relatively intolerant of drinking.

On each of the attitudinal items (see page 58), individual attitudinal deviance was unrelated to strength of approval or disapproval from significant others. No significant differences between attitudinal deviance and strength of approval or disapproval for drinking were found. It would appear that with respect to deviance from the official position of the church, the distinction between converts and alternators is a better indicator of commitment to non-drinking. Alternators tend to be less deviant in their views than are converts, especially on those items dealing with situations which are not clearly defined as violations of abstinence. Alternators also were characterized by a stronger in-group network and perceived greater disapproval for drinking. Thus no support was found for the second hypothesis.

In the next chapter an attempt is made to review the findings, draw out some further implications, and discuss some ways in which the ideas presented may be tested further.

Chapter IV

IMPLICATIONS OF THE FINDINGS

In this research, some interesting differences between converts and alternators were demonstrated. The distinction between conversion and alternation is much more than a question of the degree of institutional change. Converts reveal a pattern of changing networks; outside bonds are weakened and new bonds are created. The neutralization or the absence of past commitments allows the convert to enter a new world of meaning relatively uninhibited. These changes in the structure of relationships are necessary to bring the convert to a point at which the alternator already finds him/herself. A pattern of strong social support and minimal outside conflict is already available for the alternator. For these reasons an alternation is accomplished with less difficulty than a conversion. It comes much more expectantly than a conversion and it occurs with considerably less disruption than a conversion.

This is not to suggest, however, that an alternation is automatic. The category of restorants is made up of members who, at one point in their lives, were potential alternators. The fact that they spent some time away from their religion of upbringing before the restoration suggests that

alternation is not always a guaranteed passage to the born-again experience.

It would make an interesting study to find out how many of those raised in evangelical churches do alternate, restore, or abandon. The sample in this study included some who alternated and others who left but were later 'restored', but it could not include those who may have left and never did return. It is possible that those who abandoned their evangelical faith completely have undergone an identity change similar to a conversion which is accomplished with greater difficulty than alternation or restoration. One could suggest that it may be more problematic for a person raised in an evangelical tradition not to experience a born-again alternation than it would be to leave the evangelical faith. Indeed, a decision to leave the evangelical faith may demonstrate characteristics of a conversion. This suggests that for the alternator, the turning point might not be a decision to alternate or not to alternate, but rather to alternate in the expected direction or 'convert' the other way. Alternation represents a less problematic resolution of the conflict.

Another interesting difference between converts and alternators which may provide a basis for further research is the finding that alternators tended to be involved in positions of leadership more frequently than did converts. Alternators tended to mention 'helping others' or 'serving in

the Church' as reasons for attending church, while converts tended to mention 'learning the Bible' or 'wanting to grow as a Christian'. Thus, more converts find themselves in learning roles while more more alternators find themselves in serving roles. This may help to explain the conservatism in Evangelical Churches. Alternators, who have grown up in that tradition, serve to perpetuate the conservative ideology through their leadership roles. Secondly, converts taking leadership roles may be less familiar with the religious tradition than alternators and could be more likely to introduce innovations. If such innovations are unacceptable, the convert may choose to implement those innovations within a splinter group. One could speculate, then, that the rise of schismatic groups or even new religious movements may be under the leadership of converts more often than alternators. It may be that leaders within the religious tradition tend to be alternators while leaders of schismatic groups or new religious movements tend to be converts.

This study demonstrates that the conditions outlined in the Lofland and Stark model are present for either a conversion, an alternation, or a restoration. The key difference lies in the extent to which the original identity differs from the transformed one. Conversion involves considerably more 'seeking' because the 'steps' are not as readily available. Conversion also requires recruitment to a greater ex-

tent since the path to a particular religious experience is not as readily known. It lies outside one's present world of knowing. Conversion, then, requires more interaction between a recruiting agent and a religious seeker than alternation. Thus conversion differs from alternation in that conversion involves adopting an alternative set of problem-solving and world-defining tools. Alternation makes use of tools which are readily available. Restoration picks up a discarded set of tools and re-implements them.

This analysis suggests that conversion can best be conceived as one of the ways by which an individual may adopt a set of conceptual tools by which ultimate problems and solutions can be defined. The extent to which the convert or alternator may be religiously committed depends upon the nature of bonds formed within the group which 'houses' those meanings. Thus, our understanding of religious change is broadened to include religious changes of varying magnitude. This research focused upon two ends of the religious change spectrum, conversion and alternation. The introduction of 'restorants' suggests that changes in religious identity can range in magnitude between these two extremes. One could, in fact, on a larger random sample, expect a relatively wide range of identity-altering transformations to be found under the general label of a born-again experience. To illustrate the differing types of identity changees that could occur, a taxonomy of religious changes is suggested below.

A taxonomy of religious identity changes. The following taxonomy (chart 1) is an attempt to delineate the types of religious changes that can occur. They can be regarded as heuristic devices which allow us an opportunity to evaluate the nature of religious change. Changes are ordered along the dimensions of belonging and commitment. (See Currie, 1976, for a discussion of these two dimensions.) The possible changes ordered along these dimensions are illustrated below. Different types of changes are defined in terms of whether belonging and/or commitment has been maintained, restored, or initiated.

Chart 1				
Taxonomy of Religious Identity Changes				
Religious Commitment				
		Maintained	Restored	Initiated
Religious Belonging	Maintained	Normative development	Re-dedication	Confirmation
	Restored		Restoration	Dedication
	Initiated			Initial involvement

The taxonomy of religious changes ordered along the least type of identity change to the greatest is outlined below.

1. Normative development. This represents the normative progression of an individual within a particular religious tradition. The individual develops according to prescribed 'signposts' of spiritual growth in a way that is perceived as normal and expected within the religious community. This religious change (even if it is labelled a 'conversion' by members of the religious community) does not involve a radical change in relationships or meaning, but is one in a series of 'rites of passage'.
2. Re-dedication. Commitment is restored after a lapse although institutional belonging has never been lost.
3. Confirmation. Commitment is initiated although belonging has never been lost.
4. Restoration. Both belonging and commitment are restored after a lapse.
5. Dedication. Belonging is restored after a lapse at which time commitment is initiated.
6. Initial involvement. Both belonging and commitment are initiated for the first time. An outsider who has never been affiliated with the religious community becomes a committed member.

We are omitting the case of those who, for such reasons as geographical mobility or accomodation to friends or a marriage partner decide to switch membership to another religious group within the same religious tradition (Bibby and

Brinkerhoff, 1973). This minor change in belonging can be seen as mitigated along factors other than a change in religious convictions. If the switch involved or provoked a change in religious commitment this change would come under one of the categories of religious change depending upon whether it was an initiation or restoration of personal religious commitment. The purpose of such a taxonomy as has been outlined is to provide a clearer picture of the types of religious identity changes that can take place.

It has been demonstrated that the magnitude of the identity change, the question of whether a change represents conversion or alternation or some point between these two extremes, is independent of commitment. These various types represent ways by which someone may become religiously committed. The question of how this commitment is maintained must be treated separately.

It was suggested in the second hypothesis that the maintenance of commitment is more than simply a question of the firmness of the new plausibility structure. While a plausibility structure is indispensable for the maintenance of a world-view, it was suggested that the nature of that structure has a qualitative impact upon the nature of commitment. It was suggested that a 'loose' structure of role-relationships proposing norms to be interpreted by members may provide the flexibility and room for innovation to facilitate internal commitment. A 'tight' structure impos-

ing norms for members to receive would funnel the convert or alternator into a set of external role demands so rigidly enforced that no opportunity for choice is provided and little flexibility to move beyond external compliance is permitted.

The hypothesis based upon this argument was not supported in this study. This lack of support suggests limitations or qualifications to be made to both the theoretical argument and the methods employed.

Firstly, the nature of involvement in evangelical churches, like any voluntary involvement, is such that most members do not feel closed in or coerced with respect to its normative demands. None of the respondents in the sample demonstrated any sign of feeling forced to comply with any normative demands. The door is always open; members could leave the evangelical church if they wished. In fact, some do leave. Those who stay are exercising some degree of choice with respect to their religious involvement. Furthermore, the voluntary, non-communal religious involvement characteristic of the sample in this study more closely fits the definition of structural looseness. Norms are more likely to be proposed and interpreted by virtue of the nature of voluntary involvement. In terms of Boldt's (1978) model, the sample here appears to represent complex/loose role relatedness. The fact, then, that respondents scored consistently high on measures of attitudinal commitment to

prescriptive religious norms lends partial support to the second hypothesis.

In order to test this hypothesis further it would be necessary to compare a group which is more likely to be structurally tight with a more structurally loose group. Hutterites, Children of God, or other communal groups in which the member's dependence upon the group is such that leaving would be extremely problematic would be more likely to fit the definition of structural tightness.

The attempt to find individual variation in the degree of structural tightness versus looseness was problematic chiefly because the nature of voluntary group association is characterized primarily by structural looseness. A comparison of communal versus non-communal religious groups would be a more appropriate way to fully test the hypothesis.

A second difficulty exists with respect to the attempt to measure individual variation in looseness or tightness. The fact that a number of associates may disapprove if a respondent was to drink does not necessarily mean that the respondent disapproves because of this disapproval. Both the respondent and the person disapproving may be equally committed to non-drinking. A number of respondents mentioned that while others would likely disapprove, the reason they do not drink is because they themselves disapprove of drinking irrespective of what others think.

Finally, the measure of attitudinal commitment as the extent to which the respondent's personal views regarding drinking is consistent with their perceived 'official' view of the church overlooks the fact that some respondents may, for reasons of behavioral conformity or social desirability, align their own responses with what they feel is the official position of the church. In fact, a good part of behavioral conformity involves 'verbal' commitment, the ability to know what the 'correct' response should be, regardless of whether inner conviction is involved.

It should be pointed out, furthermore, that attitudinal commitment does not exist in isolation. While the nature of commitment to norms must be voluntary in order for the member to be attitudinally committed, it appears that an important aspect of this voluntary commitment involves the willingness to submit to a structure that involves certain religious rules and regulations. It is possible that members who appear to lack attitudinal commitment to a particular norm may be conforming because of a higher order attitudinal commitment. While some behavior may be 'lawful' in their minds, the fact that it may not be 'expedient' or edifying to others will provide a basis for conforming to the rule. In other words, they may disagree with the rule but continue to obey it because of their attitudinal commitment to higher values embodied in the religious tradition.

It is argued here that the need to express attitudinal commitment within a structure of religious norms creates a fundamental conflict within evangelical Christianity. This conflict between attitudinal commitment and behavioral conformity creates a serious problem of meaning. As the basis of religious action shifts, the meaning of religious action is affected.

The basis of behavioral conformity is found in legalism. Legalism in religion refers to the emphasis upon explicitly stated norms of religious conduct. It is merely a question of obeying the law. The question of right and wrong in terms of internal beliefs is of secondary importance. Strict obedience based upon external norms requires no internal commitment if the support structure for the norms is sufficiently tight so as to demand obedience.

If then, obedience to external rules is all that is required, the norms themselves can become more salient than the values or sentiments underlying them. Religious activity becomes its own end. Thus, religious activity, as an end in itself can become detached from those ideas or sentiments which lend it meaning. A separation of ritual from the sacred results and ritual becomes meaningless religious activity. It is argued here that this externalization of religious values (the transformation of religious values into norms), as necessary as it is, creates a serious problem in religious meaning.

The term 'meaning' can be loosely defined as activity within a context. It is action oriented to some purpose. If religious action ceases to be located - by losing its connectedness to the sacred, then ritual becomes a negative routine. The sacred departs and ritual becomes a hollow act - hollow because it is an end in itself.

The strength of Christianity, for born-again Christians, lies in its expectation that religious action will spring forth from new hearts. "This is the covenant I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts and in their minds will I write them" (Hebrews 10:16; King James Version). Accordingly, Christ enters the 'heart' of the believer and transforms him/her into a 'new creature'. This provides a basis of action whereby religious action is a direct expression of internal values and sentiments. Love becomes the guiding principle. No longer is membership in God's family based upon what one must 'do' but rather upon what one must 'be'. That is, salvation is not by works (something one does) but by faith (something one becomes).

A change in being implies internal change and a constitutive rather than a regulative basis of religious action. Christ's 'new commandment' to love one another placed an internal quality rather than a set of external rules as the basis of religious action. In this context, Evangelical Christians describe their action in the world as spiritual

'fruits' connoting something that arises from the nature of the person as opposed to the 'works' of the law which are externally imposed. A change in 'doing', on the other hand, implies external change, regulative action, and compliance as the necessary and sufficient basis of religious action. A change in being implies that compliance is necessary but not sufficient for true spirituality.

However, the great weakness built into this expectation that religious action would spring constitutively from a new heart is a lack of any structure to inform the believer as to how this new being ought to behave in the world. Ideally, responsible loving action would flow naturally from the new being. However, this liberation can become an opportunity for deviance for those who are still enmeshed in the weakness of what the Bible calls the 'flesh' or the 'self'. If love is the only rule, the boundaries of the Christian community are too vaguely defined. The gates are too wide open. The innerness creates anomie. Thomas O'Dea (1969:92) describes this problem as a 'dilemma of institutionalization', specifically that of objectification versus alienation.

Ritual represents an objectified order of symbols which elicits and articulates attitudes and feelings, molding the personal dispositions of the worshippers after its own model. This objectification is a requisite for continuity, and for sharing within the religious group. Without such objectification and sharing, collective worship would be impossible. Yet a continued use of the same symbolic vehicles has the effect of making them usual and expected - that is of routinizing them. The necessary objectification tends to re-

move the symbols from meaningful contact with subjective attitudes. Thus there develops a loss of resonance between the symbol and the attitudes and feelings from which it originally derived. The symbol consequently loses its power to elicit and affect attitudes and emotions. Objectification, necessary for continuity, leads finally to alienation...

Sentiment must be translated into norms of action. To allow the structure to remain loose is to open the door for so much individual interpretation that there will be a lack of consensus as to what the role of the religiously committed person ought to be in the world. On the other hand, to impose a tight structure is to undermine the basis of internal commitment. The dilemma is that the goal of attitudinal commitment cannot be attained through the vehicle of external rules, while at the same time external rules are fundamentally important for continuity and consensus. As O'Dea (1969:94) points out:

These rules give the original ethical insight a kind of 'operational definition' comprehensible to the average man. Yet rules, however elaborate they become, cannot make explicit all that was implied in the original insight itself; and run the risk of losing its spirit. Rules specify, and thereby substitute for the original insight specific items of prescribed or proscribed behavior. Thus there can develop a complicated set of legalistic formulations.

The response to this dilemma among committed Christians is to impose a structure upon themselves. Many born-again Christians stress the 'growing' aspect of their religious life. The metaphor of 'born-again' implies this. Growth, for the born-again Christian, seems to imply a move from be-

havioral to attitudinal commitment. There is a recognition that the 'old self' does not die immediately upon becoming born-again. The re-birth is actually a life-long process of becoming. During this growing process many Christians realize that commitment to Christ involves a continual battle between the old and the new self. There is a struggle between what they were and what they are becoming. This is translated into a battle between the desires of the flesh and the will of God. The new being (what they are becoming), they feel, does not require any rules; it could operate wholly out of love. It is the flesh, the part that is passing away, which, they perceive, must be subjected to external rules. This conception of the flesh and the spirit among evangelical Christians amount to what we might call a theological statement of the problem of order.

The words of contemporary gospel singer Chuch Gerard, "I'm doing what I want to and its part of me, keeping close to Jesus that's the way it's going to be" express an ideal. In the interim the old self will not bend to the demands of the new heart without structural constraints or 'rules' to help it conform. To impose upon oneself a structure which forces one to act according to what one hopes one will someday do out of a willing heart may be the highest expression of attitudinal commitment we can expect. An ideology of forgiveness allows the born-again believers to concentrate on that goal. They believe that God sees them as sinless

through Christ. Christ's death on the cross has provided a covering for their sin which frees them from guilt and from the need to earn salvation by works of righteousness. It is this freedom which allows them to disregard the mistakes of the past or even the weaknesses of the present and to see themselves in the light of what they are becoming.

Thus a constant battle or dialectic between internalization and externalization, independence and submission, and liberty and legalism, in brief, between attitudinal commitment and behavioral conformity, takes place for the re-born Christian.

One of the key elements in the secularization of Christianity involves that unavoidable process of externalization, removing the basis of internal commitment by burdening Christianity with a set of externally imposed norms. According to Peter Berger in The Sacred Canopy this need for religion to be externalized inevitably leads to alienation. When the basis of religious action is externalized, commitment loses its internal basis and becomes compliance. Once religious action requires only external obedience, ritual becomes dislocated from the sacred and the basis of a crisis of meaningless action is forged. Thus the path to secularization is seen as the process by which religious action becomes meaningless. This process is built into the very nature of Christianity.

This interpretation of secularization, if applied on the individual level of analysis provides a basis for understanding the loss of religious commitment. Commitment is lost when religious action becomes meaningless. Religious action becomes meaningless when compliance rather than conviction provides its life. In other words, once compliance alone (the norms in and of themselves) serves as the basis of religious action, structural tightness is required to insure conformity. If, however, the support structure is not sufficiently tight so as to demand external obedience, only the internally committed members remain. It was pointed out that the committed member will impose a tightness upon their own behavior in order to control what they perceive of as the 'old self', the part that is dying to sin. Thus, a type of structural tightness is available which is only effective to the extent that members submit to it; they will only submit to it as long as the norms it enforces have meaning. The norms have meaning only to the extent that action is constitutive.

Thus a model of loss of religious commitment is suggested in which, religious action, as it shifts from an internal to an external locus, loses meaning for the individual. This process, it is argued, is built into the nature of Christian commitment itself rather than being a part of the dynamics of religious change (conversion, alternation).

Conclusion

The process of religious identity change is one which can involve a wide range of identity transformations. For some, it may involve a full-scale conversion; for others, it may involve identity alternation. The born-again experience is one type of religious experience which may represent a wide array of different types of identity changes ranging from lower-level alternations to more radical changes depending upon the various experiences and backgrounds of the religious seekers involved. This provides a basis for integrating the subjective dimensions of individual religious change into the more objective 'conversion' models such as that suggested by Lofland and Stark (1965).

This research has demonstrated that both the convert and alternator can be equally committed to the meaning system within which the religious change takes place. It was pointed out that commitment can be either attitudinal or behavioral. The difficulty with attitudinal commitment is that it is an ideal. Commitment should flow from the heart and mind of the believer, but such an intensely personal orientation to the demands of 'true religion' ignores one very important consideration. The human being is more than homo religiosus. The vehicles upon which religious commitment is carried are social. Meaning is bound up in social relationships which give plausibility and direction to those ultimate concerns. Whether the expression 'there is no salvation outside of the church' expresses a theological truth

is outside the realm of this discipline. Insofar as it expresses a sociological truth, that religious experiences must be attached to a believing community in order to retain their plausibility, it is extremely relevant. A conversion or an alternation, in order to be a conversion or alternation must involve group membership. And this institutionalization involves the new believer in a conflict between the spirit of the new commitment and its institutionalized demands. Faith with its promise of attitudinal commitment and works with its devotion to preserve institutional integrity create a dilemma for the church as well as for new believers.

The 'law' invites greater conformity to religious norms, but carries with it the danger of commitment being behavioral only. The 'spirit' provides the opportunity for attitudinal commitment, but carries with it the danger of deviance from religious norms and a lack of continuity or consensus. The plea for attitudinal commitment is not sociological enough. It ignores the fact that commitment must be maintained within a community where values can be interpreted into commonly-held norms. On the other hand, the restriction to behavioral compliance over-emphasises the social nature. It ignores the capacity for freedom, autonomous action, and personal conviction to provide meaning and motivation for action.

Thus, the dilemma faced by any new member, whether a convert or an alternator, is one of striking a balance between liberation and the law in order to find a meaningful basis of religious commitment.

I would like to begin by asking you some questions about your religious background.

4. What was the religion of your father when you were growing up (around 10)?
5. Your mother?
6. What is the religion of your father now?
7. Your mother?
8. What was the religion of your spouse/fiancee at the time you were married/engaged?
9. What is the religion of your spouse/fiancee now?
(if different from q.8, ask) How long ago did this change take place? () months.
10. Has there ever been a period in your life when you did not belong to a church or religious group?
(if yes) Between what years? Age() to age().
11. Have you ever belonged to a denomination other than the one to which you presently belong?
(if yes) Please list:
 1. (Denomination) from age() to age().
 2. () from age() to age().
 3. () from age() to age().
12. Thinking of your five closest friends, how many are born-again Christians? 1() 2() 3() 4() 5().
13. How many share your denominational affiliation?
14. How many are members of your local congregation?

15. Other than your church or religious involvement, to what clubs, organizations, associations, etc., do you presently belong? Please list:
- 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.
16. Had you been a member of any non-religious clubs, organizations, associations, etc., in the past?
1. When quit ()Year
 2. When quit ()Year
 3. When quit ()Year
17. From the responses on this card, how strong an influence was religion on your attitudes and behavior when you were growing up?
- 5() Very strong
 - 4() Quite strong
 - 3() Some
 - 2() Slight
 - 1() None
18. To what degree would you say religion now has an influence on your life?
- 5() Very strong
 - 4() Quite strong
 - 3() Some
 - 2() Slight
 - 1() None
19. How many major religious changes have taken place in your life? (Things like salvation, re-dedication, loss of faith.) Could you indicate by giving the approximate ages at which these changes took place?
- Ages 1(), type of change ()
- 2(), type of change ()
- 3(), type of change ()
- 4(), type of change ()
20. Which of these would you say was your most significant religious change?
The one at age (), Type of change().

The following questions deal with the nature of this religious change. For each question you are asked to indicate from the card supplied what it was like before this religious change and then what it was like after the religious change. The first such question deals with your perceptions about the existence of God both before and after this change.

21. Was this change accompanied by any change in your ideas about the existence of God? How did you feel about the existence of God before the change, and then how do you feel about it after the change? If your ideas about the existence of God had been pretty much the same both before and after this change, for example, if you were always 'quite certain' that God exists, then response number 6 would apply to both before and after the change. Now, from this card, how did you feel about the existence of God before this change? (mark response). And how do you feel about the existence of God after that change? (Mark response, indicate direction of change with an arrow).

Existence of God:

God does not exist

God does exist

Certain Quite Fairly
 certain certain

Fairly Quite Absolutely
certain certain certain

01 02 03 04 05 06 07

22. From this card, how happy would you say you were with your life before this change? After the change?
- Very mis- Miser- Just Allright Fairly Quite Very
erable able bearable happy happy happy
01 02 03 04 05 06 07

23. Was this change accompanied by a change in moral behavior? From the responses on this card, what was your life like before this change? After the change?

Very sinful
life

About
average

Very upright
moral life

01 02 03 04 05 06 07

24. From the responses on this card, was there a change in your sense of meaning and purpose to life? Before the change? And after the change?

I felt:

My life lacked	Uncertain as to	Quite certain that
meaning or	whether or not I	I had found the
purpose	found the meaning	true meaning to
-	to life	life
01	02	03
		04
		05
		06
		07

25. How would you describe your life in terms of a struggle with sin before the change? What was it like after the change?

My life was:

Controlled by	A struggle	Controlled by God
sin and evil	between good	and His Holy Spirit
-	and evil	-
01	02	03
		04
		05
		06
		07

Now that we have looked at some of the dimensions of the nature of the religious change, I would like to ask you about the time-frame in which it occurred.

26. Would you describe this change as:
 gradual (), over what time period? () Months, or
 sudden (), over what time period? () Months.
27. Six months before this change took place, had you ever expected that such a change would ever take place in your life?
- 1() Yes, I definitely felt I would change.
 - 2() Yes, I thought I might someday.
 - 3() I doubted whether or not I would change.
 - 4() I didn't think I would ever change.
 - 5() It had never occurred to me that such a change would ever take place in my life.

28. Would you describe this change as:
 Very easy 1 2 3 4 5 Very difficult

Did this change involve a change in religious affiliation?
 No() Yes()- from () to ().

30. Prior to this religious change, were any of your family members born-again Christians?

	Yes	Unsure	No	NA
A. Father	2	1	0	7
B. Mother	2	1	0	7
C. Spouse	2	1	0	7
D. Any others	2	1	0	7

How many? All() Most() 1 Or 2 () None()

The following questions (31-37) concern those family members who were born-again Christians at the time of your religious change.

31. How did they find out about this religious change?

	They were present at the time	I told them	Others told them	They do not know	NA
A. Father	3	2	1	0	7
B. Mother	3	2	1	0	7
C. Spouse	3	2	1	0	7
D. Others	3	2	1	0	7

32. Do you think they had expected this change or were very surprised when this change took place?

They:	Had expected it		were very surprised		
A. Father	1	2	3	4	5
B. Mother	1	2	3	4	5
C. Spouse	1	2	3	4	5
D. Any others	1	2	3	4	5

33. How close were you to this person before the change?

	I felt very close to them	I liked them a lot	I thought they were okay	I was not very close to them
A. Father	3	2	1	0
B. Mother	3	2	1	0
C. Spouse	3	2	1	0
D. Others	3	2	1	0

34. Was your closeness to any of these family members changed as a result of your religious change?

	I was much closer to them		It was about the same		I was much more distant from them	
A. Father	5	4	3	2	1	1
B. Mother	5	4	3	2	1	1
C. Spouse	5	4	3	2	1	1
D. Others	5	4	3	2	1	1

35. How often did you see these family members before your religious change?

	Times per	Year or	Month or	Week
A. Father	()	()	()	()
B. Mother	()	()	()	()
C. Spouse	()	()	()	()
D. Others	()	()	()	()

36. How often did you see them after this change?

	Times per	Year or	Month or	Week
A. Father	()	()	()	()
B. Mother	()	()	()	()
C. Spouse	()	()	()	()
D. Others	()	()	()	()

If answer to 35 is same as 36, code 37 as (0) 'no change',
If answer to 35 is different from 36, ask 37.

37. Was this difference a result of your religious change?

	Yes	Partly	No	No change
A. Father	3	2	1	0
B. Mother	3	2	1	0
C. Spouse	3	2	1	0
D. Others	3	2	1	0

38. Prior to your religious change, were any of you family members not born-again Christians?

	Yes	Unsure	No	NA
A. Father	2	1	0	7
B. Mother	2	1	0	7
C. Spouse	2	1	0	7
D. Any others	2	1	0	7

How many? All() Most() 1 or 2() None()

The following questions (39-46) deal with those family members who were not born-again Christians at the time of your religious change. (If all were born-again Christians go to question 47.)

39. How did they find out about the religious change?

	They were present at the time	I told them	Others told them	They do not know
A. Father	3	2	1	0
B. Mother	3	2	1	0
C. Spouse	3	2	1	0
D. Others	3	2	1	0

40. How did you feel they would react? They would*

	Approve the change	Be in-different to it	Have mixed feelings	Oppose it	Strongly oppose it
A. Father	0	1	2	3	4
B. Mother	0	1	2	3	4
C. Spouse	0	1	2	3	4
D. Others	0	1	2	3	4

41. Do you think they had expected this change or were very surprised when this change took place?

	They had expected it				were very surprised	
A. Father	1	2	3	4	5	
B. Mother	1	2	3	4	5	
C. Spouse	1	2	3	4	5	
D. Others	1	2	3	4	5	

42. How close were you to this person before the change?

	I felt very close to them	I liked them a lot	I thought they were okay	I was not very close to them
A. Father	3	2	1	0
B. Mother	3	2	1	0
C. Spouse	3	2	1	0
D. Others	3	2	1	0

43. Was your closeness to any of these family members changed as a result of your religious change?

	I was much closer to them	I was about the same	I was much more distant from them
A. Father	5	4	3
B. Mother	5	4	3
C. Spouse	5	4	3
D. Others	5	4	3

44. How often did you see these family members before your religious change?

Times per:	Year or	Month or	Week
A. Father	()	()	()
B. Mother	()	()	()
C. Spouse	()	()	()
D. Others	()	()	()

45. How often did you see them after this change?

Times per:	Year or	Month or	Week
A. Father	()	()	()
B. Mother	()	()	()
C. Spouse	()	()	()
D. Others	()	()	()

(If answer to 45 is the same as 44, code 46 as 0, 'no change' and go to 47. If answer to 45 is different from 44, ask 46.)

46. Was this difference a result of your religious change?

	Yes	Partly	No	No change
A. Father	3	2	1	0
B. Mother	3	2	1	0
C. Spouse	3	2	1	0
D. Others	3	2	1	0

47. Prior to this religious change, how many of your friends were born-again Christians?

All	Most	Some	1 or 2	None
4	3	2	1	0

The following questions (48-55) deal with those friends who were born-again Christians prior to your religious change. On a separate sheet of paper we will list those friends, call them A, B, C, D, and E, and discuss each one separately. (If none were born-again Christians, go to 56.)

48. How did they find out about this religious change?

	They were present at the time	I told them	Others told them	They do not know
A.....	3	2	1	0
B.....	3	2	1	0
C.....	3	2	1	0
D.....	3	2	1	0
E.....	3	2	1	0

49. Were any of these friends neighbours or co-workers?

	Neighbours?		Co-workers?	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
A.....	()	()	()	()
B.....	()	()	()	()
C.....	()	()	()	()
D.....	()	()	()	()
E.....	()	()	()	()

50. Do you think they had expected this change or were very surprised when this change took place?
- | | They had expected it | | | were very surprised | |
|--------|----------------------|---|---|---------------------|---|
| A..... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| B..... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| C..... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| D..... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| E..... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

51. How close were you to this person before your religious change?
- | | I felt very close to them | I liked them a lot | I thought they were okay | I was not very close to them |
|--------|---------------------------|--------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------|
| A..... | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| B..... | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| C..... | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| D..... | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| E..... | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |

52. Was your closeness to any of these friends changed as a result of your religious change?
- | | I was much closer to them | It was about the same | I was much more distant from them |
|--------|---------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------------|
| A..... | 5 | 4 | 3 |
| B..... | 5 | 4 | 3 |
| C..... | 5 | 4 | 3 |
| D..... | 5 | 4 | 3 |
| E..... | 5 | 4 | 3 |

53. How often did you see this friend before your religious change? Times per Year or Month or Week
- | | | | |
|--------|-----|-----|-----|
| A..... | () | () | () |
| B..... | () | () | () |
| C..... | () | () | () |
| D..... | () | () | () |
| E..... | () | () | () |

54. How often did you see them after this change? Times per Year or Month or Week
- | | | | |
|--------|-----|-----|-----|
| A..... | () | () | () |
| B..... | () | () | () |
| C..... | () | () | () |
| D..... | () | () | () |
| E..... | () | () | () |

55. (If 55 is different from 53): Was this difference a result of your religious change?

	Yes	Partly	No	No change
A.....	3	2	1	0
B.....	3	2	1	0
C.....	3	2	1	0
D.....	3	2	1	0
E.....	3	2	1	0

56. Prior to your religious change, how many of your friends were not born-again Christians?

All	Most	Some	1 or 2	None
4	3	2	1	0

The following questions (57-65) deal with those friends who were not born-again Christians prior to your religious change. On a separate sheet of paper we will list those friends, call them A, B, C, D and E, and discuss each one separately. (If all were born-again Christians, go to 66.)

57. How did they find out about this religious change?

	They were present at the time	I told them	Others told them	They do not know
A.....	3	2	1	0
B.....	3	2	1	0
C.....	3	2	1	0
D.....	3	2	1	0
E.....	3	2	1	0

58. Were any of these friends neighbours or co-workers?

	Neighbours?		Co-workers?	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
A.....	()	()	()	()
B.....	()	()	()	()
C.....	()	()	()	()
D.....	()	()	()	()
E.....	()	()	()	()

59. How did you feel they would react? They would:
- | | Approve
the change | Be in-
different
to it | Have
mixed
feelings | Oppose
it | Strongly
oppose
it |
|--------|-----------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------|--------------|--------------------------|
| A..... | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| B..... | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| C..... | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| D..... | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| E..... | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
60. Do you think they had expected this change or were very surprised when this change took place?
- | | They had expected it | | | were very surprised | |
|--------|----------------------|---|---|---------------------|---|
| A..... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| B..... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| C..... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| D..... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| E..... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
61. How close were you to this person before your religious change?
- | | I felt
very close
to them | I liked
them a
lot | I thought
they were
okay | I was not
very close
to them |
|--------|---------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| A..... | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| B..... | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| C..... | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| D..... | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| E..... | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
62. Was your closeness to any of these friends changed as a result of your religious change?
- | | I was much
closer to
them | It was
about
the same | I was much more
distant from
them |
|--------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|---|
| A..... | 5 | 4 | 3 |
| B..... | 5 | 4 | 3 |
| C..... | 5 | 4 | 3 |
| D..... | 5 | 4 | 3 |
| E..... | 5 | 4 | 3 |
63. How often did you see this friend before your religious change? Times per:
- | | Year | or
Month | or
Week |
|--------|------|-------------|------------|
| A..... | () | () | () |
| B..... | () | () | () |
| C..... | () | () | () |
| D..... | () | () | () |
| E..... | () | () | () |

64. How often did you see them after this change?
 Times per: Year or Month or Week
 A..... () () ()
 B..... () () ()
 C..... () () ()
 D..... () () ()
 E..... () () ()

65. (If 64 is different from 63): Was this difference a result of your religious change?

	Yes	Partly	No	No change
A.....	3	2	1	0
B.....	3	2	1	0
C.....	3	2	1	0
D.....	3	2	1	0
E.....	3	2	1	0

66. Before your religious change, had you known the pastor of the Church you first attended after your religious change?

- 0 () We had never met.
 1 () I knew who the pastor was.
 2 () We knew each other by name.
 3 () We were fairly close.
 4 () We were very close.

67. How close were you to this pastor after your religious change?

- 0 () We had never met.
 1 () I knew who the pastor was.
 2 () We knew each other by name.
 3 () We were fairly close.
 4 () We were very close.

68. Were there any outward circumstances which you feel may have contributed to your religious change? (Illness, personal problems, a religious change in someone close to you, some religious experience, etc.) Describe:

69. Which person(s) would you say were most instrumental in helping you make this change? (Pastor, close friend, family member, etc.)

Now I would like to ask you about a number of religious experiences which people have reported having. Since you were twelve have you ever had any of these experiences, and how sure are you that you have had them.

	Yes, I am sure I have	Yes, I think I have	No, I have not
70. A sense of having been forgiven by God for something you have done.	2	1	0
71. A feeling that you were somehow in the presence of God.	2	1	0
72. A sense of being miraculously helped by God.	2	1	0
73. A feeling of being afraid of God.	2	1	0
74. A feeling of being punished by God for something you have done.	2	1	0
75. A feeling of being unified with God in an ecstatic manner.	2	1	0
76. A sense of having been enlightened by God about a religious truth.	2	1	0
77. A feeling that God has asked you to do something for Him.	2	1	0
78. A sense of being saved in Christ.	2	1	0

79. Could you please go back over the list below and put a check mark in in front of those which are still important experiences?

80. And, finally, could you please indicate in the space provided whether this experience took place before your religious change, after your religious change, or both before and after the religious change.

79. Still important?	Experiences	80. When Occurred?		
		Before	After	Both
Yes(1) No(2)	A. A sense of having been forgiven by God for something you have done.	1	2	3
Yes(1) No(2)	B. A feeling that you were somehow in the presence of God.	1	2	3
Yes(1) No(2)	C. A sense of being miraculously helped by God.	1	2	3

Yes(1) No(2)	D. A feeling of being afraid of God.	1	2	3
Yes(1) No(2)	E. A feeling of being punished by God for something you have done.	1	2	3
Yes(1) No(2)	F. A feeling of being unified with God in an ecstatic manner.	1	2	3
Yes(1) No(2)	G. A sense of having been enlightened by God about a religious truth.	1	2	3
Yes(1) No(2)	H. A feeling that God has asked you to do something for Him.	1	2	3
Yes(1) No(2)	I. A sense of being saved in Christ.	1	2	3

Now I would like to ask you about the nature of your religious involvement.

81. How often do you attend religious services during the Summer? This can include attending Churches other than your own while away on holidays.
- I do not attend at all during the summer.....01
 Once or twice during the summer.....02
 About once a month.....03
 About twice a month.....04
 Almost every week.....05
 Once a week.....06
 Two times a week.....07
 Three times a week or more.....08
82. How regularly do you attend religious services at your church during the year?
- Rarely.....01
 About every three months.....02
 About once a month.....03
 About twice a month.....04
 Almost every week.....05
 Once a week.....06
 Two times a week.....07
 Three times a week or more.....08
83. Do you attend religious services because of pressure from parents, a spouse, or others?
 Yes(0) Partly(1) No(2) Don't know(8)

84. Are you involved in the functioning of your church in any other way besides attendance? (Leadership positions, Sunday school teacher, etc.)
- 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.
85. Are you involved in any religious organizations or groups outside of your own congregation? (neighbourhood Bible study, Missionary societies, etc.)
- 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.
86. Could you indicate your attitude toward Church attendance along the following dimensions?
- A. I always find the services meaningful. 1 2 3 4 5 I am kind of 'just there' and don't pay too much attention to what is going on.
- B. I would feel that I'd missed something valuable if I missed a Church service. 1 2 3 4 5 People would ask questions if I missed one of the Church services.
- C. I go to Church because: The Bible teaches that we ought to go 1 2 3 4 5 I enjoy the fellowship with other Christians.
87. Are there other reasons why you attend church? Describe:
88. Do you spend time in private prayer:
- Rarely, or not at all..... 1
- Less than once a week..... 2
- About once a week..... 3
- More than once a week..... 4
- On a regular daily basis..... 5
89. On the average, when you do spend time in private prayer, how much time do you spend? ()minutes.
90. How important is private prayer in your life?
- Extremely important..... 3
- Fairly important..... 2
- Not too important..... 1
- Not important..... 0

91. Do you spend time reading from the Bible:
 Rarely, or not at all..... 1
 Less than once a week..... 2
 About once a week..... 3
 More than once a week..... 4
 On a regular daily basis..... 5
92. On the average, when you do spend time reading from the Bible, how much time do you spend? ()minutes.
93. How important is Bible reading in your life?
 Extremely important..... 3
 Fairly important..... 2
 Not too important..... 1
 Not important..... 0
94. During the past year, have you read religious books, magazines, devotional materials, etc.? How many? ()
95. Have you personally tried to convert someone to your religious faith:
- | | Yes,
often | Yes, a
few times | Yes, once
or twice | No, I
never have |
|----------------------------------|---------------|---------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|
| A. Among members of your family? | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| B. Among your friends? | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| C. In your place of employment? | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| D. In your neighborhood? | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| E. Among strangers | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
96. Do you make financial contributions to your local congregation?
 No (0) Yes, Sometimes (1) Yes, regularly (2)
97. How would you describe your giving as a percentage of your total income?
- | Well above
10% | Just above
10% | About
10% | Just below
10% | Well below
10% |
|-------------------|-------------------|--------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
98. Could you describe your reasons for giving money to the Church?

99. From the following list, could you please rank the three most common reasons why you give to the church?
- 01 Giving to the church is something that I enjoy doing.
 - 02 Giving to the church gives me a sense of belonging, of being a part of something.
 - 03 The church may as well get the money rather than the government. Donations can be counted as income tax deductions.
 - 04 I give as an act of love towards God.
 - 05 I give partly because of those who would know about it if I did not give anything.
 - 06 It helps provide better facilities and a more comfortable atmosphere for worship.
 - 07 I feel morally obligated to give to the church.
 - 08 I can afford to give and so I feel I ought to.
 - 09 The Bible teaches that we ought to give.
 - 10 I would feel that I wasn't doing my share if I did not give.
 - 11 The money I give is used in support of a worthy cause.
100. Do you feel that you give as a result of any pressure from family, Church leaders, or others?
- 0...I do not give to the Church
 - 1...Yes
 - 2...Partly
 - 3...No, not at all
 - 4...I experience no pressure
 - 8...Don't know.

Now I would like to ask you some questions concerning drinking. For the purposes of this questionnaire, one drink is: one and a quarter ounces of hard liquor (spirits), four ounces of wine, or twelve ounces of beer (one bottle).

101. Which of the following categories applies to you?
1. I take alcoholic drink occasionally or regularly now. (go to 102)
 2. I take alcoholic drink but very rarely. (go to 102)
 3. I have taken alcoholic drink in the past: I don't intend to take it again. (go to 103)
 4. I have not taken alcoholic drink- I might someday. (go to 104)
 5. I have not taken alcoholic drink- I don't ever intend to (go to 104)

- | | |
|------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 102. If 1 or 2 was selected: | 103. If 3 was selected: |
| How often do you usually | When you did drink, how |
| drink any kind of alcohol- | often did you usually |
| ic beverage? | drink any kind of |
| | alcoholic beverage? |
| Drinks per day () | Drinks per day () |
| or per week () | or per week () |
| or per month () | or per month () |
| or per year () | or per year () |

If you do not drink or if you drink twice a year or less:

104. Could you indicate from this list the three most important reasons why you do not drink? Please rank the responses.
- 01 Drinking is harmful to one's health.
 - 02 My parents and/or spouse disapprove.
 - 03 Drinking costs too much money.
 - 04 It is against the moral teaching of the Church.
 - 05 I do not like the taste.
 - 06 Drinking is a sign of personal weakness.
 - 07 It is a bad example for the children or for the young Christians in the Church.
 - 08 I would not drink because of the criticism I would receive.
 - 09 Drinking is wrong in principle.
 - 10 I am afraid of getting into the habit.
 - 11 Decent people do not drink.
 - 12 My friends do not drink.
 - 13 Drinking can lead to broken homes and marriages.

105. Are there other reasons why you do not drink?
Describe:

The following questions concern attitudes toward drinking. For each question you are asked to indicate your own personal view and the the 'official' view held by the Church you attend. ASK ALL:

106. The use of wine in communion services is acceptable.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Dis- agree	Strongly disagree
A. You	1	2	3	4	5
B. Church	1	2	3	4	5

107. Drinking wine with meals at home occasionally is a practice that is quite acceptable.

A. You	1	2	3	4	5
B. Church	1	2	3	4	5

108. It is alright to toast the bride and groom with a glass of wine at a wedding reception.

A. You	1	2	3	4	5
B. Church	1	2	3	4	5

109. It would be better to teach our children moderation in drinking than to ban it totally.

A. You	1	2	3	4	5
B. Church	1	2	3	4	5

110. It doesn't really matter whether a Christian drinks or not.

A. You	1	2	3	4	5
B. Church	1	2	3	4	5

111. Do you think any of the born-again Christians you know drink at all?

Most	Many	About half	A few	None	Don't know
4	3	2	1	0	8

IF RESPONDENT DOES NOT DRINK OR DRINKS TWICE A YEAR OR LESS ASK 112 -117. IF RESPONDENT DOES DRINK OCCASIONALLY OR REGULARLY, GO TO QUESTION 118.

112. If you were to take a drink, do you think any of the following would disapprove?

Disapproval:	Strong	Some	Slight	None	NA	DK
A. Father.....	4	3	2	1	7	8
B. Mother.....	4	3	2	1	7	8
C. Spouse/fiancee..	4	3	2	1	7	8
D. Any other family	4	3	2	1	7	8
E. Your pastor.....	4	3	2	1	7	8
F. Any Christian friends.....	4	3	2	1	7	8
G. Any non-Christian friends.....	4	3	2	1	7	8
H. Any Members of your Church.....	4	3	2	1	7	8
I. Any Christian neighbours or co-workers	4	3	2	1	7	8
J. Any non-Christian neighbours or co-workers	4	3	2	1	7	8

(note: for each of the questions concerning drinking, the categories of others A to J are repeated for each question. For the sake of brevity in this appendix, the categories as they appear in the original questionnaire will be omitted. The wording of each question and the responses are included.)

113. Concerning only those who would disapprove, how close would you say your relationship is to them? (If none would disapprove, go to question 115.)

	I feel very close to them	I like them a lot	I think they are okay	I am not very close to them	NA	DK
(D to J)	3	2	1	0	7	8

114. Concerning those who would disapprove, to what extent do their views on drinking affect your own personal views on drinking?

	Very much	Some	Very little	None at all	NA	DK
(A to J)	3	2	1	0	7	8

115. If you were to take a drink, do you think any of the following would approve?

Approval:	Strong	Some	Slight	None	NA	DK
(A to J)	4	3	2	1	7	8

116. Concerning only those who would approve, how close would you say your relationship is to them?
(If none would approve go to question 127)

	I feel very close to them	I like them a lot	I think they are okay	I am not very close to them	NA	DK
(D to J)	3	2	1	0	7	8

117. Concerning those who would approve, to what extent do their views on drinking affect your own personal views on drinking?

	Very Much	Some	Very Little	None at All		
(A to J)	3	2	1	0	7	8

GO TO QUESTION 127

ASK THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS (118-126) ONLY FOR THOSE WHO DRINK:

118. Do you feel disapproval for your drinking from any of the following?

	Disapproval: Strong	Some	Slight	None	They do not know I drink
(A to J)	4	3	2	1	0

119. Concerning only those who disapprove, how close would you say your relationship is to them?
(If none disapprove, go to question 121.)

	I feel very close to them	I like them a lot	I think they are okay	I am not very close to them	NA	DK
(D to J)	3	2	1	0	7	8

120. Concerning those who disapprove, to what extent do their views on drinking affect your own personal views on drinking?

	Very much	Some	Very little	None at all	NA	DK
(A to J)	3	2	1	0	7	8

121. Do you feel any approval for your drinking from any of the following?

	Approval: Strong	Some	Slight	None	They do not know I drink
(A to J)	4	3	2	1	0

122. Concerning only those who approve, how close would you say your relationship is to them? (If none would approve go to question 124.)

	I feel very close to them	I like them a lot	I think they are okay	I am not very close to them	NA	DK
(D to J)	3	2	1	0	7	8

123. Concerning those who approve, to what extent do their views on drinking affect your own personal views on drinking?

	Very much	Some	Very little	None at all	NA	DK
(A to J)	3	2	1	0	7	8

IF RESPONDENT HAS INDICATED (118,121) THAT SOME DO NOT KNOW THAT S/HE DRINKS, ASK 124-126, OTHERWISE GO TO 127.

124. Concerning those who do not know that you drink, how do you feel they would react if they were to know?

	Disapproval: Strong	Some	Slight	Indifferent	Approval
(A to J)	4	3	2	1	0

125. Concerning those who do not know that you drink, how close would you say your relationship is to them?

	I feel very close to them	I like them a lot	I think they are okay	I am not very close to them
(D to J)	3	2	1	0

126. Concerning those who do not know that you drink, how do you think it would affect your drinking behavior if they were to know?

	I would: Stop drinking	Drink less	Remain the same
(A to J)	3	2	1

Now I would like to ask you a few questions concerning lottery tickets such as Winsday, Loto Canada, etc.

127. Do you, yourself, purchase lottery tickets?

- 0 Never
- 1 Once or twice a year
- 2 About once every three months
- 3 About once a month
- 4 More than once a month
- 5 About every week

Would you agree or disagree with the following statements? For each question you are asked to indicate your own personal view and then the 'official' view held by the Church you attend.

Strongly agree	Agree -	Neutral -	Dis- agree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
-------------------	------------	--------------	---------------	----------------------	---------------

128. It is quite acceptable for Christians to purchase lottery tickets. (Western Express, Loto Canada)

A. You	1	2	3	4	5	8
B. Church	1	2	3	4	5	8

129. There is nothing wrong with buying raffle tickets. (eg. Community Club 'win a car' draw, Grey Cup tickets)

A. You	1	2	3	4	5	8
B. Church	1	2	3	4	5	8

130. The Church should take a strong stand against lottery tickets.

A. You	1	2	3	4	5	8
B. Church	1	2	3	4	5	8

131. Do you think any of the born-again Christians you know buy lottery tickets?

Most	Many	About half	A few	None	Don't know
4	3	2	1	0	8

The final questions concern some background information.

132. Sex of respondent.... M() F()
133. What is your present age? ()Years.
134. What is your current marital status?
 Single (never married).... 1 (go to 141)
 Now married 2
 Common-law..... 3
 Divorced 4
 Separated 5
 Widowed 6
135. How old were you when you entered this marriage?
 ()Years.
136. If separated, divorced, or widowed: What year did
 this marriage end? 19...
137. Were you married previous to this marriage?
 No() go to question 141. Yes() ask 138-140.
138. How old were you when you entered this (previous)
 marriage? ()Years.
139. Were you divorced (2) or widowed (1)?
140. What year did this marriage end? 19...
141. Employment: Are you presently: (spouse)
 Employed full-time..... 01 01
 Employed part-time..... 02 02
 Unemployed..... 03 03
 Retired..... 04 04
 In school..... 05 05
 Keeping house (at home). 06 06
 Other (specify) 07 07
 NA..... 97
142. What kind of work do/did you normally do?
 Name of occupation:
143. How long have/had you worked there? ()Years.
144. What is the highest level of education that you
 (and your spouse) have completed?
 Describe highest grade completed in school or type
 of degree(s) obtained:
 A. Respondent
 B. Spouse

145. From this chart, could you tell me which number comes closest to the total income of all the members of this household for this past year before tax and deductions?

Under \$5,000	01
\$5,000 to \$9,999	02
\$10,000 to \$14,999 ..	03
\$15,000 to \$19,999 ..	04
\$20,000 to \$24,999 ..	05
\$25,000 to \$29,999 ..	06
\$30,000 to \$34,999 ..	07
\$35,000 to \$39,999 ..	08
\$40,000 to \$44,999 ..	09
\$45,000 to \$49,999 ..	10
\$50,000 and over	11

Thank-you very much for your time and co-operation.

Appendix B

A CONCEPTUALIZATION OF THE BORN-AGAIN EXPERIENCE

Fundamentalist evangelical sects have prescribed the need to be born-again as the sole criterion, the 'only way', both sufficient and necessary for salvation from in and entrance into a new life based upon a re-oriented relationship with the divine. The sects have characteristically been based upon a voluntary converted membership, and consequently even though a large number of new 'converts' are in fact members by birth who have come up through the ranks, the notion of an expected born-again commitment keeps alive the idea of converted membership. Because rebirth is conceived in terms of coming from an unregenerate state of sinfulness, the universal condition of humanity since the fall from grace in the garden, to a recognition of one's personal powerlessness to alter those conditions outside of accepting God's forgiveness through Christ, it is regarded as something which cannot be inherited. Nor can it be earned, the believer's commitment is made workable through a life of faith in the ability of an imminent personal Lord whose grace alone provides the viability and incentive to make the new life a workable possibility. Regardless of religious background, then, a born-again experience is demanded of every member.

In his widely disseminated Gospel tract 'The Four Spiritual Laws' (1965), Bill Bright, founder of Campus Crusade for Christ, outlines the fundamental steps involved in coming to an awareness and experience of rebirth:

1. God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life;
2. Man is sinful and separated from God, thus he cannot know and experience God's love and plan for his life;
3. Jesus Christ is God's only provision for man's sin;
4. We must individually receive Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.

The tract continues with a suggested 'sinner's prayer' and some guidelines for continuing spiritual growth.

In a discussion of the term 'Christian', David Moberg (1980:3) refers to anyone who professes this type of faith in Christ as a 'type I' Christian. A type I Christian is defined as anyone who 'has made a genuine enduring personal faith commitment to Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord'. In order to become a Christian in this sense one must acknowledge both his/her own sinfulness and God's provision for that sin through Christ. Thus, rebirth is conceived as both an experience (forgiveness) and an act (repentance). The notion that Christ must be received as Savior and Lord suggests that the experience of rebirth is followed by a commitment. The changed life, normally thought of as conversion, is a way of validating the experience of salvation. Gerlach and Hine's (1968) analysis of Pentecostals revealed

the presence of both a highly motivating religious experience and a more objectively observable bridge-burning act as equally salient in the commitment process.

The development of a born-again perception of self can be understood in terms of a wide variety of identity changes. Rebirth can represent varying degrees of alternation as well as full-fledged conversion.

The born-again experience is generalizable to conversions to other religious perspectives. An experience or set of experiences which lead an individual to a subjective sense of self as born-again will occur within a context which provides a basis for interpreting experiences within the framework of an evangelical Christian perception of religious change. The major differentiation, sociologically, between born-again conversion (or alternation) and conversions to other perspectives is that the born-again conversion will involve a change in identity, beliefs, values, attitudes, and behavior consonant with the expectations of the fundamentalist evangelical structure in which it inheres, while a conversion to a different perspective will involve a similar change but to a different set of meanings and values. In other words, the difference between conversions to different perspectives lies in the social contexts in which those experiences are defined by the actors and reference others, not in terms of the dynamics of the religious change. Thus, it is hoped that an analysis of born-again

Christians will offer some generalizable conceptions of the dynamics of individual religious change.

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