

RELIGION

AND

AMERICAN YOUTH:

with Emphasis on
Catholic Adolescents
and Young Adults

by

Raymond H. Potvin

Dean R. Hoge

Hart M. Nelsen

The Boys Town Center for the
Study of Youth Development
The Catholic University of America
Washington, D.C.

Commissioned by

Office of Research, Policy and Program Development
Department of Education
United States Catholic Conference

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Introduction

In the United States there are approximately 67 million adolescents and young adults between the ages of 13 and 29. They constitute an estimated 39 percent of the total population (*Current Population Reports*, Series P-25, No. 601). In terms of sheer numbers, the youth apostolate remains a major challenge for organized religion. But the challenge is even larger and more complex than numbers alone suggest.

American society is experiencing rapid change, which implies an increase in the complexity of value systems and behavior patterns often leading to agonizing moral ambiguities. Catholics have not been exempted from the impact. If religious teachers and/or institutional resources are too few or unprepared to meet this challenge, the religious development of youth may well be determined by other influences. The data presented here suggest that organized religion should consider an extended commitment of personnel and resources to the youth apostolate.

This study was commissioned by the United States Catholic Conference and carried out by the Boys Town Center for the Study of Youth Development at the Catholic University of America. It profiles the current religious attitudes of Catholic youth and young adults in the United States. In addition, it clearly identifies areas in which further research is needed. (In this connection, it should be noted that a study similar to this one concerning the religious attitudes of children 6 to 13 is now underway and will be published in the near future.)

The present study attempts to describe the religious situation of adolescents and young adults in the United States, with emphasis on Catholic youth. It outlines the parameters within which an apostolate to youth must be carried on. It reviews the pertinent literature on religious attitudes, beliefs and behavior of young people between the ages of 13 and 29, and supplements the results of previous studies with findings from recent research by the Boys Town Center.¹ Sources are identified briefly in the text and described more fully in the list of resources.

Whenever possible, attention is given to changing trends, to the determinants of these characteristics of youth, and to their possible development in the immediate future. The study focuses on two age groups: adolescents between the ages of 13 and 18, mainly junior and senior high school youth; and young adults between the ages of 18 and 29. There are considerable gaps in our knowledge about the religious beliefs and behavior of youth. While much research has been conducted, few samples have been national in scope and these few have been limited

to narrow areas of the religious spectrum. Nonetheless some valid insights are possible. We base our generalizations on the best data available.

Readers who are not familiar with statistics may wish to refer to Appendix A, which includes a short guide for interpreting statistical notation.

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RELIGION AND AMERICAN YOUTH:

with Emphasis on Catholic
Adolescents and Young Adults

Part I: Ages 13 to 18

There are approximately 25 million adolescents between the ages of 13 and 18 years of age in the United States (*Current Population Reports* Series P-25, No. 601). The great majority are in junior or senior high schools. According to Keniston, a basic, conscious issue during youth is the tension between self and society: the adolescent struggles to define his or her identity and in so doing recognizes the possibility of conflict between emerging selfhood and the social order; the result is often a pervasive ambivalence toward both self and society (Keniston, 1970). Certainly such tension affects the adolescent's orientation to religion.

RELIGIOUS BELIEF AND BEHAVIOR

In 1975 about 70 percent of American youth aged 13 to 18 believed firmly in a personal God; 20 percent were doubtful but reported belief in a higher power of some kind; and another 10 percent did not believe or felt they would never know whether God or some higher power exists (Boys Town Survey, 1975). Since the early 1950s doubt or non-belief in a personal God has increased more than 10 percentage points, most of the change having occurred during the last decade (see Table 1). Furthermore, belief in divine retribution is becoming increasingly unpopular. At present only 56 percent believe that God will punish people who sin, while in the early 1960s as many as 76 percent reported that they believed God would reward or punish them for what they did (Bealer and Willets, 1967:439). The notion of divine punishment is least acceptable to Jews and less acceptable to Catholics than to Protestants (see Table 1).

The same trend is observable about belief in life after death. In 1961 about 78 percent indicated such a belief (Bealer and Willets,

TABLE 1

PERCENT OF ADOLESCENTS REPORTING ON SELECTED
RELIGIOUS BELIEFS AND PRACTICES

	1951 ¹			1961-62 ²			1975 ³					
	TOTAL	PROT	CATH	JEW	TOTAL	PROT	CATH	JEW	TOTAL	PROT	CATH	JEW
Belief in a personal God ⁴	83	84	88	38	80	75	68	21	70	75	68	21
God punishes sinners ⁵					76	60	55	14	56	60	55	14
Belief in life after death ⁶					78	68	65	55	65	68	65	55
Bible is God's word ⁷	57	56	64	42		74	64	17	67	74	64	17
Weekly attendance at services	69	68	81	35	70	43	55	10	44	43	55	10
Pray daily	57	56	73	22	50	34	29	7	30	34	29	7

¹ Remmers and Radler, 1957: stratified sample of 2,500 high school students in grades 9 through 12.

² Data from Gallup and Hill, 1961, unpublished, and Remmers and Radler, 1962, reported in Bealer and Willets, 1967.

³ Potvin, 1975: national sample of 1121 13 to 18 year olds.

⁴ Remmers and Radler, 1957; Gallup and Hill, 1961: percent responding "Yes" to "God knows our every thought and movement." (A direct question on belief in God was not asked.) Potvin, 1975: "I am sure that God really exists and knows me."
⁵ Gallup and Hill, 1961: those reporting that they believed God to be their judge who observes their actions and will reward or punish them for what they do. Potvin, 1975: percent responding "Strongly agree" or "Agree" to "God punishes people who sin."

⁶ Gallup and Hill, 1961, as reported in Bealer and Willets, 1967. Potvin, 1975: percent responding "I believe in a life after death but I don't know what it will be like", or "I believe that I will exist after death only as a part of a universal spirit or form", or "I believe in a personal life after death and that I will exist as an individual."

⁷ Remmers and Radler, 1957: percent responding "Yes" to "The first writing of the Bible was done under the guidance of God." Potvin, 1975: percent responding "Strongly agree" or "Agree" to "The Bible is God's word and must be obeyed."

1967:439); in 1975 the percentage was 65, with more than half the believers admitting they did not know whether such a life meant personal, individual existence or survival as part of a universal spirit. Catholics reported slightly more disbelief and doubt than Protestants, and Jews reported the most (see Table 1).

In 1951 the Purdue Opinion Poll of high school students showed that 57 percent of young people agreed with the following statement: "The first writing of the Bible was done under the guidance of God." At that time Catholics had a higher rate of agreement than Protestants, 64 percent compared to 56 percent. In 1975 the Boys Town Survey reported that 67 percent of adolescents aged 13 to 18 agreed that "the Bible is God's word and must be obeyed"; 64 percent of the Catholics agreed with the statement compared to 74 percent of the Protestants. Since the questions were worded quite differently in the two surveys, it is impossible to draw conclusions about any changes which might have taken place from 1951 to 1975, but it is important to note the relative shift in the percentage of agreement with each item when Catholics are compared to Protestants.

A review of the survey literature over time generally indicates a decline in traditional orthodoxy among American adolescents. Catholics are not an exception. If anything, they have been affected more than Protestants. Furthermore, this decline has been accompanied by a decline in attendance at religious services. According to the Purdue Opinion Polls of high school students in 1957 and 1962, almost 70 percent indicated they attended religious services once a week or more. This represented 80 percent of the Catholics, about 70 percent of the Protestants, and fewer than 40 percent of the Jews. In 1975 weekly attendance had dropped to 44 percent among adolescents 13 to 18: 55 percent for Catholics, 43 percent for Protestants, and 10 percent for Jews (see Table 1).²

Though frequency of attendance has declined considerably, only 13 percent never attend at all (Boys Town Survey, 1975). This indicates some continuation of institutional contact by the large majority. Furthermore, slightly more than 60 percent of adolescents 13 to 18 believe that in some way the church and religious authorities represent God in this world, and 34 percent say they are fairly active in the youth activities sponsored by their church or religious group. Catholics report the least participation, only 24 percent claiming to be fairly active (Boys Town Survey, 1975). While some young people seem to be moving away from organized religion, others remain firmly committed.

The decline in attendance at religious services over the years does not appear to reflect simply disenchantment with institutional forms of

worship. Among high school students the frequency of private prayer remained fairly stable between 1951 and 1962, with at least 50 percent reporting that they prayed every day. In 1975 this percentage dropped to 30. Among Catholics there occurred a decline of 44 percent, from 73 to 29, compared to a decline of 22 percent among Protestants and 15 percent among Jews. Again the issue is not one of total alienation from prayer, since only 14 percent reported that prayer has little or no importance in their lives. Nonetheless, it is fair to conclude that prayer is less important in the adolescent's life than it was 10 or so years ago.

The existence of a "religious revival" among Americans between 13 and 18 in the mid-1970s is simply not sustained by these data. In fact, they tend to support the opposite. Moreover, Catholics appear to be affected more than the other groups. The notion of a revival may stem from a small minority's concern with mystical experience and newer forms of religious expression which have been widely publicized. Such movements, however, are largely concentrated among older youth, often university students or university drop-outs (Prince, 1974:263). Whether one interprets these data as signs of an overall decline in religiousness among youth depends to a great extent on how one defines religion. Though there is increasing consensus that religion cannot be reduced to official beliefs, practices, or traditional organizations (see, for example, Geertz, 1966), it remains a fact that adolescent beliefs and behaviors are changing.

Such a change is equally evident in some areas of moral judgment and behavior. A Harris Poll conducted for *Life* (January 8, 1971) reported that 45 percent of 15 to 21 year olds believed it was all right for an unmarried couple to have sexual relations if they were formally engaged. In 1975, 65 percent of 13 to 18 year olds agreed that in some circumstances having sexual intercourse before marriage would not be wrong (Boys Town Survey, 1975). Though the questions and age groups were not identical in both surveys, the change toward a more permissive view of sex appears evident. In 1972, 19 percent of adolescents 13 to 16 admitted using marijuana or drugs (Gold and Reimer, 1976); in 1975 the figure was approximately 25 percent (Boys Town Survey, 1975). This figure increases to 30 percent among 13 to 18 year olds. Truancy, running away from home, fraud and theft have increased over the years (see Table 2). On the positive side, crimes of assault or against persons have decreased by half among teenagers aged 13 to 16 since 1967.

TABLE 2
 PERCENT OF 13 TO 16 YEAR OLDS REPORTING ON SELECTED BEHAVIOR ITEMS:
 1967¹, 1972², 1975³

	1967 N = 847		1972 N = 661		1975 N = 804	
	M ³	F ³	M	F	M	F
Running away from home	7	5	8	8	13	15
Truancy	44	35	40	38	48	47
Theft	46	21	40	26	43	33
Fraud	24	19	25	21	32	31
Assault	40	19	36	10	24	12
Use of alcohol	44	28	53	46	53	54
Marijuana	[1%]	[2%]	[18%]	[19%]	23	26
Other drugs					10	13

¹ Gold and Reimer (1976). Data for 1967 were collected for the National Survey of Youth from a national representative sample of 13 to 16 year olds, and were compared to a similar sample for 1972, adjusted for age and sex-race composition. Items used: "Ran away from home"; "Skipped a day of school without a real excuse"; "Took something not belonging to you, even if returned"; "Tried to get something by lying to a person about what you would do for him"; "Hurt or injured someone on purpose"; "Drank beer, wine, or liquor without your parents' permission"; "Smoked marijuana" or "Used drugs or chemicals to get high or for kicks, except marijuana" (percent not reported separately). Percents given for acts committed in the three years prior to the interview.

² Potvin, 1975: Data from a national sample of 13 to 18 year olds (N = 1121). Items: "Running away from home"; "Skipped a day of school without a real excuse"; "Taken something not belonging to you worth under \$50", or ". . . over \$50"; "Tried to get something by lying about who you were or how old you were"; "Hurt someone badly enough to need bandages or a doctor" or "Attacked someone with the idea of taking his/her life"; "Drunk beer, wine, or liquor without permission"; "Used marijuana"; "Used any drugs or chemicals to get high or for kicks except marijuana". Percents are for those between ages 13 to 16 reporting that they had done this once or more in the last year.

³ M = Male; F = Female

These and other data indicate a trend away from ascetic morality, less concern with property rights and more sensitivity to personal rights. For example, over 75 percent of 13 to 18 year olds now believe that treating persons of other races or nationalities as inferiors is always wrong (Boys Town Survey, 1975).

A Gilbert poll in 1974 conducted for the National Association of Secondary School Principals discovered that the large majority of high school youth are satisfied with their country, families, and school. Nonetheless, over two-fifths say they would be "happier" living away from their families and find it difficult to communicate with their parents. Over half claim that school administrators do not understand them, and a third feel their teachers do not take an interest in them (NASSP, 1974). This ambivalence or unease with the adult world may explain the increasing number of run-aways cited previously and the surprisingly large number of adolescents, 23 percent, who now believe that in some circumstances it is not wrong to take one's own life (Boys Town Survey, 1975). Recent statistics show that this attitude toward suicide should be taken seriously. It is estimated that adolescent suicides rose nearly 250 percent between 1954 to 1973. In the last decade the rate increased from 4.9 to 10.9 per 100,000. Many experts believe the main cause is an increasing feeling of isolation and loneliness. Others point to changing attitudes toward sex, religion, politics, and social relationships as important factors creating awesome pressures and responsibilities which young people are not prepared to face alone. Adolescents seek freedom but, according to Dr. Daniel Lettieri, a research psychologist, suicide is sometimes an attempt to escape from that freedom (*Washington Post*, June 4, 1976:C1). Perhaps religion, by creating a sense of community among believers, can help to relieve some of this tension.

In spite of these statistics, one major survey of high school youth concludes: "They are determined, ambitious, and committed to their own individual goals . . . they are down to earth and practical. They realize the problems that lie ahead in their lives: completing their education, getting a job, embarking on careers. And while this pragmatism may not be described as 'sparkling,' 'activist,' or even 'new,' it is an honest method of building futures" (NASSP, 1974:62-63). Adolescents will continue to have strong interests in the pragmatic dimensions of life.

FACTORS RELATED TO RELIGIOSITY

A considerable literature exists relating age to religiousness. Argyle and Beit-Hallahmi have suggested that adolescence, which they describe as the period between the ages of 12 to 18, "is a period of

religious awakening, during which time people either become converted or decide to abandon their childhood faith, if they had one" (1975:59). Goldman has documented that age 13 or thereabout marks a radical change in religious thinking, with a "tendency to see much of previous teaching as 'childish' and to reject it at that level because the authoritarian literalism of the Junior [2nd to 6th grades] child is unacceptable and no coherent alternative has been presented" (1964:240). There is a suggestion in much of this research that an increase in religious doubt is related to growth in understanding, to mental age, and that this conflict between faith and reason reaches a peak at about age 17 and is generally resolved one way or the other by age 20 (Argyle and Beit-Hallahmi, 1975:62-63). Newer studies indicate that this resolution of conflict is now occurring at earlier ages.

The Boys Town Survey data of 1975 did not reveal any particular age for the occurrence of such a crisis. Generally the data show a progressive decline in traditional religious beliefs and practices as one grows older. While the number of females who do not believe in or doubt the existence of a personal God increased slightly with age, as many as 44 percent of males aged 16 to 18 doubt or do not believe in a personal God, an increase of 15 percent over the 13 to 15 age category. This change in belief is mirrored in religious practice. For example, 48 percent of 9th graders attend religious services every week, but only 27 percent of the 12th graders. The Purdue Polls of 1951 and 1962 as well as the work of Fritsch and Hetzer (1928), Bose (1929), MacLean (1930), and Hollingsworth (1933), document that this change over age is not a recent phenomenon. However, the magnitude of the decline has increased. Catholics have not been an exception, 63 percent attending weekly at ages 13 to 15 but only 45 percent at ages 16 to 18. The age differential in daily prayer is also evident, especially among Catholics, with 34 percent praying daily or more often at ages 13 to 15 but only 22 percent doing so at ages 16 to 18.³

The religious questions included in the Boys Town Survey of 1975 were reduced through factor analysis to three factors: 1) a personal-experiential dimension defined by closeness of God, frequency of prayer, and the importance of religion in one's own life; 2) a religious practice dimension focusing on attendance at religious services and participation in church activities;⁴ and 3) a traditional or fundamentalist orthodox dimension measuring agreement with the beliefs that God punishes people who sin, that the Bible is God's word and must be obeyed, that the church or religious authorities represent God in this world, and that God controls everything that happens. On the basis of another factor analysis two scales on moral issues, named according to a distinction made by Middleton and Putney (1962), were also constructed: 1) ascetic morality, including items on whether getting drunk, smoking marijuana,

TABLE 3

MEAN SCORES, STANDARD DEVIATION AND RANGE ON RELIGIOUS INDICES
BY AGE FOR TOTAL POPULATION AND CATHOLICS

Index	Mean	S. D.	Range	Mean	S. D.	Range	F Ratio	P
	13 to 15		16 to 18					
Total Population								
	(N = 626)			(N = 495)				
Personal-Experiential	16.95	5.24	5-25	16.19	5.70	5-25	5.38	< .02
Religious Practice	6.64	2.36	2-10	5.94	2.31	2-10	24.77	< .0001
Traditional Orthodoxy	14.85	3.27	4-20	13.66	3.67	4-20	32.84	< .0001
Ascetic Morality	7.46	1.38	3-9	6.78	1.51	3-9	61.74	< .0001
Social Morality	10.59	1.23	4-12	10.67	1.39	4-12	1.04	> .30
Catholics								
	(N = 187)			(N = 143)				
Personal-Experiential	16.94	4.75	5-25	15.69	5.37	5-25	5.01	< .03
Religious Practice	6.67	2.04	2-10	5.64	2.03	2-10	20.74	< .000
Traditional Orthodoxy	14.96	2.99	4-20	13.16	3.36	4-20	26.37	< .000
Ascetic Morality	7.28	1.47	3-9	6.59	1.40	3-9	18.60	< .000
Social Morality	10.48	1.24	5-12	10.70	1.22	7-12	2.59	> .10

having sexual intercourse before marriage are wrong; and 2) social morality, including items on whether lying, stealing, taking one's own life, and treating persons of other races or nationalities as inferior are wrong. Table 3 presents the mean scores, the range, the standard deviations for the total population and for Catholics by age. The higher the mean score for each scale, the more the group experiences personal-experiential religion, participates in formal services or activities, is more traditionally orthodox in belief, accepts an ascetic morality, or accepts what we have defined as social morality.

The data of Table 3 confirm the impact of age on religious orientation and behavior. On every index except social morality there is a significant decrease for the total population and for Catholic adolescents. The personal-experiential dimension seems affected the least, indicating that for some adolescents as they grow older communion with God is not tied up with formal practice or traditional beliefs. There is no inherent reason why increasing age should lead to loss of faith. Certainly exposure to competing world-views and value systems increases, but religious education can be adapted to mental age and to the market place of ideas. In fact, Goldman believes that how adolescents are taught is as important as what they are taught, and that most adolescents "have stopped thinking about religion long before they consciously reject it. The cause of this is a tangle of boredom, the association of religion with fairy tales, 'science has proved religion isn't true,' its apparent remoteness from life . . . , and a confusion with much of the language and thought used in the Bible" (1970:165). Some of these problems may be remedied by sound teaching programs adapted to the mental age of the developing adolescent, who often feels the need to question beliefs previously accepted, to discuss and to explore. If such personal confrontation with religious truth is encouraged, the decline in religiousness as the adolescent grows older may be arrested to some extent.

A not unrelated factor is that young people drop out of religion courses. According to the Boys Town Survey of 1975, 90 percent of the 13 to 18 year olds have studied religion at some time or other in their lives, but only 44 percent are now doing so. The same percentage applies to Catholics.⁵ Table 4 presents the mean scores on the religious scales for Catholics: (1) in Catholic school, (2) in public school currently attending CCD classes, and (3) in public schools having previously studied religion but not doing so now. First we compared groups (1) and (2). Catholic school youths score slightly higher than public school youth now attending CCD classes on religious practice, the personal-experiential, and social morality scales but slightly lower on the traditional orthodoxy and ascetic morality scales. None of these differences is statistically significant. Controlling for age does not change these findings substantially. Because of the national scope of the sample,

TABLE 4
MEAN SCORES AND STANDARD DEVIATION ON RELIGIOUS INDICES FOR
CATHOLICS BY TYPE OF SCHOOL AND RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION

Index	(1) Attending Catholic School (N = 51)		(2) Attending C.C.D. Classes (N = 92)		(3) Not now attend- ing C. C. D. ¹ (N = 175)		F Ratios		
	Mean	S. D.	Mean	S. D.	Mean	S. D.	(1+2)	(2+3)	
Personal-Experiential	18.59	4.49	18.25	4.50	14.99	4.90	.19	22.11*	28.21*
Religious Practice	7.73	1.55	7.23	1.83	5.42	1.84	2.72	66.56*	58.57*
Traditional Orthodoxy	14.75	3.08	15.27	2.89	13.52	3.33	1.01	5.57***	18.19*
Ascetic Morality	7.06	1.33	7.30	1.55	6.73	1.45	.87	2.12	8.88**
Social Morality	10.84	1.01	10.48	1.33	10.54	1.24	2.83	2.50	.13

* p < .001

** p < .01

*** p < .05

¹ These students attended CCD in the past but have dropped out. Only 4 percent (N = 12) never attended and are not included in the table because of the small N.

some numbers are small, but the same results were obtained in a North East sample of 1,500 Catholic public and Catholic school students.

The important factor is whether adolescents continue studying religion or not. On all the religious dimensions, except the index of social morality, being enrolled in religion classes makes a significant difference. However, it should not be concluded that religion classes cause this difference, since the data may simply reflect the fact that the adolescent who is "already more religious" for whatever reason tends to enroll in religion classes or go to a Catholic school. Nonetheless the data raise certain questions about the Greeley, McCready and McCourt finding that "there is no evidence that the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine discussion classes can function as an adequate substitute for Catholic schools" (1976:218). Our data suggest they might so function if the adolescent remains enrolled over his or her school years.

One reason for the discrepancy between the Greeley finding and ours is that the samples are not comparable. We studied 13 to 18 year olds; they studied adults 18 or over. It may well be that education in Catholic elementary and secondary schools has a delayed effect which manifests itself only in later years. Or it may be that these schools had an effect years ago when today's adults were in school, an effect which no longer exists, at least to the same extent.⁴ In any case, the relative effect of Catholic school education and CCD classes remains an open question, at least until panel data are collected.

It is generally asserted that women are more religious than men (Argyle and Beit-Hallahmi, 1975:71-79). Some writers attribute this to basic psychological differences between the sexes (Garai, 1970), others to differences in upbringing (D'Andrade, 1967; Hutt, 1972), to women's greater deprivation or lack of status-rewards (Bourque and Back, 1968; Campbell and Fukuyama, 1970) and to lack of work involvement (Luckmann, 1967). Unfortunately, much of gender theory in this area is frankly speculative. The fact remains, however, that sex differences in religiosity exist, not only among adults but among adolescents as well (see, for example, Weigert and Thomas, 1970). In the Boys Town Survey of 1975 females 13 to 18 scored significantly higher than males on the personal-experiential dimension of religion, on religious practice, and on social morality, but not on ascetic morality and traditional orthodoxy (see Table 5). Whether because of temperament, upbringing, or deprivation, adolescent females report greater closeness to God and frequency of prayer than do males. Though less prone to anti-social acts against persons and property, they are equally as anti-ascetic as males.

There is some evidence in the literature that social class influences religious orientation (Demerath, 1965; Mueller and Johnson, 1975) but the relationship is not always clear. Generally members of the lower

TABLE 5
MEAN SCORES AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS ON RELIGIOUS INDICES BY SEX

Index	Males (N = 538)		Females (N = 583)		F Ratios	P
	Mean	S. D.	Mean	S. D.		
Personal-Experiential	15.72	5.69	17.44	5.09	28.53	< .0001
Religious Practice	6.01	2.39	6.63	2.30	19.58	< .0001
Traditional Orthodoxy	14.20	3.55	14.44	3.46	1.31	.251
Ascetic Morality	7.07	1.49	7.23	1.47	3.27	< .10
Social Morality	10.54	1.36	10.70	1.24	4.24	< .04

TABLE 6
MEAN SCORES AND STANDARD DEVIATION ON RELIGIOUS INDICES BY SOCIAL CLASS

Indices	Low		High		F Ratios	P
	Mean	S. D.	Mean	S. D.		
Personal-Experiential	17.02	5.37	16.09	5.52	8.06	< .005
Religious Practice	6.36	2.35	6.30	2.39	.18	.678
Traditional Orthodoxy	14.87	3.39	13.62	3.52	36.22	< .0001
Ascetic Morality	7.14	1.50	7.18	1.45	.20	.658
Social Morality	10.61	1.40	10.64	1.18	.14	.707

classes are less likely to attend church services. If they are church members they tend to have fundamentalist religious beliefs. Their lower religious participation is often explained by a general disinclination to participate in all types of voluntary organizations (Lenski, 1963) and by preferences in style of religious expression (Demerath, 1965) which in turn are related to social deprivation (Campbell and Fukuyama, 1970). When the adolescents of the Boys Town Survey were dichotomized into lower and higher social class on the basis of their fathers' occupations, significant differences were obtained on the personal-experiential dimension of religion and on traditional orthodoxy, with the lower class scoring higher, but not on the religious practice, social morality or ascetic morality indices (see Table 6). The hypothesis that social class affects religious practice is not sustained for adolescents. Nor is the hypothesis that moral values differ by class. However, lower class adolescents are more traditionally orthodox or fundamentalist and tend to pray and "experience God" more.

Whether or not size of the town or city in which one resides is a factor in religious orientation is a matter of some dispute (Argyle and Beit-Hallahmi, 1975). Nelsen *et al.* (1971) found little difference over various dimensions except for the ideological. Small town residents tended to be more conservative. On the other hand Lenski (1953) found evidence of more church attendance in smaller communities. Back and Bourque (1970) reported that residents of smaller communities admit to more mystical experiences than residents of larger cities. Certainly social-class differences account for some of these findings. Nonetheless the adolescent sample from the Boys Town Survey showed that on all dimensions except religious practice small town or city residents scored significantly higher than residents of large cities, 50,000 and over (see Table 7). Not only are residents of areas with less than 50,000 population more traditionally orthodox or fundamentalist and more conservative on moral issues, but they report more personal closeness to God and frequency of prayer than their metropolitan counterparts.

A major factor which influences the religiousness of youth is their parents' orientation to religion. Parental religious practice is an important index of parental commitment to socialize their children within a particular religious tradition, and is related to adolescents' beliefs and behavior (Greeley and Rossi, 1966; Carrier, 1965; Allison, 1969; Argyle and Beit-Hallahmi, 1975:30). Moreover, social scientists have noted the importance of parent-child relationships and parental images in the formation of God concepts (Potvin, 1976; Spilka *et al.*, 1975; Deconchy, 1968) and of religious orientation (Weigert and Thomas, 1970;1972). The implication in this literature is two-fold. Parents influence their children's religion overtly by socialization and indirectly by the way they relate to their children.

TABLE 7
MEAN SCORES AND STANDARD DEVIATION ON RELIGIOUS INDICES BY SIZE OF RESIDENCE

Index	TOWN OR CITY SIZE		F Ratio	P
	-50,000	50,000+		
	(N = 543)			
	Mean	S. D.		
Personal-Experiential	17.21	5.27	12.55	< .001
Religious Practice	6.47	2.39	3.67	< .05
Traditional Orthodoxy	14.80	3.25	19.65	< .0001
Ascetic Morality	7.35	1.48	17.87	< .0001
Social Morality	10.73	1.27	6.61	< .02
	(N = 578)			
	Mean	S. D.		
	16.06	5.58		
	6.20	2.33		
	13.88	3.67		
	6.98	1.45		
	10.53	1.33		

Table 8 shows that parental religious practice⁷ is strongly correlated with the adolescent's religious practice ($r = .49$) and moderately correlated with the personal-experiential ($r = .37$) and the traditional orthodoxy dimensions ($r = .25$). The impact is slightly less ($r = .22$) on ascetic morality and negligible on social morality ($r = .06$). While parental religious practice is related to whether the adolescent is currently studying religion ($r = .38$), when the latter is partialled out of the relationship, the association between parental religious practice and adolescent religion remains significant on all dimensions except social morality.⁸ Furthermore, the data of Table 8 indicate that parental impact is not only through overt socialization. Adolescents with parents defined as affectionate and supporting⁹ score higher on most of the religious dimensions, especially the morality scales and the personal-experiential dimension. Adolescents with parents defined as controlling and non-permissive¹⁰ tend to score higher on the traditional orthodoxy dimension.

It is also known that loving parental images facilitate the development of a personal God image in some adolescents (Potvin, 1976). This may result from projection of parental love. But it may also mean that affectionate parents are more effective in transmitting beliefs to their children. Some evidence exists to support this interpretation (Martin, 1975:502). On the other hand, parental control and non-permissiveness are related to an image of a punishing God, suggesting some projection of parental images upon God (Potvin, 1976). The fact remains that parents and parent-child relationships are important factors in the religious orientation of adolescents. This suggests that religious instruction may increase in value if religious teachers can involve parents in the process.

However, Loveless and Lodato (1967) discovered a convergence of values in individuals from different religions during adolescence, reflecting a decline in the influence of parents and a growing influence of the peer group. Whitam (1968) performed a follow-up study on teenagers who had "decided for Christ" and documented the importance of friends in the retention of a religious commitment. The relevance of the peer group in explaining values and behavior has been amply demonstrated (see, for example, Elder, 1975; Kandel & Lesser, 1972). The correlations of Table 8 indicate that adolescents with friends who are acceptable to their parents score higher on most of the religious dimensions and that those with friends who are not acceptable to parents score lower. Again the data by themselves do not show causality but they point to a relationship which is of some interest to religious educators.

Many of these variables which are related to religious orientation are also related among themselves (see Table 8). Do they all predict independently of each other? What is their relative importance? Table

TABLE 8

CORRELATION MATRIX OF SELECTED ITEMS AND RELIGIOUS INDICES

	Age	Sex	City Size	Parental Education	Parental Religious Practice	Parental Affection-Support	Parental Control	Parents Approve of Friends	Now Studying Religion	Traditional-Orthodoxy	Religious Practice	Personal-Experiential	Ascetic Morality	Social Morality
Age		-.01	-.01	-.05	-.01	-.09	-.06	.01	-.15	-.15	-.17	-.04	-.23	.05
Sex			.03	.01	.00	-.06	.10	.07	.04	.03	.13	.16	.05	.06
City Size				.18	-.02	-.04	.02	-.02	-.04	-.15	-.08	-.12	-.15	-.09
Parental Education					.04	.12	-.04	.08	.06	-.23	-.02	-.07	-.08	-.03
Parental Religious Practice						.09	.01	.09	.38	.25	.49	.37	.22	.06
Parental Affection-Support							-.18	.27	.08	.10	.11	.16	.20	.17
Parental Control								-.13	.05	.12	.06	.03	-.03	-.05
Parents Approve of Friends									.12	.09	.15	.17	.20	.14
Now Studying Religion										.31	.55	.45	.29	.13
Traditional-Orthodoxy											.41	.60	.37	.17
Religious Practice												.55	.40	.15
Personal-Experiential													.43	.24
Ascetic Morality														.38
Social Morality														

TABLE 9

STANDARDIZED REGRESSION COEFFICIENTS (β) BETWEEN SELECTED VARIABLES AND RELIGIOUS INDICES
(N = 1121)

	Personal Experiential β	Religious Practice β	Traditional Orthodoxy β	Ascetic Morality β	Social Morality β
Age	NS	-.10*	-.11*	-.20*	.08**
Sex	.16*	.11*	NS	NS	.06***
City Size	-.08**	-.05***	-.10*	-.12*	-.08***
Parental Education	-.10*	-.05***	-.24*	-.11*	NS
Parental Religious Practice	.23*	.33*	.15*	.13*	NS
Parental Affection-Support	.12*	NS	.08**	.12*	.15*
Parental Control	NS	NS	.11*	NS	NS
Parents Approve friends	NS	.07***	.06***	.15*	.08***
Now Studying Religion	.35*	.40*	.23*	.18*	.12*
R =	.55	.67	.49	.45	.25
R ² =	.31	.43	.22	.21	.06

* p < .001

** p < .01

*** p < .05

NS = non-significant

9 presents the standardized regression coefficients (Beta's) for each variable which partial out the contribution of other variables related to it. The R's in the table give the total association between the variables and each measure of religiousness. The R²'s give the percentage of variance explained.

It is obvious from the data of Table 9 that the most important predictors of religiosity as measured by these indices are parental religious practice and whether or not the adolescent is currently studying religion. Age is also a major factor in ascetic morality (the older the youth, the less ascetic the orientation) and social class as measured by parental education is important in predicting traditional orthodoxy (the lower the parental education, the more traditionally orthodox is the adolescent). Parental affection and support are the most important factors related to social morality. Nonetheless there appears to be no substitute for a religious home environment and for religious instruction if adolescents are to remain committed to their religious heritage.

CONCLUSION

The problems of religion usually associated with college youth have now become the problems of high school youth. Concern for basic values of autonomy and independence has reached within their ranks and affected their religious orientation. They appear less traditional than in the past and a confrontation with faith appears to occur much earlier. Religion seems more peripheral to their lives but the great majority are not alienated from organized religion. They are children of the times who will insist on religious dialogue and not simply religious indoctrination. They are also confused by the very freedom they demand. Support systems of the family and/or peer groups will be important factors in how they react to this freedom. Organized religion, in union with these support systems, can be a major force but today's adolescent will assess it more critically than in the past.

Part II: Young Adults 18-29

INTRODUCTION

In this section we review information on college students who are mostly 18 to 21 years of age and on young adults 18 to 29, with special emphasis on the non-college population. In the middle-1970s college students comprised about 46 percent of all persons in the U.S. population 18 to 21 years old,¹¹ and 34 percent of the total population 18 to 29 were college students or graduates.¹²

College students in the United States have changed in religious beliefs and behavior more rapidly than virtually any other group; and so this section stresses changes and trends. Campus ministers never tire of saying to sociologists that data gathered two or three years ago on campus are now totally out of date due to the rapid shifts in mood. While we should not rush to draw conclusions about the significance of these rapid movements, it is a fact that the phenomenon is more prevalent among college students than among adults. Projections about the future are, as we shall see, difficult with regard to college students' religion.

What follows is organized into five parts: (a) data on all college students' religion and values; (b) Catholic students' religion and values; (c) the Pentecostal Movement and the rise of religious cults among students; (d) explanations for the changes; and (e) some comments on non-college young adults.

COLLEGE STUDENTS' RELIGION AND VALUES

There have been many studies of college students' religion and values. Two recent comprehensive reviews depict the basic findings. One, by Feldman and Newcomb (1969), looks mostly at research on the impact of college on students' attitudes and values. In summary, it concludes that college education usually has a liberalizing effect on students' religious and political attitudes, though colleges vary in their impact. The other review, by Hoge (1974), covers trend data and examines possible explanations for the trends. Its overall conclusions about trends among students are instructive for an understanding of the situation today.¹³

Hoge finds two distinct trends in 50 years of data on college students' religion and values. First is a single linear trend occurring in the same direction over all five decades. It has three visible components. (1) Increased individual freedom and personal autonomy of students. College students have more freedom and more personal

responsibility today than ever before, and they are treated more like adults today than ever before. (2) Changes in moral orientations, mostly from detailed moral codes to more generalized and flexible moral orientations relating to dominant values. The new moral views also include greater tolerance regarding details of moral codes. (3) The rise of a self-conscious youth culture. This occurred mostly after World War II, though earlier indications of it were found in student life of the 1920s. The idea that youth are a distinctive portion of the population and the years of youth form a distinctive segment of the life cycle is a relatively new development, essentially a product of the 20th century. The rise of a self-conscious culture growing out of this newly defined portion of the life cycle is a product of the middle 20th century.

In addition to this linear trend visible over all five decades, Hoge found a pattern of back-and-forth shifts in college students' religion and values, in response to short-term events and pressures. In the area of religion, traditional Christian commitment was relatively strong in the middle 1920s, then weakened greatly to a low point in the middle or late 1930s. Starting about 1938-41, there was a return to traditional Christian commitment which continued until a highpoint in 1952-55. Thereafter, with the demise of Cold War anxieties, the campus mood shifted again toward individualism, with a weakening of traditional commitments which has continued until the most recent research findings. In the middle 1970s there were some new indications of a halt to the downward trend, as we shall see below. But there has been no over-all reversal of the weakening of orthodox beliefs and support for the institutional church ever since the middle 1950s.

The reasons for the short-term changes must in themselves be time specific. An analyst cannot explain five-year developments by citing 50-year trends. Hoge looked into a series of short-range factors which might have caused the back-and-forth changes and found that when traditional religious commitments were strong, other kinds of values also tended to be strong, and vice versa.

Traditional religious orthodoxy is associated with fear of Communism, with commitment to family life, with commitment to military duty and patriotic war, and with commitment to dominant social norms. The extent to which it is associated with other-direction is not clear; our direct measures show little association, but historical accounts and other research suggest an association at least indirectly. We have also seen that religious unorthodoxy is associated with political action toward radical social change (1974:180).

It might be said that the middle 1920s and early 1950s were conservative periods and the middle 1930s and late 1960s were liberal periods. The concerns of college students in the middle

1920s and early 1950s were relatively personal and privatistic, while in the middle 1930s and late 1960s they were more social and political, oriented to achieving social change or national policy change (1974:182).

Put in sociological terms, traditional religious commitments have been strongest when other traditional commitments—to family, to nation, and to the social status quo—have been strongest. When, for any reason, these other traditional commitments weaken, religious commitment is also bound to be affected. To understand religious change, one must start with a view of the total system of values and commitments held by an individual, not just of religious commitments and beliefs by themselves. This is because religious commitments (and especially church commitments) are only one component of a broader structure of commitments, and pressures from various sides change the total structure.

This theoretical conclusion reached by Hoge has two implications which should be noted here. First, religious leaders should recognize that the determinants of college students' religious commitments are much broader than just the clergy, the church, or the schools. Many factors influence religious life, and many of them are beyond the control of church leaders. Pervasive social forces in modern society are difficult to perceive and identify precisely, but nevertheless their effect is strong. Second, the overall pattern of commitments to family, community, and nation are more important determinants of religious commitments in any decade than the economic situation.

By comparing college students and the total adult population, Hoge found that vacillations in students' religious commitments were much more pronounced than in the total population. Generally in the total population, the younger, more affluent and more closely tied in with national intellectual culture a person is, the more he or she is subject to short-range changes in religious commitment.

In reviewing all available data through the end of the 1960s, Hoge concluded in summary that religious commitments are closely related to other important commitments in college students' lives, and when social changes take place, religious commitments will also change. In the past, religious trends have been understandable in terms of broader social commitments, and this will be true in the future also.

Research on changes in college students' values has improved in the past decade. At the same time the campus climate has taken a new turn, away from the activism of the late 1960s and toward a more traditional pattern. Some persons have asked if there is a "return to the 1950s." Today we have three sets of data which depict college students' values since the 1960s.

TABLE 10

**PERCENT OF ALL COLLEGE FRESHMEN AGREEING
WITH VALUE STATEMENTS**

	1967	1968	1970	1974	1975
People should not obey laws which violate their personal values.	*	*	*	34	32
A couple should live together for some time before deciding to get married.	*	*	*	45	48
Parents should be discouraged from having large families.	42	*	*	60	57
If two people really like each other, it's all right for them to have sex even if they've known each other for only a very short time.	*	*	*	46	50
Marijuana should be legalized.	*	19	38	47	47
Realistically, an individual can do little to bring about changes in our society.	33	32	39	44	48
Student publications should be cleared by college officials.	52	56	43	33	34
College officials have the right to ban persons with extreme views from speaking on campus.	40	32	33	23	24
Students from disadvantaged social backgrounds should be given preferential treatment in college admissions.	43	42	44	38	37
Current Religious Preference: None	*	10	10	11	10

* Question was not asked.

Source: Astin, et al. (1975:48).

The first set of data comes from the annual survey of freshmen conducted in over 500 American colleges by the American Council on Education (see Astin, et al., 1975; Bayer and Dutton, 1976). This information has been collected since 1966, and many items have been repeated from year to year. See Tables 10 and 11. Table 10 presents a selection of attitude statements used since 1967 or 1968. It shows major increases in those agreeing that couples should be discouraged from having large families and that marijuana should be legalized. The percentage of students saying that college officials should regulate

student life decreased markedly from 1967 to 1975. Fervor for social change weakened: more students in 1975 believed that an individual can do little to bring about social change, and fewer supported preferential treatment of disadvantaged persons by colleges.

TABLE 11

PERCENT OF ALL COLLEGE FRESHMEN RESPONDING "ESSENTIAL" OR "VERY IMPORTANT" TO SELECTED STATEMENTS

	1966	1969	1970	1974	1975
Becoming an authority in my field	66	*	67	62	70
Obtaining recognition from colleagues	43	*	40	39	43
Influencing social values	*	34	34	27	30
Raising a family	*	71	68	55	57
Having administrative responsibility for the work of others	29	*	22	26	31
Being financially very well off	44	*	39	46	50
Helping others who are in difficulty	69	*	65	61	66
Writing original works	14	*	14	12	12
Creating artistic work	15	*	16	14	14
Being successful in a business of my own	53	*	44	38	44
Developing a meaningful philosophy of life	*	*	76	61	64
Participating in a community action program	*	*	29	28	30
Keeping up to date with political affairs	58	*	53	37	39

* Question was not asked.

Source: Astin, et al. (1975:52).

Table 11 presents a series of items considered by freshmen as "essential" or "very important" to them. The most noteworthy trends are decreases in some traditional values—raising a family (down 14 points from 1969 to 1975), being successful in business (down 9 points from 1966 to 1975), and keeping up to date with political affairs (down 19 points from 1966 to 1975). This table demonstrates the withdrawal

from political activism so often observed, starting about 1970 or 1971. The table does not tell us very clearly, however, in what direction the new commitments are moving while some traditional commitments diminish.

The second set of data available on recent trends was gathered by Daniel Yankelovich (1972;1974). From 1967 to 1973 he carried out large nationwide surveys of college students, and some of the surveys used identical items. His reports stress changes in values from the late 1960s to the early 1970s. With the cessation of the Vietnam War the major energies impelling student protests waned, and campus values reverted to more familiar patterns. The generation gap between students and adults narrowed. At the same time some new, more permanent value trends became visible:

The major value changes under this heading are (1) changes in sexual morality in the direction of more liberal sexual mores; (2) changes relating to the authority of institutions, such as the authority of the law, the police, the government, the boss in a work situation, etc., in the direction of what sociologists call 'deauthorization', i.e., a lessening of automatic obedience to, and respect for, established authority; (3) changes in relation to the church and organized religion as a source of guidance for moral behavior; and (4) changes associated with traditional concepts of patriotism and automatic allegiance to the idea of 'my country right or wrong'.

The second category of New Values relates to social values, primarily to changing attitudes toward the work ethic, marriage and family, and the role and importance of money in defining the meaning of success.

The third category of New Values concerns the meaning of the value concept of self-fulfillment. Self-fulfillment, is usually defined by people today in opposition to concern with economic security. At issue is the individual's feeling that there must be more to life than a slavish devotion to keeping one's nose to the grindstone. . . . Stress on the theme of self-fulfillment is the individual's way of saying that there must be something more to life than making a living, struggling to make ends meet, and caring for others. The self-fulfillment concept also implies a greater preoccupation with self at the expense of sacrificing one's self for family, employer, and community. (1974:6)

Yankelovich argues that the political alienation of the 1960s was a phenomenon specific to that decade, and the campus mood of the 1970s is a return to a more normal, less radical pattern. But the trends in sexual morality, self-fulfillment orientation, distaste for authority, religious individualism, and reduced patriotism are more basic to youth today and probably more permanent characteristics of the 1970s.

TABLE 12

**PERCENT OF ALL COLLEGE STUDENTS EVALUATING
PERSONAL VALUES AS "VERY IMPORTANT"**

	Percent Saying "Very Important"		
	1969	1971	1973
Love	85	87	87
Privacy	61	64	71
Doing things for others	51	59	56
Living a clean, moral life	45	34	34
Religion	38	31	28
Money	18	18	20
Changing society	33	34	24
Patriotism	35	27	19

Source: Yankelovich (1974:66).

TABLE 13

**PERCENT OF ALL COLLEGE STUDENTS BELIEVING
CERTAIN ACTIVITIES TO BE MORALLY WRONG**

	1969	1971	1973
Taking things without paying for them	*	78	84
Extramarital sexual relations	77	57	60
Having an abortion	36	27	32
Relations between consenting homosexuals	42	26	25
Casual premarital sexual relations	34	25	22

* Question was not asked.

Source: Yankelovich (1974:67).

Tables 12, 13, and 14 depict value changes from 1969 to 1973. In Table 12, "living a clean, moral life," religion, changing society, and patriotism have receded in importance. In Table 13 all areas related to

TABLE 14

**PERCENT OF ALL COLLEGE STUDENTS
WELCOMING PARTICULAR SOCIAL CHANGES**

	1969	1971	1973
More emphasis on self-expression	84	80	83
More acceptance of sexual freedom	43	56	61
More emphasis on law and order	56	50	51
More emphasis on traditional family ties	*	45	51
More respect for authority	59	45	48
Less emphasis on working hard	24	30	31

* Question was not asked.

Source: Yankelovich (1974:66).

sexual activities have lost their moral intensity. In Table 14 there is a desire for greater sexual freedom, less obedience to "authority," and less emphasis on "working hard." In summary, Yankelovich expects recent trends in individualism, desire for autonomy, and emphasis on personal fulfillment to continue in the years ahead. At the same time, obedience to authority, personal sacrifice, and traditional sexual morality will progressively weaken.

The third set of data is much smaller, made up of replication studies at only three colleges done by Hoge and his associates (Hoge, 1976a; Hastings and Hoge, 1976). At Dartmouth College and the University of Michigan the same attitude items were used in identical surveys in 1952, 1968-69, and 1974. At Williams College the same items were asked in 1948, 1967, and 1974.

Table 15 depicts the trends in religious attitudes at Dartmouth and Michigan. The percentage feeling the need for some religious faith or philosophy fell from 1952 to 1974, and the percentage feeling that they now have an adequate religious faith or philosophy rose (considerably at Dartmouth, slightly at Michigan). The percentage with belief in a Divine God, Creator of the Universe, fell at both colleges. Church attendance fell sharply—church attendance monthly or more often fell 23 points at Dartmouth and 28 at Michigan from 1952 to 1974. Another item (not shown in the table) asked for present religious preference. The percentage saying "none" rose from the late 1960s to 1974: at Dartmouth from 24 percent to 35 percent; at Michigan from 33 percent to 39 percent.

TABLE 15

**RESPONSES OF UNDERGRADUATE MEN AT DARTMOUTH COLLEGE
AND THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN TO FOUR RELIGIOUS ITEMS
(IN PERCENT)**

	Dartmouth			Michigan		
	1952	1968	1974	1952	1969	1974
Feeling of need for some religious faith or philosophy						
Yes	77	70	61	81	72	66
Have adequate religious faith or philosophy now						
Yes	53	54	68	62	62	65
Ideas about the Deity ^a						
Believe in a Divine God, Creator of the Universe	35	26	25	47	30	31
Believe in a power greater than myself	30	26	22	27	22	24
Other responses	35	48	53	27	47	45
Attendance at religious services						
Once a week or more	20	12	12	30	17	14
Once or twice a month	23	9	8	31	23	19
Less than monthly or never	57	79	81	39	59	67

^a Responses are abbreviated here.

Source: Hoge (1976:159).

On the basis of a large number of items, Hoge concluded that the 1974 data showed, in most respects, not a "return to the 1950s" but a continuation of trends in the 1960s. Church attendance and the felt need for religion continued to drop, as did fear of Communism, support for nationalism and the armed forces, and enthusiasm for collegiate extracurricular activities. But there were a few reversals after the 1960s—privatism gained in the early 1970s at the expense of political commitments, educational goals turned away from liberal education to vocational pursuits, and some attitudes about economics and government became more conservative. The overall pattern in religion was an unchanged level of traditional Christian beliefs but a continued dropoff in church participation and support for organized religion.

The studies at Williams College agreed in most respects. In 1974 Hastings and Hoge found no change in religious beliefs since 1967, but a continued drop in expressed support for the organized church.

TABLE 16

**RESPONSES OF UNDERGRADUATE MEN AT WILLIAMS COLLEGE
TO FIVE ITEMS ON RELIGION (IN PERCENT)**

	1948	1967	1974
"The nature of the Deity" ^a			
Infinitely wise omnipotent Creator.	29	11	12
Infinitely intelligent and friendly Being.	27	24	23
Vast, impersonal spiritual source.	13	13	12
I neither believe nor disbelieve in God.	18	13	15
The only power is natural law.	1	8	13
The universe is merely a machine.	1	1	2
None of these alternatives.	11	28	23
"Immortality" ^a			
Personal immortality.	38	17	22
Reincarnation.	3	2	1
Continued existence as part of a spiritual principle.	9	11	15
Influence upon children and social institutions.	23	39	30
I disbelieve in any of these senses.	2	7	7
None of these alternatives.	25	24	25
"Organized religion" ^a			
The church is the one sure and infallible foundation of civilized life.	8	1	1
On the whole the church stands for the best in human life.	56	41	30
There is certain doubt. Possibly the church may do some harm.	12	19	20
The total influence may be on the whole harmful.	3	11	20
Stronghold of much that is unwholesome and dangerous to human welfare.	2	4	5
Insufficient familiarity.	5	7	11
A different attitude (written in).	14	18	14
During the past six months I have prayed:			
Daily or fairly frequently (combined here)	39	24	16
Less often or never	61	76	84
During the past six months I have experienced a feeling of reverence, devotion, or dependence upon a Supreme Being:			
Daily or frequently (combined here)	27	19	18
Less often or never	73	81	82

^a The responses in this item are abbreviations.

Source: Hastings and Hoge (1967).

See Table 16. It shows that belief in an omnipotent Creator decreased from 1948 to 1967 but did not change from 1967 to 1974. Belief in personal immortality fell sharply from 1948 to 1967 and then continued

unchanged to 1974. Positive attitudes toward the organized church fell sharply from 1948 to 1967 and again from 1967 to 1974. Prayer life dropped considerably, while feelings of reverence dropped slightly until 1967.

The authors also asked about home religious background and present choice of traditions. The "holding power" of both Catholic and Protestant home backgrounds weakened over the decades. In 1948, 93 percent of those from Catholic homes and 58 percent of those from Protestant homes gave those traditions as their present choice. In 1967 the figures were 75 percent for the Catholics and 33 percent for the Protestants. In 1974 the figures were somewhat lower.

TABLE 17

**RESPONSES OF UNDERGRADUATE MEN AT WILLIAMS COLLEGE
TO THREE ITEMS ON HOME RELIGIOUS TEACHINGS (IN PERCENT)**

	1948	1967	1974
"If you were brought up under some religious influence, has there been a period in which you have reacted either partially or wholly against the beliefs taught?"			
Yes	57	72	79
(If so:) "When did the doubts start?" (median age)	16.4	15.5	14.4
(If so:) "Would you say that at the present time you:"			
Are in substantial agreement with the beliefs taught.	24	15	10
Are in partial agreement with them.	70	67	70
Wholly disagree with them.	6	18	21

Source: Hastings and Hoge (1976).

Table 17 shows three questions about religious development. From 1948 to 1974 the percentage who reported some reaction against the beliefs taught them at home rose from 57 to 79 percent, and the median age when the doubts started fell from 16.4 to 14.4 years. There was also a decline in the respondents' current agreement with beliefs which they had learned as children. These data seem to indicate that the formative period when religious commitments are formed and re-examined is occurring earlier and earlier in the life cycle. As a crucial time for religious development, college is giving way to high school.

In some respects the rate of development seems to be accelerating for these middle-class American youth. Physiological research has found the same acceleration. Measures of the age of onset of menses in American girls show a fall of about one and a half years from 1920 to 1970 (Tanner, 1962; 1971). The trend for boys is similar but more difficult to measure. Although definite proof is lacking, accelerated physiological maturation is probably associated with accelerated emotional development and perhaps also with cognitive development.

All of the research reviewed so far has included all college students, not just Catholics. It was done mostly in secular colleges and universities, not Catholic colleges. It does, however, include some conclusions specific to Catholics because many of the studies were large enough to include reliable samples of Catholic students. In the studies summarized by Hoge (1974:66ff), the Catholics changed most in beliefs between the early 1950s and the late 1960s. The Jews changed least, and the Protestants were between the other two groups. The direction of changes in the three religious groups was usually the same.¹⁴

CATHOLIC STUDENTS' RELIGION AND VALUES

Information specifically on Catholic college students is available from two sources: studies done at Catholic colleges, and large studies which include large samples of Catholics identifiable as such. We shall look first at several studies done at Catholic colleges.

The most interesting trend study was done at Marquette University by Moberg and McEnery (1976). In 1961 and 1971 identical studies were done of freshmen and seniors, including many items about religion and many about the morality of various actions. See Table 18.

This table shows a series of items which ask whether specific actions are morally "all right," "wrong," "very wrong," or "the worst thing to do." The table shows the percentage responding "all right" to each. On some of the items in the top half of the table *the shifts are very large*, almost incredibly large. For example, on the first item the shift in students saying it is "all right" to date non-Catholics with marriage intentions is *75 percentage points!* Such large changes over ten years have been found in no other student research known to us. But for Catholics the years 1961 to 1971 span the Vatican Council II and its aftermath, and, as everyone knows, the impact has been immense. The shift on the second item, about having serious doubts about religion was 34 points, In the third item, about missing Mass, the shift is 54 points. And on the fourth item, about not saying prayers, it is 53 points.

All of the items in the table—those concerning religion and those concerning other actions—received more "all rights" in 1971. This shows that not only a religious change but also a loosening of specific

TABLE 18

**PERCENT OF MARQUETTE UNIVERSITY UNDERGRADUATES
SAYING VARIOUS ACTIONS ARE "ALL RIGHT" TO DO**

	1961	1971
Dating non-Catholics with marriage intentions	17	92
Having some serious doubts about religion	48	82
Not attending another Mass on Sunday when one misses a major part by arriving late	1	55
Usually not saying evening prayers	17	70
Saying nothing about misinterpretation of Catholic thought	4	18
Heavy necking with a steady date	6	75
Drinking heavily so as to become high	12	56
Reading an obscene magazine	2	38
Taking just easy courses to get through college	22	37
Wasting a class day doing nothing	11	32
Not returning extra \$1 change received in store	7	17
Not contributing to any charity when able	8	15

Source: Moberg and McEnery (1976).

moral dicta in college students' lives took place between 1961 and 1971. Among Protestants there have been shifts on these items during the same ten years, as other research shows, but for Catholics the changes have been much greater, and mostly in the areas specific to traditional religious beliefs, commitments and practices.

Moberg and McEnery also asked about Mass attendance, and found that weekly attendance had dropped from 95 percent to 45 percent. Going to confession at least monthly had dropped from 67 to 4 percent, a drop of 63 points. The declines in personal religious practices were smaller—persons reporting daily prayer dropped 32 percent, spiritual meditation occasionally or more often dropped 16 percentage points, and those reading spiritual works at least occasionally also dropped 16 points. Moberg and McEnery tell us that beliefs about tenets of the Catholic Church became less dogmatic, but they do not report figures. In attempting to explain the meaning of the large changes they found, the authors discovered that the backgrounds of students at Marquette had not changed much since 1961, so that could not be a cause of the shifts. Nor could the explanation be a "Protestantization," since many of

the shifts are not toward moral positions espoused by Protestants. They concluded that changing concepts of authority and rising individualism are behind the shifts:

To be sure, an authority crisis has prevailed in the Church, as well as in the family, politics, education, and other institutionalized areas of social life. Houtart (1969) sees this as resulting from the Church's change toward an emphasis upon the internal dynamism of the individual, with Vatican II as the turning point. Greater respect for personal conscience, questioning the legitimacy of pontifical authority, and legitimization of democratic in contrast to former strictly hierarchical values have all made emphasis upon individual conscience an increasingly accepted stance within Catholicism. Therefore it is likely that our subjects reflect general changes within Catholicism rather than something unique to their (age group) (p. 59).

Analysts of Catholic college students need several more trend studies similar to the Marquette study in order to check on its reliability as a basis for generalization. But we know of no others spanning the years of Vatican Council II in this way.

In 1970 Langman and his associates (1973) carried out a study of undergraduates at Loyola University in Chicago, in an attempt to understand defection from the church and current political attitudes on campus. They found that in their sample 57 percent retained the parental religion; 25 percent said they now have a "personal religion"; and 18 percent had rejected all religion and were agnostics or atheists. The students in the sample were predominantly from Catholic homes. The researchers inquired into home relationships to understand patterns of religious defection.

In our primarily Catholic sample, the mother was central to the transmission of religious values, while both parents transmit political and social values. Conflict with the mother reduces the extent of identification and contributes to later rejection of the mother's religious values. This interpretation is clearly in line with Kotre's (1971) findings that leaving the Church is strongly related to early parent-child conflict, especially between mother and son (1973, p. 527).

In early 1974 Saint Mary's College in Notre Dame, Indiana, undertook a self-study which included a student survey. Saint Mary's is a women's college with a close relationship to Notre Dame University. Out of 540 questionnaires distributed, 232 were returned. Of the respondents, 82 percent said their religious preference was Catholic, 4 percent Protestant, 1 percent Jewish, 2 percent "other," and 11 percent "no preference." (Among the freshmen 9 percent said "no preference," and among the seniors 19 percent.) There was much openness to religious

commitment. Seventy-eight percent agreed with the statement "I personally feel a need to believe in a religious faith," and only 12 percent agreed that "Faith is a poor substitute for assurance and knowledge."

Saint Mary's College also took part in the American Council on Education's annual freshman survey and compared its freshmen with all women freshmen at Catholic colleges and with all women freshmen at all colleges. See Table 19. This table is remarkable mostly for the small

TABLE 19
RESPONSES OF FRESHMEN WOMEN TO ITEMS IN THE 1975
SURVEY OF THE AMERICAN COUNCIL ON EDUCATION:
SAINT MARY'S COLLEGE, ALL CATHOLIC COLLEGES, AND
ALL COLLEGES (IN PERCENT)

"Indicate the Importance to You Personally of Each of the Following:" Percent marking "Essential" or "Very Important."			
	St. M. College	All Cath. Colleges	All Colleges
Helping others who are in difficulty	80	77	80
Developing a meaningful philosophy of life	80	72	75
Becoming an authority in my field	72	68	67
Keeping up to date with political affairs	59	37	43
Participating in a community action program	42	38	40
Obtaining recognition from colleagues	42	40	40
Being successful in a business of my own	37	32	32
Being financially very well off	37	37	36
Influencing social values	37	34	36
Achieving in performing art or creative art	36	34	33
Having administrative responsibility for the work of others	28	25	27
Influencing the political structure	19	12	13
Making theoretical contribution to a science	10	10	11

Source: Saint Mary's College Research Office.

differences between the middle and rightmost columns. On only one item do the Catholic college women diverge more than 5 percentage points from all college women—the fourth, where the Catholics show less

concern for political affairs. Otherwise the similarity is striking, indicating the amount of convergence which has taken place between Catholic colleges and other colleges in America.

Catholic colleges and universities number about 250, largely independent of each other and varying in many ways. About 30 percent of the Catholics in colleges in the U.S. are in Catholic colleges and universities (Hassenger, 1970), and the percentage is gradually dropping. Most Catholic colleges are small, with fewer than 750 students, and the majority of students are women. All research on American colleges has found that Catholic schools have students who are more conservative in social and political attitudes than those in other colleges.

After Vatican II all of American Catholicism was lowering the barriers between itself and the rest of American society. The same was true of Catholic colleges. In the late 1960s many Catholic colleges changed their governance structures to provide more lay trustees and less hierarchical control. They also took steps to join mainstream American academia, often at the expense of de-emphasizing their particular Catholic heritage. Their goals turned toward the liberal and academic—scholarly achievement, freedom of thought and investigation, and recruitment of faculty irrespective of Christian or indeed any religious commitment. The role of religion courses, liturgy and the nurturing of a community of faith on campus were endlessly debated, but the main trend was toward giving them decreased attention.

Inevitably the identity problem became central. Who are we? Are we different? What does it mean to be a Catholic college or university? As Langman (1973) noted, this was a recapitulation of the same identity crises faced by Protestant colleges during the past half-century. If the Protestant experience is any guide, we should expect a spectrum of diverse resolutions of the problem in various Catholic colleges and universities.

The downturn in financial support and enrollments in the 1970s gave the identity problem more urgency, while adding new elements to it. Who will support us? Will our institution survive? This has in general slowed the changes of several years earlier and caused new attention to be given to forging close ties with identifiable constituencies. The specifically Catholic character of the colleges gained favor and some colleges attempted a mild swing back in the opposite direction, but with great variation from college to college.

Whether the Catholic college as such has an impact on student values and behavior is still an open question. Data show that in terms of church attendance, self-reported religiosity or indices of religious knowledge and understanding, Catholic college graduates score higher

than graduates of non-Catholic colleges (Hassenger, 1970:187). However, as suggested by Westoff and Potvin (1967) some of these differences may well be due to differential selectivity, with "more religious" students going to Catholic colleges in the first place. Greeley and Rossi believe Catholic colleges provide "firmer ideological underpinning for the religious practices and attitudes which were internalized in earlier years" (1966:168). After reviewing the literature Hassenger concludes: "There are a few indications that religiously affiliated colleges do not change their students so much as they reinforce the formation which has occurred in the home and to some extent in primary and secondary school" (1970:193-194). Given the general decline in religiousness over the college years, this reinforcement appears quite important.

Studies of Catholic students active in campus Newman Clubs further reinforce this conclusion. For example, a study in two colleges in 1965 found that the active members were from homes in which both parents were active, practicing Catholics, and most had had formal Catholic education on both the primary and secondary levels (Wagner and Brown, 1965). A 1969 study at four colleges found that Newman Club members were more conservative in religious and social attitudes than other students and that the Newman Club seemed to have little impact other than reinforcement on students' beliefs and behavior.

Just as the college experience as a whole has little over-all influence, so do the campus religious groups themselves. Insofar as they differ from the rest of the campus, it seems to be much more a phenomenon of selective recruitment than cumulative influence (Demerath and Lutterman, 1969:137).

It should be noted, however, that as in the case of the Catholic college, reinforcement can help in the maintenance of values.

THE PENTECOSTAL MOVEMENT AND RELIGIOUS CULTS AMONG STUDENTS

The Catholic Pentecostal Movement, also known as the Charismatic Renewal of the Church, began on college campuses in 1967. Its initial growth occurred at Duquesne, Notre Dame, and the University of Michigan. By the middle 1970s there were many Pentecostal prayer groups throughout the nation, some based on college campuses. A 1973 estimate held that there were about 1,250 groups, with a membership of 75,000 to 100,000 (Harrison, 1974:50). How many of these are comprised of college students is not known. The movement is slowly becoming institutionalized; it now has regional and national leaders, annual gatherings at Notre Dame, a Directory, and a monthly magazine, *New Covenant*. A number of sociological studies have been made

already (e.g., Harrison, 1974, 1975; Bord and Faulkner, 1975; McGuire, 1974; Hollenweger, 1972; Samarín, 1972; Fichter, 1975).

The main identity of the movement centers on the experience of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit and experience of new life in the Spirit. The gifts of the Spirit, most notably glossolalia and healing, are central to most of the leadership. Experiences of communal love and support, arising from frequent intimate prayer meetings and sharing of experiences, provide for strong group commitment by members. The Pentecostal movement is not a social change movement or a radical movement. It is not even a serious revolutionary movement within the Catholic Church—though various interpreters disagree at this point. It is basically a search for new forms of religious piety, identity, and experience within the confines of the Catholic Church. To understand it, one must realize that it arose in social locations of unrest and anomie—campuses and urban centers in the late 1960s.

The movement appears to have developed partly as an affirmation of Catholic piety and loyalty in the face of the erosion of these beliefs and forms of devotion during the upheavals that occurred within and outside of the Church during the 1960s. Nevertheless, the movement is not simply a revival of traditional devotionism. It also embodies the postconciliar search for new forms of religious community and worship, especially through lay participation. The movement also appears to reflect some disillusionment with political action among college-age youth and a heightened quest for fulfillment through religious and communal experimentation. . . . The movement is especially attractive to people who have strong prior commitments to personal religious devotion as a source of guidance and are seeking religious community (Harrison, 1975:152).

All observers agree that the Pentecostal movement was triggered by Vatican II and the general unrest of the 1960s. The movement is best seen as a search for personal devotion and support in face of this unrest—not as radical or revolutionary in its own right. Student participation has been heaviest among those in the most nonsupportive social locations who have the fewest competing commitments: undergraduates are more involved than graduate students, single than married students, residents than commuter students (Harrison, 1974). Participation by priests and nuns is very strong, and most of the groups make no criticism of clergy or hierarchy.

It seems to us that the Pentecostal movement will become a rather permanent form of Catholic life in most campus communities. Whether it will wane numerically as the unrest of the 1960s and the shock of Vatican II diminishes, remains to be seen. But undoubtedly it is becoming routinized and institutionalized. "The movement seems to be devel-

oping into an option within the Catholic Church for loyal Catholics seeking deeper expressions of personal piety and religious community" (Harrison, 1975:159).

Media attention has been given to present-day religious cults, both Christian and non-Christian. In 1976 much is written about the Unification Church of Rev. Sun Myung Moon; a few years ago attention was focused on the Jesus People and the Hare Krishna. These movements attract thousands of followers, usually urban young people whose ties to family and conventional culture are broken due to disillusionment and trauma. One psychologist claims that every young devotee of these cults has been through a serious failure of family life. They are recruited through personal relationships on the basis of promises of love, community and meaning. Members of such cults are a small minority of youth, and membership is not stable. Since they are based on young people, not on lifelong family and kinship communities, these cults can be expected to change every few years, with members entering and leaving constantly. (See *U.S. News and World Report*, June 14, 1976).

EXPLANATIONS FOR THE CHANGES

We shall look first at explanations for religious changes by individual students, then at explanations for overall trends in college students' religion over the years.

Many researchers have sought crucial factors in individuals' lives which predispose them toward or away from church commitment. Hoge (1974) extended this field and reviewed all available research. He found that the most important factor determining religious attitudes of college students was the amount of religious influence in the home. Closeness to parents was always associated with students' religion, in that the students who were closer to their parents had more ties to traditional religion and the church. Students who live at home and commute to college resemble their parents in religious attitudes more than do students living on campus away from home. Kitay (1947) did an extensive study of this relationship and concluded that to a large extent attitudes toward the church are extensions of attitudes about the family. Where family attitudes are supportive and positive, attitudes toward the church tend to be positive, and vice versa.

Many other factors have also been studied in relation to college students' religion. Social class was found to be a weak factor at best. Most studies find either no association between social class and religious commitment, or a weak association between higher class and weaker commitment. Some rural-urban differences exist. Also, whenever the researcher measures "cosmopolitanism" versus "localism," a religious

difference is found. Students with more cosmopolitan orientations (defined as acquaintance, with and feeling acceptance of, a range of different cultural settings) tend to be a bit weaker in church commitment. The reason seems to be that church commitments are often of a local, community or ethnic character, and when an individual transcends these identities, the church loses some of its saliency for him or her (see Roof, 1976 for a discussion of this). The theory which Harvey Cox set forth in *The Secular City* (1965) has never been supported by sociological research—urban life does not lead inevitably to relativization and secularization of religious commitments. For some city dwellers urban life has this effect, and for some others it does not. The crucial factor is not urban living taken alone but rather the character of one's associations with others and one's networks of friends.

The impact of college experience on students' religion seems to be less today than it was 30 or 40 years ago. Research prior to World War II tended to find that many students experienced a kind of "shock" when they encountered atheistic professors and lived with students with different religious beliefs. But recent research has found less indication of any "shock." The main impacts of secular intellectualism and experience with different religious beliefs occur in high school more often today than several decades ago. Some research has documented that the reported age of first religious doubt has dropped an average of two years since 1948 (see Table 17).

The most informative research on Catholic students done recently is the study of 100 Catholic graduate students by Kotre (1971). He interviewed 50 who considered themselves in the church and 50 who considered themselves outside it, even though all had experienced Catholic upbringing and graduated from Catholic colleges. He looked into many factors which might have caused movement in one direction or the other. He discovered that the most important causal factors which impelled many to leave the Church were parents' religion and home relationships. Those students within the Church (the "Ins") tended more often to have parents who both were practicing Catholics. Those outside the church (the "Outs") often had one or more parents who were indifferent, or whose attitudes toward the Church had changed. Mothers had greater impact on children's religion than fathers. The mothers of the "Ins" were seen as more flexible, less rigid, than the mothers of the "Outs." Home ties of the "Ins" were stronger and warmer than of the "Outs." Kotre concluded that a-rational factors are primary, that the church is perceived much differently by different persons, and that the perceptions result from interpersonal and social factors more than from intellectual factors. Identification with parents and adult leaders, or lack of such identification, is the most crucial mechanism.

We turn now to possible explanations for recent trends in Catholic students' religious commitments. Such explanations are logical extensions of the explanations for individual behavior just reviewed; but the relative frequency and power of the various mechanisms are subject to historical change, and such changes produce trends.

Many authors have discussed recent changes in American Catholicism. Our explanations for changes among students are little different from the main explanations these authors have set forth. The 1960s were a very crucial period in American Catholicism, perhaps the most consequential decade in American Catholic history (see Cogley, 1974). A number of trends converged for almost revolutionary social effect. The period of assimilation from immigrant status virtually came to an end. Large-scale immigration halted in the 1920s, and after 40 more years American Catholics have risen in social status to equal the Protestants. Greeley *et al.* (1976) have shown how many Catholic groups—especially the English, Irish, and German Catholics—rose to middle-class status in the 1950s and 1960s. The election of John Kennedy as President in 1960 was a kind of symbolic affirmation of the full-fledged Americanization of Catholics, and it had some effect on Catholic attitudes toward the larger American society. And, of course, it had an effect on the lingering anti-Catholicism which has characterized American Protestantism since the 1830s.

Analysts of recent American Catholicism have spoken of the lifting of the "siege mentality" which characterized Catholic leadership in past decades. Today there is less fear of, and less defensiveness toward, the larger American society. Catholic families more often send their children to secular colleges, where they become firmly integrated into American middle-class society. With movement from older ethnic city wards to new religiously pluralistic suburbs, a major change in Catholicism was inevitable.

An appreciation of such underlying social trends is needed if one is to understand the rapid changes which followed Vatican II in America. The effect can be likened to an earthquake—a rapid shift which results from years of gradually-building, yet blocked, pressures invisible to the naked eye. The very positive attitudes which Greeley found among Catholics in 1974 toward the innovations of Vatican II clearly reflect these growing pressures and the approval which the institutional shifts found when they finally occurred.

To what have American Catholics been assimilating? To the main-line Protestant-dominated middle-class culture. But the change is not just a "Protestantization," as Moberg and McEnery argued, for much of the new situation is deplored by Protestant leaders as much as by Catholics. The source of the changes is not the Protestant church but rather

a set of underlying, very strong social forces (discussed earlier) which influence youth in America today. Neither the Protestant nor the Catholic church can function as if these forces were not operating. Attempts to dam them up create other problems and sometimes become counter-productive. Churches have an obligation to speak on issues but they should make an effort to recognize the forces at work and develop an appropriate strategy to deal with them. It is well-established social-psychological theory that if an institution sets itself up in opposition to an existing social practice, a test of commitments ensues in which persons must choose between the conflicting claims. Persons strongly committed to the social practice, for whatever reason, will very often reject any institution which opposes it, in order to overcome painful cognitive dissonance. Efforts to define principles of Christian behavior in new social situations are sorely needed.

The changes in American Catholicism since Vatican II have been especially great in Catholic colleges. The past 12 years have seen self-study after self-study in the Catholic colleges, change after change in policy and even governance. Today the identity of the Catholic college is the subject of much reflection. In effect many of the leading Catholic colleges and universities now aspire to join the vanguard in American intellectual life. The future will see much more agonizing about the identity of Catholic colleges and universities. As financial support systems change, some church-related colleges will not survive while others will grow. Those which survive will adopt a variety of methods for combining Catholic heritage and modern secular disciplines.

NON-COLLEGE YOUNG ADULTS

In this section the emphasis is on the religious orientations of Catholic young adults between the ages of 18 and 29 with a high school education or less. Data for this segment of the population are sparse. While Andrew Greeley and his associates at NORC have written extensively about the Catholic adult population, it is not always possible to isolate information which applies specifically to the under-30 non-college young adults. Yet they are known to differ in important ways from the college population previously described.

As Demerath has noted, "college students are not alone in experiencing doctrinal apostasy" (1974:20). Though it is generally believed that a college education exerts a secularizing influence on religious practice and belief, the fact remains that among Catholics a college education in the past has been positively related to greater orthodoxy and religious practice. Tables 20 and 21 show that this continues to be true for Catholics under 30. Fewer non-college youth attend Mass in an average week and fewer believe in life after death than among college

youth. To some extent this relationship is a function of the significant number of Catholic youth who attend Catholic colleges. Such attendance, if not always generative of Catholic values, appears to help maintain them (Westoff and Potvin, 1967). Whether this effect will continue in the future is quite problematical. Saldahna *et al.* (1975) have reported disturbingly large net apostasy rates for Catholic college youth under 30 in recent years. A somewhat lower rate is to be found among youth under 30 who did not attend college.

TABLE 20

PERCENT OF POPULATION 18 TO 29 ATTENDING RELIGIOUS SERVICES IN AVERAGE WEEK BY RELIGION, EDUCATION, AND YEAR (Gallup Surveys)

YEAR	PROTESTANT		CATHOLIC	
	High School or Less	Some College or More	High School or Less	Some College or More
	<u>% (Base)</u>	<u>% (Base)</u>	<u>% (Base)</u>	<u>% (Base)</u>
1957	39 (131)	49 (37)	74 (65)	100 (15)
1968	31 (96)	36 (55)	51 (49)	66 (38)
1974	29* (**)	35 (**)	36* (**)	53 (**)

* The category was simply labelled "High School". "Grade school only" are not included in the 1974 data reported here. See Religion in America (1975:4).

** N's were not reported.

The data of Tables 20 and 21 also document the decline in church attendance and belief in a life after death over the years. Among non-college Catholic youth under 30 attendance at religious services in an average week has dropped from a high of 74 percent in 1957 to a low of 36 percent in 1974. Protestant and Catholic rates are converging. Some decline also occurred among non-college Catholic youth in belief in life after death, but not to the extent that it has among college youth. The differential in orthodoxy between college and non-college youth seems to be narrowing over the years, caused mainly by the increase of doubt and disbelief among the college population. On the other hand, the differential among Protestants seems to be increasing because of an increase in doubt and disbelief among the non-college youth.

TABLE 21

**PERCENT OF POPULATION 18 TO 29 BELIEVING IN
LIFE AFTER DEATH BY RELIGION, EDUCATION, AND YEAR
(1957 AND 1968 GALLUP SURVEYS AND 1972 SURVEY
RESEARCH CENTER, UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN, STUDY)**

YEAR	PROTESTANT		CATHOLIC	
	High School or Less	Some College or More	High School or Less	Some College or More
1957	85 (131)	89 (37)	66 (65)	87 (15)
1968	81 (96)	78 (55)	69 (49)	82 (38)
1972	70 (221)	80 (157)	60 (100)	67 (70)

In the area of moral values non-college youth tend to be more conservative than college youth, but the differences between them have narrowed over the past few years (Yankelovich, 1974:23). Nonetheless they have not disappeared. For example, in 1973 as many as 61 percent of college youth would welcome acceptance of sexual freedom compared to 47 percent of non-college youth; only 32 percent of the former consider having an abortion as morally wrong compared to 48 percent of the latter. Generally "living a clean moral life" is a more important value to non-college than college youth (Yankelovich, 1974:25, 67).

The data suggest differences in religious orientation between college and non-college youth. While college youth attend religious services more frequently and appear to be more orthodox in doctrinal matters, non-college youth are more traditional on moral issues. Furthermore, they pray to God more frequently (75 compared to 64 percent reporting frequent prayer: 1971 Gallup *Newsweek* data) and more (42 percent compared to 28 percent) believe that religion is an important value in life (Yankelovich, 1974:26, 66). Certainly, the lower rates of church participation among non-college youth do not necessarily indicate less religiousness or less interest in religion but a difference in orientation. This difference, however, seems to have narrowed recently.

AGE AND GENDER DIFFERENCES

A summary of Gallup surveys over the years (*Religion in America*, 1975) shows that young adults under 30 and males are consistently less likely than older adults and females to attend religious services in an

average week. The same age differential is not so clearly apparent in the area of belief (Hertel and Nelsen, 1974). When one compares 1965 data presented by Marty *et al.* (1968) and 1968 data presented by Alston (1972) on belief in life after death and in heaven and hell, the suspicion arises that cohort factors are as important as age in determining the level of belief. Any association between age and religious practice after adolescence must be interpreted with caution (see Wingrove and Alston, 1974).

Studies of religious behavior over age categories have traditionally indicated that there is a decline in religious activity between 18 and about 30, followed by renewed activity. These studies relied upon cross-sectional rather than longitudinal, panel data—that is, upon studies of a population at a given time rather than on studies of the same individuals over time. The studies are briefly summarized by Bahr (1970) who proposes that the data selectively suggest four models for the relationship between age and religious behavior and belief: stability (for example, church attendance, based on patterns established early in life, is subject to relatively little change—the faithful keep attending); decline from 18 to 30 (as one leaves the family of orientation); change according to one's place in the family life-cycle (people with young children have renewed interest in religion); and disengagement as one grows old (with decreasing church attendance following middle age). Concerning church attendance, Bahr was forced to conclude from analysis of cross-sectional and retrospective data that "little confidence can be placed in

TABLE 22

**PERCENT OF CATHOLICS ATTENDING CHURCH* REGULARLY
ON SUNDAY BY SEX AND EDUCATION: 1971**

AGE	FEMALE		MALE	
	High School or Less	More Than High School	High School or Less	More Than High School
Under 30	61 (94)	41 (57)	33 (58)	40 (68)
30 plus	65 (283)	73 (81)	58 (191)	75 (95)

* The item was: "About how often do you go to church?" The responses were collapsed as follows: Never and occasionally, Regularly on Sundays and Holy Days, and More often than regularly on Sundays and Holy Days. In reporting the data to the analysis, the last two categories are combined above. There were 4 individuals who did not respond to the item. Data on education and age were not available for 23 additional individuals.

the extant generalizations about aging and church attendance until extensive retrospective or longitudinal research reveals the degree to which variations now attributed to aging or stage of life-cycle are merely reflections of age-specific patterns of *current* attendance without direct counterpart in the personal histories of older respondents."

The association between age and religious behavior is further complicated by gender and level of education. Table 22, based on secondary analysis of 1971 Gallup data on Catholics collected for *Newsweek* (made available by the Roper Public Opinion Research Center), presents these multiple relationships for church attendance. The age difference is minimal among non-college women. It is considerable among the college-educated of both sexes. Females are more likely to attend church than males if they have a high school education or less. This is especially pronounced for young adults under 30. Among those in the college-educated category, gender differences are minimal whether under 30 or over 30 years of age. The implication of these findings is that age and gender differences in religious orientation are often a function of other factors such as education.

ACCEPTANCE OF ECCLESIASTICAL AUTHORITY AMONG CATHOLICS

In *Catholic Schools in a Declining Church* Greeley and his co-authors (1976:28-39) document a decline in religious devotion, moral values and acceptance of the legitimacy of ecclesiastical authority. They identified attitudes toward *Humanae Vitae* and papal authority as the major factors in this decline, which was found to be most precipitous among the younger generation and least precipitous among those who attended Catholic schools (1976:170; 306). In 1974 nonetheless 60 percent of Catholics under 30 still had a "great deal" or "quite a lot" of confidence in the church or organized religion. Another 38 percent had "some" confidence (*Religion in America*, 1975:21). The impact of *Humanae Vitae* on acceptance of papal authority was not evenly distributed among Catholic youth (see Table 23). For the age group under 30, college males were the most affected, non-college males the least. Females reflected an intermediate degree of impact, with college females reporting more questioning of the pope's authority after *Humanae Vitae* than non-college females.

Given such a differential impact of *Humanae Vitae* and the finding by Greeley and his co-authors that the impact of Catholic education in arresting the decline in religiousness is greatest (for those under 30, in 1974) when 10 or more years have been spent in Catholic schools, it would be instructive to see two subtables showing scores separately for

TABLE 23

PERCENT OF CATHOLICS REPORTING THAT THE 1968 ENCYCLICAL HAS MADE THEM QUESTION MORE THE POPE'S AUTHORITY* (1971 Gallup Catholic Data), BY SEX AND EDUCATION

AGE	FEMALE		MALE	
	High School or Less	More Than High School	High School or Less	More Than High School
Under 30	35 (88)	47 (57)	25 (56)	68 (66)
30 to 49	29 (141)	45 (58)	22 (69)	14 (57)
50 and over	13 (115)	10 (21)	16 (101)	18 (34)

* The item was: "How has the Pope's 1968 encyclical condemning birth control pills as well as other forms of artificial contraception affected your attitude toward papal authority — do you question it more, accept it more, or hasn't your attitude changed?" The responses were Accept more; Hasn't changed [my] attitude; Question it more. There were 72 individuals who responded "don't know" or who did not respond. Data on education and age were not available for 19 additional respondents.

those who have had a college education in Catholic schools and those who have not. Since changes in doctrinal and moral orthodoxy have been greatest among college youth, the conclusions by Greeley and his co-authors on the impact of Catholic education might apply to Catholic higher education more than to parochial or high school education.

HUMANAE VITAE AND SOCIAL CLIMATE

Reaction to *Humanae Vitae* as well as lessened religious belief and observance among the young are also a function of the times. Fee (Greeley *et al.*, 1976:83) has noted the increase in the number of Americans who express no religious affiliation and that "voters show a consistent tendency to choose independency in political affiliation as well as independency in religious affiliation." With rising educational levels and the increase in ideologues—people who have a consistent set of political attitudes—a growing disenchantment with the political system has meant an increase in the number of individuals who are "political independents." Nie *et al.* (1976:231) report the increase in the number of political "independents" among Catholics between 1952 and 1972, especially among younger voters. The fact that these trends occur together over time suggests that the increase in political independency is related to

the rise in religious independency and the decline in church attendance. Along with such religious and political independency, from the mid-1950s on polarization increased among the rest of the population on religious issues (Hertel and Nelsen, 1974; see also Hoge, 1976b) as well as political issues (Nie *et al.*, 1976). The end result is a suggestion that a general mentality of independency is linked to a declining and polarizing church. The importance of the changing socio-political climate over time lies in the fact that it has brought disillusionment generally, including disillusionment with organized religion. The rise in independency set the stage for rejection of *Humanae Vitae*. In other words, we relate the effects of *Humanae Vitae* to change that took place more generally. This is a hypothesis worth testing in greater detail.

Part III: Projections

Any attempt at describing the future is risky business. We are especially wary of projections in an era of rapid social change. While recent years have witnessed a decline in religiousness among youth on most traditional measures of religiosity, we recognize that religion can not be reduced to statistics. Nonetheless there has occurred a radical shift in the religion of youth.

First, we do not expect the underlying changes in American society which have occurred over the past five decades to be reversed. We foresee greater personal autonomy and individualism among youth. We foresee more tolerance of variation in culture and life style and less adherence to detailed, specific codes of moral behavior. The changes brought by the women's liberation movement, which are by and large consistent with these trends, will probably be permanent in American society. To some extent religion will become more personal, more private, and its communal dimension, its capacity to create a sense of intimacy and belonging, will become more salient than its formal, institutional dimension. Unless some unforeseen social event such as a major war, depression or fundamental change in the political order occurs, these trends will probably continue.

Second, the very rapid decline in religious practice and orthodoxy among Catholics in the twelve years since Vatican II is probably over. Recently Greeley and McCready (1973) have written: "The worst is over. There are some signs that the rate of collapse is slowing." We tend to agree. We have likened the changes of Vatican II to an earthquake, a kind of rapid resolution of pent-up forces. Earthquakes are violent, but they do not last long. Future trends will be gradual, as were most past trends since research began. Nonetheless, at present the picture is mixed and the staff at NORC responsible for the best documentation available on the Catholic scene cautions: "While there is not yet reason to despair over the future of Catholicism in the United States, neither is there reason for easy optimism" (Saldahna, *et al.*, 1975:20).

Some of the effects of the past decade are still being felt among adolescents. Moreover, the main impacts of secular intellectualism and experience with different religious beliefs occur more often today in high school than in college or upon entering the world of work. While past research has documented the beginning of religious doubt at about age 17 or 18, more recent research shows that the reported age of first religious doubt has dropped an average of two years since 1948. We expect this drop to continue. Even now some adolescents at 13 and 14 report problems with religious belief. The values of autonomy and inde-

pendence popularized by past generations of college students have invaded the high schools. Furthermore, age 13 or thereabout marks a radical change in religious thinking which sets the stage for conflict between faith and reason. Instead of waiting until the age of 17 or 18 to resolve this conflict one way or the other, the adolescent is expected to reach his decision much earlier and this trend will continue in the years to come. Religious instruction at that age level will have to adapt itself to serious questioning by the young, and authoritarian answers will be the least acceptable to them. Authority will have to make "sense."

Third, we do not foresee any collapse of the American family in spite of current trends. Though the degree of estrangement between youth and parents is higher than in the past, this is partly a function of evolutionary changes in the family (Bronfenbrenner:1974). Parents remain the major influence on the religion and religiousness of youth. We expect that this will continue, even though counter-forces will increase in importance. It will be necessary for parents to grow in their understanding of their religion if they hope to maintain this influence. Religious instruction organized around family roles may be an effective technique to cope with this problem.

Fourth, in spite of the media coverage of the Pentecostal Movement in the Catholic church, the Jesus Movement among Protestants and religious cults among youth in general, we do not foresee any significant rise in traditional religious commitment. These groups encompass a small minority. Most adherents are recruited through personal relationships on the basis of promises of love, community and meaning. While these groups are not expected to disappear, they can be expected to change every few years, with members entering and leaving constantly. An increase in religious fervor, such as that found by Zanglein and his co-authors (1975), will affect small minorities but is not expected to be widespread.

Fifth, we do not foresee any immediate rise in religious practice or traditional orthodoxy among Catholics either. The American Catholic Church is now an integral part of American society. While pockets of its faithful will retain some ghetto-orientation, the majority of its youth will be part and parcel of the world around them. Generally religion has not been central in the lives of most people in modern societies, but instead occupies the role of a resource to be tapped in times of need. While its challenging and prophetic function is basic to its mission, the fullness of religion's vision usually has been a way of life for a few only. Nonetheless its comforting and communal functions are essential and can become the springboard for deeper and more extensive religious experience. We expect American Catholic youth to remain identified with the church but in a less formal and traditional fashion. Weekly church

attendance will not be an imperative as in the past and a plurality of beliefs will coexist. It will become increasingly important for the church to define the basic core around which these plural beliefs can be integrated.

Sixth, we do not believe that science, or modern philosophy, or modern secular world views, seriously threaten the Christian faith if the latter is understood as more than a set of formalisms. Intellectuals in the Enlightenment tradition have been predicting the demise of the church for about two centuries, basing their argument on the supposed effect of modern science, philosophy, or new thought. But it has not happened, and trends in church life are not at all related to these phenomena. This view of human behavior is too cognitive, and we have tried to avoid it in our discussion above. An adequate understanding of religion must give more attention to its identity function, its belonging function, its nonrational roots, and its group dynamics. Religion will not disappear, and the church—in some form—will not disappear either. One piece of supporting evidence is that provided by Hertel and Nelsen (1974) who presented Gallup data on beliefs and attendance by age categories. They indicate that level of belief remains relatively high over time and within age categories. Thus they challenged the prediction by Stark and Glock (1968:204-224) that a demise of core Christian beliefs is occurring. Stark and Glock had written (1968:210):

As matters now stand we can see little long-term future for the church as we know it. A remnant church can be expected to last for a long time if only to provide the psychic comforts which are currently dispensed by orthodoxy. However, eventually substitutes for even this function are likely to emerge leaving churches of the present form with no effective rationale for existing.

We could not agree less with Glock and Stark. We have found some decline in traditional forms of behavior and an increase in doubt or disbelief in some areas of orthodox doctrine among the youth. But the great majority have not defected from the churches, even though their participation is at times peripheral. They are there, awaiting a response from the churches to the new forces and values which surround them.

Societies change and force change on religious institutions. Though much has been taken away, much also has been given. If the churches try to understand the new social context and discern how to be creative within it, youth will remain faithful to their Christian heritage—perhaps in ways different from the past, but nonetheless authentic.

Footnotes

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¹ The data are from a national probability sample of youth, young men and women 13 to 18 years of age living in households in the continental United States in April, 1975. The sample was selected and questionnaires administered by the Gallup Organization for the Boys Town Center. The details of the sampling procedure are available from the authors.

² These percentages are higher than the 29 percent regular attendance reported by The Gilbert Youth Research Corp. survey of the high school youth in the mid-'70s sponsored by the National Association of Secondary School Principals. Since the exact sampling procedure was not explained in the report, it is impossible to explain what bias may exist in the figures. See "The Mood of American Youth:1974," published by the NASSP in 1974.

³ Zanglein, Vener, and Stewart have reported that religious orthodoxy did not decline dramatically by age in 1973 though it did in 1970 (1975). Their sample was very limited and non-representative of the nation as a whole. In 1975 that decline is still evident in our data.

⁴ In the original factor analysis the item currently studying religion loaded on this factor. It was dropped from the religious practice scale so as to be able to compare other forms of religious practice by studying religion.

⁵ This percentage is lower than that reported by Paradis and Thompson (1976) but our sample does not include children below 13 who presumably are more apt to attend or be sent to religion classes. Our data also show that 4 percent only of Catholics, 13 to 18 years of age, have never studied religion.

⁶ In the Greeley and Rossi data of 1963 the "no Catholic school attendance" category is not subdivided into those who are and are not attending CCD classes; so this hypothesis cannot be tested. See Greeley and Rossi, 1966:185.

⁷ This was measured by frequency of attendance at religious services.

⁸ It should be noted that while parental religious practice remains significant, the current study of religion also does and is in fact a stronger predictor of adolescent religiosity as measured by these scales.

⁹ Each parent, father and mother, was ranked on a five-point scale ranging from very true to very untrue on the following: a) affection-support items: "often is too busy to listen to me"; "always understands me"; "often gives me a hug or pat on the shoulder"; "sometimes seems cold and distant to me"; "listens to my opinions and thinking even when disagreeing"; and b) control items: "expects me to make up my own mind in most things"; "wants to know everything I do or think"; "lets me set my own rules when and what I can do"; "seems to be always watching over me." The father affect and support score ranged from 0 to 20 with a mean of 11.67 and a standard deviation of 4.43. The mother affect and support scores ranged from 0 to 20 with a mean of 13.04 and a standard deviation of 4.21. The

father control scores ranged from 0 to 16 with a mean of 7.57 and a standard deviation of 3.09. The mother control scores ranged from 0 to 16 with a mean of 7.88 and a standard deviation of 3.34. See Potvin and Suziedelis (1969) for factor analytical details of the larger scales from which these items were taken. The scores of both parents were summed to form the parental scores.

¹⁰ See footnote 9.

¹¹ *The Statistical Abstracts of the United States*, 1975, p. 136.

¹² See Yankelovich (1974) for nationwide survey data comparing college and non-college youth of comparable ages in 1969 and 1973. His main conclusion is that the gap between college and non-college youth has narrowed during this period. Attitude trends are in the same direction in both groups.

¹³ Additional reviews of research have been done by Parker (1971) and by Argyle and Beit-Hallahmi (1975). The latter is a good comprehensive review of research on religious attitudes and behavior in the U.S. and Europe.

¹⁴ For other studies producing trend data, mostly in agreement with our summary statements, see Morris and Small, 1971; Gorsuch and Smith, 1972; Goertzel, 1972; and Bell and Chaskes, 1970. The Foley College Poll has done a series of college studies which are not widely known. It asked about belief "in God or a Supreme Being" in annual surveys from 1968 to 1972, and found a decrease from 85 percent to 76 percent saying "yes" during that time. It also asked about church attendance during the past seven days and found a four-year decline from 38 percent to 25 percent reporting attendance (Foley and Foley, 1972).

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Appendix A

Guide In Interpreting Statistical Notation

1. Factor Analysis a statistical procedure for grouping items based on their inter-relationships, allowing one to identify a smaller number of underlying dimensions or "factors." The meanings and names of the various factors are determined by considering the items with the highest "loadings." The loading is essentially the correlation (see item 7 for "correlation") of the item with the overall factor.
2. mean the arithmetic average or the total sum of the scores divided by the number of respondents.
3. S. D. the standard deviation is a statistic which indicates the degree to which the series of scores deviate from the mean. If all of the scores were concentrated at the mean there would be no dispersion and the S.D. would equal 0. The greater the dispersion of scores, the greater the standard deviation.
4. range a simple measure of dispersion which includes the lowest score attained and the highest score attained. For example, a range of 5-25 indicates that all of the scores fell somewhere between 5 and 25.
5. F Ratio a statistic which indicates the extent to which any two means differ from each other.
6. P (probability) an indication of the extent to which a statistical finding, such as the F Ratio, could have occurred by chance. When P is significant at the .01 level, it is assumed that the finding could have occurred by chance only 1 time in 100.
7. r the correlation coefficient is the degree of correspondence or relationship between two variables. The statistic can vary between +1.00 (a positive relationship) to -1.00 (a negative or inverse relationship). (For a positive relationship, the plus-sign is normally not shown, but rather assumed). A correlation coefficient of 0 indicates no relationship between the two variables in the table.
8. R the multiple correlation coefficient indicates the total relationship between the independent (or predictor) variables taken together and the dependent variable (that variable being explained or predicted) in the table.
9. R² the square of the multiple correlation coefficient. This statistic indicates the percentage of variance explained in the dependent variable by all of the independent variables taken together (for example, .46 would mean 46.0 percent of the variance is explained). Like R, R² has a range from 0 through 1.00.

10. β (Beta)

the standardized regression coefficient is a statistic which indicates the relative importance an independent variable has in predicting a dependent variable, while simultaneously partialling out (removing) the effects of other variables.



