



1985

# The 700 Club as Religion and as Television: A Study of Reasons and Effects

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# The 700 Club as Religion and as Television: A Study of Reasons and Effects

**Abstract**

There has been a great deal of public debate recently over the phenomenon known as the "Electronic Church." This label has come to be attached to a rather large group of religious television broadcasters who syndicate programming nationally and who pay for their use of this expensive medium through commercial-like appeals for funds from viewers.

These broadcasters have come to public attention and scientific scrutiny recently due to their prominence in programming schedules nationwide (a function of technological and Federal policy developments) and to their presumed involvement in "right of center" politics.

**Degree Type**

Dissertation

**Degree Name**

Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)

**Department**

Communication

**First Advisor**

George Gerbner

**Subject Categories**

Communication

THE 700 CLUB AS RELIGION AND  
AS TELEVISION: A STUDY OF  
REASONS AND EFFECTS

Stewart Mark Hoover

A DISSERTATION

in

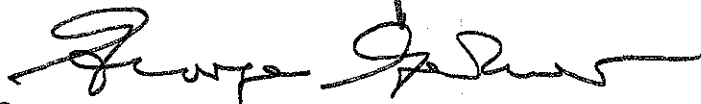
Communications

Presented to the Graduate Faculties of the University of  
Pennsylvania in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

1985



Supervisor of Dissertation



Graduate Group Chairperson

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

No endeavor such as this one could be done alone. There are many people who have contributed greatly to whatever value there may be in this work. I wish to thank, first, my faculty committee at the Annenberg School, without whom this project would not have been possible. Larry Gross, my chairperson, contributed many hours to consideration of the issues introduced here, and encouraged me to try the methodology used here, as intimidating as it might have seemed to us at the time. George Gerbner has been a trusted mentor, an inspirational teacher, and a valued colleague during my doctoral studies. Last but not least, Carolyn Marvin contributed much to the conceptualization of communication and the importance of this particular avenue of research, and provided helpful insights to me and other committee members at what always seemed to be just the right moment.

I would like also to acknowledge the assistance and counsel of many others who gave of their time and expertise as I carried out this study. William F. Fore of the National Council of Churches laid much of the groundwork for this project through his own research and writings. Everett Parker and Dallas Smythe, who carried out the landmark study in the field, both contributed very helpful insights to this process, as well. David Clark of the Christian Broadcasting Network was a tireless source of information and assistance over the five years this study was underway. Robert White and Peter Horsfield provided invaluable bibliographic and other assistance. James Carey, Daniel Dayan and Elihu Katz gave the project a boost with kind words and keen interest, even as my own interest was flagging in the final stages of the research. There are really too many others to mention, though they know who they are, and I am indebted to them.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the support, encouragement, counsel, and assistance of my wife, Karen, who beyond everything else she has contributed to my academic career, is responsible for the trajectory figures in this document.

Whatever value there may be in this work is the result of the combined efforts of these and other people.

Stewart Hoover

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## Introduction

There has been a great deal of public debate recently over the phenomenon known as the "Electronic Church." This label has come to be attached to a rather large group of religious television broadcasters who syndicate programming nationally and who pay for their use of this expensive medium through commercial-like appeals for funds from viewers.

These broadcasters have come to public attention and scientific scrutiny recently due to their prominence in programming schedules nationwide (a function of technological and Federal policy developments) and to their presumed involvement in "right of center" politics.

Such a development is interesting on far more subtle levels than just its policy or political implications.

These programs appear on a medium which has been extensively studied already, and which has been found to have its own central, unitary myths and logic. Presumably there is some sense in which religious television is a unique subset of "all television," and thus provides interesting, even critical contrasts to the "mainstream" of the medium, both in content and in audience enculturation. Moreover, due to its very nature being "religious," religious television should give us some insight into the ways in which

"conventional television" is also "religious." Finally, this phenomenon has occurred at a specific point in history, in a specific socio-cultural context, as the result of specific technological developments, and investigations of it could enlighten ongoing understanding of the cultural impacts of communication-technological change. The research reported here is intended to provide insight into all of these areas through systematic consideration of the audience of one of the most prominent of these "Electronic Church" ministries.



## I: Previous Research and Theoretical Background

The study reported here takes place within an area where a modest amount of previous work has been done. Most studies have been limited in methodology and scope, but have presented a very unified and specific picture of the phenomenon of religious broadcasting and its audience.

The phenomenon of the "Electronic Church," though, has broader implications than those entailed by the sort of particularistic research attention religious broadcasting has received in the past. A variety of communication theories, including those posited by Innis, McLuhan, Gerbner, and others, have seen the whole question of what happens to religion in the age of television as fundamental to our understanding of this medium. Further, television, as a cultural force, sets a specific context within which the "Electronic Church" must be interpreted.

The controversy surrounding the "Electronic Church" indicates yet another field of analysis for the phenomenon. This type of programming is seen by many to be a direct challenge to conventional, institutional religion. This is particularly significant in that current trends in American Protestantism, specifically the intra-denominational tension

between "evangelicalism," and "modernism" (often called the "Two party" system there) place the "Electronic Church" in a position to pose a serious threat to denominational authority and stability.

#### Previous Research

Religious broadcasting in general, and religious television in particular, have not been the objects of extensive research efforts in the past. Aside from a study published in 1955 as The Television-Radio Audience and Religion (Parker, Barry, and Smythe, 1955), no major empirical efforts have been devoted to the phenomenon and its consequences. Several descriptive studies have been carried out as doctoral dissertations, including one, (Horsfield, 1984) which is also published as a book.

Other descriptive works and smaller empirical studies have appeared from time to time, as have a great number of more popular works, particularly in recent years. In addition, national polling firms have asked some questions about religious viewing and listening, and have released some results. The field is nonetheless spotty and more definitive assessments of the importance of the "Electronic Church" awaits the published analyses of a more ambitious study, of which this enterprise was a part, and from which it drew some

major direction and groundwork.

Previous studies have, in spite of their limitations, provided us with some basic dimensions of religious broadcasting and its audience. These studies have come from a variety of theoretical and methodological directions, but some synthesis is possible here.

All previous studies of religious broadcasting have agreed that the audience is made up of older people, that women are more likely to view than men, and that viewers tend to be "already" religious in one way or another, belying the assumption that religious broadcasting functions to reach a non-religious audience. Johnstone (1972) said it this way:

In brief, religious radio broadcasting tends to reach those who have already been reached in the sense of already having formal association with religious institutions. The old, the church member, the regular attender, these comprise the large majority of the listening audience for religious radio broadcasts. (p. 101).

Some studies have moved further, to suggest that besides the above attributes, the audience for religion is also made up of blue as opposed to white collar workers, and that Catholics seem more likely than Protestants to view or listen (Parker, et. al., 1955).

Viewing of religious broadcasting also seems to be very largely a function of program availability. Horsfield (1981)

found that viewers are predominantly from the south and west, where there are a larger number of programs shown and a larger number of stations carrying each. The Parker, et. al. finding of a preponderance of Catholics in the audience was felt by them to be largely related to the existence of one program, Bishop Fulton Sheen's, which was not only the most-watched religious program at the time, but was one of the highest rated commercial programs as well (Parker, et. al. (1955).

More recently, Ellens (1974), Jennings (1976), Fore (1972), Horsfield (1981), Clark (1984), and Hadden and Swann (1981) have all underscored the critical issue of scheduling and availability of "non-ghettoized" time slots in the success of attracting desired audiences. As is the case with "conventional" media planners, Horsfield notes, the church must be prepared to schedule its fare in such a way so as to locate the types and numbers of viewers it desires.

There have also been a number of studies which could loosely be described as based in the "uses and gratifications" school of media research. Parker, et. al. included both objective assessments of audience gratifications and more inferential ones in their work. They found, for instance, that viewing of specific types of

religious programs (not viewing in general) was more clearly predicted by inferred dimensions of respondent "interest areas" (family, social consciousness, formal religion, etc.) than by more basic demographic or religiosity measures. Horsfield (1981) reports that the consensus of all studies seems to be that "religious interest" and "church affiliation" are the strongest predictors of viewing of religious programming. (pp. 145ff).

Previous studies have also tended to support the idea that regardless of audience interest dimensions, the form and content of "conventional" television seems to shape and affect religious groups' use of it. Ellens (1974) suggested that all religious groups are prepared to accept certain formal elements of television (sophisticated sets and props, make-up) in their productions, realizing that their programming cannot be too incongruous with what is already there. Fore (1972) identified pressures on the programming of one denomination, and found that "trade offs" had to be constantly accepted in order to make their television productions sophisticated enough to be aired. Horsfield (1981) basically agreed on this point.

The present author's own work found evidence (Hoover, 1981) that a major "electronic church" broadcaster had

experienced a number of changes in approach and theology influenced by their self-conscious use of television.

Since Parker, et. al., no study of religious broadcasting has attempted a systematic analysis of program content. That study's approach was somewhat time-bound and by contemporary standards, must be seen as impressionistic and subjective. It was informed by the same bias which weakened that work's wider applicability in other areas today: its concentration on differences between religious programs based on their Protestant vs. Catholic origins. No attention was given to content-analytic approaches which might inform the critical questions of how viewing of religion differs from viewing of "conventional" TV and possible effects on the audience of a diet of religious fare.

Impressionistic studies have suggested fertile ground for systematic analysis. Hadden and Swann (1981) and others have found much evidence to suggest that the content of religious programming, particularly that of an evangelical, non-denominational, variety, has changed in an important way since Parker, et. al. That difference lies in the extent to which social and political content (not found in the evangelical programs in the earlier study) now dominates some segments of some evangelical programs. This "politicizing"

of religious broadcasting by the "Electronic Church" has proven to be one of the most controversial aspects of new developments in this area. Systematic monitoring of broadcasts by People for the American Way (1984) confirmed this trend.

Institutional studies of religious broadcasting have provided some of the most firm data we have available regarding this phenomenon. We have a fairly clear picture now of the institutional context, both "sacred" and "secular", which shaped the Electronic Church. For reasons well documented elsewhere, (Fore, 1972, Jennings, 1974, Armstrong, 1979, Hoover, 1982) religious broadcasting is dominated now (unlike religious broadcasting in the period before 1970) by evangelical paid-time broadcasting. Further, those broadcasts which are most prominent are also independent of (even "evangelical") denominational or ecumenical ties, operating with a great deal of institutional freedom and flexibility.

Thus, the phenomenon of the "Electronic Church" can be seen to have evolved within a specific religious institutional context, specifically, within the classic confrontation between modernism and fundamentalism.

### The Religious-Institutional Context

Weber (1963) described modernism as the religion of the bourgeoise, "...practical rationalism in the conduct of life...intra-worldly ascetism...", and fundamentalism, as a religion of "magic." These two camps or "parties," as Marty (1969) has called them, have not been limited to specific institutions over time. Before 1950, modernism was the trend in urban Protestant churches such as the Protestant Episcopal, Unitarian Universalist, and Christian Congregational bodies. Fundamentalism, on the other hand, found its expression primarily in independent, rural and frontier faiths, such as Methodist, Disciples of Christ, and Baptist movements. Today, the latter groups have evolved into formal denominations and are among the largest of the mainline churches. Even the Southern Baptist convention, long a conservative and fundamentalist stronghold, has become "establishment" in the south and southwest, according to Hadaway (1978). Fundamentalism expresses itself now in other groups, many of which are on their way to "establishment" status in a process of evolution described by Niebuhr (1929) and others.

Just as the two "parties" have not been limited to any specific institutions over time, neither have they been



identified as only distinct between denominations or groups. Marty (1969) points out that by the latter half of this century, the two "parties" of American Protestantism were as distinct within many groups as they were between groups. This observation was empirically tested by Hoge, Perry, and Klever (1978) who found evidence of clear disagreements within major denominations over church goals and priorities, primarily along this "modernism vs. fundamentalism" dimension. Weber's two labels can be seen to now encompass groups which disagree over whether the church's proper role is to "save souls" (fundamentalism or evangelicalism) or to "change the world" (social action--the modernist agenda.) Noteworthy in the Hoge, et. al. findings was that this disagreement could also be tied to the roles of individuals in their specific local churches, with the leadership (primarily clergy) being more closely supportive of the modernist agenda, and laity being more fundamentalist in their desires for the church. Thus the "two party" dimension can be seen to pervade Protestantism as a controversy between different religious institutions and within those institutions with certain institutional-role related associations. This fact serves to provide, in a sense, a pool of fundamentalists within denominations and local

churches who may see in church leadership, ideology inconsistent with their own concerning basic goals for their church institutions.

The historical developments in the area of religious broadcasting, when seen in light of these religious-institutional issues, reveal a key intersection in the controversy over religious broadcasting. The mainline churches which very early became identified with the "sustaining time" relationship to network broadcasting were primarily modernist groups along the "two-party" dimension, while, almost by definition, other groups--primarily the evangelicals and fundamentalists--were left to eke out an existence on syndicated, paid-time, non-network broadcasting. As the new technologies brought paid time broadcasting into prominence in the 1970's, it was a fundamentalist message which was presented there, raising a new challenge to the established, mainline churches. Because they count among their own membership people of fundamentalist, evangelical leanings, it is at least possible that these denominations faced a threat to income and constituency support as a result of these developments.

For these rather complex reasons of policy and theology, "independent" religious broadcasters, (or those representing

independent groups) have specialized in the direct-mail fundraising and commercial-quality production which typifies the emerging "Electronic Church" of the 1970's and 1980's (Hoover, 1982, Hadden and Swann, 1981, Hadden, 1980). These same independent groups tend as well to be fundamentalist ones, though not all are. The challenge they do represent is a challenge to the institutional authority of the established churches and denominations. Horsfield (1981), has noted:

These changes have caused a marked lack of representativeness in the presentation of religious faith on American television. In 1979 more than half of all national airings of religious programs were accounted for by only ten major evangelical programs. Other religious expressions and traditions were almost forced off the air totally by the [now] wealthy conservative Protestant organizations (p. 10).

A related salient effect of this trend has been the evolution of the "voice of religion" in the dominant cultural environment. Increasingly, to the wider society, evangelicalism has come to equal religion, and evangelical leaders, such as Jerry Falwell, have come to new prominence along side, or in place of, more mainline and "mainstream" Protestant spokespeople. This may be the real sense in which television has acted to re-organized the meaning and function of "religion" in contemporary culture.

An additional dynamic seems to be involved in the salience of the Electronic Church, at least according to some

observers and writers. The Electronic Church is seen by some to represent what Berger et. al. (1973) call "demodernization"--a socio-cultural movement which sets its heels against the modernizing and secularizing tendencies of the wider culture. Modernism in religion is one of the chief targets of the ideology of the "Electronic Church" (Horsfield, 1981, Bourgault, 1980, Hadden and Swann, 1981, People for the American Way, 1984) and further, one of the greatest objections raised to modernism in religion is that it serves the needs of modernism in the secular state as well. (Murphy, 1978, Horsfield, 1981, Hadden and Swann, 1981). Horsfield identified an anti-modernity, anti-secularism package of issues at the base of Jerry Falwell's influence in the 1980 elections:

Jerry Falwell's major success in 1980 may have lain not in achieving the dramatic effects of which he boasted but in demonstrating for religious and social leaders the potential of television and its associated media to bring together elements of society which previously had been scattered. There has always been a significant fundamentalist movement within American society. Falwell did not create it. However fundamentalism in American society has typically consisted of unrelated, often anti-social small pockets of society. Falwell was able to put together a religious and social media package which brought together a diversity of people in a potentially dramatic way. It is quite likely that many of these were people who did not agree with all of Falwell's package, nor even with its central fundamentalist theology, but were people who felt otherwise disenfranchised over a particular issue of concern to them, whether it be deterioration of the

family, the spread of pornography, abortion, prayer in the school, or the restoration of traditional American life. (p. 205).

The idea that independent religious broadcasting can carry a cast of anti-modern ideology, within and outside the institutional religious context, was suggested by Parker, et. al. in their early study. They made this statement about an independent religious program of that time, Charles Fuller's "Old Fashioned Revival Hour."

The "Old Fashioned Revival Hour," upon appraisal, seems to be, as its title indicates, almost purely an adventure in nostalgia for the audience, a religious version of the old WLS "Saturday Night Barn Dance." The entire content and format are a ritual evocation of a kind of religious experience that dominated Protestant America a half-century ago, and the audience appears to consist largely of working-class Protestants whose younger days were spent in an environment with such religious overtones....who have not climbed the social ladder--they are manual workers--and even the institutions of their own religion have betrayed them...So they tune in the "Old Fashioned Revival Hour" and listen to the familiar words with the comforting feeling that at least here, on this important modern medium of communication, the men that "run this country" have had to give some recognition to "our kind" of religion. (p. 391).

Admittedly, Parker, et. al. seemed to be infused with what Stuart Hall (1980) has called "social consensus" or "positivist" theory in their assumption that Fuller's audience's members were lying outside a unitary mainstream of modernity. Whether that is the case, or as seems more likely, such de-modernization or anti-secularist sentiments

are more particular than generalizable, the sort of appeal made by a Jerry Falwell could still coalesce a rather diffuse set of interests into a politically-relevant force.

In sum, then, the religious-institutional dimensions which underly much of the controversy over the "Electronic Church", can be seen to have both "sacred" and "secular" components, and can be seen to have largely lined up so that the Electronic Church more clearly represents the fundamentalist anti-secularist, anti-modernist side than it does the other.

Bourgault (1980) has identified what she calls the "symbolic worlds" of mainline (modernist) and fundamentalist Protestantism.

The symbolic world of mainline Protestantism, with its quiet, intellectually toned, ritualized and regularized worship services, its dependence on family-based church participation, its economic and social participation in secular culture, its embrace of scientific theory, its intellectual and analytical approaches to Biblical teachings....This cast is what the Fundamentalists disparagingly refer to as "the denominational churches with their 'Sunday religion.'" (p. 39).

On the "other side,"

The symbolic world of fundamentalist religion, with its emotional style, its conversion experiences, its literal interpretation of the Bible, its rejection of the prevailing culture with its scientific approaches to human creation, its ascetic intolerance for the larger secular society, its poor and "old fashioned" looking members -- all of these form a symbolic cast. (p.38). These two "symbolic worlds" are, without a doubt, in

conflict in American Protestantism, and have opened a field of battle on the airwaves. The fundamentalist forces predominate there, but their overall success (by whatever measure) awaits confirmation. Horsfield and Hadden and Swann see the effect of the Electronic Church on conventional religious institutions as vastly overblown, Bourgault speaks with more caution.

The "Electronic Church": Religion or Television?

As we have seen, most studies have agreed that the audience for religious programming tends to be older, poorer, and female, and tends to be already "religious". Membership in the audience for religious programming is also predicted to a certain extent by religious interest, and by region of residence, with more viewers in the south and southwest than in the northeast.

We have suggested that one of the most basic issues in this area is how or whether viewers of religion differ from other members of the television audience, and from the viewers' perspective, how and whether television (religious, secular or both) functions as a "religion" or religious experience for them. The latter question awaits further study. The former can be addressed to an extent through data already at hand.

The audience for "conventional" television is also older, poorer, and female, only the dimensions of religiosity and religion identified by Horsfield (1981), Buddenbaum (1979), Johnstone (1972), and Casmir (1959) to make the audience for religion in any way unique. This should not be too surprising to us, and might lead us to the hypothesis that "heavy viewers" of religion are, indeed, just "heavy viewers" in general.

The Annenberg/Gallup Study (Gerbner, et. al., 1984) contains viewing data for religious and conventional television viewing for all families in ten Northeastern and Southeastern cities who participated in the Arbitron diary surveys for a specific ratings period. These measures of amount of religious and conventional viewing provide the best data yet available on the actual relationship between religious and conventional viewing among a sample population.

According to these data, mean television viewing across the total population (a Northeastern and Southeastern regional sample pooled for this analysis) is 33.6 hours weekly. Mean viewing of religious television is 37 minutes weekly. By subtracting, case-by-case, each R's religious from conventional viewing, a mean non-religious viewing level of slightly less than 33 hours results.



By comparing levels of non-religious television viewing between religious-viewer and non-religious-viewer households, it is possible to see if, in fact, religious viewers are more or less likely to also be heavier viewers of conventional television. The data reveal that they are, indeed, heavier viewers of conventional television. While non-viewers of religious television report mean viewing of non-religious television of 27.7 hours, religious viewers report a much higher level of viewing of non-religious material, over 38 hours weekly. This should not be too surprising, given the demographic characteristics of these viewers, but it sets the agenda for further investigations in a definite light.

We now know that religious viewers cannot be said to be particularistic in their media tastes. What we don't know is whether, in fact, religious viewing is largely a function of heavy viewing in general, or if it is seen as something unique and specific by its participants. We further know that viewers of religious television are highly conversant with the dimensions and forms of conventional television, and that makes the task of looking at their religious television behaviors different than would have been the case if they had been found to eschew conventional, "non-religious" television. For religious television viewers, then, this

activity takes place very much in the context of overall media consumption patterns where non-religious television viewing predominates.

What we seem to know about how religious television viewing relates to the institution of conventional "television" leaves unanswered other questions with reference to the relationship between religious viewing and conventional "religion." In particular, we are still left with questions about the relationship between viewing and the institutional "two party" dimension discussed before. If, as it seems, there is something uniquely "religious" about viewing religious television, what is the significance, if any, of the fact that the preponderant religiosity on television is a religiosity of loosely-defined "fundamentalism?"

In her ethnographic study of the audience for the "PTL Club", Bourgault (1980) found evidence to support that the "two party" dimension is, indeed, salient for viewers. "PTL," she found, functions to support a kind of "para-church" religiosity, which, while clearly fundamentalist and anti-"mainline", nonetheless is less fundamentalist than some dogma, and actually brings highly dogmatic (fundamentalist) viewers to a slightly more

"mainstream" theological stance.

These data show that the 'PTL Club' is used primarily as religious entertainment by many fundamentalist Protestant viewers. Although the program's hosts and guests exhibit more tolerance of secular worldly styles than many fundamentalists, they foster empathy among viewers through accounts of their religious experiences. This tolerance has a moderating effect on the fundamentalist beliefs of viewers. (p. 274).

Bourgault found that among all groups of viewers (mainline and fundamentalist) (measured by their affiliation or membership self-reports) there were two basic reasons for viewing. There were the "entertainment" viewers, who viewed the program for purposes they themselves did not describe as particularly religious or spiritual, and for whom viewing behaviors closely paralleled those of conventional viewers in such areas as context of viewing and other activities engaged in. The other group of viewers were those Bourgault called the "committed" viewers, for whom viewing of "PTL" held an especially spiritual or "religious" place in their lives, according to their own self-descriptions and according to other measures (again, context, other activities in conjunction with viewing, and Bourgault's own impressions of the place viewing held in their lives.) (p. 245ff).

For all of these groups, "PTL" provided a para-church symbol system to which they responded and with which they more or less identified. "PTL" cuts its own swath for its

viewers in terms of its religious-symbolic meaning, and was found to represent a type of religion to its viewers, clearly distinct from their conventional television experience.

Though it is often not markedly different. Viewers identify "PTL" format as ersatz Tonight Show, and often commented to Bourgault on it as if it were actually in competition with Tonight.

The "religiousness" of "Electronic Church" programming may have among its associations a quality of "linking up" viewers through its particular symbolic environment who would not have been linked otherwise. Bourgault quotes New York Times religion editor Kenneth Briggs:

Until recently, small-town "born again" Christians lived in relative isolation in widely separated parts of the country, sharing the same essentials of faith with Christians in other areas but expressing them in their own unique styles. Television makes it possible to galvanize this diverse sweep of Christians into a much more uniform, homogeneous constituency in which matters such as denominational identity mean far less than they did in the past."

Bourgault seems to have found, moreover, that this aggregated audience draws around a symbol system which they identify as being more or less religious, and through which they place themselves vis a vis "secular" culture as well.

### Television's Cultural Environment

The content of "secular" culture is known to most Americans through its most important symbolic environment, television. This study takes place within a field where much is already known. The institutional commitments and processes, the symbolic content, and the enculturation processes of television have been extensively documented.

Television has been shown to be shaped institutionally by rather strict processes of management and control. Geiber (1964), White (1964), and Pool and Shulman (1964), have shown how these processes are rather standardized, strict ones, as have Elliot (1970), Epstein (1973), and Cantor (1980). Gerbner (1972a, 1972b, 1973), in particular, has described these as "institutional power roles" which operate on the production of what he calls television's "message systems." Further, these message systems, television's symbolic content, are widely held to be grounded in, and serve, the most basic interests of their society of origin. (Gerbner, et. al., 1979). Finally, television has been shown to cultivate values and attitudes which are consistent with its basic symbolic dimensions. (Gerbner, et. al., 1979; Comstock, et. al., 1978). Its formal ritualism, and the ritualistic way it is used by viewers serve to undergird the

idea that it has come to serve in a capacity in contemporary America near to that of the Church in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Period.

Gerbner has merged a broad perspective of television as "...the new religion..." and the new phenomenon of religious television in this way.

...the commoditisation of the Christian faith in response to the economic demands of television removes the distinctiveness of the Christian faith and absorbs it as an indistinguishable part of the broader message of television, 'the established religion of the industrial order. (Gerbner and Connolly, 1978).

This may in fact be the case, and there is much reason for thinking so. Television is the single most common activity of American life. It has at least challenged, and perhaps supplanted, other cultural institutions, (the church, home, family) as carriers of the cultural heritage on the most basic level--which Gerbner (1972a) describes as explaining "...what is, what is right, and what is related to what...." Further, television does this through highly stable systems of messages which, while they may appear to differ from one to another, essentially change little over time. (Gerbner, et. al., 1979).

There is reason to suspect, however, that the phenomenon of religious television does not entirely disappear into the broader terrain of television's symbolic environment, either

etically or emically. Bourgault (1981), Gantz and Kowalewski (1978), and Parker, et. al. (1955) all found that viewers find something unique in their consumption of religious programming, and that at least in the case of Bourgault's study, that viewing seemed to contribute to attitudes which varied on a peculiarly religious, not only a broader, "secular-cultural" plane.

Such notions aside, it is still essential to our understanding of television's religio-cultural force to know what happens to self-conscious religion when carried on television, and to know how its meanings do or do not uniquely cultivate certain ideas in its audience.

There has been a broad if rather diffuse and impressionistic literature (Ong, 1969, Innis, 1954, McLuhan, 1964, Carey, 1967) which has proposed that from a historical perspective, the interplay between religious institutions and various communication-technological developments has been highly salient in the ongoing development of both realms. Notions have stretched from the rather systematic and psychological suggestions that people as spiritual beings and physical actors have been "transformed" by their use of these technologies through the ages (Ong, McLuhan) to much more concrete ideas of formal religious-institutional change which

has been wrought through new communication developments.  
(Innis, Carey).

Very little fertile theory exists here, other than the very general idea that we should expect to find dimensions which are specifically spiritual or religious, (whether personal or institutional,) which are uniquely affected by communication-technological change. For instance, Innis' ideas of temporally and spatially biased media (as interpreted by Carey, 1967) suggest that religion on television would actually be serving secular institutional ends because of that medium's spatial bias. Innis held that a more halcyon state of affairs for religion exists (actually, "existed") in orally-based transmission. If we were to find that Briggs is right and that the Electronic Church actually does nothing more than link up pre-existing, non mass-mediated religious interests, then Innis' notions here would be undermined. It should be noted here that both Innis and Carey hold to a peculiarly "orthodox" understanding of both religious and secular authority. If (as it appears from anecdotal evidence) for viewers, religious authority is diffuse, it would be therefore indifferent to the "spatial bias" which would presumably undermine more localized, hierarchical, and homogeneous "religions." In fact, to push



a bit further, nearly all modern media are both space and time binding, and function in both ways.

Taken together, it would appear from previous theoretical and empirical work, that the gaps in our knowledge of this area are indeed quite wide. Further, there are some major issues in basic theory of the meaning of the mass-public symbolic environment of television which could well benefit from detailed study of the "Electronic Church." It also appears that such a study would need to involve convergence of theory and methodology from a number of disciplines. We have insight into the social-structural components of the phenomenon through previous work in assessing the audience for these programs. Sociology, Anthropology, and Phenomenology have contributed understanding of the basic religious- institutional dynamics involved, particularly the "two-party" dimension and the meaning and operation of ritual. Cultivation theory proposes a strong hypothesis about the cultural meaning of religious television, that it is, after all, just another kind of television, whether or not it is also another kind of religion. Historical and institutional studies have placed this phenomenon in a specific context within which it moves along these other dimensions.

This convergence of ideas seems to describe a certain approach to these problems: a study which would look at the Electronic Church as a cultural-symbolic phenomenon, and which would concentrate on meaning engendered in its audience. The methodology would draw heavily on the methodologies of cultivation analysis, but will attempt much more finely tuned empirical judgements than are often possible through the large-sample quantitative means generally employed there.

As should be obvious from the forgoing discussions, neither religion nor television are simple, unitary constructions. As it is understood here, television is a highly complex and significant system of cultural symbols. Gerbner has said:

The terms of broadest social interaction are those available in the most widely shared message systems of a culture. Whether one is unaware of them, supportive of them, critical of them, or even alienated or rebellious of them, the terms of the culture shape the course of the response. (Gerbner, 1972a:47)

The complexity of religion as a cultural form need not be argued here, but we have seen that one aspect of its complexity has specifically shaped the "Electronic Church," the struggle between fundamentalist and modernist Protestantism.

We have not yet stated, however, a cultural

understanding of religion to compare in scope with Gerbner's statements regarding television. Clifford Geertz has proposed that religion, and religious symbols in particular, fulfill a particular role in cultural systems.

In religious belief and practice a groups' ethos is rendered intellectually reasonable by being shown to represent a way of life ideally adapted to the actual state of affairs the world view describes, while the world view is rendered emotionally convincing by being presented as an image of an actual state of affairs peculiarly well--arranged to accomodate such a way of life. (1973:90)

Geertz proceeds to an assessment of specifically religious symbols and their function within this framework.

Religious symbols formulate a basic congruence between a particular style of life and a specific (if, most often, implicit) metaphysic, and in so doing, sustain each with the borrowed authority of the other."

Geertz then proceeds to a general definition of religion which is particularly relevant to questions of cultural symbolic meanings. Religion is...

...a system of symbols which acts to establish powerful, pervasive, and long-lasting moods and motivations in men by formulating conceptions of a general order of existence and clothing these conceptions with such an aura of factuality that the moods and motivations seem uniquely realistic. (1973:90)

On a certain level, what we know about television and its enculturative power places it in a position to function as a religion under this very broad definition. Geertz (and others) insists that the "general order of existence" called

for in his definition must be clearly present, even if implicit. While it would be theoretically possible for a value system to exist "...without any metaphysic referent, an ethics without ontology...", Geertz claims, "...no such system has been found."

A good deal of the underpinning of the idea of "television as religion" seems to draw from television's ritualistic aspects. The individual's interaction with religion is primarily through ritual (this line of reasoning would posit) and television provides many such rituals in content, and the viewing of it also contains ritualistic overtones. On this point, Geertz grants some leverage in the range of ritualistic practices which can be subsumed under "religion." However, an essential component of ritual, if it is to be assigned religious meaning, is that it "mean something" in a greater sense. "A man can indeed be said to be 'religious' about golf..." Geertz contends, "...but he must also see it as symbolic of some transcendent truths." (1973:98)

#### Summary

Previous research and theoretical work relevant to this study provides interesting leads to our investigations, but leaves many gaps unfilled. We know that religious

broadcasting has traditionally attracted a rather homogeneous audience of already-religious people, an audience which, in demographic terms, is not unlike the audience for all of television. We expect that, among the dimensions important to our understanding this phenomenon are a number which place the "Electronic Church" in a position to threaten conventional religion, particularly in that this type of broadcasting tends to be evangelical in orientation, and thus most consistent with one side of the "two parties" currently in tension in American Protestant denominations.

This phenomenon also relates to ongoing theoretical work contemplating the broader meaning of television in general. Many theorists have proposed that conventional television is "religious" in a sense, or that it at least functions in religiously-significant ways for its viewers, and thus the existence of self-consciously "religious" television becomes important in assessment of these approaches. Through the understanding of what happens when religion attempts to "use" television, we may come to a better understanding of the extent to which conventional television, is, or can be, "religious."

A variety of approaches to religion, television, and the cultural meanings of each are available to this study. In

the work of Geertz and others in cultural interpretation, models for the understanding of religion can be found. Gerbner, Innis, McLuhan and Ong have all proposed ways of interpreting the religious meaning of the television medium itself. While the study undertaken here may not directly test major theoretical propositions in these fields, it is intended to provide insights through which such work can be further extended. This study may provide insight into more mundane issues as well.

## II. The Present Study: Research Questions and Methodology

We have proposed that the basic objective of this study was to place the viewers of religious television within a series of specific contexts, along religious institutional, cultural, and broader institutional dimensions (such as political attitudes, social attitudes, personal ideologies.)

The basic questions to be addressed, then, are:

1.) How members of the audience, themselves, define "religion," and the extent to which they assign or draw more basic metaphysical meanings from their consumption of explicitly "religious" and "conventional" television and other media;

2.) The interplay of various religious-institutional forces in their lives, such as their religious self-conceptions vis a vis fundamentalist-modernist dimensions, and their attitudes on wider social and political and "modernism-demodernism" issues;

3.) How viewers themselves articulate their religious and non-religious viewing and other media consumption behaviors, including a more refined approach to Bourgault's dimensions of "entertainment" vs "committed" viewing;

4.) Viewers' integration into "conventional" church attitudes, symbols, and behaviors, and media-based ones

(print and non-print) and the interplay between these;

5.) A sense of the directionality of any relationships found. Does religiosity predict other dimensions, do institutional issues predict viewing, does viewing affect these others?

#### Methodology

The study which was undertaken to address these questions was related to a much larger effort, the Annenberg/Gallup study of Religious broadcasting (Gerbner, Gross, Hoover, Morgan, Signorielli, Wuthnow, and Cotugno, 1984). This research included both content analyses and audience surveys. As has been described, many of the outstanding questions in the general area of religion and television are ones which persist in a context where a certain amount of quantitative data already exists.

Therefore, it was decided to pursue a research strategy which would be elaborative of what is already known from the more quantitative work. The occasion of the larger study and its surveys provides an opportunity to work through with a relatively small sample of confirmed participants in religious broadcasts, the clearly complex issues of the cultural, symbolic, and communicational "meaning" of this phenomenon.



The methodology involved two related phases. First, an extensive analysis of the Gerbner, et. al. data was undertaken with the objective of describing these phenomena as completely as possible through those means. Specific attention was given to viewers in the Northeastern United States, so as to be able to describe in broad terms the demographics, beliefs and behaviors of viewers in the geographic region from which respondents in the following stage would be drawn.

Following these analyses, extended personal interviews were conducted with a sample of twenty viewers or viewing families in order to qualitatively elaborate the findings of the earlier survey work.

#### Personal Interview Sample and Methodology

A pool of five hundred respondents was selected, at interval, from the mailing list of all "members" of the 700 Club program in the Philadelphia Market. From this pool, prospective respondents were randomly selected according to geographic location in the region, with a range of rural, suburban, and urban respondents the primary objective. Selected R's received a letter explaining the purpose of the research and inviting participation. Letters were followed by telephone calls to arrange appointments. Each prospective

R received three attempts at telephone contact (day and evening) before being dropped if contact was not made.

This resulted in a sample of twenty respondents or respondent couples. Table II.1 presents demographic profiles of this sample along major demographic dimensions. As will be seen later (Table III.1) 700 Club viewers differ from all viewers of religious television in a number of ways. They tend to be slightly younger, better educated, and more "upscale" than other religious viewers, and this personal interview sample is even more extreme in these ways, being particularly likely to have completed more schooling and to have higher household income than is generally the case.

In the case of the personal interview sample here, the tendency to be atypical in education and income is probably related to the fact that the pool from which they were drawn is a pool of members (and thus contributors) of the Club. As was found by Gerbner, et. al., contribution to religious television is strongly correlated with income. A further explanation might be that respondent education level might also predict their willingness to participate in such a study.

Appointments were made to interview, in person, each household member who was listed as a member of the 700 Club.

Table II.1:

Personal Interview Sample Demographics  
 Compared to the Total Northeastern  
 Gerbner, et. al. Subsample

	Gerbner Subsample: All Rel- TV View- ers	700 Club Viewers	Personal Int- erview Sample:
	----- (%)	----- (%)	----- (%)
Age:			
18-49	13.2	13.2	0.0
30-49	33.5	46.3	25.0
50-65	34.5	29.8	45.0
over 65	18.8	10.7	30.0
	----- (638)	----- (121)	----- (20)
Education:			
LT HS	24.1	15.0	10.0
HS Grad	44.0	50.9	30.0
College+	31.9	30.0	60.0
	----- (634)	----- (120)	----- (20)
Income:			
<15,000	41.7	38.0	5.0
15-24.9	29.4	31.5	50.0
25-34.9	14.1	15.7	30.0
>35,000	14.8	14.8	15.0
	----- (561)	----- (108)	----- (20)

All members in each household were interviewed together, where possible. Interviews ranged in length from 75 minutes to three hours. They took place in R's homes. Interviews were recorded, except where R's refused permission (three cases.)

#### Interview Methodology

Each respondent was first given, in person, the questionnaire employed in the Gerbner et. al. regional survey. Notes were made during this set of questions for further elaboration later. Following the formal instrument, each respondent or family was engaged in an open-ended discussion of their faith history and issues surrounding their viewing of religious television. The interview-discussions were semi-structured in that beyond the formal instrument, a set of specific questions was developed which were intended to speak to the research questions of the study. These questions often did not need to be asked as they came up in the discussion "on their own." All of the questions were addressed, in the interview, in one way or another. The formal survey instrument (Appendix I) and the interview agenda (Appendix II) are reproduced as appendices to this document.

III. The Annenberg/Gallup Study:  
Regional Sample Findings

As has already been noted, the field of religious broadcasting has not drawn a great deal of research attention in the past. What literature exists tends to have been spotty, with only one major empirical effort (Parker, et. al., 1955) and several impressionistic studies (such as Horsfield, 1984) the only substantial contributions made so far.

The present research is able to benefit from association with the most comprehensive study of the phenomenon attempted since Parker, et. al. This project, conducted by the Cultural Indicators Project at the Annenberg School of Communications and released, in technical form, as "Religion on Television and in the Lives of Viewers" (Gerbner, et. al., 1984) entailed three major phases, including content and audience analyses. One of these phases was a regional survey of viewers of religious broadcasting in the Northeastern and Southeastern United States.

behave, in aggregate, the Gerbner data provide a much cleaner and more definitive description than previously available.

The significance of the Gerbner, et. al. study lies, to a great degree, in the size and quality of its religious-viewer sample. Not satisfied with previous studies which had relied on survey self-reports as their measure of religious viewing, the Annenberg team located "confirmed" viewers of religious television through ratings archive data of the Arbitron Corporation. From these archives, it was possible to locate a sample of viewers who had watched religious television during their participation the Arbitron Ratings process. This method, while still relying on respondent self-report, does so with some greater accuracy than is possible through other survey methods. As a result of this process, a sample of religious viewers greater in size and quality than otherwise available, was developed.

#### Basic Findings

It had long been suspected that viewers of religious television are "religious" in more conventional ways, as well. Viewing is positively associated with church attendance, giving, and personal religious behaviors such as prayer and Bible reading. Because of the quality of the sample available, the Gerbner, et. al. study was able for the

first time to specify different "levels" of religious viewing, and see if there were, in fact, a type of viewer for whom this activity constituted a substitute for these other, more conventional, ones. If this were the case, then a new range of research questions and strategies would emerge. What was found, instead, was that the "most frequent" viewers of religious television do not, in fact, differ in any important ways from "all viewers."

Table III.1 presents Pearson Correlation Coefficients for the relationship between religious television viewing, conventional television viewing, and contributions to religious television and a variety of demographic, religious, and behavior variables in the Gerbner, et. al., regional survey.

Aside from the obvious demographic measures here, certain others should be explained. The "Fundamentalism" item is a factor-based index of fundamentalist attitudes (made up of items on charismatic experience, Biblical literalism, the second coming of Christ, and respondent self-description as "born again"). Evangelical denomination divides respondents' church memberships into either classically "evangelical" or "non-evangelical" denominations.

As can be seen here, the Gerbner, et. al. data confirm

Table III.1:

Correlations Between Viewing Religious Television, Viewing  
Conventional Television, Contributions to Religious Television,  
and Demographic, Belief, and Behavior Variables:  
Full Regional Sample

	Religious Television	General Television	Contribution to Religious TV
	-----	-----	-----
Education	-.262*** (2496)	-.251*** (2505)	.032 (317)
Income	-.232*** (2233)	-.250*** (2242)	.126* (294)
Age	.321*** (2518)	.169 (2602)	-.032 (317)
Sex	.064*** (2518)	.112*** (2602)	.049 (317)
Race	.187*** (2244)	.129*** (2320)	-.061 (279)
Lit/Char. Scale	.495*** (1843)	.049* (1864)	.120* (246)
Evangelical Denom.	.291*** (2447)	.057** (2457)	-.032 (311)
Church Attendance	.284*** (2468)	-.011 (2501)	.144** (310)
Local Church Contribution	.205*** (2260)	-.093*** (2336)	.220*** (301)
Frequency of Prayer	.194*** (2559)	-.099*** (2496)	.036 (317)
Importance of Religion	.382*** (2503)	.083*** (2521)	.129* (316)

[Significance key: \*= $p < .05$  \*\*= $p < .01$  \*\*\*= $p < .001$ ]

Note: Direction of codings are generally with higher values moving toward the labeled value. I.e., Prayer: High=frequent; Contributions: larger; Importance: Very Important; Race: High=non-white; Fundamentalism: High=fundamentalist.



findings from earlier studies that heavier viewers of religious (and conventional) television tend to be lower in income, lower in education, and older than lighter viewers. Nonwhites are also more likely than whites to view. In the area of religious attitudes and behaviors, there is more of a differentiation between "religious" and "conventional" viewers. These issues are much more highly correlated with religious than with conventional television viewing. The strongest correlation of all is that between fundamentalism and religious viewing, consistent with the presumed content of most religious programs, but very interesting nonetheless.

Religious television, based on these data, would appear to be positively associated with other religious behaviors and beliefs, particularly with the more fundamentalist beliefs.

A central question addressed by the Gerbner *et. al.* study was one of whether it is ever the case, for any group or subgroup of viewers, that viewing of religious television does not follow this dominant pattern vis a vis religious beliefs and behaviors. Tables III.2 and III.3 test this question.

As can be seen here, increased levels of church attendance are reported along with more frequent viewing of

Table III.2:

Percentage Attending Church Once a Week or More Among  
Categories of Viewing of Religious Television by  
Denomination and "Fundamentalism" Categories

	-----Religious Viewing-----				CD*	N	P(Tau)
	None	Rare	Some	Freq			
	%	%	%	%			
<u>Evangelical Denomination:</u>							
Evangelicals	38.5	54.3	66.6	69.3	15.0	(905)	.001
Mainline Protestants	38.9	43.9	62.3	65.9	22.0	(824)	.001
Catholics	54.8	77.3	64.0	74.5	-2.8	(521)	.001
Other Faiths	20.6	42.9	52.6	64.3	21.4	(154)	.001
<u>Fundamentalism:</u>							
High	61.3	64.9	74.3	78.7	13.8	(629)	.01
Medium	50.9	66.1	58.7	60.5	-5.6	(450)	--
Low	33.9	46.4	50.8	52.1	5.7	(736)	.001

Table III.3:

Percentage Making Contributions to Local Church Among Categories  
of Viewing of Religious Television, Denominational,  
and "Fundamentalism" Categories

	-----Religious Viewing-----				CD*	N	P(Tau)
	None	Rare	Some	Freq			
	%	%	%	%			
<u>Evangelical Denomination:</u>							
Evangelicals	44.3	54.9	58.9	60.4	5.5	(830)	.01
Mainline Protestants	41.0	51.0	60.6	63.9	12.9	(755)	.001
Catholics	43.0	53.1	57.5	49.0	-4.1	(486)	.01
Other Faiths	21.2	50.0	52.9	61.5	11.5	(141)	.001
<u>Fundamentalism:</u>							
High	55.9	70.6	65.8	66.0	-4.6	(580)	--
Medium	44.5	52.8	48.5	50.0	-2.8	(425)	--
Low	36.1	46.9	57.9	54.7	7.8	(682)	.001

\*The differential calculation compares "rare"  
with "frequent" viewers.

religious television for all the denominational categories except Catholics. Higher levels of attendance are also reported by more frequent viewers among the most and least "fundamentalist" viewers, with an insignificant contrary pattern for the moderates there.

While the differences are not as large for those reporting increased giving, (Table III.3) the pattern is the same. From these tables, it appears obvious that in nearly all cases, (and, most importantly, in light of the "two party" dimension) increased television viewing goes with increased levels of reported conventional religiosity.

This finding is significant particularly because a range of hypotheses, including several coming from earlier, impressionistic and qualitative studies (cf. Bourgault, 1980; Horsfield, 1984) rest on the assumption that the "two party" dimension could interact with religious television in such a way so as to see evangelically-minded individuals within non-evangelical denominations being more drawn to religious television for confirmation of their own evangelical beliefs.

The previous tables provide little evidence to support such an hypothesis. Not only is there no particular differentiation between members of evangelical and non-evangelical groups in terms of their interacting media

and religiosity patterns, there also seems to be no clear tendency for the more evangelical to be drawn to media, instead of church, overall (or, as Gerbner, et. al., demonstrated, in subgroups.)

Gerbner, et. al. were clearest on the following points. First, as we have seen here, religious television is a component of, not a substitute for, conventional religiosity. Viewing of these programs is so heavily integrated into respondent religiosity that it appears that even for the exceptions (i.e., the older, homebound viewers) it should be seen as an expression of "conventional" belief and behavior, not a substitute for them.

Second, Gerbner, et. al. conclusively demonstrated that there is not the tendency for large numbers of "non-religious" people to report viewing these programs. A facet of the finding above, this further suggests that a major assumed function of these programs (assumed, that is, by their producers) i.e., "converting the unbelievers" is probably not occurring.

Third, the Gerbner, et. al. findings suggest that for the population as a whole, conventional television viewing is far more negatively associated with conventional religiosity than is religious television viewing.

Fourth, the audience for religious television is a fairly small, though distinct and significant, one. Among the interesting findings here was that while, in general, people are less likely to vote if they are heavy viewers of television, religious television's small, politically-conservative audience of heavier viewers are more likely to vote than are lighter viewers.

Fifth, Gerbner, et. al. found that there is some small differentiation among the audiences for various religious programs. Due largely to factors of scheduling, it was found that more viewers tend to report viewing the Sunday Morning programs than those shown on weekdays. It was further found that the programs which, in format terms, most resemble "conventional" television (the weekday programs) draw a slightly less "upscale" and theologically more conservative audience. Again, these differences were barely significant, but deserving of further elaboration.

Sixth, the Gerbner, et. al. study was able to apply instrumentation in the social/political attitude area which had not been used before, and confirmed the widely-held assumption that viewers of these programs are, indeed, much more conservative than non-viewers on a wide range of political and social issues.

### Summary

As cross-sectional data, the Gerbner, et. al. findings present a clear picture of these relationships at one moment in time. Many of the major claims and hypotheses about these phenomena can be investigated in this way and some major conclusions reached. For instance, the finding that viewing is so clearly related to other measures of religiosity (even with controls) has established that religious television probably does not lead to lower levels of conventional religious behavior.

Directionality of such relationships is, however, difficult to establish. Even more elusive, based on these findings, is a sense of how the various dimensions under study inter-relate. Beyond the simple notion of causality, then, there are a raft of issues having to do with research assumptions regarding how these issues should be related. Summative judgments about directionality are not possible, but, lacking such previous work in this field, models which could guide inference are missing, as well.

Critics and defenders of the "Electronic Church" have fairly clear ideas of how they expect various demographic, belief, and behavior dimensions to relate to one another vis a vis these issues. Previously cited theoretical

perspectives also carry implicit judgments about these components of the interaction between media and religiosity.

All of these assumptions deserve further elaboration, and the existence of the Gerbner, et. al. data provide an occasion to do just that with the personal interview sample in the present study.

#### IV: The Specific Case of CBN: Institution and Audience

The Christian Broadcasting Network, Inc. is one of the best known (outside the religious broadcasting community) and most prominent of the "Electronic Church" ministries. It has been extensively described elsewhere in institutional terms (Robertson, 1972, Hoover, 1981, Hadden and Swann, 1981, Horsfield, 1984). Aside from proprietary studies and one small survey by Gantz and Kowalewski (1978), though, little audience data on programs of this type had been available before Gerbner, et. al.

This study, as it concentrates on audience members of the 700 Club program, needs to address some basic issues about this particular example of the "Electronic Church" phenomenon. The Club represents the "Electronic Church" to many casual observers, in that its format was one of the first to break with what had been standard in the religious genre. It has also been prominent because it was among the first to be widely available on cable television.

Concentrating on the Club, however, raises some questions. In what way are Club viewers "typical" of all "religious viewers," and how are they different? What is the Club, as a viewing experience, and how does it compare with



other types of media behaviors? Finally, how does viewing of the Club with its commercial-like format, relate to conventional television viewing? These questions can be partially addressed through the Gerbner, et. al and earlier data, but more conclusive judgments must await later analyses.

#### The Institution

In brief, the Christian Broadcasting Network, Inc. (CBN) produces one major television program, the 700 Club six days a week. The Club is a ninety-minute program and is fed live, via a CBN-leased satellite transponder, to around 180 television stations and several hundred cable television systems nationwide. The program has been on the air for two decades but really came to public attention in 1976 when the first satellite-fed live distribution began to major cities. The program began as a local production which allowed viewers to call in for prayer, counseling, and to "talk back" to hosts and guests.

This basic structural reality has not changed over the years, though the "format" and other formal elements, have. Starting out as a charismatic preaching, prayer, and music program, the show has evolved into a "Christian talk show" in recent years, with news, public affairs, and personal

self-help (cooking and exercise) segments. This evolution has been described elsewhere (Hoover, 1981) partly as a process of self-conscious accomodation to the formal structures of the television medium.

The telephone-feedback element of the program was also found, in that earlier stuyd, to have undergon modification as a result of CBN's consciousness that their presence is feld in a larger, more heterogeneous media environment. For example, phone "counselors" are carefully trained to avoid legalistic, doctrinal proscriptions in their conversations with callers.

A political-economy analysis of the 700 Club might well conclude that it is not really a television program at all, but instead is a sophisticated direct-mail fundraising institution. Hadden and Swann (1981) estimate that CBN must raise over 100 Million per year to keep the program on the air. Hoover (1981) found that fundraising was accomplished primarily through direct-mail solicitation of individuals who call the program for prayer and counseling.

The basic members of the Club, then, are people who have called in, been put on the mailing list, and then solicited for a regular, monthly membership fee of \$20. Using sophisticated fundraising techniques, this pool of members is

stratified according to additional giving they can be challenged to, such that about half the program's income comes from the top five percent of its donors (Hoover, 1981).

These "special donors" are accorded special treatment by the program, often receiving calls from the Club offering thanks or prayer. The development department maintains a staff of professional phone counselors just for this purpose.

All donors, but especially those who are in the higher giving categories, are frequently invited to attend regional CBN dinners, or to attend special events or seminars at the CBN Center in Virginia. Organized much like the "donor cultivation" events put on by conventional organizations (such as colleges and hospitals) these bring together donors and prospective donors from across the country for seminars in current events and for worship and evangelistic services.

To the viewer, then, CBN is more than a television program. It can become a gradually more and more involving institutional affiliation, not a "church" institution in the classic sense, but an agency of what we have begun to call the "para-church." In addition to the broadcast, telephone, and personal communication, there is also a smaller, though significant publishing effort, with members receiving pamphlets, books, and newsletters on a relatively regular

basis, often without charge. Some books are sent in exchange for contributions.

#### The 700 Club Audience

The Gerbner, et. al. data suggest that the 700 Club audience differs from that of other programs in some respects. Beyond the obvious audience demographics concomitant with a daytime program (i.e., larger percentages of unemployed, retired, and home-making viewers) there seems to be a pattern of the Club attracting a slightly atypical (in religious broadcasting terms) audience.

According to Gerbner, et. al., the weekday programs (of which the Club is one) attract a fairly distinct audience. A minority of viewers of religious television overall, and a minority of viewers of weekend religion, watch these programs. (p. 71) Even within categories of "fundamentalism" this pattern holds, with both "fundamentalists" and "non-fundamentalists" less likely to view these weekday programs than they are to view other types of programs.

The demographic and belief characteristics of the weekday audience are interesting, however. Gerbner, et. al. (Appendix IV.2.2) report that these programs are more popular with certain subgroups than with others. For instance, members of charismatic denominations, independent

(non-denominational) churches, fundamentalists, and members of evangelical denominations generally are the most prominent in their preference for these weekday programs. Women view weekday programs with more frequency than men do, and non-whites watch proportionally more of these shows than whites.

This would suggest, at least speculatively, that the weekend programs are those most associated with membership in traditional denominations (Baptist, Catholic, Presbyterian, etc.) and with (relatively) more upscale and professional classes, while the weekday programs attract larger proportions of the more institutionally-independent and lower-class respondents.

This is, in itself, an interesting finding. It has often been noted by producers and observers that the weekday programs (in the Gerbner, et. al. data: 700 Club, the similar PTL Club, and Jimmy Swaggart's A Study In the Word) are unique for their ability to attract a conventional, "non-religious" audience. This is assumed to be related to the format being "non-religious" (self-consciously, at least) and thus, presumably, more attractive to "non-religious" or "non-evangelical" viewers. These data suggest that this is not the case. Instead, all viewers seem to be highly

religious people (measured by belief and behavior) and those who are more liberal, more denominationally identified, and less like the profile of the "typical" viewer, watch the programming which is the most obviously "religious" (that on Sunday morning.)

Given these general descriptions, it is possible to move to an account of how 700 Club viewers in the Northeast (the location of the personal interview sample) differ from others in demographic, belief, and behavior dimensions.

Table IV.1 presents these data for all religious viewers, viewers of weekend-daytime programs, and viewers of the 700 Club alone, for the Northeast region of the Gerbner, *et. al.* data set. These are presented as frequency distributions for the simple reason that these are not mutually-exclusive categories. A given respondent can watch more than one type of program, and is thus not easy to clearly type into viewing categories.

As can be seen from Table IV.1, the 700 Club viewers in the Northeast region are a relatively small number of respondents within the total pool, but their various characteristics are a reasonable approximation of those of all religious television viewers, and of all viewers of weekday programs.

Table IV.1:

Northeastern Subsample:  
Frequency Distribution of Various Characteristics  
Among Categories of Religious Viewing

	All Religious Viewers	All Weekday Viewers	<u>700</u> <u>Club</u> Viewers	Total Sub- sample
<b>% Among:</b>				
<b>Denomination:</b>				
Evangelicals	24.2	28.2	24.6	17.0
Non-Evan	41.3	43.1	44.9	35.8
Catholics	29.8	23.1	27.1	38.0
Others	4.7	4.6	3.4	9.2
	-----	-----	-----	-----
	(620)	(216)	(118)	(1221)
<b>Age:</b>				
18-29	13.2	9.9	13.2	19.7
30-40	33.5	39.6	46.3	38.0
50-65	34.5	36.5	29.8	28.9
over 65	18.8	14.0	10.7	13.4
	-----	-----	-----	-----
	(638)	(222)	(121)	(1258)
<b>Education:</b>				
LT High Sch.	24.1	19.1	15.0	19.7
High Sch. Grd.	44.0	50.9	52.5	42.0
Coll. and More	31.9	30.0	32.5	38.4
	-----	-----	-----	-----
	(634)	(220)	(120)	(1249)
<b>Race:</b>				
White	77.1	76.1	75.7	84.3
Nonwhite	22.9	23.9	24.3	15.7
	-----	-----	-----	-----
	(582)	(201)	(107)	(1134)
<b>Income:</b>				
<15000	41.7	41.3	38.0	34.1
15-24,999	29.4	29.6	31.5	29.1
25-35000	14.1	14.8	15.7	17.3
>35000	14.8	14.3	14.8	19.6
	-----	-----	-----	-----
	(561)	(196)	(108)	(1107)

Table IV.1, Cont'd.

<b>Church Attendance:</b>				
>1/wk	15.0	25.2	28.3	10.5
1/wk	45.9	42.7	40.0	40.4
2-3/mo	10.7	6.9	10.0	10.2
1/mo.	8.0	8.3	9.2	7.9
several/yr.	9.1	6.4	4.2	10.2
1/yr.	6.4	5.0	4.2	10.5
Never	5.1	5.5	4.2	10.2
	-----	-----	-----	-----
	(628)	(218)	(120)	(1234)
<b>Fundamentalism:</b>				
High	40.7	62.4	62.2	23.9
Medium	25.4	15.0	14.3	23.8
Low	34.0	22.5	23.5	52.3
	-----	-----	-----	-----
	(477)	(173)	(98)	(924)
<b>Call Program:</b>				
No	81.0	64.4	64.5	
Yes	19.0	35.6	35.5	N/A
	-----	-----	-----	
	(638)	(222)	(121)	
<b>Contribute to Program:</b>				
Yes	30.6	51.4	47.9	
No	69.4	48.6	52.1	N/A
	-----	-----	-----	
	(631)	(631)	(119)	
<b>Television Viewing:</b>				
Low	25.4	26.1	27.3	34.4
Medium	32.6	28.4	29.8	31.2
High	42.0	45.5	43.0	34.3
	-----	-----	-----	-----
	(638)	(222)	(121)	(1258)



There are a few interesting large differences between Club audiences and others, however. Most of these differences seem to be related to the format of the Club and to the kind of institutional involvement it entails for its viewers. Among basic demographic characteristics, Club viewers differ from general religious viewers only in their educational level, with proportionally more high school graduates among Club viewers than appear in the general distribution of religious viewers.

Where there are more interesting differences are among the religiosity items. Club members appear to be more frequent in their church attendance than religious viewers in general with nearly twice as high a percentage of them reporting attendance more than once a week. Club viewers (and all weekday viewers) score much higher on the fundamentalism item than viewers in general.

The relationship of these viewers to the institutions behind the programs they view differs as well. Club viewers (and all weekday viewers) report calling the programs they view in much higher percentages than is the case with religious viewers in general, and contribute in higher proportions as well. Both of these latter findings are related to the institutional characteristics of the Club as

described. All of the weekday programs, but not all of those on weekends, have phone counselors available. The weekday programs are all of the more sophisticated independent type, while the weekend programs include many that operate on a shoestring, or do not do any fundraising other than on-air solicitation.

The conventional-television viewing patterns of all religious viewers are quite similar, being more likely to report heavy conventional viewing than is the case for the sample as a whole. This may, in itself, be an effect of their level of religious viewing, which, if they view only two of the weekday programs regularly, would result in at least two hours of viewing, onto which whatever non-religious viewing they do must be added. An alternative explanation would be that the Club and weekday viewers differ very little from all religious viewers, who, as we have seen, tend to also be heavier than normal viewers of non-religious television.

A test of this question reveals that, in fact, weekday religious viewers are no less likely to be heavy viewers of non-religious television than are all religious viewers. As a matter of fact, according to the Arbitron data cited earlier, (from Gerbner, et. al.) viewers of weekday

religious programs report a mean level of weekly non-religious viewing of 36.5 hours, while the mean for all television viewers is 32.9 hours weekly. The figure for weekday viewers is, however, slightly lower than the mean weekly hours of non-religious television viewed by all religious viewers (38.6 hours).

Returning again to Table IV.1, there are differences which should be noted between the Club audience and the sample in general. The Club audience is older, slightly lower in income, more evangelical, and contains proportionally more non-whites than the sample at large. In addition, Club viewers are more likely to belong to evangelical churches, to attend church frequently, and to espouse fundamentalist attitudes than the general population, according to these data. As we have seen, Club viewers are also heavier viewers of television in general.

Weekday viewers can also be looked at, as a class, in comparison with all respondents in the Gerbner, et. al. regional sample in terms of the relationship between their viewing and the demographic, belief, and behavior items described earlier for that larger sample. Table IV.2 presents the same data as in Table III.1, this time for the weekday, Northeast-sample viewers only.

Table IV.2:

Correlations Between Viewing Religious Television, Viewing Conventional Television, Contributions to Religious Television, and Demographic, Belief, and Behavior Variables for Northeast Sample Weekday Viewers

	Religious Television	General Television	Contribution to Religious TV
Education	-.185** (218)	-.147* (220)	-.001 (93)
Income	-.036 (194)	-.175** (196)	.127 (86)
Age	.172** (220)	.070 (222)	-.087 (93)
Sex	-.133* (220)	.098 (222)	.159 (93)
Race	.055 (200)	.080 (201)	.019 (82)
Fundament- alism	-.270*** (172)	.093 (173)	-.133 (74)
Evangelical Denomination	-.069 (214)	-.118* (216)	-.166 (91)
Church Attendance	-.176** (216)	.019 (218)	-.199* (92)
Local Church Contribution	.237*** (204)	-.138* (205)	.223* (92)
Frequency of Prayer	-.159** (220)	-.062 (222)	-.119 (93)
Importance of Religion	-.235*** (218)	.034 (220)	-.175* (92)

[Significance key: \*=p<.05 \*\*=p<.01 \*\*\*=p<.001]

Note: Direction of codings are generally with higher values moving toward the labeled value. I.e., Prayer: High=frequent; Contributions: larger; Importance: Very Important; Race: High=non-white; Fundamentalism: High=fundamentalist.

In comparing these two tables, some interesting, though slight, differences emerge. For the Northeastern weekday audience, viewing of religious television is associated with slightly higher educational and income levels. Religious viewing seems to be slightly more common among men in this group, than is the case in general. All of these relationships should have been expected, based on the earlier demographic analysis. What is more obvious here than earlier, however, is the fact that these weekday viewers present a different relationship between media and religiosity measures than does the general sample. They appear to be less fundamentalist, and less likely to report that religion is "very important" in their lives, though these differences are slight.

#### Summary

Overall, then, the Northeastern weekday-viewing respondents, and the specific respondents who watch the 700 Club are reasonably representative of all viewers of religious television in most respects, save the aspects, such as their likelihood to call in, which are most significant of the Club as an institution. They are a bit better educated, a bit younger, and a bit more affluent than the norm. They are also more frequent church attenders, more fundamental in

belief, and more involved in terms of calling or contributing to religious programs. The correlation between their viewing measures and their religiosity measures reveals that their viewing and these things are a bit less strongly associated than is the case for the general population, though much of this difference is probably due to a "ceiling effect." This means that because they are so extreme in certain of these behaviors, there is simply not the range of variance possible to support a high correlation between viewing and other behaviors.

The major findings of the Gerbner, et. al. study present an account of the phenomenon of religious broadcasting which is not unlike that available from previous work. The qualitatively superior data base has confirmed that the overall picture of the audience for religious broadcasting holds even for important subgroups of viewers. The data have allowed us to sketch a picture of the demographic, belief, and behavior characteristics of the prospective interview sample of this study, and see in what ways it is similar to, and different from, the general population, and the population of religious television viewers.

We are left with our research questions essentially unmodified by these findings. The following chapters report

on the interviews conducted to elaborate these basic findings of the Gerbner, et. al. and earlier studies.

## V: Analysis and Findings of Interviews

It was anticipated that at least five major questions would be addressed by this study: First, how the respondents, themselves, seem to describe their various media and other beliefs and behaviors vis a vis their own religiosity, functional and substantive; Second, how the various religious-institutional (formal and informal) forces seem to interplay in their lives, including both the "two party" dimension and relative primacy and recency of various behavior and believe structures; Third, how these viewers relate their viewing of religious television to other media consumption behaviors; Fourth, viewer integration into "conventional" church attitudes, symbols, and behaviors, and media-related ones; Fifth, a sense of directionality of the relationships found.

Full accounts of the interviews themselves appear as Appendix III. These interviews, as data, present information and insight into all of these issues, but seem also to present a slightly different analytic agenda than the one implicit in the research questions. For instance, respondents do not, by and large, consume much media other than religious television, and thus the whole question of the relationship between these behaviors is less one of



comparison of various types of behaviors as they are present, and more one of how the avoidance of certain cultural-symbolic experiences relate to the consumption of others (specifically, explicitly "religious" media.) Respondents also do not hold salient the whole question of what is and what is not "religion," or "religious television." With one important exception, to be discussed later, the extent to which the existence of a program like the 700 Club, can be taken to be "secular" by "non-believers" (and thus 'sneak up on them' with an alternative world-view) is entirely transparent to these viewers. The respondents, themselves, very clearly hold their viewing to be a "religious" or "religiously significant" activity, one that has substantive, not only functional salience for them. Thus, the question (the first of the proposal's questions) of how these people define "religion" is less important than what they designate to be a religious activity, and how they do this.

The methodology which evolved is based very much in the structure of the interviews as they progressed, looking to the respondents not only for what issues and dimensions seem salient, but also how they relate to one another. Out of these discussions has emerged at least one very important

additional analytic tool, a dimensions we call "localism/translocalism."

We therefore have used two analytical frameworks to address the research questions proposed. They are related, of course, as are the questions themselves. First, we will plot each case along its own viewing/religiosity "trajectory," describing meaningful relationships between the ideological, behavioral, and symbolic components of each respondent's "faith history" around their religious television viewing. Through this plotting, most of the important research questions from the original proposal can be addressed. Second, we will attempt to establish the importance of a new dimension, that of localism/translocalism, to these issues, and describe the various cases in terms of their positions on this localism/translocalism dimension.

#### Viewing and Involvement Trajectories.

This analysis is intended to answer the basic question of causal direction not established by other research. The most simple question here is based on the finding noted earlier that religious television viewing and religious behaviors and beliefs are related. Analysis of the Gerbner, et. al. data base supported earlier research studies which

have seen this (very strong) relationship to be evidence that religious television viewing stems from pre-existing and more basic religious attitudes and functional religiosity. Some voices, especially venal ones among the religious broadcasting establishment, (and indeed, those justifying broadcasting as a truly "evangelical" endeavor) have argued that this relationship also moves in the other direction, that is, that viewing of religious television can lead to increased levels of conventional religiosity. If, among the respondents in this study, presumably the most "typical" viewers of this type of programming (by virtue of their loyalty to it and their membership and contributions to it) ["typical" is not intended here to mean "average" so much as to imply, conceptually, those viewers who are most centrally related to the program, the ones from whom producers hear the most, and whose tastes and needs are most pressingly articulated in the program production process] it is found that the common pattern is of watching the program first, and turning to other religious behaviors later, then there would be some reason to suspect that the direction of relationships goes from viewing to religion, at least occasionally.

To answer this and other directionality issues, trajectory analyses need only look at the respondent's

reported order of various experiences, attitudes, beliefs, etc. If a given behavior precedes another temporally, it can at least be assumed that the more recent behavior could not have "caused" the former, though more evidence would be needed to clearly establish that the converse (the former "caused" the latter) is, in fact, true.

Trajectory analyses include at least these issues/dimensions: How respondents first began watching religious television, and when that happened; How respondents first became involved in conventional religious behaviors and beliefs, and how/when beliefs and behaviors have changed over time; If respondents have had "religious experiences" (visions, re-baptism, tongues, etc.), the intensity of those experiences, and when they occurred; and, the time order of these various elements, where clear.

The dimensions of this analysis also emerge out of the interviews themselves. While certain of them ("substantive religiosity" for instance) were expected to be important issues before the study began, other issues came to be obvious dimensions of belief/behavior interrelationships through the interviews. Nearly all cases hold the same set of dimensions to be salient to their experience with religious television, and with few exceptions, the major

dimensions seem to relate to the others in the same temporal order. The following were the salient dimensions which emerged in this way.

Substantive Religiosity. It has been noted that much previous research in this area concentrated on "functional" aspects of religiosity. Presumably, this has been because of the relative ease of measurement of functional issues such as church attendance, Bible reading, etc., at least in part. Berger (1974) has pointed out, however, that this is very much staging Hamlet without the prince. The whole, material meaning of religion is, in fact, something meta-functional, if you will. In Geertz's terms, there is an ontology which informs the ethic, and it is this which defines the "religious." It was decided to attempt to log substantive issues of religiosity for the respondents in this study, with as clean a measurement or classificatory scheme as is possible, given the obvious problems involved with operationalizing a metaphysical "quantity."

Certain aspects of substantive belief can be gauged fairly easily, particularly in that the primary interest of the study has been the "two party" dynamic defining the tension between "modernism" and "fundamentalism." For instance, the responses of a person to a question on their

belief about the Bible, can qualitatively differentiate between those who hold it to be infallible and those who are less convinced of either its metaphysical or tangible meaning and value. A person who reports experiences of visions, visitations, divine healings, etc., can usually be seen, when considered along with his/her expressed belief that these were emanations of one specific God, to have a qualitatively different substantive religiosity than one who has never had these experiences. There is no claim made here that the dimension we call "substantive religiosity" is anything other than a very broad classification, one which takes attitude and belief statements by respondents as indications of respondent belief being either classically "evangelical" (including pentecostal or fundamentalist doctrines or beliefs) or "non-evangelical" (including either non-Christian, mainline Protestant, or Roman Catholic aspects.) In most cases, respondent attitude about the Bible (Biblical literalism) can be taken to be the most important measure of evangelicalism or fundamentalism (as is done in quantitative studies by the Gallup organization and others.) In some cases, however, other indications are taken along with the belief about the Bible. For instance, while Respondents 3 and 4 do not choose the most "literalist"

position on the Bible, they do describe their early religious experience as being "Bible believing," and they report having had specific experiences of being "born again."

Taken together, in order to be scored "evangelical" in this substantive religiosity area, a respondent would have to conform rather well to the description of the fundamentalist-evangelical "symbolic world" presented by Bourgault:

The symbolic world of fundamentalist religion, with its emotional style, its conversion experiences, its literal interpretation of the Bible, its rejection of the prevailing culture with its scientific approaches to human creation, its ascetic intolerance for the larger secular society...all of these form a symbolic cast. (Bourgault, 1980:38)

In some cases, respondents provide insight into the sense in which this substantive dimension is in tension with their functional religiosity (generally in terms of church attendance.) For instance, Respondent 22 had expressed frustration with the fact that the mainline church she attended did not profess enough of the fundamentalist beliefs she holds dear. She was asked how this "tension" came about. She responded that the church had changed, that it used to be more fundamentalist, but over the years, the "liberals" had taken control of the denomination, ruining the Sunday School materials and the worship order.

Through a variety of means then, all respondents can be gauged as to whether they hold evangelical/fundamentalist beliefs. This can be measured either through more objective means (their response on the Bible item) or through more deductive means (such as self-reported distance from others or from organizations which the respondents consider to be non-evangelical).

Functional Religiosity. This is a simple objective measure of whether or not respondents are involved in religious behaviors that are related to evangelical/fundamentalist, or non-evangelical organizations or religious institutions. These behavioral measures can also be taken in terms of respondent particularist behaviors, such as whether a given respondent actually "evangelizes" (i.e., participates in door-to-door witnessing, etc.) Neither this item nor the substantive area above turned out to be very difficult to measure within this particular sample. Nearly all respondents actually see the issues, institutions, and dimensions dealt with here very clearly in these terms. They have a set of beliefs which are their own, and which can be more or less orthogonal with their institutional commitments. They further see their institutional associations very clearly in terms of a given



church's or organization's authenticity and commitment to evangelical witness.

Religious Experience. Nearly every respondent reports, besides their set of basic beliefs and their particular functionalist behaviors, a range of experiences from which they draw substantive religious meaning. In most cases, this is an experience of being baptized or being "born again." In several cases, these religious experiences are quite focused, with a specific event of seeing visions, hearing voices, experiencing healing, etc., a focus of their personal level of religious experience. The range of this dimension, then, runs from the very focused--i.e., Respondent 20's experience of being born-again at a rally--to the more diffuse, where the r8's contend that "...the process of being 'born again' is an evolutionary one. We don't always buy those stories of seeing lights and visions."

This dimension is very much that described by James in The Varieties of Religious Experience. This is also a dimension which respondents see as being relatively independent of their substantive beliefs or functional behaviors. Of course, once an respondent has a vision, these other elements are affected. For instance, Respondent 20, a Catholic, finds that he is less close now to his priest, who

cannot accept that his experience was authentic.

Salient "Social" Experience. There are those experiences which are not related to either religiosity or to religious experience, but which "break in" on the lives of respondents, bringing new meaning to, or new conflicts with, their religiosity. A surprisingly large number of respondents report very serious personal problems, and relate these in one way or another to their being drawn to viewing the 700 Club. Among this sample, there are at least the following experiences: One personal bankruptcy, two deaths of children from illness, two attempted suicides by children (one to the same family who had a another child die of cancer), a woman who discovered her husband was a bigamist and a mafioso the evening the FBI showed up to arrest him (she has not seen him since), one woman who was driving the car when an accident killed her husband, a child killed by inadequate medical treatment (or so the parents believe), a man whose first wife shot herself to death in front of him, a paraplegic, and two widows from more or less natural means. In all, the interviews revealed a surprising concentration of such troubles, and nearly all respondents who reported such things, reported a direct link between this experience and their coming to view the 700 Club. Fewer of them reported

that their experiences had an affect on their conventional religious behaviors.

Social/Political Attitudes. This dimension was expected to be a fairly important one, particularly based on the extent to which the political impact of "Electronic Church" broadcasts has been controversial. It was clearly established by the ASC/Gallup study that viewers of these programs are more politically conservative than non-viewers, but it was not possible to clarify there whether this political conservatism itself is a clear dynamic in the process of viewing these programs, or whether it is merely so closely related to evangelical religiosity that the two cannot be separated, and that it is the religiosity, not the political attitude, which predicts viewing. In fact, the overall finding here was that many, but not all, respondents report clear gratification from the political and social content of The 700 Club. While there is a great deal of possibility of social desirability playing a role here (respondents saying that the political content attracts them because they know its there, and expect that the interviewer would want them to say that) the clear sense emerged from most interviews that, in fact, this political/social content forms a vital attraction for them, and a major reason for

contributing to CBN.

Class. Class was measured subjectively, based on an assessment of the homes, material lifestyles, occupations, and class-oriented statements of the various respondents. While most were, of course, middle class or upper-middle class, some variance was found here. Two respondents lived in clearly upper-class ways (servants, large estates, very expensive furniture, etc.) Class was only considered a salient issue in cases where respondents mentioned class-related issues in their explanations of the beliefs or behaviors. For instance, Respondents 3 and 4 reported that while there were many people to whom they talk about their faith and their viewing of the program, there are many to whom they do not, particularly associates in Mr. 3's brokerage firm, social contacts through his work, and neighbors.

As a matter of course, this issue of who respondents will talk to about their viewing revealed class associations in nearly all cases where it was a salient issue. Class was also particularly salient in many respondents descriptions of differences between 700 Club and PTL, particularly in terms of "...who would be attracted to each." It is clearly perceived by these viewers that CBN would be attractive to a

"higher" class audience than would PTL. This further reveals an active consciousness that self-conscious religiosity, particularly of the type evidenced by PTL, is a class phenomenon, with "lower classes" more obviously religious. CBN, by contrast, tends to be seen as a program which illustrates to the wider world the fact that religious people don't have to be "Bible-thumping" or intellectually inferior.

Religious Television. This turned out to be a very straightforward issue. Most respondents were well aware, throughout the interview, that the focus of the study was to be religious television, and thus were very forthcoming in locating their viewing of these programs within their own cognitive maps. About half of the respondents viewed only the 700 Club, though they were somewhat familiar with other programs. The other half viewed many different programs, but preferred the 700 Club. Only one respondent did not prefer to watch the 700 Club, (but she was still a contributor) and one reported that she seldom, if ever, watched religious television.

Para-Church Involvements. In a subset of the respondents, it became clear that their viewing of religious television needed to be seen within the context of larger involvements in non-church or "para-church" religiosity. This

describes a set of involvemnts and institutions which exist outside the realm of normally-construed institutional religion. There exists within American society a large and diffuse network of agencies and organizations which are religiously motivated but which are not directly related to churches or church denominations. These organizations have arisen in response to the widely-observed tendency for American Protestantism, in particluar, to be a "meta-church" reality. Noord (1984), for instance, has detailed the extensive influence that Bible Societies had on American publishing in the last century. Niebuhr (1929) and others have held that the various waves of American Protestant evangelization, institutionalization, and schism, have had an anti-establishment bias, and the "great awakenings" of American Protestantism have been largely meta-denominational events. The average American seems to have a nearly insatiable desire to simply "be religious" on a certain level (as can be seen in the surprisingly high levels of self-reported religious belief in such national surveys as Gallup, Harris, and Roper---levels which far outstrip measurable "functional" religiosity, attendance and church membership.)

A great number of organizations and institutions stand

ready to aid in this expression of non-church religiosity. Campus Crusade for Christ, Jews for Jesus, "The Way International," The Full Gospel Businessmen's Fellowship International, and the Slavic Gospel Association are all examples of religious organizations which work actively outside denominational circles, but which hold services, provide counseling, and organize evangelistic activity. Other para-church possibilities exist which are less conventionally "church like," however. ABC Entertainment publishes religious periodicals, and produces religious albums under the WORD label. There are also evangelistic ministries which travel from city to city, radio ministries, and television ministries. Each of these organizations is more or less completely articulated, offering a variety of opportunities and affiliational possibilities, but taken together, they form a fairly well institutionalized locus for the interests and energies of persons who wish to act on their beliefs in non-church ways.

Within this sample, such para-church involvements run from the more institutionally-related, such as Chuck Colson's prison ministry program, to the informal, such as one respondent who runs her own prison ministry program in women's prisons in Delaware County. In some cases these para-church

involvements stem from viewing of religious television, in others, it is vice versa, in still others, the para-church involvements seem to exist with little relationship to religious viewing.

#### Trajectory Analyses Case by Case

Diagrammed trajectories are presented for each case. In all cases, it should be remembered that the salience of a given issue, and its relation to other dimensions, evolved out of the interviews themselves. No attempt is made here to infer an association which was not clearly stated by the respondent, and no attempt is made to assign a value to a dimension (i.e., "evangelical" religiosity) without clear information from the respondent on which to make such an assignment.

Each of the trajectories implies only one active axis, that of time, moving from left to right. The placement of each dimension along this continuum is organized according to respondent-reported time order. It was not possible, in all cases, to fill in all spaces, and no attempt was made to infer such placements. Moving accross from left to right, the value of a given dimension should be assumed to remain constant until it is seen to change at a later time.

Arrows are not intended to imply anything other than



time order and association. There is no implication of causality intended by any of these arrows, they are there only to connect dimensions that were clearly connected by the respondents themselves and to indicate, visually, what preceded what, in the mental map of the respondent.

Each trajectory is accompanied by an explication intended to clarify the significance of the associations presented in it. Interview accounts and trajectory analyses are reported in the chronological order in which they were administered.

#### Cases Number 3 and 4

These respondents were a family of three (father, mother, grown daughter who lives at home). The parents started out in evangelical, highly functionally "religious" homes, but in non-evangelical churches. They continue to attend a mainline church. Their political attitudes seem to be more moderate than other respondents, but this is largely a function of their having become involved in prison ministry and other volunteer social work.

Probably because of their class/social associations, and because of their mainline membership, Respondents 3 and 4 express a more diffuse personal religious experience than do other respondents. They consider themselves "born again" but

Figure 1:  
Trajectory for Respondent Number 3

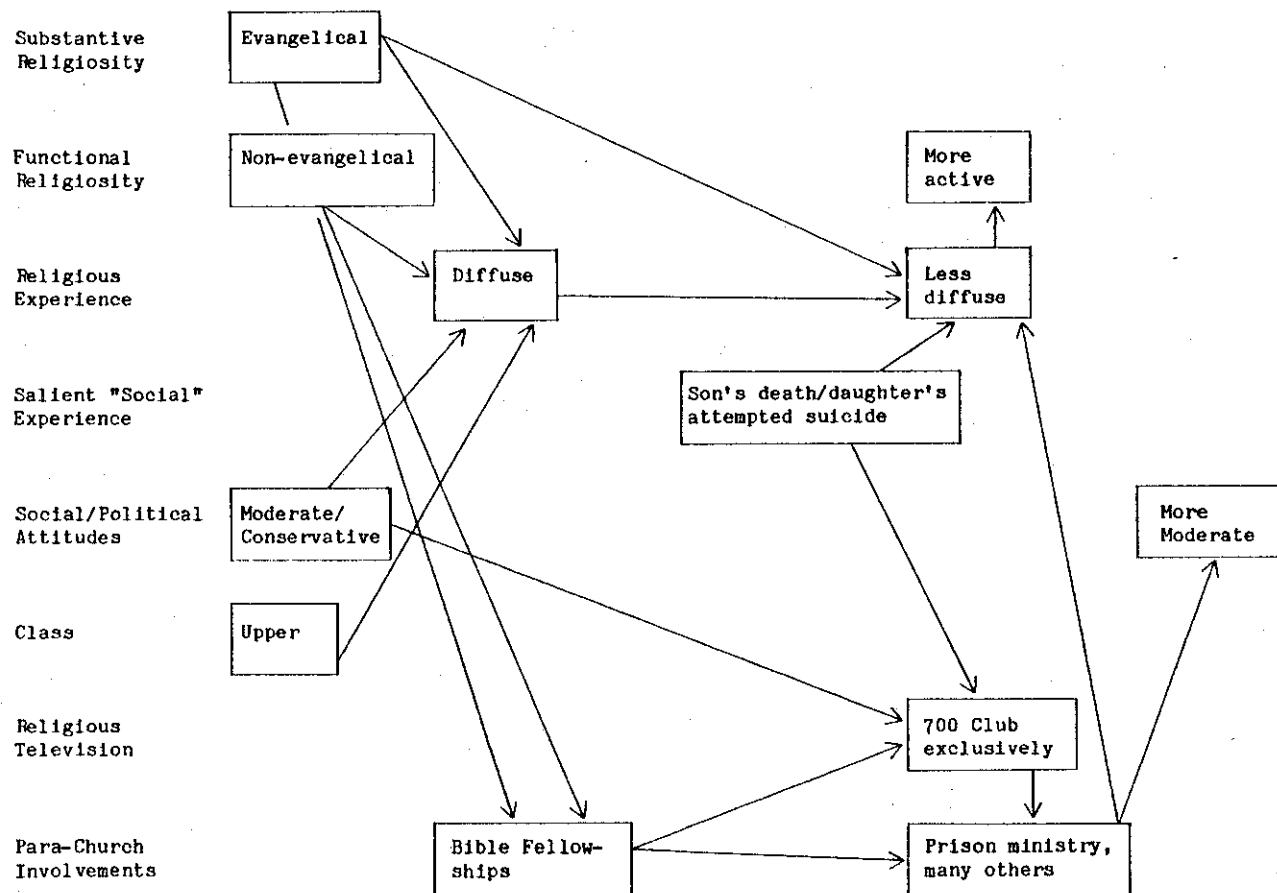
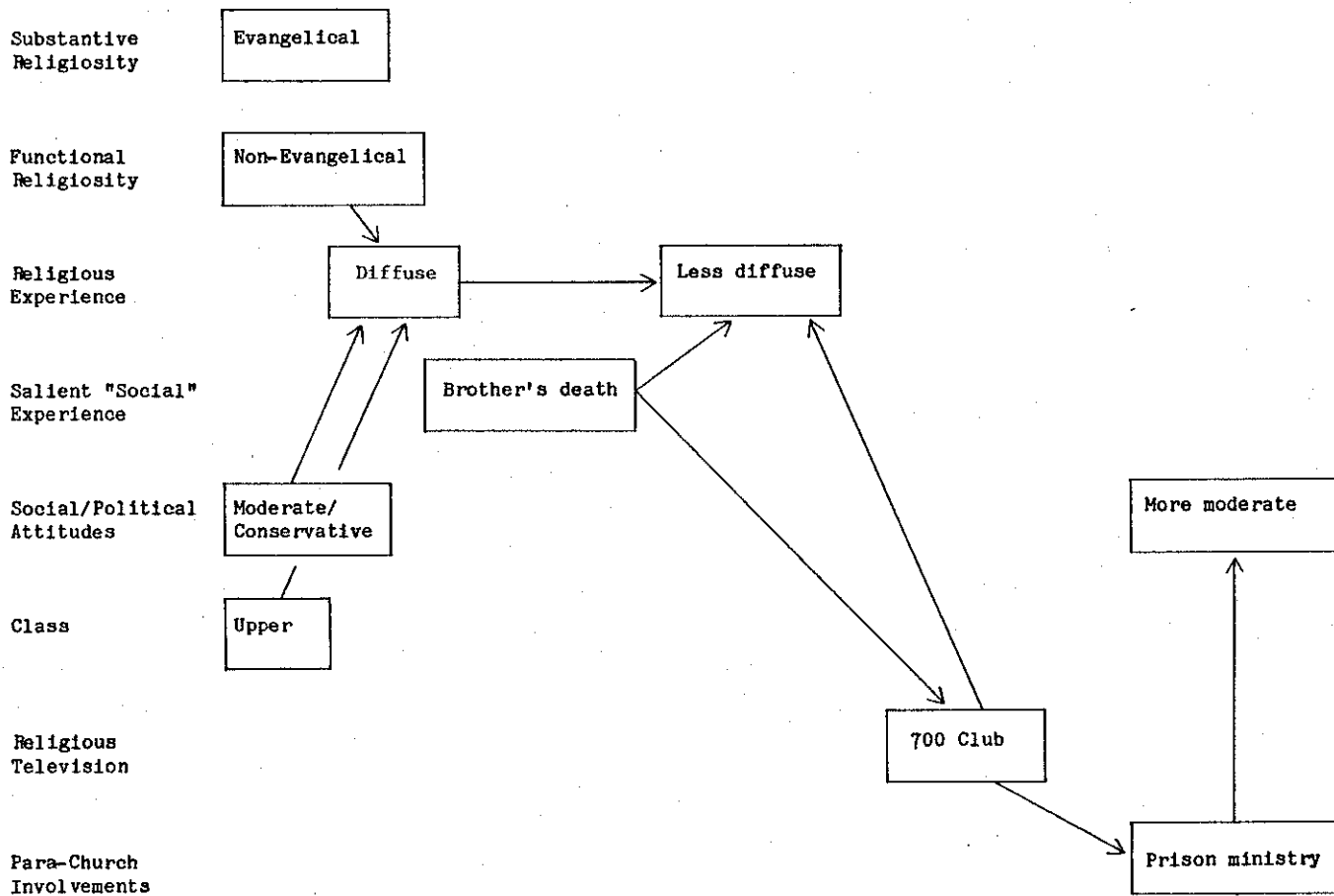


Figure 2:  
Trajectory for Respondent Number 4



see this to be an "evolutionary" process.

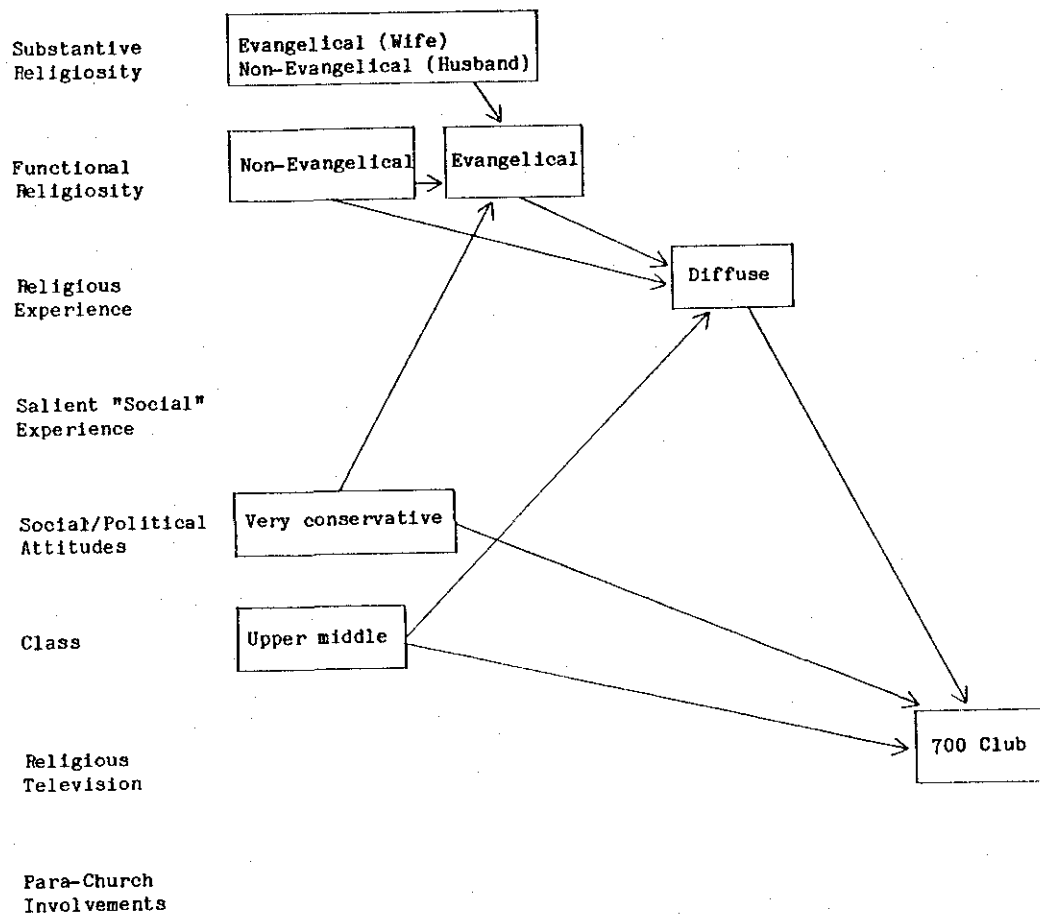
The watershed issue in their faith history was the death of their son and the attempted suicide of their daughter. They report that their viewing of the 700 Club began immediately after this experience, and they have become heavily involved as donors and acquaintances of CBN. They have travelled to the CBN headquarters many times, and contribute over 1200 per month to the network. They watch only the 700 Club, but are familiar enough with the PTL Club to describe extensive differences between the two programs, including that people of different classes are probably attracted to each (lower to PTL, higher to CBN).

As a result of their son's death, and their viewing of the program, they have begun to feel free to express a personal religious experience as less diffuse, and have become more active in their local church.

Case Number 8

The outstanding thing about Respondents 8 is their political conservatism and their social isolation. Interviewed were a husband and wife in their late fifties, whose children are out of the home. They live very comfortably on the salary Mr. 8 earns in the security business. Mrs. 8 was more evangelical as a child than was

Figure 3:  
Trajectory for Respondent Number 8



Mr. 8, but both of them attended a non-evangelical church as children. After marriage, they sought out an evangelical church, more consistent with Mrs. 8's substantive religiosity. They gradually began to see themselves then as "born again," though they insist that this is "...an evolutionary process...."

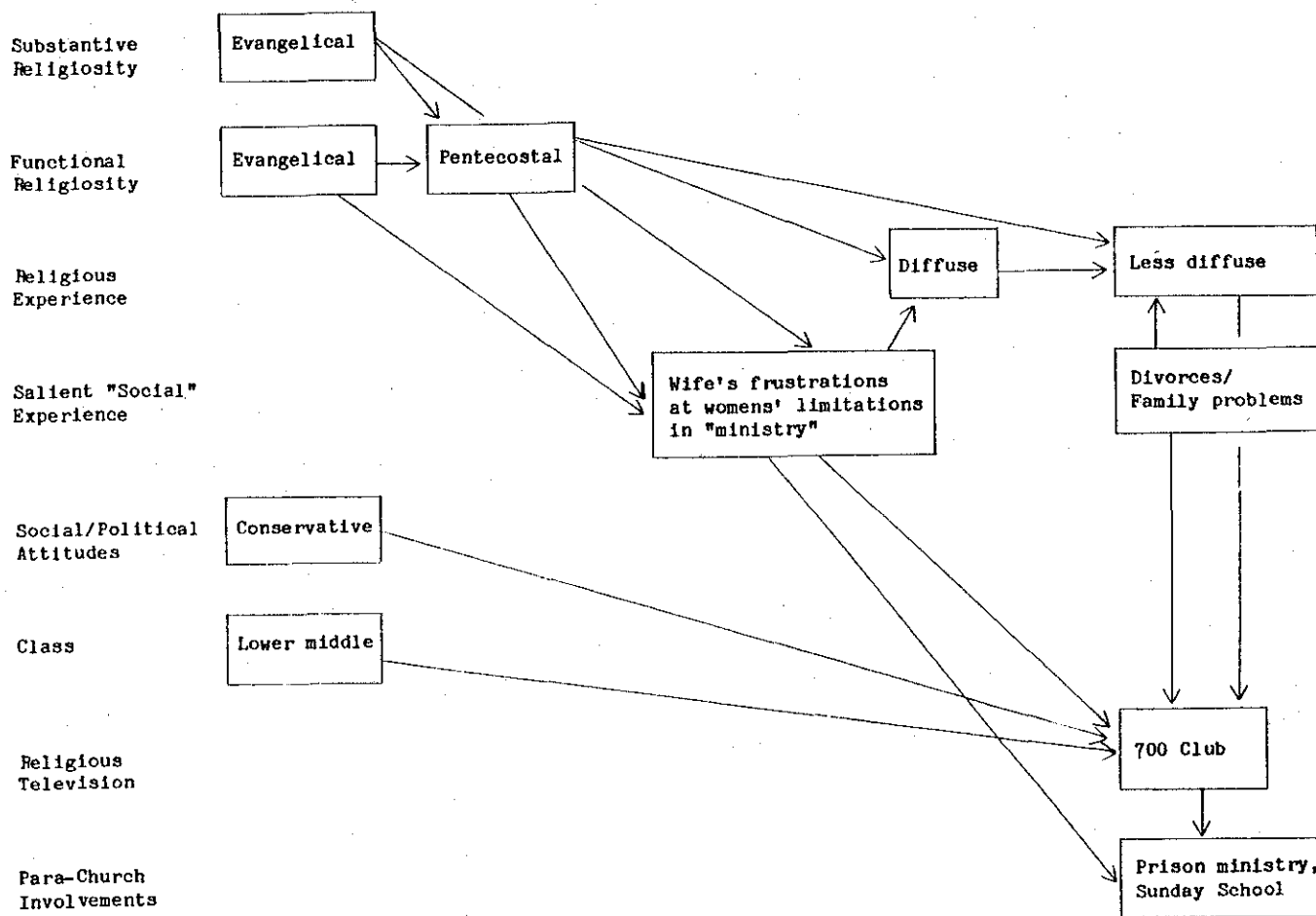
They relate the 700 Club rather loosely to their ever more evangelical religious experience, but more strongly to their conservative political and social attitudes. Their current level of religious experience is evangelical, almost pentecostal. In response to the question "do you believe Jesus will return to earth someday?" they both respond, "...I hope it's tomorrow...."

The 8s have no "para-church" involvements, and report no salient "social experience" which might have been active in the development of their faith/viewing trajectory.

#### Case Number 12

In many ways these people were the most interesting and complex case interviewed. Both had been raised evangelical in evangelical or pentecostal churches (the distinction is based on whether "speaking in tongues," or other charismatic aspects were present in their substantive or functional religious experiences). Both had been divorced. In this

Figure 4:  
Trajectory for Respondent Number 12



family, it was the wife who provided the most interesting issues for consideration. She had always felt frustrated that she could not be a minister, which is what she always wanted to be. However, in the conservative, pentecostal churches where she grew up and belonged, the proper role for a woman was only as a wife, mother, and member of the "ladies circle."

This dissonance for her between her desires and the constraints of her church has led her to a looser relationship with her traditional church of affiliation. After her divorce and remarriage, which was not well accepted by her home congregation, she and her new husband moved to join a Black church, because she says, "...I've felt a calling to be in ministry to the Black church... their leadership doesn't tend to be very good...."

As a result of these various experiences, the 12s have become more focused in their personal religiosity. Their viewing of religious television, they see to be tangential to their central focus in religious activity, which is the wife's "ministry." She says, "...I'm the one that carries things here, because I'm the one with the gifts...I'm the more intelligent one, for instance...." Her husband responds, "...yes, and I just am real proud of her, I love to



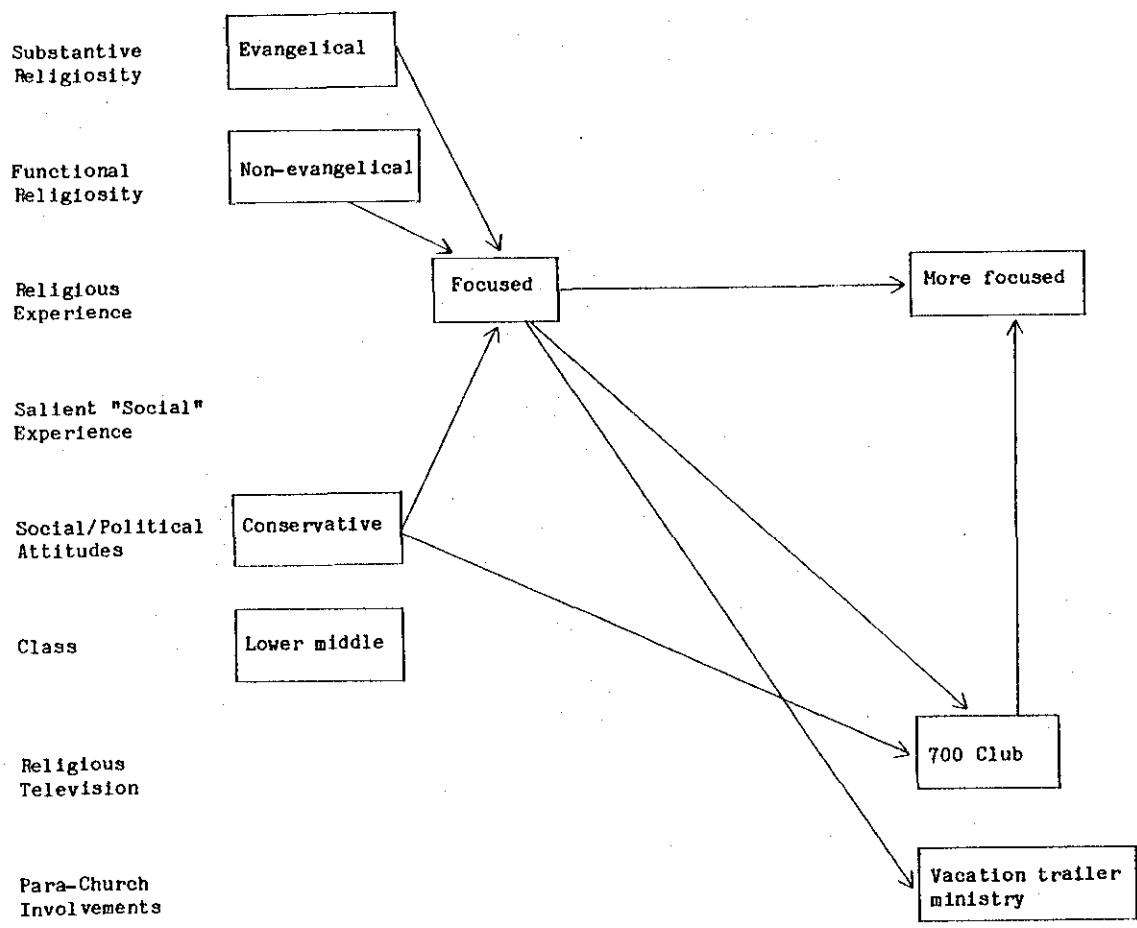
hear her preach...." They have become extensively involved in para-church endeavors through the wife's starting of her own prison ministry in women's county prisons in the western suburbs of the city.

Case Number 14

Para-church involvements also typify case 14, a retired couple, each on their second marriage (widowed, in each case) where the husband is an ex-minister in the American Baptist (mainline) church, and the wife is a former bookkeeper. Both had been very evangelical in outlook, and had been politically conservative.

Both of them report focused personal religious experience, and both would say they've been "born again." Mr. 14, in fact, had a charismatic experience at a CBN meeting in Virginia, his first such experience. They view the 700 Club as a more or less tangential experience among many others in their lives, though they have visited the CBN headquarters several times, and have received calls as "special donors" to CBN. They were particularly strong in their description of their reasons for finding the 700 Club attractive, giving an account which sees the program as a powerful example of Christians being able to witness in the wider world. This "translocalism" was a strong gratification

Figure 5:  
Trajectory for Respondent Number 14



for nearly all viewers, but the 14s were most convincing in the descriptions of the influence such a program can have in the "wider world," and in other gratifications of this type.

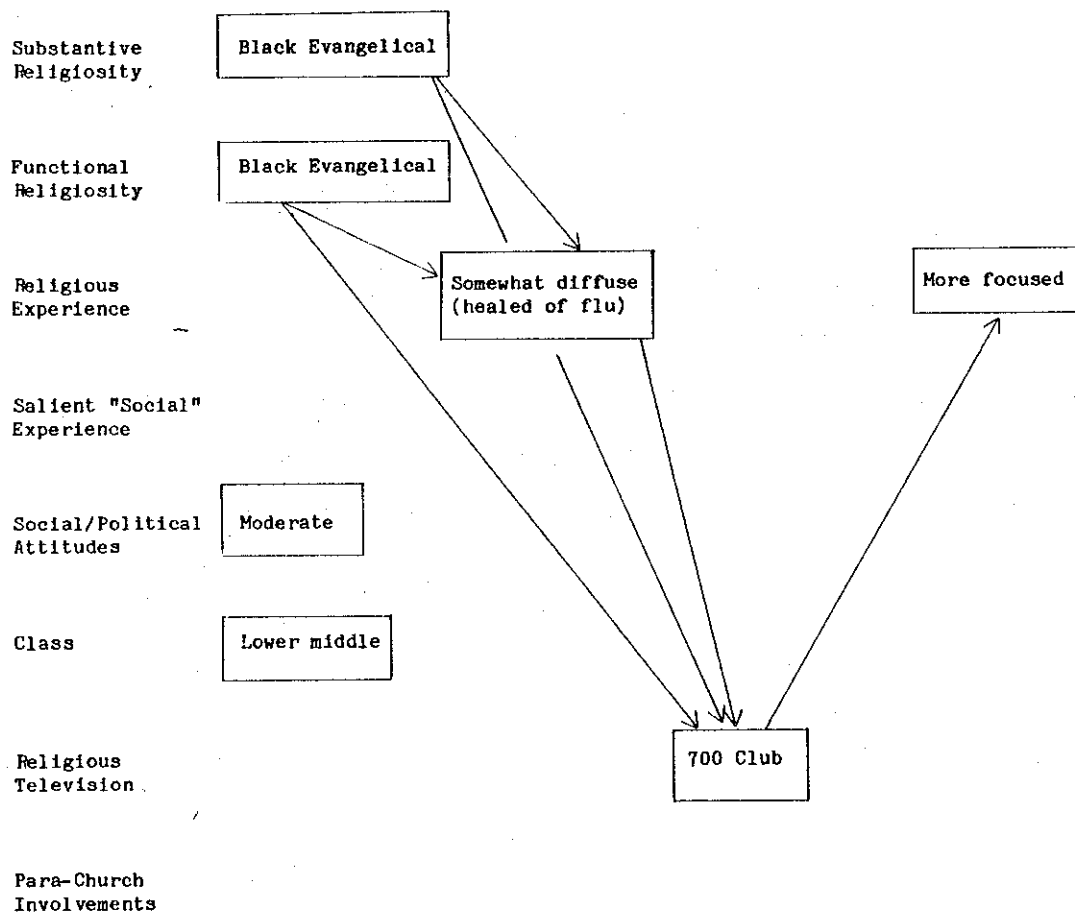
Their viewing of the program also seems remarkably unrelated, for them, to their primary religious involvement, which is a summer "trailer ministry" they operate at the Jersey Shore.

Case Number 18

Case 18 was the first Black person interviewed, and was rather unremarkable (on the surface) in terms of her religiosity, personal experience and consumption of the 700 Club. Black evangelicalism is a different type of religiosity from the white variety, with pentecostal elements much more accepted and acceptable among Black churches than among white churches. Black evangelicalism clearly does not carry the same social/political agenda as does white evangelicalism, and 18's political moderatism in the face of the pentecostal nature of her faith (sees visions, hears voices, as do her daughters) is to be expected. She is a woman of 67 years of age and was raised in an independent black Baptist church.

Her faith history was impressive in that she was so free and offhanded in her description of rather remarkable

Figure 6:  
Trajectory for Respondent Number 18



mystical experiences she has had, including her description of her own healing. Most faith stories dealing with healing among the sample dealt with rather serious illnesses.

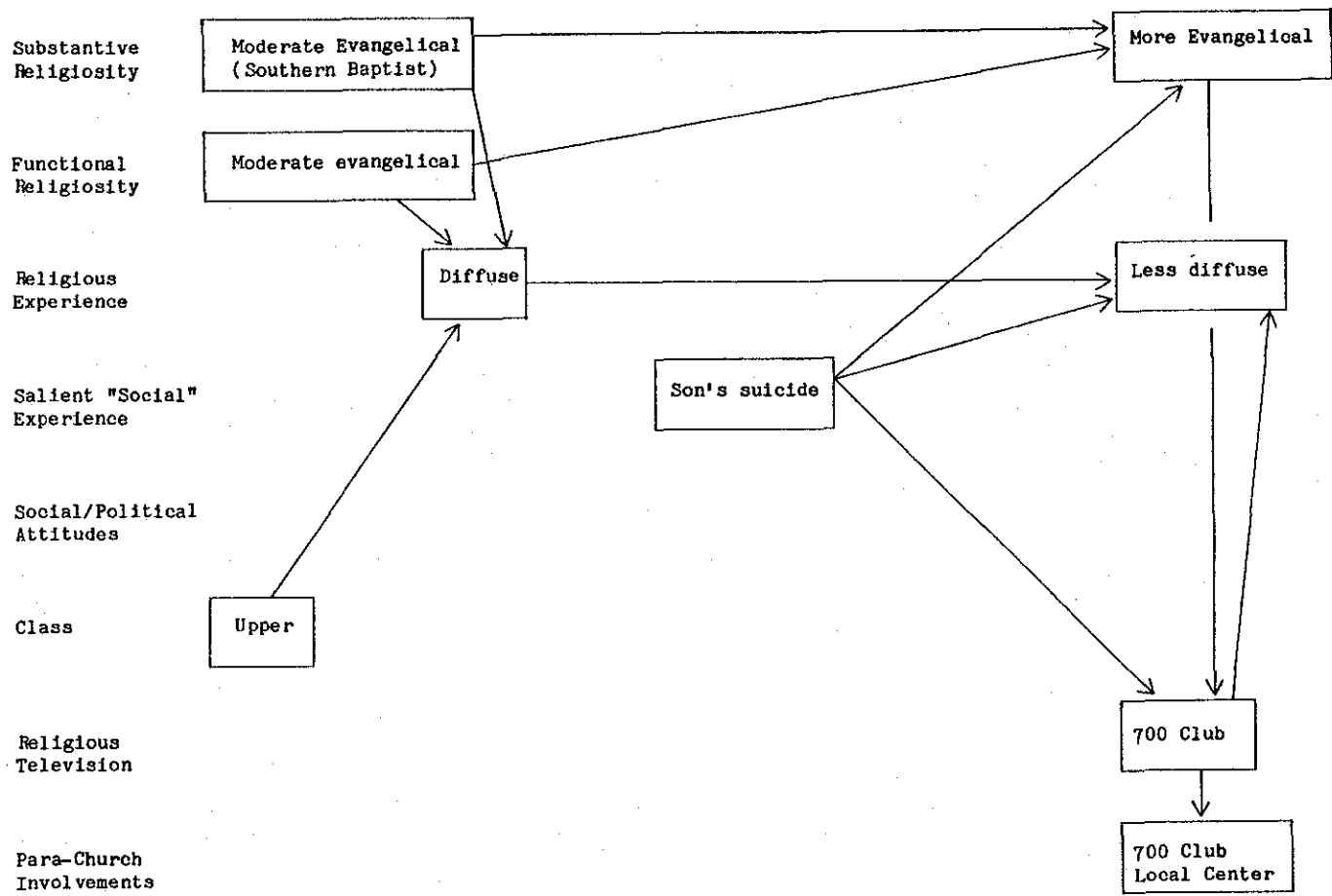
Conversly, Respondent 18 shares the story of how, through a vision, she was healed of the flu. This experience seems to have done little to extend or focus her faith, rather it is taken as a more or less mundane dimension of her particular belief system.

Respondent 18 sees her viewing of the 700 Club as an activity which is not terribly integral to her day-to-day religiosity, but it has focused her faith. She does not talk to many people about the program, even at church, but watches it very much as though it were nothing more than "entertainment" for her.

#### Case Number 19

Respondent 19 is one of two upper class respondents in the sample. Her proclivity to view the 700 Club is partly due to her religious upbringing, as a Southern Baptist in Atlanta. In that context, membership in the SBC is very much more an "establishment" activity than it would tend to be north of the Mason-Dixon line. Her level of religiosity tends to have been much more upper-class (less emotional, more rational) than other viewers of the program, and than

Figure 7:  
Trajectory for Respondent Number 19



she herself now holds, subsequent to her viewing the program.

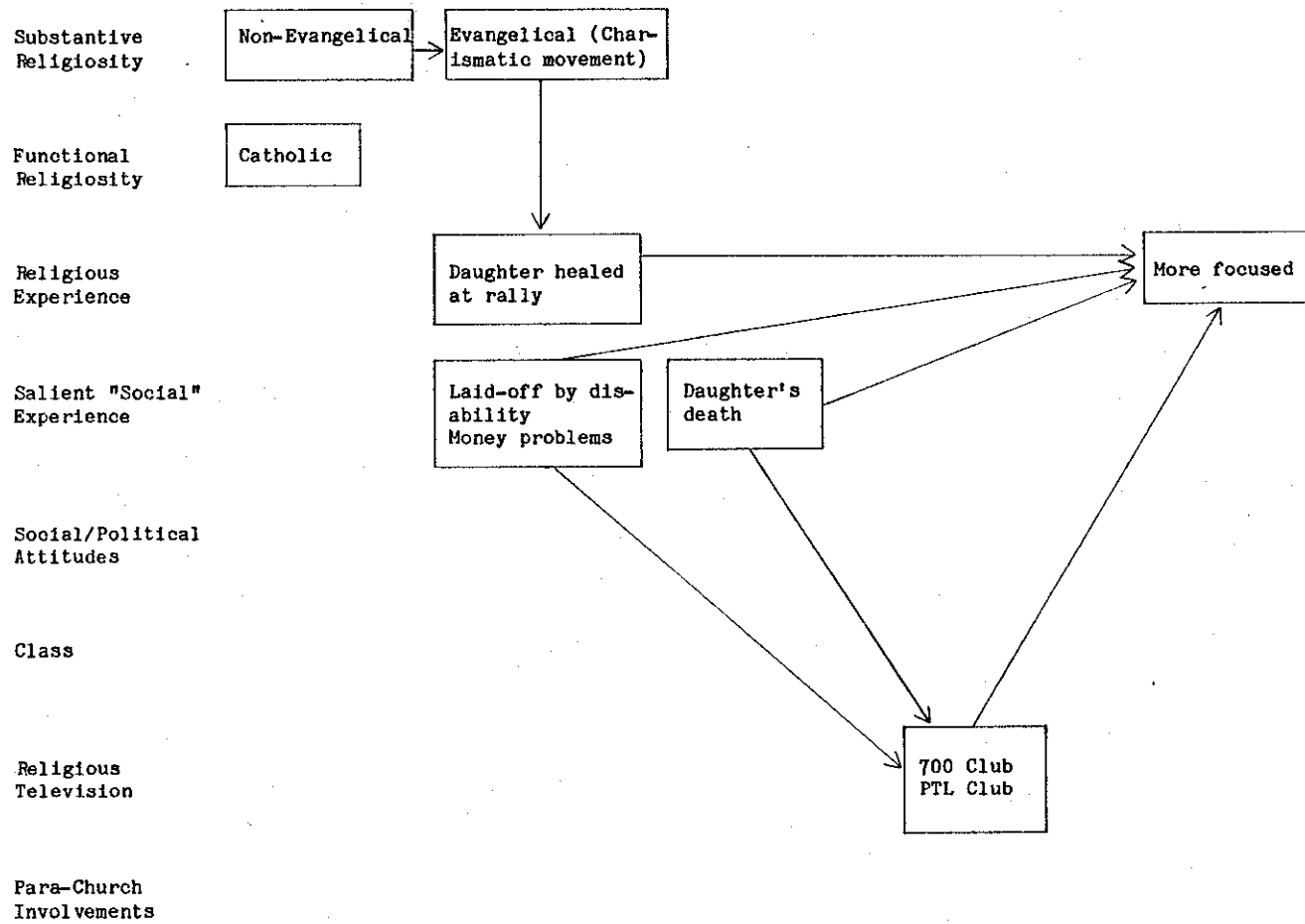
The central focus of Respondent 19's story is the experience of her son's suicide at age 24. This occurred five years ago, but is still a deeply emotional subject for her. This experience coincided with, for Respondent 19, a turning to more intense religiosity and to viewing of the 700 Club, to which she was attracted for inspiration and hope, particularly after her son's death. Through the 700 Club, she has also become involved in a para-church activity, as a volunteer for CBN's own local counseling center.

Case Number 20

Mr. 20 became a viewer of the 700 Club after a series of personal misfortunes and curious circumstances. He had been a Catholic all his life, but became involved in the Catholic Charismatic movement at the age of 35. He seems to have been drawn into this movement by friends, but that is not clear. He feels he has always had a "mystical" streak, and used to perform a "mind reading" act. He was quite concerned that this might be construed to have been an involvement in the occult, and felt himself that it was a questionable activity. In fact, his first major misfortune, developing epilepsy, he felt to be somehow related to his use of a crystal ball one night.

Figure 8:

Trajectory for Respondent Number 20



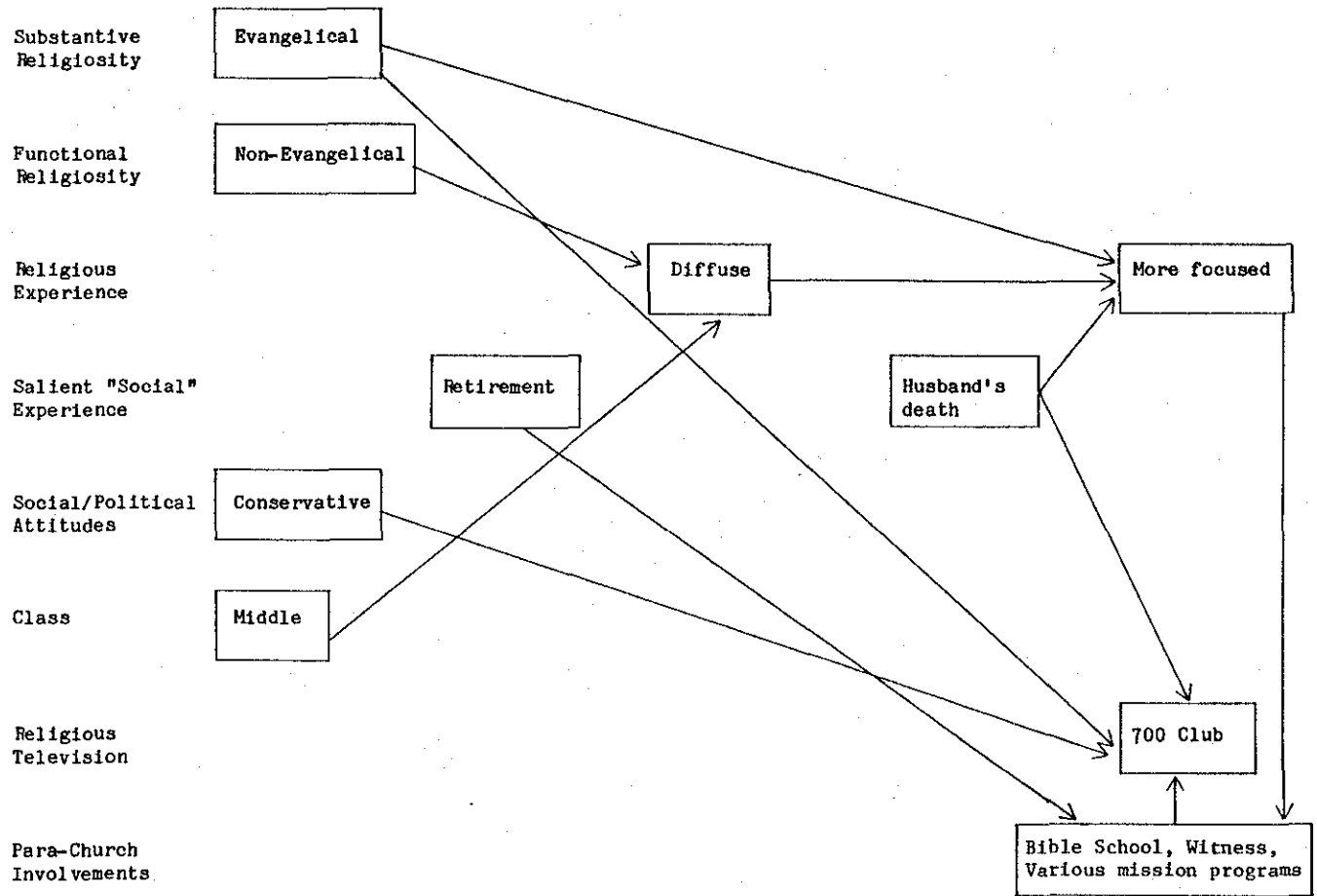


Laid off on full disability by his epilepsy, he soon experienced having his daughter develop leukemia. All of this, and the financial troubles which ensued, was quite stressful, and he and his wife began watching religious television and feeling some comfort through it--first PTL and later the 700 Club. They both prayed with PTL one day, and feel that that was instrumental in their developing a more focused faith, and in helping them out of their financial troubles. They further feel that their daughter was healed through a healing service they attended, only to die later of complications growing out of her treatment. The 20's are convinced that she died due to medical negligence, and are pursuing a lawsuit of both the doctor and the school she attended (a Catholic school, incidentally.)

Case Number 22

Respondent 22 is a woman of 76 years, an Ivy League graduate, who lives comfortably in an older suburb of the city, and who also maintains a vacation property at the shore. A major watershed for her was retirement, where she and her husband left the city and moved to her current address. In retirement, she left active, full-time volunteer work at a large mainline congregation in the city. She had, over the years, built up a feeling that this church was

Figure 9:  
Trajectory for Respondent Number 22



growing away from her basic evangelical positions, and once she left, she has not looked back. Surprisingly, for someone who had been as involved in her church as she, Respondent 22 cares little for such formalities as where her membership now resides.

She experienced the tragic death of her husband in a car accident (she was driving) ten years ago, and experienced a vision and visitation at that time. These did not change her life, but did serve to focus her sense of personal religious experience a bit.

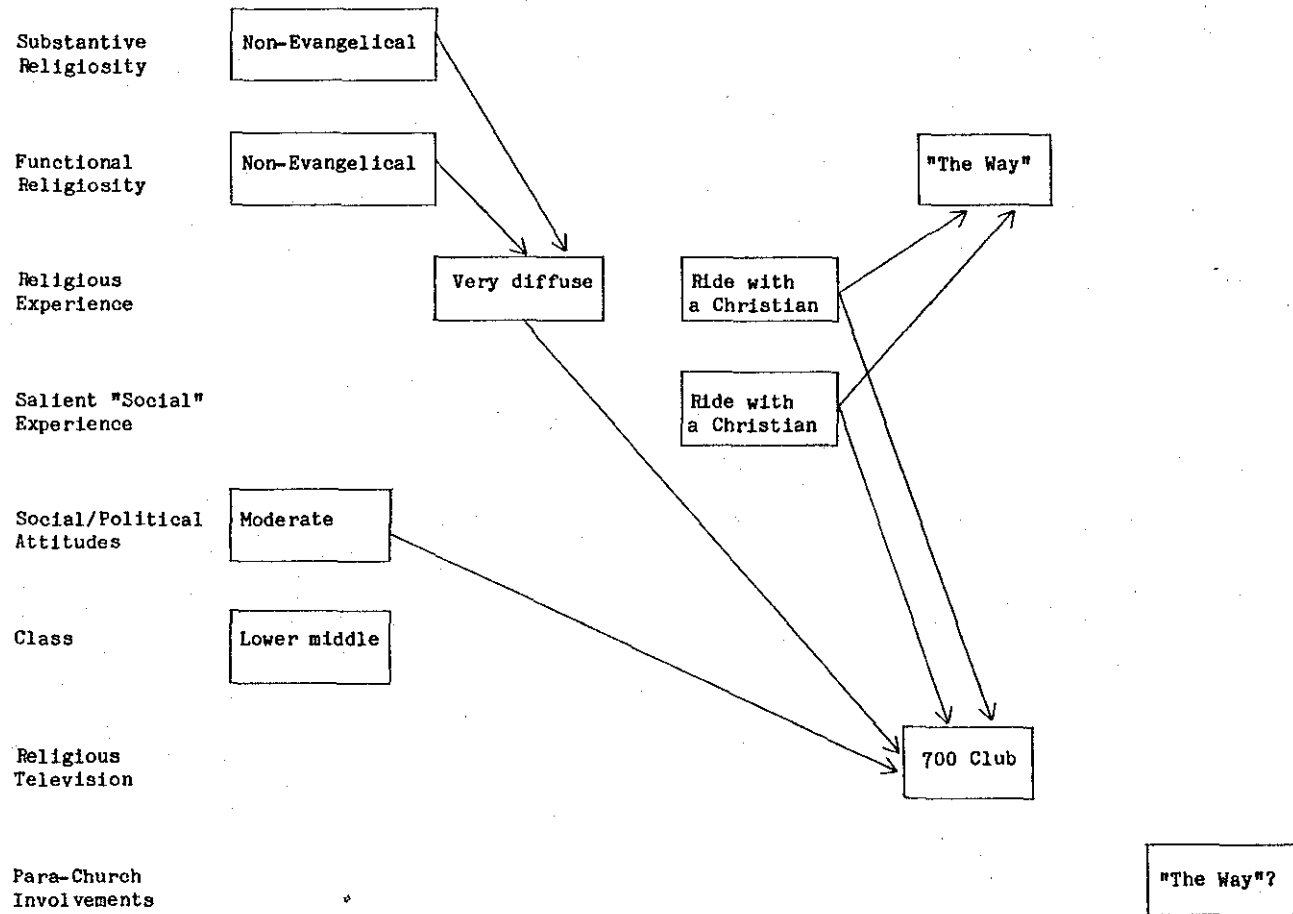
After retirement, she and her husband had begun to support a wide range of "para-church" institutions, and the 700 Club was merely one of these. She does not watch the program, she is "too busy."

Among her interests are work on alumni affairs for her Alma Mater, and a wide range of personal evangelistic activities, including a summer-long Bible School she runs for the church she relates to most, one at the shore near her vacation property there, and a Sunday School program she runs for a Black church also near her summer home.

#### Case Number 29

Respondent 29 is the least religious of all Respondents sampled. A single man in his fifties, he has been on

Figure 10:  
Trajectory for Respondent Number 29



disability for five years. His mother and aunt lived with him until recently when his mother died and his aunt entered a nursing home.

He describes himself as always having been religious. He was raised in a non-evangelical home and church, but he attended Sunday School regularly. Throughout his adult life, he attended little if any church, and is, to this day, quite skeptical of the church as an institution. However, he always held to a baseline religiosity, as was the norm for his class and social cohort. He revealed, for instance, that he had only ever met one person who did not believe in God, and that person was now a believer who described herself as a "former athiest."

The turning point for Respondent 29 came when he picked up a hitchhiker, a young woman, who was on her way to a meeting of "The Way International" an evangelical, cult-like group which stresses encounter-type therapies for drug addiction and other personal problems. Respondent 29 was so taken with the idea that this organization meant something to this hitchhiker, that he went along. He also, at nearly the same time, began to watch the 700 Club, which he found a more attractive way to articulate his faith than was "The Way," which he finds too restrictive and legalistic.

Respondent 29 is moderate on most political issues, and is the only interviewee who does not attend church regularly.

Case Number 31

Respondent 31 is a devout, practicing Jew (conservative), and began watching the 700 Club when she became paralyzed due to a long-standing spinal condition and was home a great deal. The problem of her health, and her inability to have children, have been troublesome to her, and she has begun to derive personal religious meaning and experience from these problems. She feels that the 700 Club helps her with this process.

Her substantive religiosity has come to be more universalist as she has been home, though she is still a very committed Jew, and she maintains very conservative political attitudes. Her universalist attitudes come to the fore in her description of her reasons for viewing the 700 Club. "We all worship the same God, don't we?" she says.

Case Number 35

Respondent 35 is right in the midst of a family crisis brought on by problems with her husband's business. They have had to declare personal bankruptcy, sell their home and their cars, give up their friends, and move to a more modest house away from the Main Line, where they had lived. She is

Figure 11:  
Trajectory for Respondent Number 31

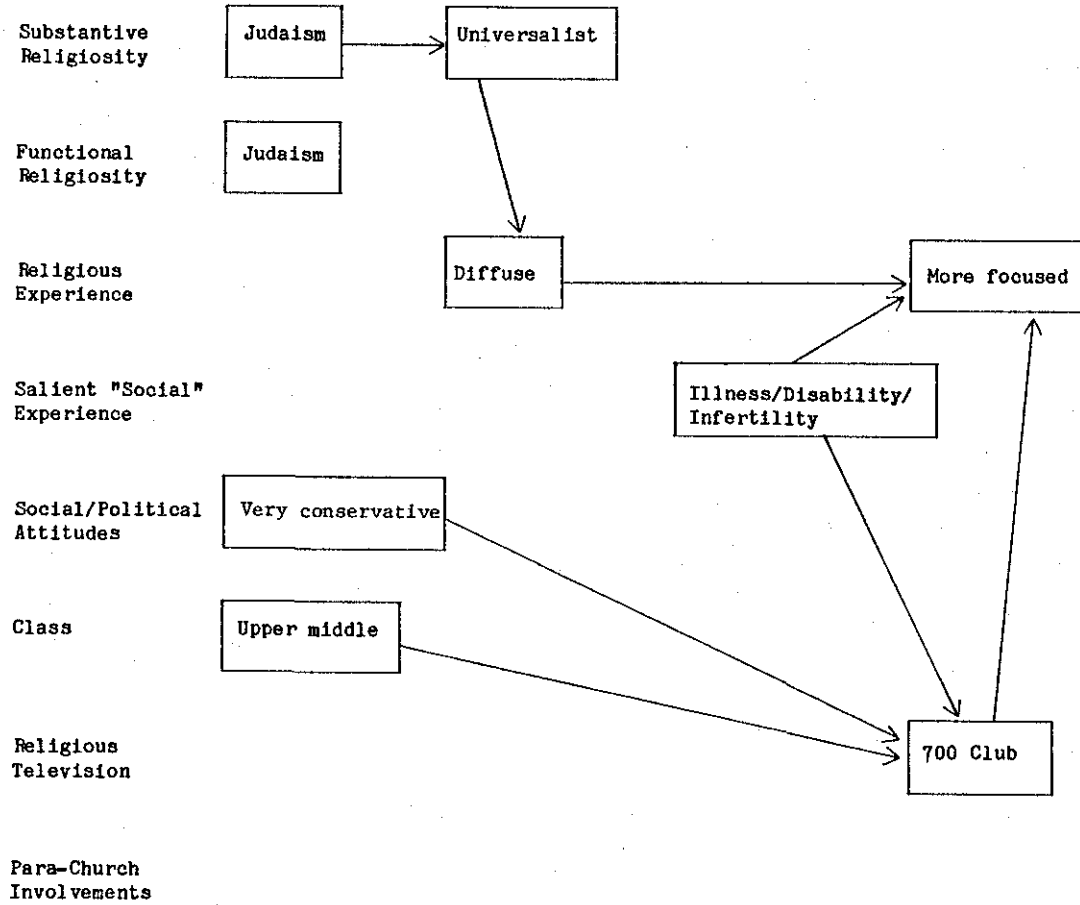
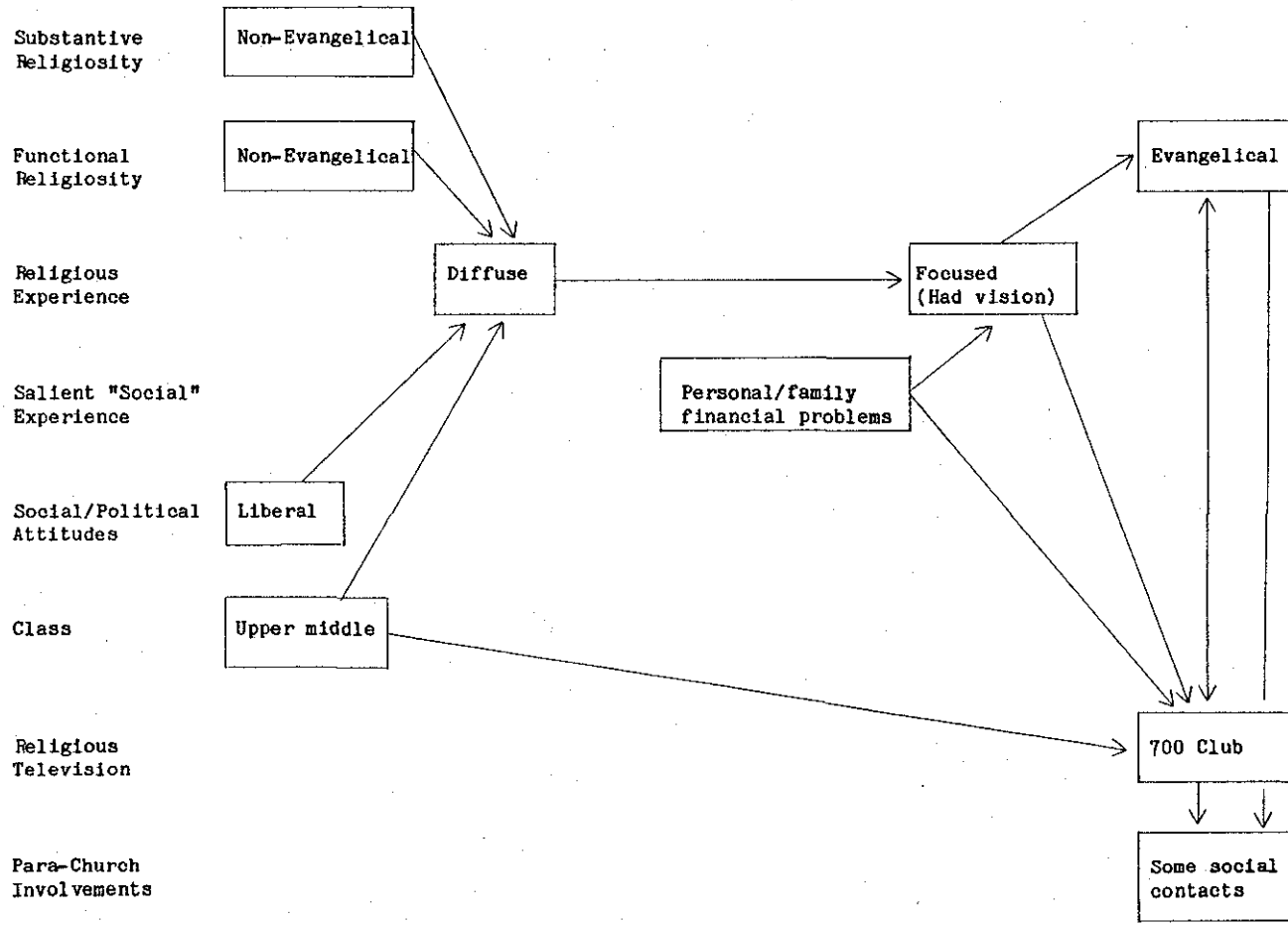


Figure 12:  
Trajectory for Respondent Number 35





still quite distraught about these problems, and is only just beginning to enjoy life again, and this is only (in her mind) because she has found new meaning through faith.

She is probably the most consistently liberal respondent in the sample, openly admitting that she "...is not for Reagan this year..." and that she likes Geraldine Ferraro a great deal. Like other respondents (number 19 in particular) she feels that her faith, up until these problems and the faith experiences she has had in conjunction with them, was a rather ho-hum affair.

When she began to pray for help as a result of the family problems, she one day had a vision in the church where she was praying, and is convinced that God was reaching out to help her. After this experience, but before she and her husband were forced to move, she also began to watch the 700 Club, just 'happened on it on the dial,' and feels that all of these things have been very helpful to her and have explained to her what it means to be a "born-again Christian."

Respondent 35 could be described as being still in formation as a "born again Christian," at least to her own way of thinking, and it is possible that her liberalism may eventually begin to erode. She uses some language which

would suggest such a thing, [such as, "...I'm beginning to see things differently..."] but, at the same time, she goes to great pains to point out that while she will take Pat Robertson to be an expert on theological issues, she is less sure he has much to say to her on 'purely' political issues.

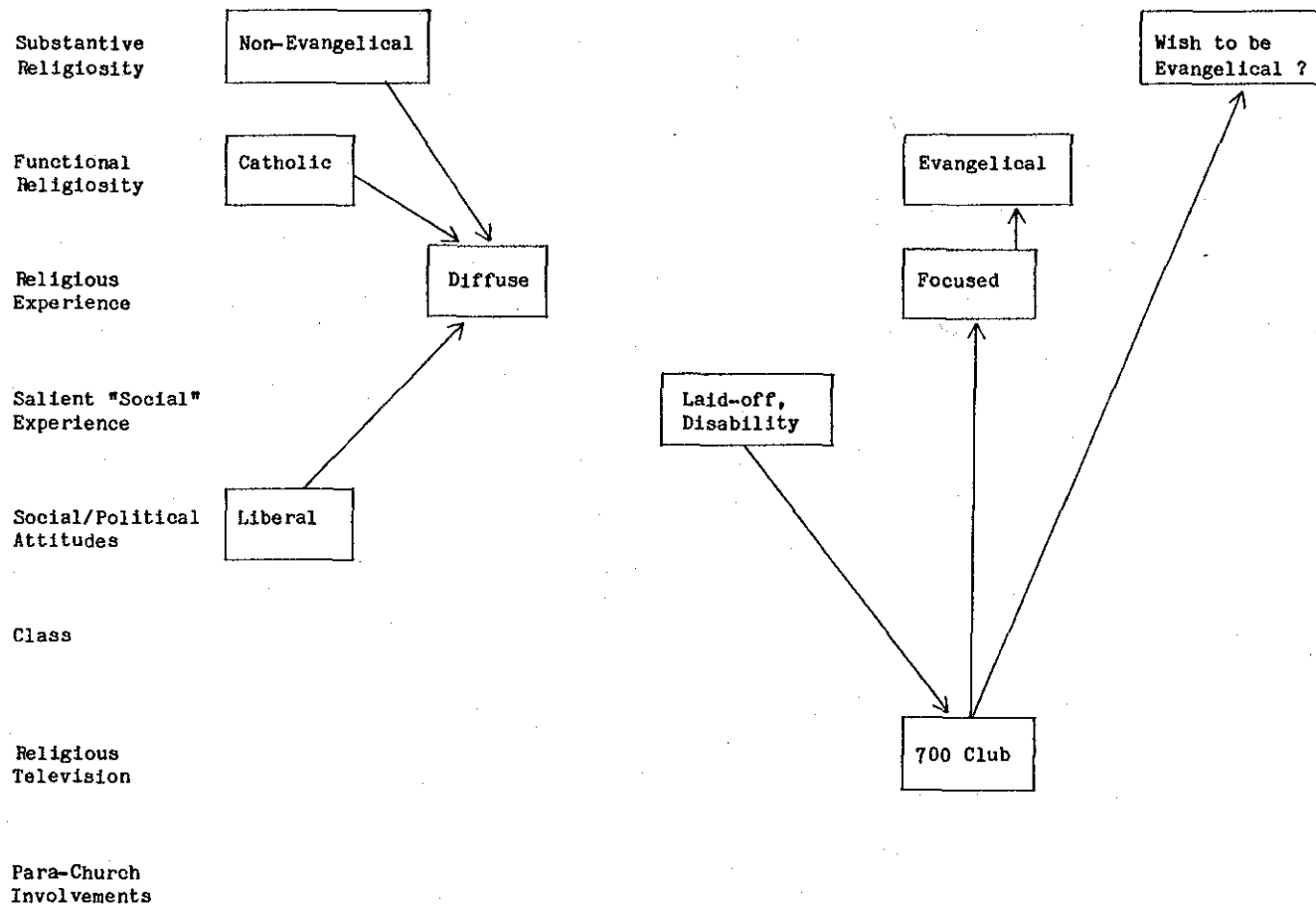
A much more powerful influence on her is her gradually-increasing involvement in evangelical church and para-church life. This cannot help but move her more in the direction of political and social conservatism. She is, of course, aware of these pressures, and takes pains to describe herself as "...not a prude..." in her discussion of having seen Deep Throat.

#### Case Number 36

Respondent 36 is also politically more liberal than most of the others interviewed. Like Respondent 35, he has recently come to a more evangelical faith, describing himself as having been "born again" after a life of relative religious indifference. He contends that he always believed in God and Jesus, even though he did not have an "active faith" to any great degree. Also like Respondent 35, he feels that he is still to a great degree in formation, and that he has "backslid" quite a bit.

Respondent 36 is unique among this sample in that he

Figure 13:  
Trajectory for Respondent Number 36



feels his "born again" experience was a direct result of watching the 700 Club. He just stumbled on the program one day (he had seen it before) when they were reciting the "sinner's prayer" and he found himself saying it, followed by a feeling of great emotion, weeping, and healing. He also found himself afterwards on the telephone asking a CBN counselor what had happened to him. It was from her that he learned he had been "born again." He feels that he was healed of smoking, drinking, and carousing by this experience, and he has also subsequently begun attending an evangelical church.

He had been raised Catholic, had fallen away, but had always felt that "some day" he'd become a real Christian. He has recently begun to smoke a little again", so feels that he has not fully been "born again yet. He contributes to the 700 Club regularly because he believes in what they do, and because he feels that it is important to have ministries preaching the word without petty denominational differences getting in the way. He is mystical about his own faith, but is strongly driven by a social-action impulse, as well, saying that his main criticisms of most broadcast ministries is that they spend so much money while people all over the world are starving.

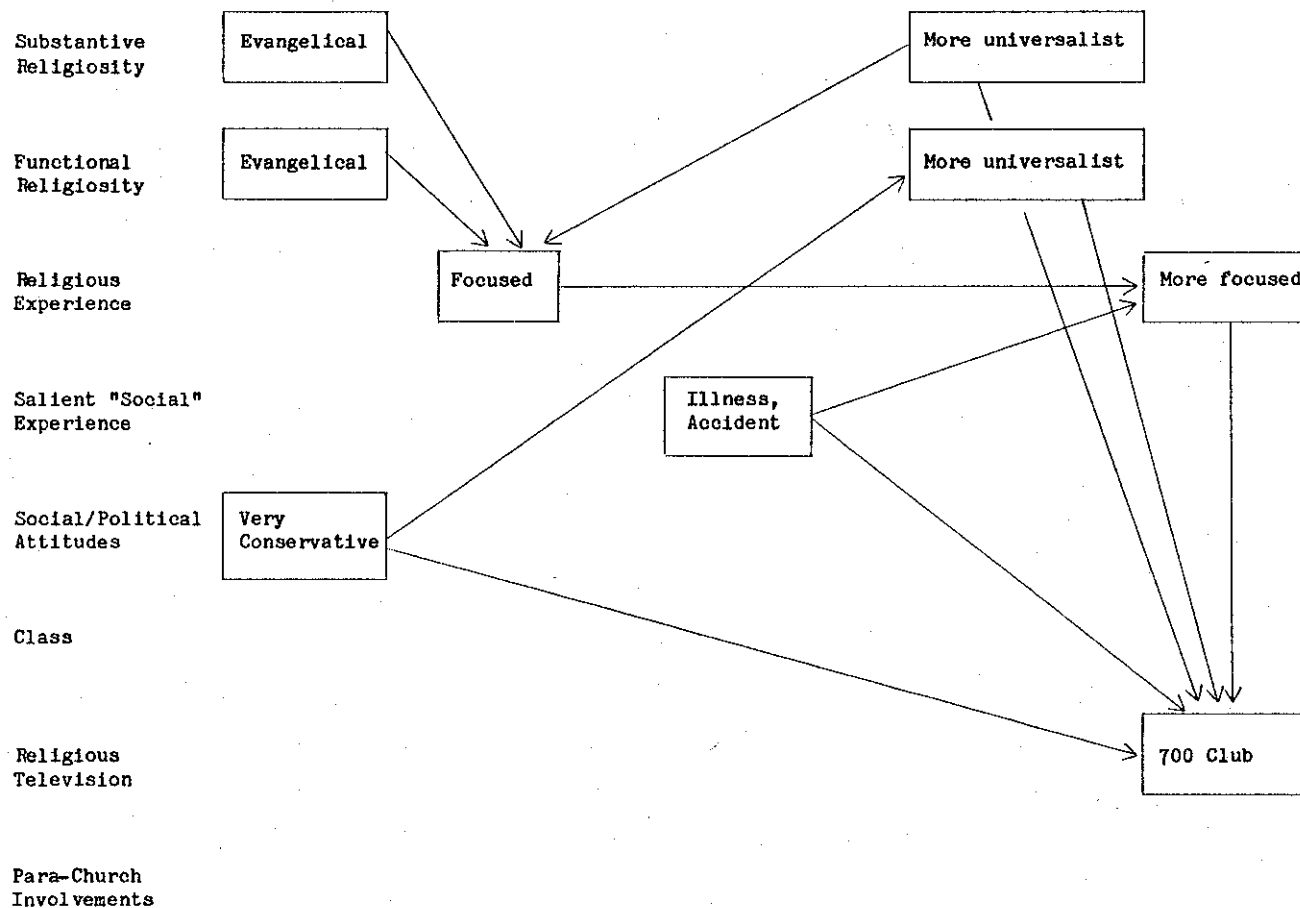
Number 36 is really the only respondent in this sample who describes his faith experience as [in any way] beginning with the 700 Club. His striking mystical experience with the program was followed by (not preceded by) a period of searching for a way of expressing "functional religiosity."

Case Number 40

The 40's are a couple in their mid-fifties. Mr. 40 is a military chaplain. Mrs. 40 a homemaker. It was from Mr. 40 that we heard the most articulate statement of how "translocalism" is a salient gratification for involvement in the 700 Club. Mr. 40 states, in no uncertain terms, that his own pentecostal faith background is entirely too structured, dogmatic, and legalistic, and his viewing of the 700 Club (and, incidentally, his work as a chaplain) is related to the fact that he is drawn to the idea of upholding the Gospel without all the petty legalisms.

Both of the 40's come from the same conservative, pentecostal "holiness" denomination. Mrs. 40 was raised in it, Mr. 40 joined after they met, and after he completed his military service. Mr. 40 has a graduate degree in theology from a conservative seminary, and Mrs. 40 has a college degree herself. Class, including intellectual class, is a very important issue for both of them in their discussions of

Figure 14:  
Trajectory for Respondent Number 40



how and why Pat Robertson is an attractive figure for them.

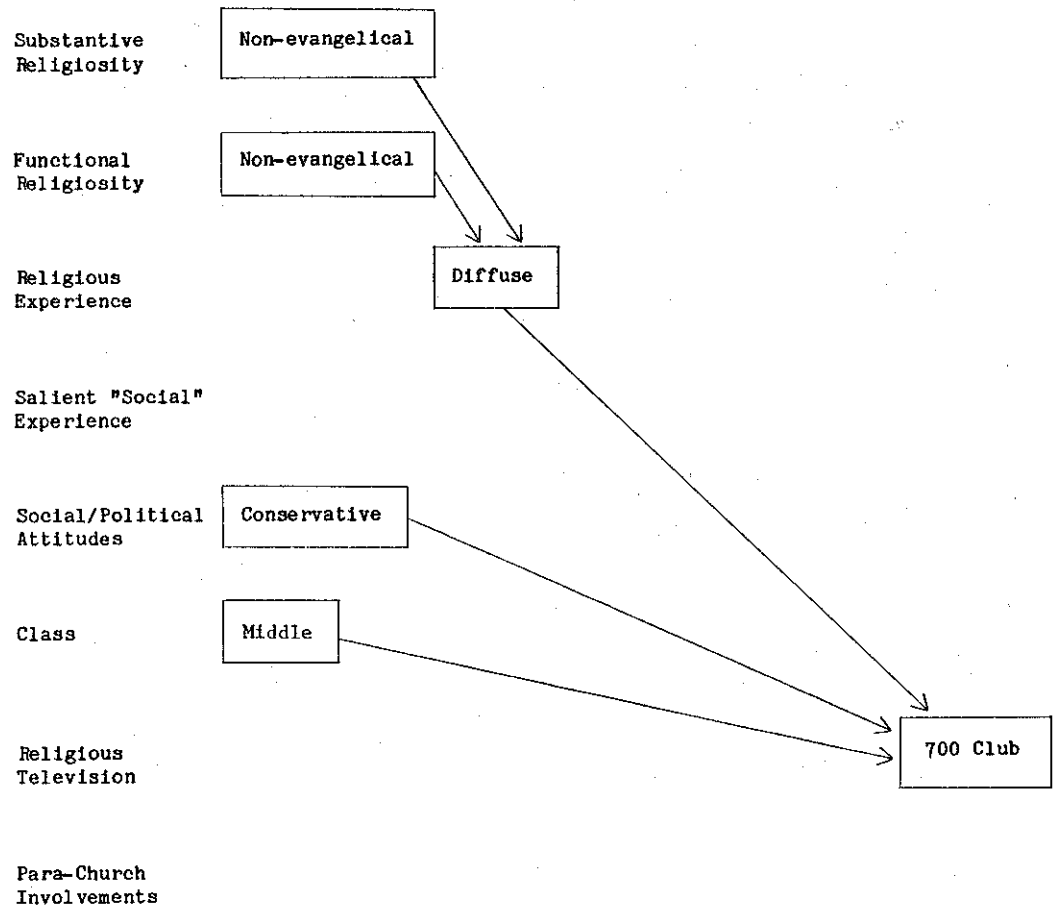
The trajectory they have traveled through would seem, then, to have been one that began with them involved in a very closed, conservative evangelical context. They have since come to see this as too limiting, in and of itself, and they have sought out other ways to express their faith and their witness.

Both have had striking personal experiences, as well. Mr. 40 nearly died of cancer, and Mrs. 40 was seriously injured in a car accident. Both feel that their faith has helped pull them through this, though their consumption of religious broadcasting is not largely involved in this, so much as is their functional religiosity (friends at church, etc.) Mr. and Mrs. 40 are clearly 'information seekers' in the classic sense. They watch a great deal of news programming on cable, and consider the information one of the more important aspects of the 700 Club.

Case Number 45

Respondent 45 is rather loosely connected with conventional religiosity, though she does attend services regularly. Her husband attends, as well, but does not watch religious television. Respondent 45 is the nearest thing to a classically-designated "entertainment" viewer of religious

Figure 15:  
Trajectory for Respondent Number 45





television that was encountered in the sample. Her reactions to the programs are off-handed, evaluative, not clearly those of a committed viewer.

She was not raised in an evangelical household, though she would describe her home as "religious." She has become primarily involved in the 700 Club through support of projects dealing with children, which she feels are very important. "I'm very concerned about children..." she says. She has also, from time to time, sent money to programs such as Thea Jones [a local Philadelphia faith-healer] but she describes most religious programs as being "...too emotional" for her.

She is primarily attracted to the information and news on the 700 Club, describing other religious programs as being "...mostly Baptist, mostly spiritual content...." She is very well acquainted with many religious and conventional television programs, and is a heavy viewer of both. She is remarkably (for this sample) non-judgmental about conventional television, even allowing as how she likes the David Letterman show.

Respondent 45's religious experience can only be described as diffuse, and her religious context as non-evangelical. Her politics are conservative, and she

relates well to the political stance of the 700 Club, but none of these things could be called persuasively associated with her viewing in the way they are for other respondents. She began watching religious television, along with other television, once she retired and had more time on her hands.

She is very conscious of class-associated differences in denominations and religious beliefs, clearly describing her reactions to various programs in class-oriented terms.

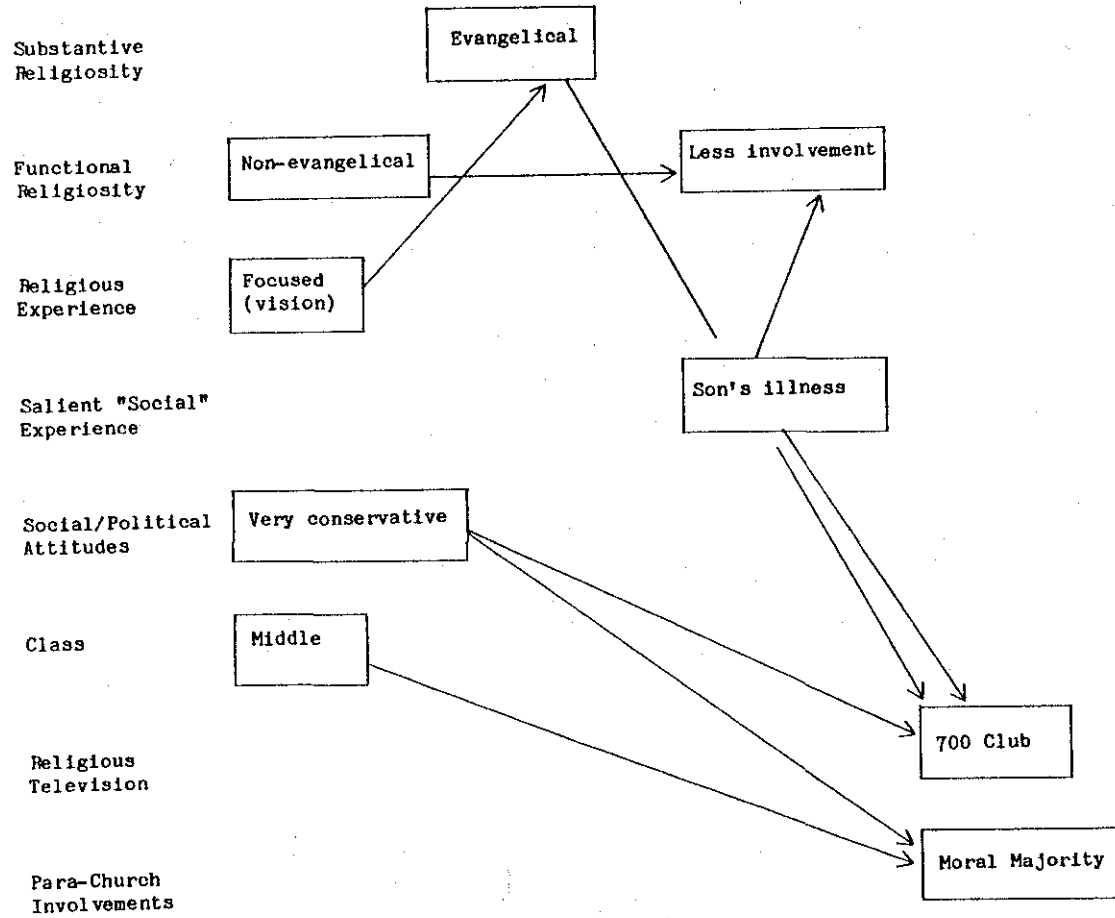
Case Number 46

Respondent 46 could be said to be primarily interested in the 700 Club for the worldview it espouses. She and her husband are very conservative and have been involved in non-evangelical churches, while their substantive religiosity is decidedly evangelical.

Their lives have been dominated in large measure by the fact that their youngest child was born with a serious birth defect, and has since developed serious psychological problems. This has kept them from having a normal religious life, and Mrs. 46 began watching religious television partly to supplement what they were missing. She has called the 700 Club several times for prayer for her problems and for their son, and she feels that those prayers have helped her and him.

Figure 16:

Trajectory for Respondent Number 46



She also uses the program for information and inspiration for herself and recommends it to others if they are having problems of their own.

She is obviously dissatisfied that she has been unable to relate more closely to a conventional church, though the family does belong to a mainline church, and the pastor has been very helpful to them and to their son. Their involvement in local church activities has actually decreased in recent months due in large part to a traffic accident she has suffered, which has had her away from work for several months, and needing plastic surgery. She feels that the intervention of prayers through the 700 Club has been instrumental in bringing her through this crisis.

Like other respondents she feels that the program's "...putting the Christian aspect on world affairs..." is unique and a major value of the program for her and for others. Respondent 46 seems particularly drawn to the program as an alternative, and a witness, to the rest of television, which she feels is dominated by secular humanism.

Respondent 46's salient religious experience, a vision she had as a child, pre-dates her viewing of the 700 Club and these other experiences by several decades. She has always had a focused faith, as a result of this vision, but it does

not seem to have become more focused as a result of her viewing of the 700 Club.

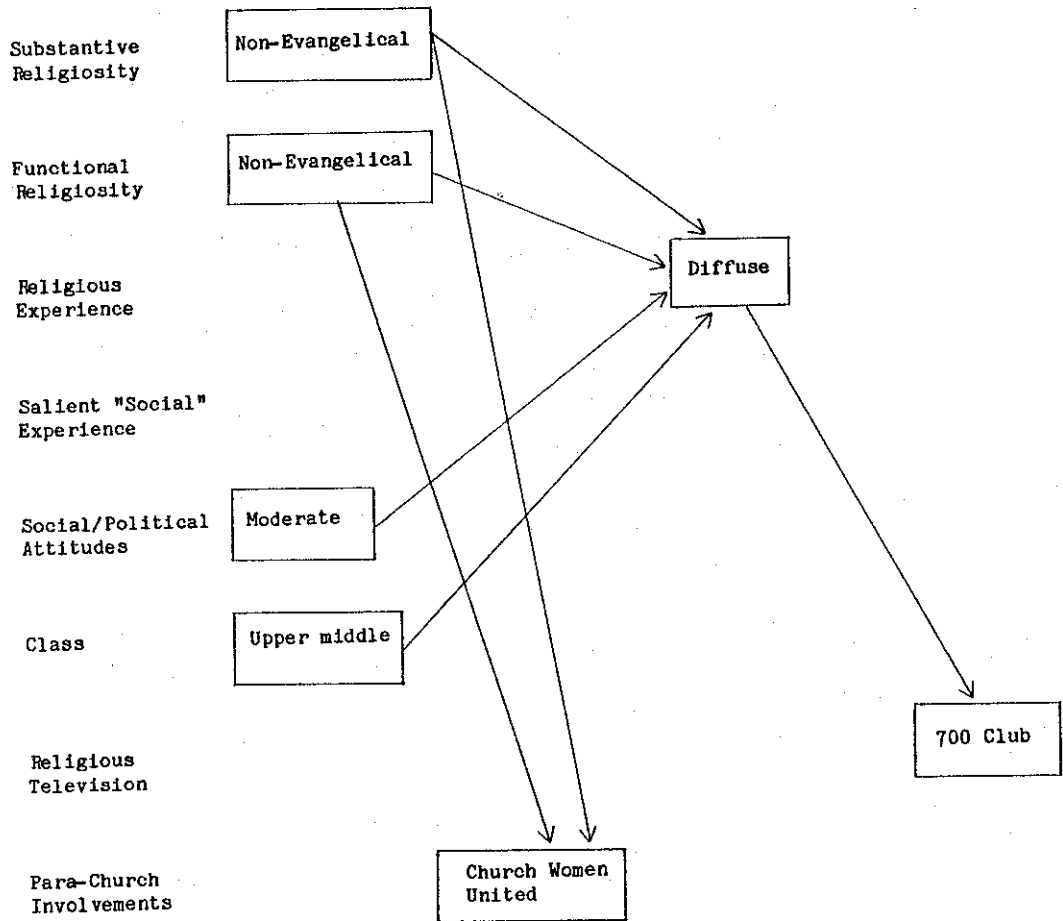
Case Number 47

Respondent 47 does not report any particular social or religious experience related to her viewing of the 700 Club. She is politically moderate, though she feels that current society is too lenient, and does not give youth enough direction. She is Black, but is a member of a non-evangelical denomination, and holds non-evangelical beliefs herself. Her religious experience is fairly diffuse, with only the healing of her son through prayer twenty years ago appearing in any way "mystical" or focused.

She is well aware of the fact that many of these programs have positions on theological and social issues that she disagrees with, and she watches them anyway. She is particularly attracted to the PTL Club because it is so energetic and enthusiastic, but likes the education and outreach of the 700 Club. Each of the programs she watches, including Swaggart, she feels has a place.

She is still heavily involved in conventional church activities, including service in the local chapter of "Church Women United," a mainline-oriented, politically liberal organization.

Figure 17:  
Trajectory for Respondent Number 47



She is upper middle class (her husband is a doctor) but does not describe her attractions to the programs, her attitudes about them, or who she would talk to about them (all class-oriented issues for other respondents) in class-oriented terms. Her viewing of these programs is clearly related to her religiosity, but is not the result of any stark or moving personal religious or social experiences.

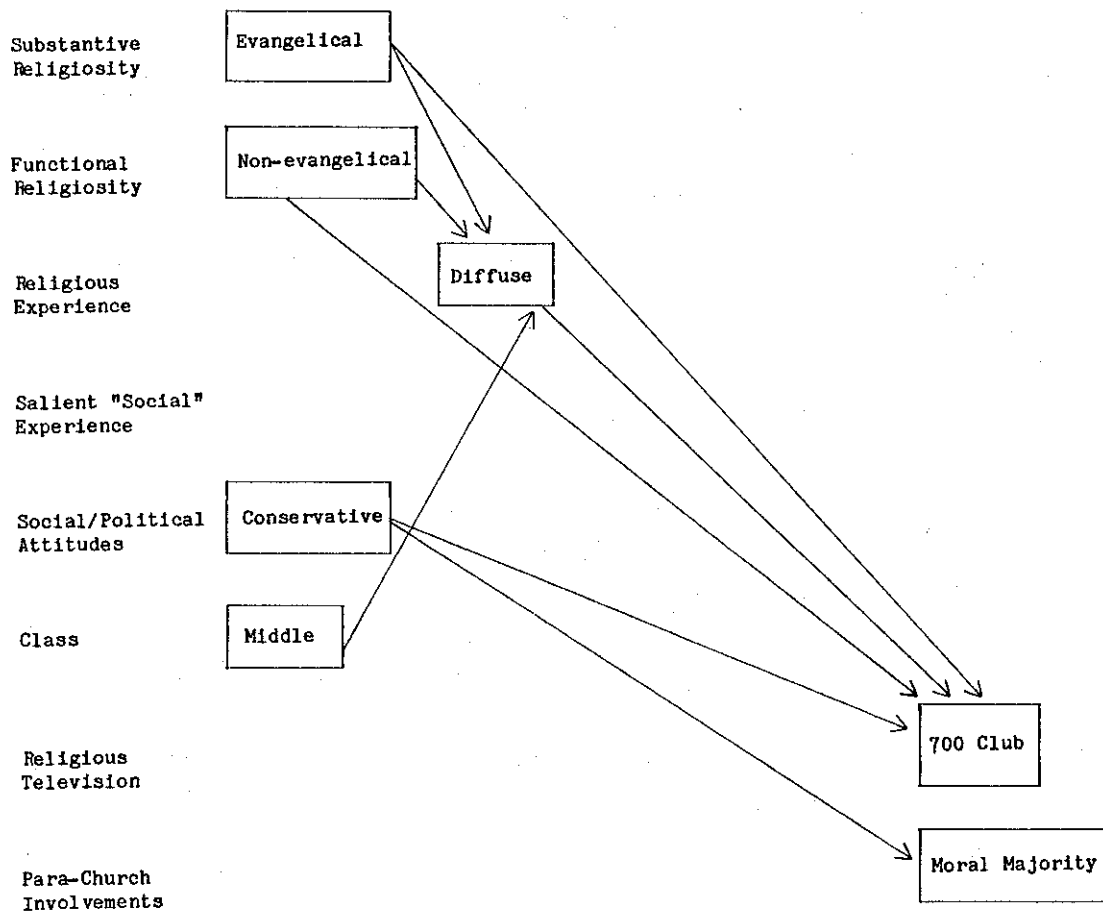
Case Number 51

Respondent 51 is fairly conservative politically, and is more evangelical in her religious beliefs than some other respondents. This has led her to be dissatisfied with most ministers and churches she has attended. She would prefer to belong to a more fundamentalist church, but somehow has always managed to get into non-evangelical congregations. Often, this is because she and her husband have "shopped around" to locate a fundametnalist minister only to have that minister leave and be replaced by a more liberal one.

She has not had any particular religious or social experience which is related to her viewing of the program. Rather, she sees the 700 Club, other religious broadcasts and para-church organizations to be emanations of a valuable Christian witness to the outside world. She makes clear distinctions between the various programs, including that the

Figure 18:

Trajectory for Respondent Number 51





700 Club is more for the edification and growth of Christians, and PTL is more for people who are interested in spiritual content.

There is some class orientation in who she will talk to about the program, mentioning it only to people she does not know, and to friends who she knows are fundamentalist Christians themselves.

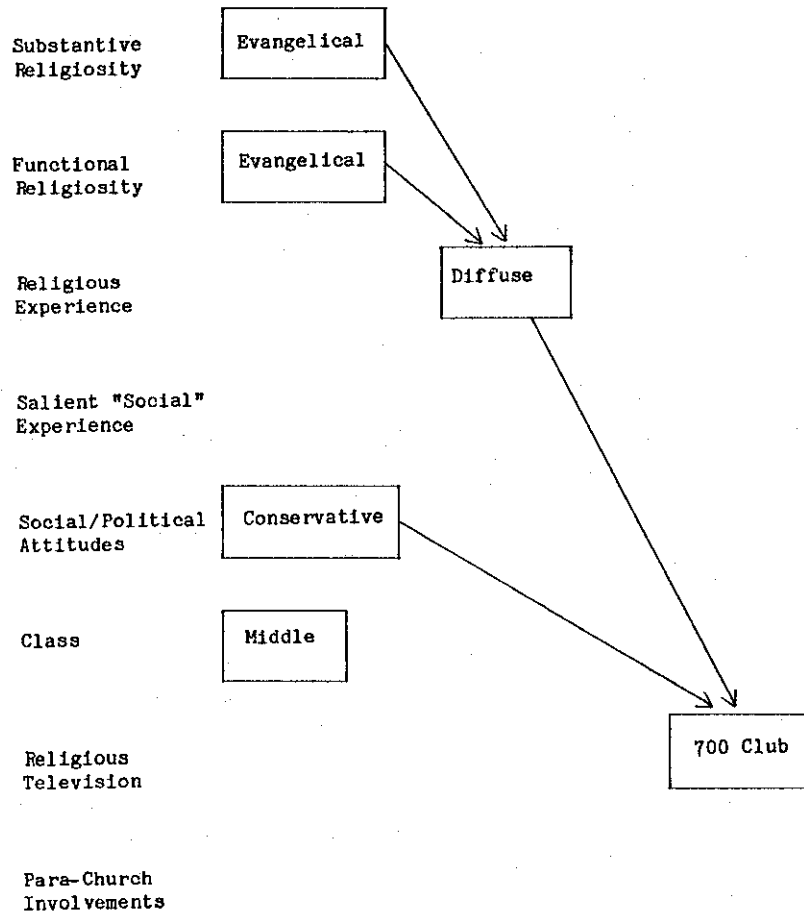
Overall, it does not seem to be as much the spiritual content of the 700 Club that draws her to the program as it is its universalism, its translocalism, and its ability to bring a Christian perspective on world events.

As with other respondents, she feels that the religious climate of America is changing, that it is becoming much easier to talk to people about religion than it used to be. The 700 Club is symbolic, for her, that her attitudes and beliefs are finally coming into their own in culture and society. The program forms a strong symbolic focus for her worldview. Her Para-Church involvements also illustrate this mindset. She and her husband are strong supporters of the Moral Majority.

Case Number 52

Respondent 52 is clearly an evangelical and has consistently held to such beliefs since childhood. He

Figure 19:  
Trajectory for Respondent Number 52



belongs to a evangelical church currently, and describes his involvement in religious broadcasting very much as an adjunct to this basic religiosity.

His interest in religious broadcasting appears to be less related to "social" issues than is the case for some respondents. He describes the differences between the various programs very much in terms of their spiritual value, with Charles Stanley getting top marks because "...he helps Christians grow."

Out of this context, Respondent 52 sees the 700 Club in universalistic terms. "...The society is very pluralistic and diversified, there's a need for a variety of evangelistic approaches," where a program such as Charles Stanley's is much more "...focused to people who accept his teachings." The role of the 700 Club, to Respondent 52, is to present an alternative to the rest of television, while it will never really affect conventional television directly (as some respondents expect it to.)

The universalism and openness of the 700 Club can be problematic, Respondent 52 believes, because it is possible for guests to confuse believers and observers by giving conflicting accounts of things. Programs that just preach and exhort, he believes, cause less trouble because they

don't lose control over what is said.

Respondent 52 expresses no salient social or religious experience that is related to his viewing of religious broadcasting.

Case Number 53

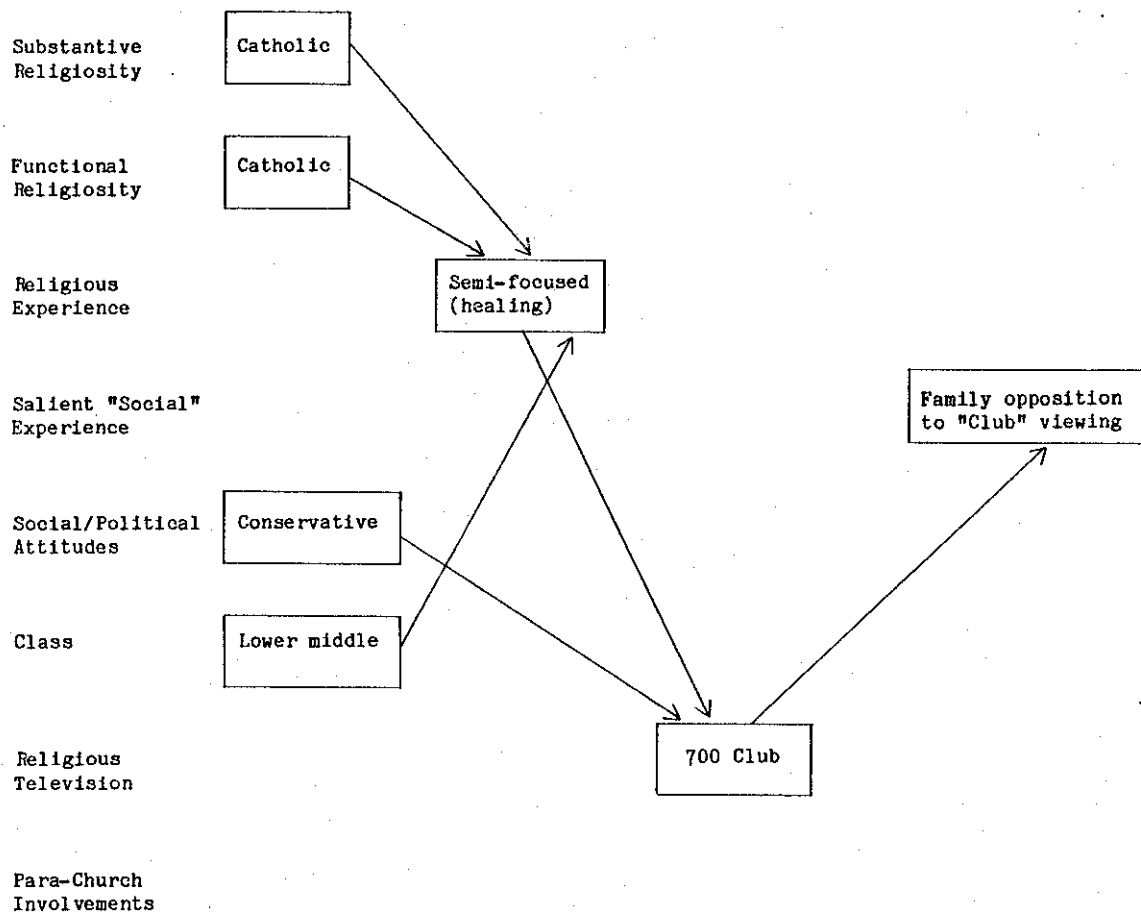
Respondent 53 is a very conservative and judgmental person. She is the only respondent who is not currently a member of the 700 Club, due in part to her family's opposition to her viewing. She is Catholic as is all of her family. She is unique also because of this family opposition to her viewing.

She expresses her greatest interest in the healings that are shown on religious television. She also attends all of the healing services at her home parish, so this is not a gratification of religious television alone. She is very conservative politically, and finds the program comfortable on most social issues, including abortion, of course.

She has watched religious television for years, and has always preferred the programs which feature healing. Now that she has begun watching the 700 Club regularly (which she has only done the last month or so) she is beginning to feel that it is important and significant.

She expresses a universalistic attitude to the

Figure 20:  
Trajectory for Respondent Number 53



programming that is strikingly similar to that of the Jewish respondent (number 31). Whereas Respondent 53 responds to the criticisms of people at church that the program is "protestant" that "...we're all Christian, aren't we?" Respondent 31 responds to similar criticisms at her Synagogue by saying "...we all worship the same God, don't we?"

Respondent 53 is one of the most critical of all respondents in the sample. She disapproves of the affluence of the programs (especially of the Club) feeling that all of that money should go to feed the poor, instead.

#### Findings of Trajectory Analyses

It was thought that a major contribution of this study would be insight into the directionality of the relationships between respondent religiosity and media consumption patterns. As is well known, the statistical correlation between religiosity (particularly evangelical or fundamentalist religiosity) and religious television viewing is exceedingly high. What had not been known was whether religious television could ever be seen to influence higher or different levels of religious activity and commitment, and if so, under what circumstances this would occur.

The results plotted on these trajectories are mixed in answering this question with any definition. It does seem to

be the case that with most respondents, a certain high level of evangelical religiosity, at least in substantive terms, pre-dates their viewing of the 700 Club. Exceptions, (such as Respondent 29, a man who was never very "religious" in any other than a nominal sense) and number 34, a Jewish woman, were however, "religious" to a certain extent, that is religion and religiosity formed part of their world-view in advance of their viewing the program, and thus it cannot really be said that the program turned "non-believers" into "believers." In fact, in these cases, this has precisely NOT happened. For instance, the Jewish woman is a more committed Jew than ever, and the man is no more enamored of church than he ever was, and still describes himself as only moderately "religious." The only respondent would could be said to have experienced a focused religious experience as a result of his religious television viewing is number 36. His experience is complicated and unique in the sample, but it was based on a certain pre-existing level of religious commitment and experience. It could not be said he was a "non-believer" before, in any absolute sense.

Many respondents relate their viewing to life-changing "social experiences" including family problems, deaths, etc. and feel that their involvement in the program has helped

them deal with those problems in a more helpful way. Other respondents, even some who also experienced such stark tragedies, are not particularly helped by the program, but support it for other reasons.

It would appear that there are nearly as many reasons for supporting and viewing the 700 Club as there are respondents in the sample. It would also appear that for most viewers, the 700 Club functions in a similar way to the functioning of the PTL Club for viewers in Bourgault's study of that program.

These data show that the 'PTL Club' is used primarily as religious entertainment by many fundamentalist Protestant viewers. Although the program's hosts and guests exhibit more tolerance of secular worldly styles than many fundamentalists, they foster empathy among viewers through accounts of their religious experiences. This tolerance has a moderating effect on the fundamentalist beliefs of viewers. (Bourgault, 1980:274).

The broadest statement that can be made about the utility of the 700 Club for its viewers is that it serves as an accoutrement to their already-ongoing substantive and functional religiosity. For some, it functions materially to ease the burdens of life, but for most, it is something they are drawn to as a particularly attractive locus for attention but in the context of their basic faith and commitments.

For some, the viewing of the program has put them in



touch with "para-church" opportunities they would not have had otherwise, such as the prison ministry involvements of Respondents 3 and 4. For others, it is "only" a form of entertainment.

The respondents themselves give a wide-ranging array of reasons for their viewing, with most dividing their explanations along what they see to be the major components of the program, the "social" (news, politics, economics, etc.) and the "religious" (Bible teaching, sermonizing, prayer, counseling.) Nearly all report that both aspects of the program are important, and are well in balance, to their way of thinking.

VI. Analysis of Emerging Concepts for  
Further Development and Research

As analysis of the interviews has progressed, a number of interesting (but still less than clear) issues have emerged. Some have come from areas which were anticipated to have been important analytical points, but which have turned out not to be.

One issue which was intended to be addressed by this study was how the various respondents themselves know that a program is "religious," that is, how do they know that what they are watching has religious intent or meaning, and how they judge its value as such. Respondents turned out to be less than helpful on this score. Most could not describe in any final way how they know a program is worthwhile. Most simply answered this question with reasons which could apply equally to any number of religious activities or programs, not ones which are unique to the 700 Club. Respondent 29 was typical, if particularly verbose, in his perspective.

...they're [the 700 Club] building to learn people the way they should be...in other words, some churches and places, they take the money and all they're doing is making the place bigger..they're not learning the people what they're supposed to...Like this fellow here trying to say a Jew can't be a Born-again Christian [a reference to news stories about the controversy over congregation Beth-Jeshua in Overbrook Park, a messianic Jewish congregation]...I don't understand it...why don't they leave them go...one fights against another and

that's no good.

Attempting to get at this credibility issue (how do you know who's right and who's wrong?) another way, Respondent 29 is asked..."How do you know how to trust Pat Robertson. I mean, he's building alot of buildings, and just raising money to buy air time?"

...I don't know for a fact, but I don't know how the people are going to come out of there [CBN University]....They're building a University to teach people to live up to the standards of the Bible... but they're [conventional churches] are not teaching people how to do that stuff outside [the Church.]...that university [CBN] will learn you the way you should do...treat the other person right...the Church will just tell you to love your fellow man, but not that particular item,...you don't know how to [apply Christian principles] to your field....

A second issue has to do with the many ways the various respondents bring their own preconceptions to the program. For instance, one set of respondents, in discussing the 700 Club, respond negatively to the sophistication of the dress and the sets on the program. Particularly pentecostalist viewers, such as number 40, find this a problem on doctrinal grounds, while others, such as number 53, object to the spending of money this way, when it could be going to feed the poor. Thus some aspects of respondent background (the Respondent 40s' pentecostalism vs 53's Catholicism) may have more to do with what various viewers criticize about the

program than with whether they view at all.

A third issue is the fact that there seem to be viewers for whom religion is not a particularly important or salient issue in their lives. Both Respondent 29 and Respondent 52 were reluctant to describe themselves as particularly religious people. Respondent 52, in particular, seemed to always be offhanded, almost bored, in his discussion of these issues. He was one of few respondents to say religion was merely "important" not "very important" to him. This, in spite of the fact that he comes from a highly religious background. The following passage from that interview is illustrative.

At home, my parents always took me to a Baptist church...a Southern Baptist church first, and then an independent church....I grew up with religious training, Bible School, Sunday School, and all, and then in my teens, I slipped away from it. I was rebellious for awhile, I did things I'd rather not think about...some years later, about in my early twenties, I started to realize that there really is a Jesus and a God, you know...it started to impress me what the scripture teaches and what the world is, but I started more and more to fix my eyes on the Lord, to lean on him. [Did you have a charismatic, or 'born-again' experience? Was there a specific date or time, you could specify?] No...it wasn't a dramatic experience. At some point I was saved and my confidence in Christ just kept increasing. [What happened to your church attendance through all of this?] At some point, I started attending an Orthodox Presbyterian Church. [What kind of a church is that?] Well, its a church with mostly converted Jews in the congregation, its a fundamentalist church. [Does your wife share a similar history?] No, my wife was a Baptist, so when we got married...I was about 30...we

joined a Baptist Church in Rosslyn. Now we both belong to the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. [was there a dramatic point where you decided to switch churches, or anything, how did it come about that you switched congregations?] ..the Presbyterian one was more convenient, that's all."

Which church he attends, the institutional "signifier" of his religiosity, is quite ho-hum to him in comparison with some basic level of religiosity or religious assurance.

Fourth, it seems to be the case that for nearly all dimensions discussed, (politics, class, theology, spiritual need, "newness in faith", fundamentalism) there are respondents who relate that particular one to their viewing of the program. However, no one dimension, or constellation of them, seems to be a better predictor than another. Other than some rudimentary level of personal religiosity which seems to be required--widely divergent in scope--and perhaps a rudimentary fundamentalist/evangelical "universalism" (willingness to be exposed to religious teaching from outside the "home" church or faith group) nothing seems to tie these viewers together. As will be discussed in the area of localism/translocalism, this "universalism," itself, may be the tie.

Fifth, most respondents do not affix any specific dates and times to their faith experiences, and none were able to specifically state when they began watching religious

television, or the 700 Club.

Sixth, there is a sense in which a type of "bedrock" evangelical viewer exists, one who was always evangelical, and for whom no particular recent salient social or religious experience has occurred. These viewers naturally fit the traditional profile of religious viewer better than do those who have experienced a faith or social disruption of one sort or another. It can almost be said that the viewers who are long-term evangelicals in substantive and functional terms are the basic audience in some sense, and that the only viewers who are not long-term evangelicals are those for whom some sort of social experience has intervened. A small group, perhaps two cases, appear to be neither evangelical nor victims of "social experience", and for them, viewing appears to be nearly entertainment. Although both of these latter cases expressed great support for the social/political approach of the program.

#### Localism and Translocalism

As the interviews progressed, it became clear that an additional dimension beyond those anticipated and beyond those already discussed, was emerging. We have called this issue "localism and translocalism," for want of better terminology. It seems to be the case that many viewers

identify the 700 Club, religious television in general, and the "para-church," as cultural-symbolic referents which are salient precisely because they are outside their normal "local" frames of reference (doctrinally, ideologically, or physically.)

It has long been held, in theories of communication and national development, that an important attraction (and function) of mass media in rural areas has been its "cosmopolitizing" capacities. Rural radio listeners, for instance, have been found to begin to develop desires to move to the city, from which, they feel, this outside influence comes. (Rogers, 1983). This localism/translocalism may be a related concept.

The respondents in this sample see religious television to be distinct from, but related to, (or borrowing credibility from) conventional television. Further, they identify it as "religious" (and--through some as-yet unclear mechanism--they see it as "positive" and "good".) Finally, they see it as something outside themselves, outside their basic cohort frames of reference and institutional commitments. This latter "universalism" associated with viewing was identified by Bourgault (1980:274) in her study of the PTL audience as well.

Respondent 40 is a good example of this universalistic, translocal dimension in association with a gratification from the potential political impact of the program. Being a chaplain, Respondent 40 is particularly clear and articulate in his understandings here. In discussion of his perspective on his church background (Church of God, Cleveland, TN) he describes it as legalistic and petty in its proscriptions, and reveals that the reason he has chosen a life in the military is to be able to "...preach the Gospel without all the dogma and legalism." Asked what role the 700 Club plays with reference to small, local churches, he says the following.

...obviously he [Pat Robertson] can reach more people, because he's satellite and he's worldwide. But I think that the quality is better, too, because in my denomination, which are small churches, and mostly farmers, and workaday people, and not doctor-lawyer-indian chief, college-professor type, you know, small churches are always struggling, and they don't have the wherewithal to do big things...and the 700 Club can do alot of things a small church can't do, and do them well....[What are you thinking of when you say 'quality' in that sense?] well, I think its the quality of Robertson's teaching, wisdom, his exposure personally to alot of people and alot of events that the poor local pastor somewhere, you know, timbuktu, Iowa, just doesn't get...Robertson is a 'high vis' person in America. He's well educated, his father was a senator, his wife is a representative, he has a law degree from Yale...so its just that, echelon he travels in, is exposure to the things that come back to the local church through the people who watch, and I think that that's the kind of quality you just don't get when you're pastoring a local church...I watched the program



when I was a pastor just to inform myself [the news/information stuff is meant here] ..you don't have time to read everything, the newspapers, the magazines, I take three or four religious magazines,...so that kind of quality, the quality also of 'operation blessing,' too, cause the principle of multiplication, that translates into power. They're able to feed many more people, cause here again, he got hooked up with these big supply houses of food and he was able to start these big warehouses of food...the little old local church, what's he going to do, he's going to go to the local supermarket and get dented cans...and I think that's quality as well as quantity.

This power associated with something like the 700 Club is clearly a thing which is closely associated with its being "in" but not "of" television. As has been said, the respondents all felt that the 700 Club was a worthy and worthwhile expression of religious and social attitudes with which they resonate, but were able to provide little insight (directly or inferentially) into the source of their being able to classify different ministries as "good" or "bad."

The problems notwithstanding, this localism/translocalism loomed large in nearly all interviews, and it assumed dimensions which moved beyond the more functionalist, social/political referent described above. For some respondents, it seems to enable them to approximate a level of personal functional and substantive religious awareness that Victor Turner has called communitas. Turner sees this as the sought-for, universalist confirmation for

the individual that he or she is part of a larger structure and reality, and that others participate in it. This serves as a re-confirmation for all of the existence of a transcendence which gives meaning to their universe (Turner, 1972). Turner has identified among "primitive" (tribal) cultures, rituals which reconfirm this sense of communitas by deliberately crossing boundaries into "antistructure" so that, through re-entry into the community, communitas occurs as a heightened sense of meaning for the individual and the group. These so-called "liminal" experiences are highly ritualized locally in tribal cultures, but less localized in other cultures.

Turner has, in fact, extended his considerations of these issues into a comparatively "modern"--and clearly communicational--set of phenomena, religious pilgrimages. He sees, in the pilgrimage, the occasioning of liminality through cohesion of formerly non-associated persons in a collective search for religious meaning. Pilgrimages have come to blur not only geographic, ideological and cohort boundaries, says Turner, but class boundaries as well, into a less ritualized but still structured communitas.

I myself tend to see pilgrimage as that form of institutionalized or "symbolic" "antistructure" (or perhaps "metastructure") which succeeds the major initiation rites of puberty in tribal societies as the

dominant historical form. It is the ordered anti-structure of the patrimonial-feudal systems. (Turner, 1972:204)

Among the "gratifications" of this for the pilgrim, Turner sees a localist-translocalist sense which is consistent with the perceived (by informants) nature of religious television being outside the close cohorts of reference. Pilgrimages, "...[represent] a higher level of freedom, choice, volition, structurelessness, than [do] say, the world of the manor, village, or medieval town. [They are]...cosmopolitanness to its local particularism, communitas to its numerous structures." (1972:200).

Pilgrimages are significant of what Turner calls "existential communitas" "...the direct, immediate, and total confrontation of human identities which, when it happens, tends to make those experiencing it think of mankind as a homogeneous, unstructured, and free community."

One respondent described the gratifications of a real pilgrimage he took--to the CBN headquarters in Virginia. Respondent 14 is very class-conscious in many of his descriptions of what he likes about his involvements with the 700 Club program. Referring constantly to "people with degrees...top people..." he clearly holds that religion is a class phenomenon, and that the type of pentecostal faith he

holds is unusual among the intellectual classes.

We went down [to CBN] and stayed for three or four days. I was excited to meet a man face-to-face who has the education, and degrees, who is so pleasant, and humble, he's a servant of the Lord, not a 'somebody' to show off his abilities or anything like that.

The 14's went on to give an account of their visit which evokes Turner's sense of pilgrimage based on communitas.

...and the thing that shocked me, but I expected it, every person loving you, hugging you...they'd say 'praise the Lord,' and its not that they were fanatical, these were people who had college degrees and whatever, and had been in manufacturing...for some reason as you got into conversation, they were people who could express themselves...and for the first time I said to myself, 'this is a taste of heaven', every person, loving you, smiling, you felt free, you felt like flying around. Occasionally, I'd pick out a couple who had just met, and I'd overhear, and they were talking about Jesus, about how great he is...and there was this sense of 'melting to Christ.'..this whole thing was so organized, and yet the Holy Spirit was in control...everything was done top-notch. Nothing was left to chance, from the entertainment, the food, the sevice, you stayed in the best hotel, you really felt like you were 'king's kin'. We especially enjoyed touring, going into the buildings....

Beyond this very clear example that pilgrimage-like religious meanings can be derived from involvements such as this one which, in fact, was a pilgrimage in a physical sense, it seems to be the case that involvement in CBN through viewing and contribution can have similar associations for the religious lives of the respondents interviewed.

It is more difficult, admittedly, to support a claim that mere viewing of the 700 Club is or can be "pilgrimage" in a Turnerian sense. The Club is not irrelevant to the idea of pilgrimage, at least as regards its relationship to broader "para-church" realities which can and do offer physical pilgrimage opportunities (however trivial they may seem.)

The more stringent problem, if we wish to assess the Turnerian significance of Club viewing is the problem of how viewing the program contains dimensions similar to those of pilgrimage, and further, how significant these dimensions seem to be.

As we have said, Turner believes that pilgrimage entails an experience of liminality, a period when the common assumptions and structures of society are seen by the individual to be suspended. During this period of disaggregation, a realization of new possibilities, an examination of structures, or their evaluation, can occur. Following the liminal period comes a reaggregation into these structures through a realization of communitas. Communitas is described by Turner as the realization that there is "...an essential and generic human bond, without which there would be no society."(1972) For most intents and purposes,

Turner's conception of "communitas" can be taken to be coextant with idealistic conceptions of "community" as the central focus of moral imperative.

Pilgrimage takes the form of this structure-antistructure (liminal) dialectic, believes Turner, because it places the pilgrim in a position (i.e., takes the pilgrim away from his/her "home turf,") where secure, assumed structures are suspended for a time. It serves the formation of communitas because it presents the pilgrim with the clear sense that "communitas" is possible and is real, by putting the pilgrim in touch with seemingly "different" people (i.e., pilgrims from other places) who share an identical quest.

To put it simply, the pilgrim travels a distance from his home, and discovers others who share his beliefs and ideas (as described with the actual pilgrimage taken by one of our respondents above). In the process, through the suspension of structural constraints of class, ethnicity, and cultural practice, a greater sense of communitas and meaning result.

Turner has noted that modern mass media of communication, and modern transportation have a specific contextual relationship to the meaning of pilgrimage.

...The communitas character of pilgrimages and their capacity to evoke the loyalty of the most diverse types

and groups of people to common aims -- in contrast to many sectarian religious activities -- are probably well suited to the communications media of mass culture and large-scale societies, industrial perhaps more than feudal.

Turner gives few examples of the role of communications media in pilgrimage, other than such statements as this. He is far clearer in describing the role that modern transportation has played in stimulating the development of new pilgrimage sites, and in the extension of pilgrimage catchment areas. For instance, he notes, the Haji is now a worldwide phenomenon in a way not possible before modern mass communications and air travel, and is available to Moslem pilgrims as more than a "once in a lifetime" obligation (1972).

He also seems to suggest, given the realities of modern transportation, that the "hardship" elements of medieval pilgrimage are less important to their "liminality" than is the larger sense that the structures and rules of "home" are under suspension as the pilgrim progresses. The description of the significance of pilgrimage given by Turner is a difficult if not impossible test for a "purely" television experience to pass. Dayan, Katz, and Kerns (1984) have attempted just such an elaboration, in a recent study of Papal trips as "media events." In the of consideration of

the meaning of recent journeys by John Paul II, they arrive at an explanation of Turnerian views, by which our accounts of the 700 Club audience might be judged. Dayan, et. al., wish to claim that the Pope's journeys, when covered live by television, do amount to a pilgrimage experience for their television audience for a number of reasons.

They elaborate Turner's conception of pilgrimage by decomposing its concept of liminality into a series of "conditions" which they use to test the quality of mediated pilgrimage events. First, they contend that, as Turner describes it, liminality must entail a separation from day-to-day reality, achieved, in pilgrimage, by the act of travelling itself. This "anti-structural" aspect of pilgrimage is accompanied by what Dayan, et. al. call "subjunctiveness," the sense that the pilgrim comes to realize possibilities beyond his/her own contextual reality, possibilities of things that don't currently exist, most pressing being Turner's sense of "universal" "existential communitas." (Dayan, et. al., 1984).

Dayan, et. al., contend that Papal journeys are, in fact, mediated pilgrimages for their viewers, because they entail dimensions which support liminality.

First, there is a strong sense of interruption in the



flow of everyday life. "The event starts in advance of the actual ceremony," they note, with a long period of anticipatory news coverage and other preparation. They are thus contending that one of the critical components of the pilgrimage process as described in Turner, the separation of the pilgrim from his/her day-to-day life, is performed on behalf of the pilgrim, by television. The choice of the pilgrim to engage in separation, is thus taken by an external source of power.

A second critical "liminal" dimension to Dayan, et. al., is that the "separation" elicited by television results in the symbolic re-ordering of social life and social paradigms. The "universalism" and universal appeal of the Pope's message undergird a universalistic communitas, they assert.

Israelis might live in peace with their Arab neighbors  
 Poles might live up to the standards of their Catholic  
 faith. Earth might stop being the subjective center of  
 the universe...in fact the ceremony offers itself as a  
 metaphor of its own potential consequences. Seeing the  
 Pope perform huge masses in Warsaw somehow means that  
 Polish Catholicism is already free. Seeing Sadat land  
 in Jerusalem tells you in a way that peace in the middle  
 east has already come about....

Third, Dayan, et. al., contend that so-called "root paradigms" are invoked or manipulated. In Turner's conception of physical pilgrimage, the pilgrim travels to a shrine of his/her own affiliation, and experiences there a

powerful re-statement of the basic tenets of the faith, made more pressing by the liminality of the journey and the encounter with other believers.

When the Pope is on television he celebrates mass. When Sadat travels to Jerusalem, he visits the holocaust memorial. Both are examples, say Dayan, et. al., of the manipulation of the most foundational symbols and paradigms which give their respective cultures continuity and meaning.

Lastly, Dayan, et. al., contend that the "media event" of a televised Papal visit can entail Turnerian pilgrimage-like associations in that the coverage itself draws the audience into the role of near participants in the experience. They achieve an actual sense of communitas through their identification with those physically in attendance. This "...simulates in them an oceanic feeling, a euphoric loss of the limits of the self, a new, imaginary, communal corporality."

Dayan, et. al., conclude that television-covered papal visits do, indeed, constitute pilgrimage-like functions for their television audience.

"Media events" thus appear to be not only a liminal form, but one which though structurally different, is experientially similar to that of pilgrimage. Curious pilgrimages indeed...pilgrimages in an armchair.

The viewing of the 700 Club is (or may be) removed a

step from the sort of mediated event represented by Papal journeys or Anwar Sadat's visits to Jerusalem. Most powerfully, the 700 Club fails the test of "separation" or the "interruption" introduced by live coverage which pre-empts other programming on television. There is some of the separation or "separate-ness" in the interviews reported here, however. They realize that they are participating in something unusual, something different. There is "conventional television" and there is "religious television" to their way of thinking.

The second of Dayan's, et. al. liminal qualities of "media events" is satisfied by our findings regarding the 700 Club in that a universalistic "subjunctive" sense is a clear dimension uncovered in the interviews. Dayan, et. al. contend that this "subjunctiveness" is expressed in the re-ordering of social and cultural reality implied by the Pope's message of the possibility for universal peace and salvation. The respondents in this study verbalize a different agenda, but one which still imagines possibilities from greater inter-faith and inter-cultural cooperation.

The third quality of Turnerian liminality invoked by Dayan, et. al., is the manipulation of root paradigms or symbols as part of the ritual. In the case of 700 Club

viewing, this process is exemplified by the fact that the program is self-consciously religious, and constantly invokes the symbols of Christianity and American cultural "civic piety."

The fourth of Dayan's, et. al. qualities is the larger sense of communitas they claim is engendered by the ability of television coverage to make the viewer at home identify with the audience for the event itself. With the 700 Club, there are several ways that this same identification is possible. Primarily, the viewer can (and often does) actually participate in the program through the telephone counseling service, which they can call during the program to give prayer requests, suggestions, testimonies, or responses to to poll questions. In addition, the hosts of the program frequently speak directly to the television audience and refer to its members specifically. Finally, the program is involved in a larger, well-articulated set of "para-church" institutional relations, including especially an active direct mail program, through which the viewers can be made to feel physically part of a larger audience.

Thus, the 700 Club, as it has been described through these interviews, may be a bit removed from the type of "media-event" described by Dayan, et. al., due to the fact

that there is not the clear "suspension" or "anti-structural" or "liminal" nature engendered by Papal trips or other "special events." The other qualities they cite do apply, however, and it is particularly interesting to note that the important quality of communitas seems to be powerfully involved in the articulation of respondent use of the 700 Club program.

There is an intuitive test of the significance of television-carried experiences which can be applied to both Dayan's et. al., data and ours regarding the Club. That intuitive test is the question of whether, prima facie, such televised experiences must be seen to be more trivial than actual pilgrimage. This triviality can be described in two senses: First that viewing an event, from home, simply cannot be as significant a liminal experience as would be an actual journey; Second, as Dayan, et. al. note, liminality in pilgrimage, encompasses a clear sense of separation on a conceptual level, easily accomplished when the pilgrim is forced into leave home, less clearly achieved when the individual is viewing something as mundane as day-to-day as television.

Turner's sense of pilgrimage seems to be a promising framework through which to look at some issues uncovered in

the interviews here. The overall intuitive feeling that both viewing of the 700 Club and "media events" as defined by Dayan, et. al., are somehow too "trivial" to qualify as pilgrimage obscures some firmer senses in which dimensions here articulate the ideas behind that larger concept.

It seems that the experience of the 700 Club (as well as its accompanying opportunities for visits and actual physical experiences) entails particularly clear sense of "universalistic" "existential communitas" for its participants. What remains unclear is whether the liminality of the experience, its "subjunctiveness," its anti-structuralism, is powerfully articulated for these viewers. For Dayan, et. al., this liminality emerges out of the television experience itself. If we accept that theirs is a persuasive case, we have yet to make the same case for the Club, other than to point out that the viewers of the Club do see it as clearly disjunctive from the rest of television. The case cannot be made, however, that it is in any way as clear a disjunction as a "once only" event such as a Papal visit to a given country. A further question, begged by both Dayan's et. al. and our data is the question of volition, of whether something can really be called "pilgrimage" if it has not been chosen by the "pilgrim," but has, instead, been

forced upon him or her as an aspect of television viewing. As we said above, participation in pilgrimage which doesn't require one to actually leave home, appears, *prima facie*, to be too trivial to justify the appellation "pilgrimage."

Further exploration of these issues may be justified, but not without first a throughgoing re-conceptualization for our purposes, of what Turner means by "ritual" and "pilgrimage." In a sense, the quandary here stems from stretching the limits of dimensions which are, in fact, inflexible. While Turner has accurately observed and described a set of processes in tribal and less tribal societies which he calls "pilgrimage," in so doing, he does not evolve a set of relations which are anything more than descriptive elements of a phenomenon with known parameters. That is, he has substantial liberty to describe processes which are components of acts which are unquestionably "pilgrimage." What happens when those components are applied as elements of less self-evidently "religious" processes is another matter.

On a deeper level, it may be necessary, before coming to a clearer understanding of these issues, to develop a better sense of just what "religion" and "belief" are (as these are so essential to the definition of pilgrimage and other vital

processes) when they take place outside the realms of what are known and widely accepted contexts and behaviors. This task extends somewhat beyond the limits of the analyses undertaken here, however.

As noted before, Bourgault found among viewers of the PTL Club, a tendency for viewing to be associated, for certain classes of viewers, with more moderate, universalist theological attitudes. We see similar tendencies here. The Catholic and Jewish viewers, for instance, describe in detail their feelings that their viewing of the program transcends religious and denominational labels. Respondent 20, a Catholic, says,

Most Catholics are just Catholic because they always were, and many people call these programs and criticize the Catholic Church, but Pat says you can work withing the Catholic structures, in spite of the doctrinal differences.

Respondent 31, the Jewish woman, sees issues in a very similar way. Asked about how it is a Jew is attracted to this activity, she says,

...I believe that we're all here, Jews, Christians, and Islam, for a reason. We have a part in God's plan to eventually redeem the world...a Catholic friend and I learned from each other, even though we're from different faiths.

There is a sense in which this universalism is an idea shared by viewers and producers. As was noted in our



discussion of the CBN institution itself, that organization has taken self-conscious steps to "universalize" its message and services, in light of its national position. Many respondents see this as important, as well. All respondents were asked to comment on the question of how producers should walk the fine line between being "too religious"--thus risking turning off some viewers--and being "too secular" in order to maximize the audience. Respondent 52 gave a typical answer.

...they're [the Club] being true to their mission [by including "non-religious" material]. The society is very pluralistic and diversified, there's a need for a variety of evangelistic approaches. ..Pat Robertson has a more general audience [than some others].

There is a second aspect to localism and translocalism, besides this "universalism." As verbalized by Respondent 40 earlier, there is a sense of "religio-social hegemonism" in some respondents' feelings about the 700 Club program, particularly its "social" or "public affairs" segments. Respondent 40 saw Pat Robertson as being able to have access to centers of power not available to local pastors, churches, or believers.

Other respondents have the same feeling. Respondent 49, for instance, saw this as the unique contribution of CBN to national life.

CBN is new, to put the Christian aspect on world affairs, on government, that was entirely new to me. [You'd never seen that done before?] No...we had one minister I can remember who would ever mention government and he would get very excited about it, but he was the only one in all those years.... The liberals have been vocal for years, and they've been spreading their influence, people like Aaron Spelling, they get onto there with their cute little plays and programs and they've been active for years, and all of a sudden there's a big hullabaloo because the other side is putting in their ideas and influence.

The general idea of "localism/translocalism" is intended to be seen to be very general at this stage of reflection on these issues, general enough to encompass both a "sacred" (doctrinal universalism) and a "secular" (this latter social/political meaning) side. The term comes from the work of a theologian (Snyder, 1984) who has used it to refer to a very diffuse set of perspectives and ideas he has seen within American Protestant denominational groups. Snyder, in turn, bases his analysis on the work of Redfield (1956) and Hanssen (1952). All of these accounts see within the structures of local communities an orientation which also lodges these communities within a larger context. In Redfield's terms, a community, no matter how small, sees itself very much as a "community within other communities" or part of a larger whole.

Snyder tends to see a dimension of transcendent "meaning" (similar to Turner's communitas) involved in this

consciousness, one which assigns value to the community outside the most local one. Whether the local community sees the wider community as a negative or ominous presence thus becomes either a measure (or a cause, to Snyder) of the local community's closed-ness. Snyder also adjusts the meaning of "wider community" as described by Redfield. Rather than needing to identify a specific larger community to which the local community refers, he has found that the "localists" sense of the "outside" is rather vague and diffuse. Translocalism, to Snyder, can be based on any of a wide range of referents including class, theology, doctrine, ideology, or geography.

With reference to the phenomenon of the "Electronic Church," these ideas deserve a good bit more analysis and elaboration. At this stage, though, the following can be posited. For the majority of these respondents, there operates a conscious understanding of the broad reach (geographic and ideological) of the 700 Club. They see this very clearly as an emanation from a world outside their own local frames of reference and cohorts. Exactly what the extent of the larger community represented by the Club is may be less important to them than is the fact that such a community does, indeed, exist. (They do, by the way, often

try to populate and "flesh out" this "community" for themselves.) There seems to be a gratification for them in being able to see, in this larger community, ideas, attitudes, and activities that they identify with in a very (religiously) substantive and politically profound sense. This identification seems to be a gratification very similar to that described by Turner in his analysis of pilgrimages.

A broad claim that 700 Club viewing is, in fact, a "pilgrimage" is, of course, not justified here (though some claims about the broader "para-church" of which CBN is a part, could be more easily made.) What we do learn from pilgrimage literature is that there are people for whom the "translocalism" and "universalism" of the 700 Club is a salient gratification, and that this is at least a component of the more fundamental "gratifications" identified in studies of religious pilgrimage. Respondents simply seem to want to feel and believe that their faith has meaning and associations outside the particularistic frames of reference where it is normally encountered, and that the "para-church", religious television, and specifically the 700 Club, confirm this for them.

#### Emerging Theoretical Issues

We have noted that among communication theorists,

McLuhan, Ong, and in particular, Innis, had proposed perspectives on communication processes which had implications for issues of religion, culture and institutional processes underlying religion and culture. Of particular interest to many have been Innis' ideas regarding "time" and "space" binding media, with his concomitant suggestion that media which are particularly "time" binding are thus most likely to enhance the institutional interests of religious or sectarian realms of society. Some have proposed that these ideas extend into contemporary issues of secular and religious authority. (See particularly, Carey, 1967)

Some discussion of Innis' ideas is possible in light of the findings reported here. Marvin (1984) has presented a fresh review and critique of the Innesian approach. Innis' own works are dense, encyclopedic expeditions through history, and present the contemporary critic with few testable hypotheses. Marvin notes three primary problems with Innis' ideas as presented. First, the "epochal" scope of his historical analysis makes the hypotheses nearly un-testable.

Second, Marvin points out that the comparative or ideal efficacy of "time" and "space" biased media and their

relevance to socio-cultural institutions is also un-testable. Finally, she suggests that in reality the "dominance" of the various media biases is not really specifiable. There is not any more (and may never have been) any sense in saying that there is a mutually-exclusive "bias" to any medium. Most media, at least, appear to be both space and time binding.

A naive reading of Innis and the phenomenon of religious television would look in the latter for evidence of temporal bias, due to the "religious" commitment of the purveyors of these programs. A less naive reading, such as that of Carey (1967) suspects that, in fact, the content of television is irrelevant to its Innesian bias. Carey suggests, for instance, that even when used for religious purposes, radio and television would support secular ends due to the fact that they are dominantly "spatial" media.

Even Carey's presentation of Innis seems to overlook the issues raised by Marvin, and does little to enlighten us about the findings of the present study. It would appear that at least from this perspective, television can be both space and time biased. Further, it would appear that the ideal efficacy of "time" and "space" in the medium of television can only be known through history. At least one critique of the "electronic church" phenomenon, (that

typified by groups such as "People for the American Way"--those concerned about the political impact of certain of these programs) and indeed, one possible interpretation of the "localism/translocalism" phenomenon discussed here, would suggest that television can promote a type of extension of traditional value and commitment into other geographic areas via the medium of television. This "imperialism by tradition" presents a confounding of Innis' ideas of secular, sectarian, time, and space.

The specific case of religious television (or indeed, of Gerbner's "television as religion") thus confronts Innisian analysis in at least one way. A medium which is both permanent or time-biased, (technologically and in terms of its durable message being a moral, non-temporally-fixed one) and space-biased (a national, even international mass medium) is seen to serve both "traditional" (sectarian) values, and authoritarian (secular) institutions. These latter connections emerge from received assumptions about the nature of the content (a secularized yet "religious" function--as in Gerbner--or a self-consciously "religious" expression--as in religious television) and from the finding here and elsewhere (Parker, et. al., 1955; Bourgault, 1980) that there underlies the ephemeral "religiosity" of these media a deeper

"imperialistic" structure. Religious television, in particular, seems to be attractive because it represents the extension of religious values accross space, making Washington D.C. and the viewers' home churches both active fields of moral witness.

"Religious" and "Conventional" Television." Most previous considerations of religious television have done little to inform our understanding of conventional television in that thye have focused on forma elements of religious practice (such as church attendance.) Geertz, Turner, and Berger present us with a conception of religion which is far more substantive and pervasive than could be encompassed by such reductionist conceptualizations as these. They contend that religion is more than a set of functions but is an organic component of wider culture and society. In a similar vein, Gerbner's suggestions regarding the relationship between religion and mass communication is also a more "cultural" one. He sees religion as a system of ideology and belief structure, and television functioning to inform that ideology and structure.

In this light, television, as "religion," need not only focus on the formal, ritualistic elements of television, but can also look at the sense in which television can function



as a confirmer of cosmopolite (or "translocal") religiosity. Religious television and conventional television may relate to a kind of continuum, with people on the most "religious" end of the continuum needing the confirmation and assurance that this is "religious" television (however they know that) before they can immerse themselves in it. Less religious viewers do not require this confirmation in order to watch television, but the cosmopolizing or "translocal" dimension is similar for them, and can entail religio-cultural values and associations.

For the most "religious" among the audience, there is a sense that religious television is "their" television. Conventional television, with its religion of "secularism" (or, if you will, "secular humanism") sets the context in which "their" television is judged. In Turnerian terms, religious television viewing may serve a "liminal" function for its viewers in that there is, after travel through the seductive medium of television, an ultimate finding that there are other Christians there.

Conventional television would seem, then, to be in aposition to religious television not because it is "non-religious", but because its substantive commitments are the wrong religion. Religious television and conventional

television may well then function in similar ways, but for substantively different audiences. Indeed, the finding that for some viewers, these programs act in a "universalizing" or "liberalizing" way is analogous to the "mainstreaming" phenomenon noted elsewhere (Gerbner, et. al., 1981.) This "mainstreaming on the right" defines a function of television in general which, with reference to the specific issue of religious television, can be seen to encompass dimensions of both content and audience ideology.

Our findings here regarding "religious" television would suggest at least that the localism/translocalism of each "type" of television forms an important dynamic in its relationship to its audience. In both cases, the medium can be seen to define, through its content, a specific ideological swath, one which is to the center of total range exhibited by the audience it serves.

#### Methodological Issues

In addition to the tantalizing theoretical issues discussed above, a number of methodologically-oriented issues also emerge from these interviews. While these questions are not direct findings of this particular analysis, they are nonetheless significant to the larger questions involved in religion and mass communication.

The Role of the "Two Party" dimension. As has been noted, we expected that the dimension which Marty has called the "two-party" system of American Protestantism, would prove to be an important aspect of many of the other dimensions uncovered here. This did, indeed, turn out to be the case. We had expected that in both the area of functional religiosity, and in the area we have called substantive religiosity, we would find that respondents would exhibit ideological commitments which could be gauged along such a dimension. This is significant, as we have said, because this "two party" phenomenon exists within denominations as well as between them, making it possible, for instance, to find both evangelical/pentecostal and less evangelical/pentecostal members within both evangelical and non-evangelical churches.

This phenomenon has resulted in stress within many Protestant churches, particularly the more "mainstream" or non-evangelical ones, according to Marty. These issues are particularly important here because religious broadcasting is primarily "evangelical," and the possibility exists that viewers of these programs, emboldened by their viewing, might form a sort of "fifth column" within mainline congregations. This fear is somewhat supported by the Gerbner, et. al.

finding that viewing of these programs relates to evangelical attitudes more closely than it does to evangelical or non-evangelical membership, and that this association holds within "mainline" as well as evangelical church groups.

These data, then, are best understood when the "two party" dimension is taken into account, and the findings here support the earlier sense that this phenomenon would have great interpretive utility to this study. In both what we have called "substantive" and "functional" religiosity, respondents were rather easily measured along the "two party" dimension, and the relationship between their evangelical religiosity or membership and their viewing proved to be a salient dynamic in some cases. For instance, a number of respondents revealed that, while they belonged to less "evangelical" congregations, they themselves are more "evangelical" than other members, and their viewing of religious television serves to either satisfy their desire for more evangelical input, or to provide them with justification for advocacy of more evangelical approaches within their local churches.

The "Two Party" dimension is thus not necessarily a major "cause" or direct "effect" of viewing of religious television. Instead, in most cases, it serves as an

important demarcation along dimensions of religiosity, one which is both salient for the respondents and substantively connected to the tenor and approach of the religious television they watch.

Limitations of Previous Research Approaches. These findings have served to enable a better understanding of the phenomenon of religious television, and have served to call into question a number of previous research efforts in this field. The majority of previous works have focused on easily-measured functionalist dimensions of religiosity, such as church attendance and giving, when, as revealed here, a more complex set of interactions on both the "substantive" and "functional" levels are involved. While many studies have looked at rather conventional measures of religiosity and demographics in an attempt to arrive at meaningful predictors of involvement with religious broadcasting, these data would seem to suggest that there is no particularly consistent constellation of such dimensions which would seem to predict viewing, other than a rather high level of personal religiosity. This religiosity, in itself, would further seem to mask a raft of other dimensions and associations.

A second way in which previous research approaches have

been limited relates to the way "substantive" and "functional" religiosity have been handled. While many studies have concentrated inordinantly on the "functional" level (as was pointed out by Berger) even those (such as the Gerbner, et. al. study) that have attempted to account for more "substantive" dimensions, have stopped there, without giving much attention, if any, to other possible predictors of involvement. These data revealed at least two additional dimensions which appear to be quite salient, what we have called "personal social experience" and the very important area we have called "para-church" involvements. The problems of achieving useful measures of these aside, particularly in the context of more quantitative approaches, there still seems to be, based on these findings, an important sense in which these two dimensions explain more about some respondents' viewing than any of the more standard measures previously used.

The area of the "Para-church" makes such conventional measures of religiosity particularly misleading. It is not enough to know, for instance, that a respondent attends church frequently (nearly all do.) What is more important in relationship to religious television viewing is the extent to which they are also integrated into the institutional and

group networks of the "para-church."

The interaction between these dimensions is also significant, and little accounted for in previous work. Church membership, for instance, must be seen in conjunction with personal "substantive" religiosity in order to fully appreciate its significance to the viewing of religious television.

There are further a few specific measures, commonly used, which appear to be completely ill-suited to useful understandings of these issues. The most obvious example encountered in these interviews is the curious relationship between two specific survey questions. As was reported by Gerbner, et. al., the formal instrument used there (and here) contained questions on "personal religious experience" and on the respondent's self-report of having been "born again." In the formal survey of that larger study, these two questions were asked in tandem, with the "born again" question branched off of the "religious experience" one (a fairly common, and intuitively-sound procedure). This meant that only those respondents who reported that they had had a "religious experience" were asked the question about having been "born again." In the interviews here, both questions were asked of all respondents, with the curious result that a number of

them answered "no" to the question of "religious experience," but "yes" when asked if they had been "born again."

This phenomenon undoubtedly relates to the fact that the concept of being "born again" is, in fact, a label or self-designation which does not necessarily imply an actual experience of visions. "Religious experience" and "born again" are thus not necessarily the same thing, to these respondents. It further appears, from these interviews that it would be misleading to take at face value a response of "no" to the question regarding religious experience.

Many of these respondents, when queried at some length about their faith experiences, revealed a type of "religious experience" which, while diffuse (not focused at one time or place) is nonetheless significant and powerful, and which bears some relationship to their involvement with religious television.

#### Summary

Analysis of the personal interviews reveals that a wider range of dimensions than expected relate to respondent involvement in the 700 Club. Data from earlier studies, especially the Gerbner, et. al research, presented us with a clear sense that religious television viewing and conventional religiosity are strongly related. The same



studies suggested that the opposite was the case with religiosity and conventional television viewing.

The interviews reveal that earlier conceptualizations of all these phenomena have probably been too narrow, and that relations among them are more complex than anticipated. Looking only at the religious television-conventional religiosity axis (where this research is presently concentrated) for instance, we find a wide range of potential "determinents" or "effects" of viewing.

Beyond the conventionally-accepted measures of religiosity used in earlier research, some new (and more difficult to operationalize) dimensions emerged from the interviews. Personal substantive religiosity (along the "two party" dimension of evangelicalism and modernism) and conventional behaviors such as church membership and participation (also amplified by the two "parties") are important in this regard. In addition, however, many respondents described a class of experiences which we have grouped under a dimension we call religious "experience." Respondents seem to see their religiosity in these three ways, with the latter, including experiences of healings, visions, or merely "growth in faith" as important as the former two. All three must be verbalized, it seems, before a

respondent's "faith" has been fully stated.

There are a set of "social" dimensions which also relate to viewing. For a clear subset of these viewers, the most important of these has been some personal experience of crisis. In many of the cases here, these crises have related directly to their viewing of the Club, with their membership in its audience serving to help them through this crisis, either through direct intervention or through moral support.

Less important social factors include a range of relations we have grouped under "class," including respondent self-conscious assessments that this type of religiosity is "lower class" (surprisingly common) and respondent reluctance to discuss their viewing of the program within certain cohorts. Also important here seems to be a sense of respondent identification with the social and political stance of the program (which is decidedly conservative in a conventional sense.)

Finally, a dimension we have come to call "para-church" religiosity seems to be important here. It is not enough, in the context of these interviews, to describe the 700 Club as "only" a religious television program. Instead, it is an institution which is heavily interconnected with a well-articulated but informal network of institutions and

agencies through which exceptionally religiously-motivated people can express their faith. Besides the programs of the "Electronic Church," there are publications, recording companies, independent mission boards, travel agencies, travelling evangelists, newsletters, magazines, specialized ministries, (such as the "prison ministry" of Charles Colson) colleges, schools, and Christian business associations. In light of this "Para-Church," it no longer seems enough to attempt to look at any classic functions, effects, or gratifications of "religious television" without taking account of this larger context. Religious television is not, for many viewers, just a television program.

Another new issue which emerged from these data is the dimension we have called "localism and translocalism." It became obvious during the interviews, that beyond the issues above, there is a feeling of gratification for these respondents in the fact that this program represents something outside their local frames of reference. This translocalism seems to contain both "religious" or doctrinal and social or political elements. It is not possible yet, based on these data, to chart the extent and definition of this phenomenon. However, for our purposes here it is enough to note that the distinction between the "local" and the

"translocal" exists for these viewers, and that it entails a salient gratification for them that they can identify with the "translocal" CBN institution.

We have further considered ways in which this dimension of translocalism might be consistent with what is already known about how individuals achieve religious meaning through their understandings of where their local cohort involvements fit into larger worlds. In particular, the work of Victor Turner in the consideration of ritual pilgrimages seems useful here. Turner sees as particularly profound in this regard the individual's sense that he or she can be part of a wider reality, one that is no their whome, but which contains values and ideals consistent with their own. We have suggested that this "translocalist" gratification is very much that described by Turner, particularly when we consider that the 700 Club can entail physically "pilgrimage-like" experiences (such as the reports of visits to the CBN headquarters). It is possible that watching the program alone can entail similar functions at least as it appears from these data.

On reflection, these findings reveal a study which was more exploratory than was originally anticipated. Earlier instrumentation was assumed to have great utility for the

study at hand, and the assumptions behind the study, informed by prior work, were thought to anticipate most of the dimensions to be encountered. What was found instead was a far more varied and complex set of relationships than was predicted by earlier work.

## VII: Conclusions and Findings

The preceding section contains analytical conclusions based in frames of reference which emerged from the interviews themselves. The analyses reported there provide us with insight into most if not all of the original propositions and research questions which occasioned this study.

We found that respondent religiosity is more complex as regards viewing of the 700 Club than had been expected, and that viewing itself revealed a complex array of associations with religious and non-religious dimensions of respondents' lives. Here we detail those findings which we feel have resulted from this study, and draw some conclusions regarding the overall meaning and effect of the 700 Club and other "Electronic Church" ministries in the lives of viewers.

### Findings

As we have said, we had anticipated a certain range of issues and dimensions, such as "substantive" religiosity and the "two-party" dimension, to be particularly relevant to this analysis. In reviewing the results of the interviews, however, a broader and more complex set of dimensions seemed to present themselves, the dimensions used in the "trajectory analyses" in the preceding section. This is, in itself, a

finding. While we had expected a fairly simple model to be adequate, one which related respondent conventional religiosity to his/her media behaviors, a larger set of more parallel dimensions presented themselves.

Under our simpler expectations, we would have anticipated that the relevant dimensions in explaining respondent use of the 700 Club would be limited to their religious attitudes (along the "two-party" dimension, i.e., are they evangelical or non-evangelical?) religious behaviors, and their use of the Club. As the interviews progressed, our understandings of these dimensions expanded to include a larger range of issues, which are more or less parallel in the personal "maps" presented by respondents' faith histories.

Respondent religiosity, for instance, is a more complex issue than expected. Respondents very clearly perceive a difference between what we have come to call their "substantive" and "functional" religiosity. They describe themselves or see themselves clearly as "...a fundamentalist in a mainline church," not merely as "...a Presbyterian." This differentiation between respondent religious self-consciousness and religious-institutional identification is particularly interesting as it relates to the "two-party"

dimension, and in turn, as these issues are connected with respondent use of the 700 Club. Respondents seem to be highly conscious of the salience of these two aspects of religious identification to their viewing of the Club, as well. Some clearly feel drawn to the program because of its substantive coherence for them, but feel reluctant to discuss it at Church.

Respondent religiosity revealed yet a third dimension in our analyses. Respondents not only see themselves as substantively and functionally identified, they also describe, in some detail, personal "religious experiences" which are relevant to their faith histories and their viewing of the 700 Club.

Often, these "religious experiences" are directly related to viewing, as in the cases who feel they became "born again" in connection with the program. In other cases, religious experiences are merely relevant to other aspects of religiosity, explaining, for the respondent, his/her type of substantive or functional religiosity. These experiences seem to be either healing or spiritual revelations of one sort or another.

An entirely unexpected dimension which emerged was respondent non-religious "social" experience, which included,



in this sample, a rather bizarre array of personal crises. While "Electronic Church" broadcasters often recount the role their programs have played in such things for some viewers, it is assumed by most observers that such accounts are rather exceptional. These data seem to propose that such things are far more typical than we might have thought, at least among viewers of the 700 Club.

The social and political attitudes of the respondents also seem to be a salient dimension for understanding and interpreting their relationship to the Club. This dimension was articulated in two ways of interest here. First, many respondents simply reported appreciating or agreeing with that part of the program's content. Second, a certain number also expressed a gratification which was related to the "translocalism" of the program, a sense of satisfaction with the presumed power and prominence of the program's political witness.

A final dimension which emerged out of the interviews was the "para-church" itself. This diffuse set of institutions, activities, and agencies is a very real presence for many viewers. For some, their only "para-church" involvement is the Club, for others, their viewing relates to, or has led to involvement in more

extensive para-church activities.

One area of findings, then, is that religious television viewing interacts with a larger range of dimensions for these respondents than was expected. It can be seen to have a relationship to respondent's ongoing religious beliefs and practices, to their social and political attitudes, and to their personal experiences of revelation and substantive meaning. It also seems to relate, for many, to more mundane functionalist issues, such as to personal crises, and to their involvements in non-church religious activities.

We are then left to conclude that both "religiosity" and "religious media" are far more complex than was anticipated as they work out in the lives and experiences of these viewers. The elaboration of these dimensions has intervened in our analysis to make more complicated the fleshing out of findings relevant to the research questions we outlined earlier. This elaboration of dimensions has also served to re-orient several assumptions about these issues, and should, ultimately, lead to different methodological approaches and instrumentation in this area.

We have undertaken this study recognizing its relevance to a number of theoretical issues in the field of communication research. While we have found the terrain here

slightly different than we had anticipated, we were able to address several of these questions, as well as the research questions themselves. In addition, we have laid out an additional frame of analysis, that of Localism and Translocalism.

Is it "Religion" or is it "Television?"

Clearly the "Electronic Church" is both religion and television. More specifically, religious television does not, for these viewers, disappear into their ongoing media behaviors. It is not merely a subset of their conventional television viewing, in spite of the fact that religious viewers can be assumed to consume a great deal of conventional television as well. The respondents in this sample see religious television as something qualitatively distinct from the rest of television.

The test we proposed earlier for this question was whether respondents can be seen to draw uniquely transcendent meaning from their involvement in religious television. We found that they do, and in this way, religious television does seem to be "religion," in that it relates to, and is an example of, the "para-church", which is "religious" in a material and functional sense.

The context set for religious television by conventional

television is a profound one, however. As Gerbner, in particular, has proposed, the existence of television provides a challenge to the traditional institutional power and authority of religion. We have discussed the ways this may be the case within the wider context of conventional television viewing. These data, both from the personal interviews and the larger studies, present several clear ways this challenge is felt with regard to the issues under scrutiny.

First, conventional television viewing was shown in the quantitative analyses to be negatively associated with conventional religious beliefs and behaviors. This is consistent with Gerbner's idea that television creates a context inconsistent with major religious institutional propositions. (Gerbner and Connolly, 1978).

Second, the technology of television, particularly in its more recent permutations, has allowed for the development of an independent, institutionalized, translocal, universalist, "counter-institution" which finds its level outside traditional religious settings and networks. This institution, the "Electronic Church," has risen to a place of political and social prominence which has threatened the authority of more conventional churches.

Third, television technology also threatens those "Electronic Church" groups who wish to use it. It is clearly the case that the more distinctive, particularist elements of conventional religiosity are seen by these producers (and by some viewers) not to "fit" on so public a medium and are thus "watered down" to accommodate television's conventional industrial paradigms. Curiously, this threat to religious message and religious distinctions occasioned by television technology seems to serve as a positive gratification for viewers who may be drawn to the more "universalist" "doctrine" which results.

Fourth, viewers of religious television, as we have seen, take a radically particularist view of it. Simply put, television technology seems to be able to bring to these viewers experiences that are substantively "religious" for them.

Finally, "conventional" television sets the context for the "Electronic Church" itself, through the extensive experience religious (and non-religious) viewers have with it. In the interviews reported here, there is evidence that this functions in several ways. Conventional television powerfully sets the formal symbolic norms and standards through which religious television is understood and analyzed

by its adherents. Beyond the obvious precondition that viewers perceive what they are viewing to be "religious," (and setting aside the fact that we are unsure of just how they know this and how they know it is good) most respondents seem to base the perception of these experiences very much within the framework of conventional television, and its presumed norms and values.

Conventional television also seems, for these viewers, to be the primary source of information about the "secular" social realities that their religiously identified frames of reference are different from. For these viewers, conventional television is the embodiment of the negative and profane world which exists along side their diffuse "sacred" one.

Finally, television seems to provide, for the viewers, the occasion for assigning translocal credibility to "Electronic Church" figures. Respondent 40's and others' satisfaction that Pat Robertson can be "on television" with all that power seems tautological to a certain extent. However, viewers take it as a given that that power, authority, and credibility go hand-in-hand with appearance in the medium of television.

Taken together, these findings present a picture of the

"Electronic Church" as being not easily extracted from the larger reality of conventional television. It is interesting to note, in this regard, that in spite of their general condemnation of conventional television content and values, most respondents here do not see religious television as in any way a challenge to conventional television. To quote one respondent, "...it is an alternative, that is all...." And yet, these data suggest, viewers of religious television are also among the heaviest viewers of conventional television.

While the precise relationship between these two types of television viewing cannot be clearly articulated yet, it does appear that religious television viewing is a subset of all television viewing, a very particular subset, but a subset nonetheless.

#### Religious Television and Conventional Religiosity

We have known for some time that religious television viewing and conventional religiosity are strongly related. All previous studies have reaffirmed this basic relationship. The most recent of these, that of Gerbner, et. al. (1984) to which the present research is related, assess these issues with a far larger and more reliable pool of religious viewers, than was possible before, in its findings confirmed this basic relationship. The unique contribution of the

Gerbner, et. al. data is its utility for analyses among subgroups on religiosity and demographic measures, further confirmed that there are no classes of viewers for whom religious viewing is not positively related to more conventional religiosity.

What variation exists, according to Gerbner, et. al. findings, is slight and not necessarily significant. To the extent there is variation here, though, the data suggest that the less "typical" religious viewers (the more upscale ones, for example) tend to watch the most "typical" religious programs, i.e., the Sunday Morning church services. The lower income, more fundamentalist viewers are more prominent in the audience of the 700 Club and other weekday non-church-service types of programs.

Institutional analyses indicate that programs such as the 700 Club provide more means of audience contact than just the program itself. There are telephone hotlines, publications, affiliated local church groups, direct mailings, dinners, and seminars. For the viewer of this specific program (and others like it) involvement means more than just viewing, as a result.

Our review of data from the Gerbner, et. al. study suggests that the viewers of the 700 Club from whom we drew



our sample of respondents, are not really dissimilar to all religious viewers, as a class, are slightly lower in income, and slightly more likely to belong to independent, fundamentalist churches than are religious viewers as a whole.

Trajectory analyses seem to reveal that a certain level of substantive religiosity, especially evangelical religiosity, is a precursor of viewing of religious television, for nearly all respondents. There are, however, some interesting variations between respondents among these dimensions. Specifically, there seem to be, in this sample, four different classes of viewer (an extension of Bourgaunt's (1980) classification into two classes, "entertainment" and "committed" viewing).

The first class of viewers are the substantive evangelicals. They are the largest group of respondents, and for them, viewing of the 700 Club is similar to what Bourgaunt called "entertainment" viewing, i.e., viewers who find the program so well articulated with their particular theological outlook that their viewing of it really need not entail any unique substantive religious meaning or experience for them. Many of these respondents express attraction to the program's "universalism" on theological, or

socio-political grounds, but few of them seem to have been attracted to it as an alternative source of revelation or support.

The second group of viewers are those who relate their viewing of the program to a profound personal experience of loss or poor health. These respondents included some who were substantively evangelical, but included nearly all the non-evangelicals interviewed. In some cases, viewing the program preceded this experience, but respondents credited the program with helping them through their crises anyway. At least one respondent felt that by getting her to start watching the Club, God was preparing her for the tragedy of her son's suicide. The Jewish respondent, (number 31) could also be placed here.

The third group of viewers are the two Black Baptists interviewed. They tend to confound the analysis otherwise, because they are very similar (in terms of their substantive religiosity,) to evangelical whites, but differ markedly from them in functional religiosity and in social attitudes. Both seem to be most similar to the first class of viewers above in that they find the program substantively comfortable. They differ from each other, however, in that one of them, Respondent 18, had had an extremely varied background in

church membership, while the other, Respondent 47, continues to be very active in a mainline denomination. This latter respondent provides an interesting contrast to others, in that while she is an evangelical in a mainline congregation, there is less dissonance for her than is the case with some other respondents. This may be a function of characteristics unique to Black evangelicalism.

There appears to be one final group of viewers, those who are the most clearly attracted only to the "universalism" of the 700 Club (we should keep in mind that universalism was a gratification for a much larger number of viewers). These viewers, a man who describes himself as not particularly religious (number 29), perhaps the Jewish woman (number 31) and a Catholic (number 53) who is a non-member of the Club, seem to be drawn by the program's general world-view rather than by any foundational religiosity they may have in common with it. In fact, in the case of Respondent 53, the relationship to the religiosity of the program is only in terms of the healings that are reported on it.

It might have also been best to put Respondent 45 in this latter classification, in that she seems drawn only the the mission programs of the Club, describing no substantive religious gratification from viewing. She is attracted to

the political perspective of the program, as is the Jewish respondent, however.

In the end, each case is sufficiently different from others by all but the most rudimentary dimensions (those used in the trajectory analyses) that a tighter classificatory scheme seems less than useful to attempt at this point. We are inclined to be satisfied that the basic relationships are accessible here, and save for further reflection and probing, tighter classification of viewer "types," should such further work be relevant.

Viewing of the 700 Club appears, in sum, to be an activity which follows, rather than precedes, other religious commitments and activities. It is an involvement which is seen as clearly "religious" by its participants, but takes on special meaning only for those respondents in this sample who have suffered a striking "personal experience," and who have been helped by their involvement in the program.

The Club is heavily inter-related with other agencies of the "para church," providing its viewers with a wide range of opportunities to express their religiosity outside conventional institutional settings. This "para-church," as an informal, yet institutionalized network of organizations and agencies, is itself highly dependent on mediated

communication. Besides the prominent mediated agencies of the "para-church", such as the 700 Club, this network of institutions relies heavily on computer-managed direct mail, publishing, phone networks, sound recordings, and itinerating evangelistic organizations to create its community. Viewers of the 700 Club, by and large, express by their viewing of it, an interest and involvement in this larger "para-church" reality.

The "two party" dimension is salient in these regards, in that the evangelical side of that dimension is the dominant one in the Club and the larger para-church. The challenge posed by the "Electronic Church" to the conventional church is very much based in this dimension, as we expected. These respondents, by and large, are substantively evangelical. Those who belong to non-evangelical churches, clearly receive great reinforcement for their dissonant religiosity from their viewing of the program. Most report their viewing gives them moral support to advocate for more conservative theological directions. This "fifth column" effect of the "Electronic Church" has also been reported elsewhere (Horsfield, 1984, Bourgault, 1980).

#### Localism and Translocalism

Finally, we have attempted to see how a new dimension, that of localism/translocalism, might relate to previous theoretical work, particularly that of Turner. We found, within this sample, a clear sense that many respondents were attracted to the (to them) broader "universalism" of the theological message of the Club. Turner has seen this sort of identification and contact with other believers outside the local frames of reference to be a type of substantive theological activity, one he calls "existential communitas." We have seen some parallels within the experience of some respondents, and feel certain that further pursuit of this idea could result in fruitful new understandings of how media in general, not just religious media, function to create worlds of meaning for their viewers.

This "universalism" we have seen to be part of a larger (and more pervasive) sense of localism and translocalism that appears in nearly all the interviews. Respondents clearly see as attractive the fact that they are participating in something outside their local communities of reference. This can have substantive significance (as above) but it also can have more materially social and political referents, with viewers gratified that someone like Pat Robertson can be on television to "...speak for them."

Summary

We have found here that the issues of religion, television, and religious television are interconnected in a more complex way than had been earlier assumed. We had access to a large-sample data base which enabled a detailed analysis of issues which had only been sketched in broad strokes in earlier, more limited studies. We found, using this database, that the received picture was essentially unchanged, that what was needed was an elaboration of these data through analyses that could result in new approaches to and perspectives on these phenomena.

The interviews reported here provided just that. Out of these accounts, we have drawn a model of religion-media interaction in the lives of viewers which reveals a set of interacting dimensions of religiosity and social experience. Respondents' viewing is related to substantive religiosity, and to formal religious behaviors. It is also related to substantively religious experiences of revelation. It further seems to be related to personal experiences of crisis for many viewers. Viewer social and political attitudes are also salient here, as are involvements in other aspects of the "para-church."

The interviews further revealed a dimension which

underlies many of these others, that of "localism and translocalism." Most viewers seem to gain a special gratification from the knowledge that the 700 Club comes from the larger world outside their own. This gratification seems to take two related forms. On a theological level, some viewers seem to be attracted to the "universalism" or lack of doctrinal particularity of the program. On a more socio-political level, respondents are drawn to the assumed political impact and social prominence of the Club (related to its presence on the public, translocal medium of television.)

This latter side of translocalism, its social/political credibility referent, is further related to a wider issue, the fact that this phenomenon exists in the larger context set by conventional television. 700 Club viewers watch a great deal of conventional television. We have described a number of ways that conventional television can be seen to have related to these issues.

It appears that viewing of the 700 Club is a very specific component of general television viewing for the several classes of respondents we identify here. It is a very peculiar type of television, though. It serves needs in times of crisis for some. For others, it is a sort of



mundane "entertainment," which is comfortable for them given their foundational levels of religiosity. For a few others, it is less clear that it is really meaningfully "religious." It can also be said to put viewers in touch with a wider world of meaning, where they find others who share their beliefs and perspectives. For some, this has primarily a religious (that is, transcendent) meaning. For others, it may function more to confirm for them that important and powerful people can and do speak for them and their values.

APPENDIX I

The Regional Survey Questionnaire

No. \_\_\_\_\_  
Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Initi. \_\_\_\_\_  
Dept. \_\_\_\_\_

CONFIDENTIAL

The Annenberg School of Communications  
Religion and Television Study  
PRELIMINARY QUALITATIVE SURVEY INSTRUMENT

-----Not for circulation or citation-----

Respondent number \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Pre-interview date: \_\_\_\_\_

Personal Interview Scheduled: \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

Personal Interview Date \_\_\_\_\_

Time \_\_\_\_\_

Special Requests, notes \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Annenberg School, U of Pa.  
RELIGION AND TELEVISION STUDY  
June, 1984

INTRODUCTION: Hello, do I have the (FAMILY NAME) residence?  
I am (YOUR NAME) calling from the University  
of Pennsylvania.

We are conducting a survey, and would like  
to ask you some questions about some items  
of interest. We appreciate your own personal  
response to each question.

1. I'm going to name some institutions in this country. As far as the PEOPLE  
RUNNING these institutions are concerned, would you say you have a great  
deal of confidence, only some confidence, a little confidence or no  
confidence at all in them?

	<u>Great Deal</u>	<u>Some Confidence</u>	<u>Little Confidence</u>	<u>No Confidence</u>	<u>NO OPINION</u>
A. The Medical Community	40-1	-2	-3	-4	-5
B. The Scientific Community	41-1	-2	-3	-4	-5
C. The Government	42-1	-2	-3	-4	-5
D. Organized Religion (In general)	43-1	-2	-3	-4	-5
E. Your Local Church	44-1	-2	-3	-4	-5
F. The Press	45-1	-2	-3	-4	-5
G. Television	46-1	-2	-3	-4	-5

2. Did you vote in the 1980 Presidential election?  
(PROMPT: Did you vote in the election between Reagan, Carter and Anderson?)

YES	47-1
NO	-2
DON'T REMEMBER	-3

3. We hear a lot of talk these days about liberals, moderates, and  
conservatives. Do you generally think of yourself, politically, as...

READ:	liberal	48-1
	moderate, or	-2
	conservative?	-3
DO NOT READ:	OTHER:	-4
	NONE	-5
	DON'T KNOW	-6
	REFUSED	-9

4. Are you generally in favor of the death penalty for persons convicted  
of murder?

DO NOT READ:	YES	49-1
	NO	-2
	MAYBE	-3
	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION	-4
	DEPENDS ON CIRCUMSTANCES	-5

5. Are you in favor of tougher laws dealing with pornography?		
DO NOT READ:	YES	50-1
	NO	-2
	MAYBE	-3
	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION	-4
	DEPENDS ON CIRCUMSTANCES	-5
6. Do you think that abortions should be legal?		
DO NOT READ:	YES	51-1
	NO	-2
	MAYBE	-3
	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION	-4
	DEPENDS ON CIRCUMSTANCES	-5
7. Are you generally in favor of a freeze on nuclear weapons?		
DO NOT READ:	YES	52-1
	NO	-2
	MAYBE	-3
	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION	-4
	DEPENDS ON CIRCUMSTANCES	-5
8. During any given week, what would you say are your chances of being involved in some kind of violence -- do you think the chances are 1 in 10, or 1 in 100 that you'd be involved in violence?		
DO NOT READ:	1 IN 10	53-1
	1 IN 100	-2
	NO CHANCE	-3
	OTHER:	-4
	REFUSED	-9
9. There's been a lot of discussion about the way morals and attitudes about sex are changing in this country. Do you think it is always wrong, wrong only sometimes, or not wrong at all...		
a. For a man and woman to have sexual relations with each other before marriage.		
DO NOT READ:	ALWAYS WRONG	54-1
	WRONG ONLY SOMETIMES	-2
	NOT WRONG AT ALL	-3
	NO COMMENT	-4
	DON'T KNOW	-5
b. For a married person to have sexual relations with someone other than their marriage partner?		
DO NOT READ:	ALWAYS WRONG	55-1
	WRONG ONLY SOMETIMES	-2
	NOT WRONG AT ALL	-3
	NO COMMENT	-4
	DON'T KNOW	-5
c. For two adults of the same sex to have sexual relations with one another?		
DO NOT READ:	ALWAYS WRONG	56-1
	WRONG ONLY SOMETIMES	-2
	NOT WRONG AT ALL	-3
	NO COMMENT	-4
	DON'T KNOW	-5

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10. Overall, would you say that your health is...

READ:	excellent,	57-1
	good,	-2
	fair or	-3
	poor?	-4
DON'T READ:	OTHER	-5
	REFUSED	-9

11. In the past year, have you been confined to a hospital, a nursing home or your own home for a month or longer?

DON'T READ:	YES	58-1
	NO	-3
	REFUSED	-9

12. In your opinion, do you think that most people can be trusted or that you can't be too careful in dealing with people?

DO NOT READ:	PEOPLE CAN BE TRUSTED	59-1
	CAN'T BE TOO CAREFUL	-2
	DON'T KNOW	-3

13. Please tell me whether you generally agree or disagree with these statements.

a. Most women are happiest when they are making a home and caring for children.

DO NOT READ:	AGREE	60-1
	DISAGREE	-2
	DEPENDS ON CIRCUMSTANCES	-3
	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION	-4

b. A woman should not work outside the home if her husband can support the family.

DO NOT READ:	AGREE	61-1
	DISAGREE	-2
	DEPENDS ON CIRCUMSTANCES	-3
	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION	-4

READ: Now, I'd like to ask you some questions dealing with attitudes and opinions about religion.

14. Do you ever read the Bible?

SKIP TO Q.15	YES	62-1
	NO	-2
	REFUSED	-9

14a. Do you read the Bible...

READ:	frequently,	63-1
	sometimes, or	-2
	rarely?	-3

15. Do you ever pray to God?

SKIP TO Q.16	YES	64-1
	NO	-2
	REFUSED	-9

15a. Do you pray to God...

READ:	frequently,	65-1
	sometimes, or	-2
	rarely?	-3

16. Which one of these statements comes closest to describing your feelings about the Bible?
- |       |   |      |
|-------|---|------|
| READ: | a. The Bible is an ancient book of stories, history and morals recorded by human beings, or                   | 66-3 |
|       | b. The Bible is the inspired word of God but not everything in it should be taken literally word for word, or | -2   |
|       | c. The Bible is the actual word of God and is to be taken literally word for word.                            | -1   |
17. Do you believe, as told in the New Testament, that Jesus Christ will return to earth someday?
- |             |                      |      |
|-------------|----------------------|------|
|             | YES                  | 67-1 |
| SKIP TO Q18 | NO                   | -2   |
|             | NO ANSWER/DON'T KNOW | -3   |
|             | REFUSED              | -9   |
- 17a. Do you think that he will return...
- |             |                                       |      |
|-------------|---------------------------------------|------|
| READ:       | In your lifetime, or                  | 68-1 |
|             | Will return but not in your lifetime? | -2   |
| DON'T READ: | HAS ALREADY RETURNED                  | -3   |
|             | DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION                 | -4   |
|             | OTHER                                 | -5   |
18. Have you ever had a religious experience, that is, a particularly powerful religious insight or awakening?
- |              |            |      |
|--------------|------------|------|
|              | YES        | 69-1 |
| SKIP TO Q.20 | NO         | -2   |
|              | REFUSED    | -9   |
|              | DON'T KNOW | -3   |
19. Would you say that you have been born-again or have had a born-again experience -- that is, a turning point in you life when you committed yourself to Jesus Christ?
- |  |         |      |
|--|---------|------|
|  | YES     | 70-1 |
|  | NO      | -2   |
|  | REFUSED | -9   |
20. Do you believe in miracles?
- |              |            |      |
|--------------|------------|------|
|              | YES        | 71-1 |
| SKIP TO Q.22 | NO         | -2   |
|              | REFUSED    | -9   |
|              | DON'T KNOW | -3   |
21. Do you believe miracles occur today?
- |  |            |      |
|--|------------|------|
|  | YES        | 72-1 |
|  | NO         | -2   |
|  | DON'T KNOW | -3   |
22. Do you believe people can be healed through their faith in God and prayers alone?
- |              |            |      |
|--------------|------------|------|
|              | YES        | 73-1 |
| SKIP TO Q.23 | NO         | -2   |
|              | REFUSED    | -9   |
|              | DON'T KNOW | -3   |
- 22a. Have you ever experienced a physical healing through faith and prayer?(IF RESPONDENT VOLUNTEERS INFORMATION ABOUT OTHERS BEING HEALED, CIRCLE OTHER AND WRITE IN INFORMATION BELOW.)
- |  |       |      |
|--|-------|------|
|  | YES   | 74-1 |
|  | NO    | -2   |
|  | OTHER | -3   |

23. Have you heard of the religious practice known as "speaking in tongues"?

	YES	75-1
SKIP TO Q.24 ←	NO	-2

23a. Do you feel favorable or unfavorable toward speaking in tongues in modern times?

DO NOT READ:	FAVORABLE	76-1
	UNFAVORABLE	-2
	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION	-3

24. How often do you attend religious services?

DO NOT READ:	MORE THAN ONCE A WEEK	77-1
	ONCE A WEEK	-2
	2-3 TIMES A MONTH	-3
	ONCE A MONTH	-4
	SEVERAL TIMES A YEAR	-5
	ONCE OR TWICE A YEAR	-6
SKIP TO Q29 ←	NEVER	-7
	OTHER	-8
	REFUSED	-9

25. Has your attendance at religious services increased, decreased or remained the same during the past year?

DO NOT READ:	INCREASED	78-1
	DECREASED	-2
	REMAINED THE SAME	-3
	REFUSED	-9

26. Do you participate in activities at your place of worship other than religious services.....

READ:	frequently,	79-1
	sometimes,	-2
	rarely, or	-3
	never?	-4
SKIP TO Q.27 ←	REFUSED	-9
DO NOT READ:		

26a. Did you participate in any of those activities during the last month?

DO NOT READ:	YES	80-1
	NO	-2
	DON'T KNOW/DON'T REMEMBER	-3
	REFUSED	-9

27. I'm going to read you a series of dollar amounts. Please stop me when I get to the amounts that best reflect your yearly contribution to your local place of worship last year?

READ:	Up to \$120	81-82-01
	\$120 to \$180	02
	\$181 to \$300	03
	\$301 to \$420	04
	\$421 to \$600	05
	\$601 to \$780	06
	\$781 to \$960	07
	\$961 to \$1200	08
	Over \$1200	09
	NONE	10
DO NOT READ:	REFUSED	11

28. During the last three years would you say your overall contribution to your place of worship.....

READ:	increased,	83-1
	decreased or	-2
	remained the same?	-3
	DON'T KNOW	-4
DO NOT READ:	REFUSED	-9



29. Taken all together, how important would you say religion is in your own life -- would you say it is.....

READ:	very important,	84-1
	important,	-2
	not very important, or	-3
	not important at all?	-4
DON'T READ:	DON'T KNOW	-5
	REFUSED	-9

READ: Now, to turn to some other topics.

30. Do you think minorities in the United States get their fair share of resources, more than their fair share or less than their fair share?

DO NOT READ:	GET THEIR FAIR SHARE	85-1
	MORE THAN THEIR FAIR SHARE	-2
	LESS THAN THEIR FAIR SHARE	-3
	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION	-4
	REFUSED	-9

31. Compared to 10 to 20 years ago, would you say that the number of older people has....

READ:	increased,	86-1
	decreased or	-2
	stayed about the same?	-3
DON'T READ:	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION	-4

32. On an average day, how many hours do you spend watching television? (WRITE IN AMOUNT, ROUNDING UP TO NEXT HOUR-- USE "0" FOR NONE.)

WRITE IN AMOUNT: \_\_\_\_\_ 87-88

33. Do you ever watch any religious television programs? (PROBE: Have you watched any in the past 3 years?)

SKIP TO Q.44	YES	89-1
	NO	-2
	DON'T KNOW	-3

34. How often do you watch religious programs.....

READ:	frequently,	90-1
	sometimes or	-2
	rarely?	-3
DON'T READ:	DON'T KNOW	-4

35. Which religious programs do you watch? (PROBE FOR TITLE OF PROGRAM - INDICATE ALL TITLES BELOW - USE SPACE AS NECESSARY.)

_____	91-92
_____	93-94
_____	95-96
_____	97-98
PROBE: Are there any others?	
_____	99-100
_____	101-102
_____	103-104
_____	105-106

36. During the past year would you say your viewing of religious programs has...

READ:	increased,	107-1
	decreased or	-2
	remained the same?	-3
DON'T READ:	← DON'T KNOW	-4

37. Do you ever send money to any religious television programs?

	YES	108-1
GO TO Q.42 ←	NO	-2
	REFUSED	-9

38. Do you send money regularly, once in a while or only when there is a special appeal? (CIRCLE ALL THAT APPLY.)

DON'T READ:	REGULARLY	109-1
	ONCE IN A WHILE	110-1
	SPECIAL APPEALS ONLY	111-1
	REFUSED	112-9

39. How many different programs do you usually send money to?

(WRITE IN NUMBER) \_\_\_\_\_ 113-114

40. I'm going to read you a series of amounts. Please stop me when I get to the amount that best indicates the average monthly contribution you gave to support religious programs.

READ:	Up to \$10	115-116-01
	\$11 to \$15	-02
	\$16 to \$20	-03
	\$21 to \$25	-04
	\$26 to \$40	-05
	\$41 to \$50	-06
	\$51 to \$100	-07
	Over \$100	-08
DON'T READ:	← NONE	-09
	REFUSED	-10

41. During the last three years, would you say that your contributions to these programs has.....

READ:	increased,	117-1
	decreased or	-2
	remained the same?	-3
DON'T READ:	← DON'T KNOW	-4
	REFUSED	-9

42. Do you ever call or write to religious television programs?

	YES	118-1
SKIP TO Q.43 ←	NO	-2

42a. How many times in the past year have you called or written to these programs?

DON'T READ:	1-2	119-1
	3-4	-2
	5-6	-3
	7-8	-4
	9-10	-5
	11-12	-6
	OVER 12 TIMES	-7
	DON'T KNOW	-8
	REFUSED	-9

42b. Why do you usually contact these programs?

_____	120-121
_____	122-123
_____	124-125
_____	126-127

43. When you watch religious television who do you usually watch with?  
(CIRCLE ALL THAT APPLY.)

DON'T READ:	FRIENDS	128-1
	FAMILY MEMBERS	129-1
	ALONE	130-1
	OTHERS	131-1
	REFUSED	132-1

SKIP TO Q.47

QUESTIONS 44 THROUGH 46 SHOULD BE ASKED OF ONLY THOSE WHO SAID "NO" TO ANY RELIGIOUS VIEWING IN Q33.

44. Have you ever heard of any religious television programs?

	YES	133-1
SKIP TO Q.47 ←	NO	-2

44a. Which religious programs have you heard of?

_____	134-135
_____	136-137
_____	138-139
_____	140-141

45. When you are watching television and you realize a religious program has come on, do you change the channel or continue to watch the religious program?

	CHANGE THE CHANNEL	142-1
SKIP TO Q.46 ←	WATCH THE RELIGIOUS PROGRAM	-2
	OTHER:	-3

45a. Why would you change the channel?

_____	143-144	
_____	145-146	
_____	147-148	
	DON'T KNOW	149-1
	NO DESIRE TO WATCH	-2
	REFUSED	-9

46. Do any other members of your household ever watch religious television programs?

	YES	150-1
	NO	-2
	DON'T KNOW	-3
	REFUSED	-9

47. What is your religious affiliation? (PROBE FOR DENOMINATION IF "PROTESTANT".)		151-152
<hr/>		
48. Are you a member of a church, synagogue or other place of worship?	YES NO REFUSED	153-1 -2 -9
	SKIP TO Q.50 ←	
49. How close do you feel to other members of your congregation or parish? Do you feel...	READ: very close to them, somewhat close to them or not close at all? DON'T READ: DON'T KNOW REFUSED	154-1 -2 -3 -4 -9
50. What was your religious affiliation at age 16? (PROBE FOR DENOMINATION IF "PROTESTANT".)		155-156
<hr/>		
READ: Now, I'd like to ask some questions for statistical purposes.		
51. What was the last grade of school you completed?	DO NOT READ: GRADE SCHOOL OR LESS SOME HIGH SCHOOL HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATE SOME COLLEGE/TECHNICAL COLLEGE GRADUATE MORE THAN COLLEGE REFUSED	157-1 -2 -3 -4 -5 -6 -9
52. What is your marital status?	GO TO Q.53 ← MARRIED SEPARATED GO TO Q.55 ← WIDOWED DIVORCED GO TO Q.56 ← SINGLE REFUSED	158-1 -2 -3 -4 -5 -9
53. Is your spouse employed?	YES NO	159-1 -2
54. Does your spouse belong to the same place of worship as you do?	YES NO	160-1 -2
55. How many children under 18 are currently living in your household?		

151-152

APPENDIX II

The Personal Interview Agenda

Interview Agenda

1. When did R first start watching the 700 Club?
2. Why and/or how did this happen?
3. Has R watched or listened to other religious programs?
4. What does R think of the others?
5. Who does R think watches religious programs?
6. How does R think the audiences for the Club differ from audiences for other programs?
7. What does R think about the rest of television?
8. How does R feel about other media like films, magazines, books?
9. How does R think CBN programming and ministries relate to regular churches?
10. Have conventional churches failed, or is CBN a supplement, not a replacement to them?
11. How does viewing relate to other religious activities?

Interview Agenda, Cont'd

12. Who does R talk to about viewing?
13. Does anything on any show ever make R uncomfortable or nervous?
14. Who does R not talk to about his/her viewing?

APPENDIX III

The Personal Interview Accounts



## The Personal Interviews

There follow accounts of the interviews with all twenty respondents or respondent families sampled. The sampling process has already been described. In brief, each respondent here was asked the questions from the formal survey questionnaire used in the Gerbner, et. al. regional study. This enabled each to be described parsimoniously along major demographic and belief dimensions.

Following the formal questionnaire, respondents were led through a semi-structured, open-ended discussion of issues and experiences surrounding their viewing of the 700 Club and other religious programs. The formal questionnaire itself and the personal interview agenda are reproduced in the Appendices.

The open-ended interviews were intended to seem unstructured to the respondents, but all of the issues in the interview agenda were addressed in each. Often this occurred spontaneously. Some slight modifications were made in the interview agenda as interviews progressed.

Generally, respondents were asked first to recount their "faith histories," with additional probing as necessary to flesh out the interview agenda questions.

them to compare the CBN 700 Club program (usually called the "Club"), the similar PTL Club, and Jimmy Swaggart's A Study in the Word which are also carried on a daily basis. This comparison was intended to elicit information from them on how they go about deciding if something they see is religious and how they know it is "good" or "bad" religion.

If possible, respondents were asked about one specific aspect of the PTL Club, that being the presence on that program of Tammy Bakker, the co-host of the program, which is a modified "Tonight Show" format. Tammy is dissonant to the majority of what happens on that pentecostalist, charismatic-oriented (and thus lower-class and mystical) program. She dresses revealingly, wears makeup, and wears expensive jewelry. Bourgault (1980) found that the presence of Tammy was a major focus of respondent like or dislike of the program. Respondents here were simply asked what they thought of her, with follow-up probing as necessary to provide insight into these connections.

Respondents generally elaborated a perspective on the Club that saw it as involving two parts, a "religious" (prayer, counseling, preaching, Bible study) and a "non-religious" (news, public affairs, health, self-help features) one. They were asked to evaluate these two parts,

often with a provocation that perhaps the program isn't "religious" enough because it contains the latter content, or one that suggested it would turn off its intended audience of non-believers because it contained too much "religion."

Finally, R's were asked to address any issues not yet covered through the discussion.

In addition to the agenda-related issues, a large range of additional material resulted from each interview. This included observations of the homes, physical appearances, and styles of the various R's. Where appropriate, these matters are also presented in the accounts that follow.

These accounts are not transcripts. They contain many long passages from the interviews, but are presented here to be relevant to the objectives of this study. Much more information is here than was used in analyses reported here. It is hoped that the additional context provided by these fuller accounts will provide the reader with a sense of the tangible quality and meaning of the lives represented here. These respondents contributed much to our efforts by their candor and openness. It is hoped that the accounts of their interviews will prove to be a continuing resource to this and other efforts.

Respondents 3 and 4

The R3's and R4 were interviewed as a family, over the course of a three-hour session one evening in their home. The most striking thing about the R3's was their wealth. Mr. R3 is a stockbroker with a prominent firm in Philadelphia, and they live in a wealthy suburb, in a very elegant rambling house on a two-acre parcel of wooded property. Their home includes a swimming pool that was custom-built into a sculptured, Japanese-style garden, and overlooks one of their wooded acres. They have at least one household domestic, a gardener-handyman, who spoke with an hispanic accent (over the phone.)

The R3s were first contacted by phone, and their daughter (R4) was administered the formal questionnaire at that time. During the personal interview, each of the parents also responded to the questionnaire, often disagreeing, though on minor points. All agreed on such items as Biblical Literalism, the Second Coming of Christ, and capital punishment.

Mr. and Mrs. R3 are in their late fifties, their daughter is 36, and lives with them. Mrs. R3 is a homemaker, the daughter a music teacher in a private school. The daughter has always lived at home. There are two other children, both boys, one older than the daughter, and a

younger one, who died suddenly (suicide) several years ago. In addition, the daughter has attempted suicide once, subsequent to the son's death.

The R3's readily express feelings and experiences surrounding disturbing personal tragedies (the son's death, the daughter's attempted suicide) in discussion of their involvement with the Club, but they express far more socially-desireable motivations and attractions as their reasons for viewing. Mr. R3 likes Pat's intellect, and socio-political pronouncements, Mrs. R3 finds some more "substantive" reasons for viewing (including interest in the charismatic movement) the daughter likes the intellectual stimulation of the program.

Another significant thing about the R3's is their social conscience. Far from being the sort of 'personalistic' pietists often assumed to be viewers of these programs, the R3's hold social involvements, including a heavy involvement in prison reform work, to be basic to their faith. Do not be misled, this prison work takes place in the same "para-church religiosity" based institutional context as does most of what they do, having come from their evangelical involvements, and their having been invited by "Chuck Colson" (who is a friend and has been a guest in their home) to attend "prison

ministry" experiences he has held at Graterford. Nonetheless, they seem to see and conceive of their work with prisoners as a social witness as much as it is a "religious" (in the sense of seeking salvation for these "sinners" sense.) They see Christianity has having utility in its ability to help these people who are alive today, not as a palliative that will assure them eternal life if they just "accept Jesus." The R3's have been politically and ideologically affected by their prison work. They have come to oppose capital punishment, and have come to be advocates for prison reform, including opposing new prison construction. However, they merge these ideals with curious remnants of their basic ideology, holding, for instance, that what is needed is that corrections needs to be handled more by the "private sector."

The R3's are heavily involved in the para-church. They are pillars of it in the Philadelphia area, and are well-connected with the other pillars, such as Mrs. Nancy DeMoss, who is the best-known of the local evangelical doyennes. They attend a significant congregation in terms of its association with neo-evangelical, para-church involvements, the Narberth Presbyterian Church. This congregation, while mainline-related, is about half

charismatic, is strongly neo-evangelical in outlook, is growing in numbers, and which runs a vast number of outreach programs, such as alcohol counseling, teenage drug abusers, unwed mothers, and prison work. These R's, and this congregation, are an interesting topographic area in the total map of American socio-political life. Politically conservative, Republican, but not necessarily individualistic or overly materialistic (though Il Papa or Solzynitsin would probably disagree) they blur some of the received categories we often deal with.

When asked how they first began viewing the Club, Mrs. R3 answers.

"...before [daughter-in-law] and [Son] went to Paraguay [a son and daughter-in-law moved to Paraguay for business reasons] about ten years ago, I started watching...I had read Pat's book ['Shout It From the Housetops']...one day I was watching something else, and Pat came on and I said, 'oh, this is the man who wrote the book,'..." [Mr. R3 adds,] "...we can't watch regularly anymore, since it is no longer on in the evenings."

"How did you come to be so heavily involved [their monthly contribution is over \$1200.00, and they know Pat and Ben personally.]"

"...It was right after Georgie [another son] died, we were invited to a seminar down there [CBN] and [daughter] thought it would be a good idea for us to get away, to be away during his birthday. So we went down to Williamsburg, and we wrote for tickets to be in the studio audience...and from there we were invited to

seminars...and theyn we got to meet Ben Kinchelow through a friend...and then we kept going to seminars...we've been to four, including the dedication of the new building...and we'll be going back again this year for the dedication of the library."

Asked to describe what attracted them about the program initially, all three answer, but all in terms of current gratifications, not in terms of original attraction. It seems most likely, that Mrs. R3 was originally attracted, as she says, by the fact that here was the program led by that persons whose book she had read, and coincident with the death of their son and other personal experiences, they found themselves closer and closer to CBN.

[Mr. R3 answers,]"...well, I don't know whether this was right from the beginning, but I like what Pat has between the ears...if you want to put us down as 'spiritual snobs,' ok, or as intellectual snobs in the spiritual arena...we would not be so much taken with PTL."

[R4:]"...its a cultural thing, more than anything else. Its cultural and intellectual...I'm a musician, so for me some of the music on PTL would not be what I would choose to listen to...the message might be what I want, but I'm a lover of Bach, so that puts me in a different place from alot of other people...so I was meaning culturally I'm in a different place."

[Mrs. R3]"...but I find some things fascinating [about the Club]. I was fascinated, for instance, by what they call the 'Baptism of the Holy Spirit', [catch-phrase for charismatic expression] and I think that's what brought me to the program. I didn't understand what I was saying, really..." [daughter]: "...you've changed alot in ten years [coming to accept religious spiritual things she wouldn't have before]" [Mrs. R3]: "...but I haven't really understood things until recently...but I



knew there was something there, that I was going to tune in the next day...["Had you heard of the 'Baptism of the Holy Spirit' before?"] ...yes, I had heard, I was a seeker, but I'd never found it...I was very attracted to him, because he presented it in a way that was attractive, that didn't turn me off."

"But I take it that you like the content of the program as well as Pat's particular communication skills."

"...not only in the area of spiritual messages but I think that, politically, he is on top of things. For awhile, he even had a newsletter which was even better than most of your news analysts or columnists as far as right, correct, interpretation..."["so you wouldn't separate the spiritual from the temporal realms and say it was inappropriate to worry about the temporal?"] "Oh, no. I certainly would not be critical because the Gospel is political, and the more well-rounded a program is, the better." [daughter]:"...it depends on what you mean by 'political.' If you mean he'd start endorsing candidates, and things like that, I'd have a lot of trouble with that, and he's not about to do that...so it depends on what you mean by that word...if you mean just...God's world is everything, including the political...."

[Mr. R3]: "Pat presents a perspective on things, including politics...he brings out things you don't usually hear...the Russians pulled out of the Olympics, and he said, 'what do they know that we don't know?'...he really is on target with most things, and now that he's on live, it's much better, because he can have up to the minute reports and interviews."

[Mrs. R3]: "...I wasn't raised in a narrow Christian home. I learned that God and Christ are in and work in the world."

"How would you compare and contrast the PTL and Club audiences?"

[R4:] "I am sure the 700 Club attracts a smaller group of people... better educated...interested in broad topics, not just religious issues. PTL would be more attractive to the masses...[Mr.]: Pat's program is

better produced than PTL...[Mrs. R3]: ...PTL is too 'folksy,' too 'homey,'...[Daughter]: I think what we're talking about here is a class thing more than anything else. I think that blue-collar class people would be more comfortable with PTL...."

The R3's were then asked what other media they consume, television, radio, and print.

[daughter]: "...we watch little TV besides Channel 12...dad watches the business program on Channel 12. Dad likes WW II movies, but we don't go to many films besides those...the media, in general, are pretty bad, and CBN and religious TV can be a positive influence there...." [Is CBN an alternative, or does it present a new model for the rest of TV?"] [daughter]: "...CBN and Channel 12 are alternatives for the same group, the more intellectually motivated group...Pat deals with things that aren't 'consciously religious' [meaning 'self-consciously' religious] he talks about issues." [How do you know, then, if a program is a religious one. What do you mean 'not consciously religious'?] "...it should make you care about things, care about prison reform, care about the poor, care about pain and hurt...I think you could tell the 700 Club is religious by looking at it's values."

The R3's were then asked to talk a bit about their conventional church behavior. In spite of their prison work, which takes them to Graterford every Sunday, they do relate to a local church, one in Narberth, known to be one of the local centers of evangelical/charismatic ferment.

[Mrs. R3] "...we support our local church, financially, and we go to many events there, but we are at the prison every Sunday, so I don't think we've been to Sunday services in our church for over a year. [R4:] Our church is a very

active, involved one. Everyone there is involved in making the world better. There are AA chapters sponsored, and programs for unwed mothers...[Mrs. R3]: ...the church is about half charismatic and half not, but there is no tension about that. The 'Holy Spirit' [charismatic] group meets in the evenings, and everyone attends in the mornings." [do others there watch the Club?] [Mrs.]: Lots of people there watch the 700 Club, and we talk about it when something interesting has been on. [does the minister watch the Club?] I don't know whether he does or not...it wouldn't surprise me, but I never asked him..."

"What about most other churches? What makes yours different?"

"Most other churches aren't preaching the message Jesus taught us to teach. Most of them are personalistic, individualistic, or so secularized their irrelevant [daughter]."

The R3's were then asked to detail their faith histories. Mr. R3 went first, and was very garrulous. "My mother was the active Christian at home," he begins. "She had been going to a very modern church, a Methodist church or something, and one day switched to the Christian Missionary Alliance." [A pentecostalist denomination known for charismatic expression, and anti-intellectual, anti-modernist dogma and legalism.] Mr. R3's mother and father broke up over

this change in religion, and he and his brothers stayed with their mother, and continued to attend the CMA. After he left the service (he was a Marine officer, and left to go into stocks and bonds) he joined Mrs. R3's church, which was Methodist. Mrs. R3 had been Methodist all her life, and had been a regular attender. However, she and Mr. R3 "...accepted Jesus at 10th Presbyterian church downtown, under Barnhouse, and left the Methodist church and joined a Presbyterian church." After thjey moved to the west suburbs, they transferred to their current church, which is a Presbyterian one also.

Mr. R3, as part of his history, reveals that he is on the boards of many religious organizations (more Para-church involvement) including the Bible and Medical Missionary Fellowship, and various Bible societies. These involvements are ones he began almost as soon as he accepted Jesus. All three of the R3's include their involvment in CBN as one of the inportant wayposts along their faith paths (like that metaphor?). Mr. R3 says, for example, "...it [CBN] has opened up vistas we didn't know existed. It has shown us possibilities for our faith and put us in touch with people we never would have know about."

When asked directly what relationship CBN has to local

churches, Mr. R3 is very much aware of the implications of the question.

"Our level of giving [to CBN] seems quite high, I'm sure. But we also give to our local church, as much, if not more, than we did before. CBN put us in touch with the prison work we now do. That has taken us out of church on Sundays but we still think the church is vital. It is the body of Christ, and cannot be shunted aside...I am sure that whatever money is going to the religious broadcasters is money that would have not gone to the local church anyway. It is extra, and can't be seen by local churches as competition."

The R3s were then asked about the idea of and "evangelical era," had their really been a renewal of evangelicalism, a religious turn-around in America. Their answer revealed the extent to which such social constructs are not bedrock, that is, are not necessarily salient, even for those who would be expected to be most typical of those who would identify with such an idea or such a movement.

[R4:] "...No, there hasn't been any great evangelical revival, or religious turn-around in America. [why do you disagree with Time Magazine about that?] ...Because for there to actually have been such a thing, there would have to be material, concrete evidence and consequence. Too much religiosity is just egocentric, just narcissistic. There would have to have been real social and political change in America, based on religious consciousness, and there has been none. This 'evangelical revival,' I see as nothing more than personalism, without social conscience...."

This is a natural entre into more discussion of R3's social involvements including their prison work, which they spend about 30 minutes describing. The important points are

that they have been heavily involved in such work for over three years. The "ministry" itself seems to involve only direct contact with prisoners who are or claim to be Christian, and contact only during church services on Sundays, though they do follow-through with 'friends' on the inside with phone calls, letters, packages, advice, and other help. For awhile, they were keeping one recent parolee at a time in their home, many of whom were alcoholic, but this got too heavy for Mrs. R3 to handle alone, and they backed off of this. They launched into an extensive discussion of prison reform, saying, among other things, "...there's no reason why non-violent criminals should be imprisoned...." and "...prison reform is a necessity for economic, if for no other reasons." They do not accept that poverty is the primary cause of crime, "...there is no direct correlation between poverty or blackness and crime...."

The R3's also work with a teenage alcohol and drug program [one which is heavily Christian in orientation] called 'teen challenge.' Among the things they do for this group is to hold weekly barbecues and swim parties for kids in the program at their pool, combined with Bible studies led by Mrs. R3.

The R3's are among the most interesting R's in the

entire sample. Their uniqueness in terms of SES is particularly interesting, given that they do not typify the lower-SES R often visualised when considering the elec. church. Their level of social involvement also runs counter to expectations of people of such status.

What is most interesting, though, is the extent to which there are opportunities offered to such people by the para-church, opportunities which are "safely" religious and thus not socially threatening (in class terms) and which are also thus "safe" social-reform involvements. The R3's are cosmopolite. They run in social realms which are above those usually reached by fundamentalist Christianity. The 700 Club gives them a cosmopolite cultural expression onto which they can map their own consciousness, one which is justified for them by its being "substantively" religious. There are people, of their class, to whom they talk about the program ["...yes, I talk to one of the neighbors about the Club, I know he views it, too..."] but not all of their social contacts are in that circle for them. Mr. R3 does not talk to his partners at work about the Club. There is little dissonance for Mr. R3, for instance, on a day-to-day basis at work because the ideology of the Club (its political perspective) is one which is already consonant with that of

his colleagues at work. The Club is not a palliative (an opiate) for Mr. R3. It fits with his ideology as a member of the financial establishment, AND it does so by evoking imagery and substantive affirmation which is consistent with his religious fundamentalism.

#### Respondent 8

The R8s live in a very nice home in an upper-middle class neighborhood in the suburbs of the city. There were four cars parked in their driveway, and the house included a spacious, wooded lot behind, and an American flag in front. The interview took place on their screened-in porch in the back of the house.

Mr. R8 is about sixty years of age, and Mrs. R8 a few years younger. They both speak with northeastern accents (both are from suburban Boston originally.) They were suspicious, even a bit hostile, at the beginning of the interview, but warmed to the process as things progressed. Mr. R8, in particular, was the active agent of this suspicion and hostility. The interviewer got the clear impression that the R8's were actively suspicious of universities, and researchers, and pollsters, and the media, all of which the interviewer could have represented to them. It took a bit of doing to dislodge this suspicion. Mr. R8 took a discursive



stance similar to that encountered in discussions in factory lunchrooms, or in auto garages, or other settings where educated blue-collar workers meet and interact. The style there is to be a bit combative, a bit anti-intellectual, parrying for rhetorical advantage on the basis of needing to "define terms," or questioning assumptions. The following interaction, in response to a survey question about confidence in institutions, is illustrative.

["Would you say you have...confidence in the people running these institutions?"] "...now, wait a minute, define 'confidence,'...confidence in them as business managers, confidence in them as space travellers, or, you know, I'm not going to define the problem for you...." ["It depends on the institution....let's say the government."] "...now you have to define what you mean by the government, you have to be fairly specific cause there parts of the government that do great things, and there are parts of the government that are, uh relatively ineffective. That's too broad a question. ["How would you divide the government to make that distinction?"] "...naw, I want you to divide it." ["Which parts of the government do great things?"] "...naw, that's not the question. You divide it, I'll answer the question." ["OK, how about the courts?...how about the executive branch."] "Well, that depends on how you divide the executive branch. If you were to say, to ask, how much confidence I have in the regulatory, some of the regulatory agencies, I'd say none at all...if you were to ask how much confidence I have in President Reagan, with respect to his own personal judgement, I'd say 'yes, I do have confidence in him, as far as his personal judgment is concerned.'" [How about 'organized religion'?] "...again, I ask you what do you, in your survey say is organized religion, are you talking Baptists, Presbyterians, Methodists..." ["Denominations, is what, I think is intended."] "...and the question is, do we have confidence?...I guess I have to be more specific and say 'very little,' because some

of the organizations you would call 'organized religion' are communistic, and there's no reason to think they're going to change." [What organizations would you include in that?] "...that's not part of your question, you asked about confidence in churches."

During this battery of questions, the R8's revealed that they do not belong to a local church, a matter we will return to later.

They claim to watch very little television, other than religious television, sports, and channel 12 (public television.) They did vote in the 1980 presidential election, but refused to type themselves politically.

"...that's a question that's impossible to answer...name tags don't mean alot in today's world...name tags as one you're trying to select, I'm not going to answer your question."

Their positions on political issues and social issues were decidedly conservative, however. They are a bit distrustful of other people. "...our house was broken into three times recently...I was even distrustful of having you in here...."

They are frequent Bible readers, pray frequently, and take the "inspired word" (not the most literalist) position on the Bible. In response to the question about the second coming of Christ, they responded, "...amen, and I can hardly wait."

In response to the question about religious experience,

Mrs. R8 responds,

"...realizing that Jesus loved us enough to die for us, is, you know, the greatest, that he has given us eternal life, what could be better, what could be greater?"  
 ["would you say you have been 'born again?'" ] "...praise the Lord for that."

They believe in miracles, and in faith healing. They opposed to the charismatic movement, but accept that tongues are one of the gifts conferred in the Bible. In spite of the fact that they do not belong to a local church, they attend religious services weekly, and attend non-worship activities at church with some frequency as well.

Their contribution to church has remained the same over the past three years, though they report that their giving is divided among the 700 Club, PTL, and Jews for Jesus.

Their unwillingness to conform to the questionnaire continued when they were asked how important religion is in their lives.

"...well religion involves a kind of concept, and philosophical projection. We believe you have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, and so, to answer your question is rather difficult because religion in some contexts could mean 'all or nothing,' but, our relationship to Jesus Christ means everything to us."

They contribute to the 700 Club about \$15 a month, and send regularly to one other as well. As a need arises, some special appeals are responded to. Mr. R8 serves on a mission

board, that of "Missionary Retreat Fellowship" and that implies some regular contribution. Mrs. R8 describes one of the special donations she has made to the Club.

"...I regularly give \$15 a month to the 700 Club but when they went on the air in Jerusalem, I sent, I think, \$100 because I'm to the Jew first...when they came out with the book, I sent \$100 for the book because I thought that was something worthwhile. [Have you ever called any religious programs?] "I've called only one, for prayer... the 700 Club."

The R8s were then asked to recount how they began watching the 700 Club?

"...[Mr. R8:]that's so far back...you certainly must have been watching it before Pat was up here, at Willow Grove...[Mrs.:]...I would probably say it was twelve years ago or so. My mother and her sister live in Maine, they got the PTL in Maine, and they would write and tell me about this fantastic Christian programming that they were getting, and we couldn't get it here. And all of a sudden, I don't know how we started, but all of a sudden one day we were aware that the 700 Club was on the air and we started watching that, and I felt 'one upsman' with my mother because I thought it was a little bit better [than PTL]." [Did you both watch it?] "...No, he's never around to watch it, really...he's in security, so he's gone for most of the day, and for longer sometimes...." [to Mr.: So you can't watch the show very much?] "No, I have to watch the road, so I listen to Christian radio instead...and I listen to alot of tapes." [Have you been down to see a taping?] "Yes several times, I've been down frequently because I'm in a business which actually requires that I visit CBN periodically for technical reasons."

They were asked then to compare the PTL and 700 Club programs. What were the differences?

[Mrs.:] "...I think the 700 Club is intellectual, news, up-to-date... [Mr.:]they represent Bible-oriented

opinions, they do represent news, oriented again, when it can be, to Bible prophecy, and ah, they have a fine edification program...and PTL more entertainment, like a Christian Johnny Carson Show, and a Christian 'Good Morning America' so that more informative, the 700 Club. [How do you compare their spiritual content?"]

"...spirituality is very hard to define, and I guess one would have to say, that there is a very basic question there, which on the other side of the fence could be represented by the question 'are you still beating your wife?' ...I don't think you can give a yes or no answer...not with my definition of 'spirituality'.

[Mrs.:] I think they're goals are the same, to bring honor and glory to God... I think PTL, I've been down there, too, I think they're wild, my goodness, this guy's a ball of fire, I don't support them, I don't send them a penny, whereas I support 700...its hard to say, I guess I can't....It [700] seems deeper, but I can't really say they really aren't, I mean they're working on the same body, you know its the arm and the leg, they don't do the same job." [Would different people be attracted to the two programs?] "...I don't think so, but, 700 Club is more intellectual...[Mr.:] ...you really have to sit and listen to it...."

The R8s were then asked to describe how they would know if PTL and CBN differed on a theological/doctrinal issue. Specifically, they were asked if they could tell that CBN and PTL have essentially the same position on the charismatic movement--they support it--while they have different approaches in their programming, with CBN tending to tone that aspect down, compared to PTL. The R8s, as did others, seem to accept that Pat Robertson is charismatic, "filling in" gaps in their direct knowledge of this through the program, with their own perception of what they see there.

"...I would only say that Tammy and Jim are more

demonstrative... but in terms of...I think its equally obvious with Pat, even though he's not so demonstrative...its a personality thing, essentially." The faith history of the R8s differ slightly. Mrs. R8

"accepted Christ at the age of 12."

"...I was raised in a Christian home, and accepted Christ at the age of 12. By Christain home, I should say 'half Christian,' my stepfather was not a Christian, but he was saved before he died. [Did you attend any specific church?] Yes, we attended a little...I was saved in a little Pentecostal church. [Was it part of a denomination?] No, it was so long ago...they just started springing up, and we went down to laugh and ridicule and watch them roll on the floor, one night...[and what happened?]....my mother was saved. A few years later, I was, I was just a kid then." [And what about you Mr. R8?] "I was saved in my wife's Christian home, after we were married. [What about your children?] They're all born again. [were you saved before or after them?] I guess I could say I was saved along with them...being 'born again', in my opinion is an ongoing situation, an evolutionary experience...that starts with the very first time you hear the message and find the holy spirit saying 'you've got to listen some more,' some people use the word, 'come under conviction.' It takes different people different lengths of time, and that is what happened to me.... Our youngest was singing in a choir, and I had to drive her, and I was attending Sunday School and there wre some very good people in there, and if I was going to compete, I'd need to know some things, so while she was at choir, I'd study in the church library while she was in the choir. Eventually, I decided that you can't sit on the fence forever, eventually you've got to come down on one side or the other. [Had you been raised in a non-Christian home?] My parents weren't really religious, at all, never whent to church."

The R8's then discoursed on the question of different styles of being "born again," including a sense that they are somewhat uncomfortable with the way many "born again"

Christians seem to be so intolerant of persons who have other ways of seeing salvation. They were then led to a discussion of how the 700 Club relates to conventional church. They were told that one of the areas of criticism is that religious television harms local churches by taking away members and contributions.

[Mr. R8] "It isn't intended to relate to regular churches in any way... even the staff people tell you there is no intention to compete with local churches. [Mrs. R8:] To grow spiritually, you have to be involved, you have to be doing, and just sitting home, watching... 'course you can always pray and send money, but you have to be involved [in a church]. [Mr. R8] I don't think money is even connected...there should be no 'self' involved, you should be willing to help others, and they to help you. If someone needed help, I'd help, irregardless of CBN..."

They were asked what sort of publications they receive, they responded that they get mailings from organizations such as PTL, the American Messianic Fellowship, CBN, and a number of "archeological organizations."

What about politics? How do you feel about ministers being involved in Politics?

"...if you consider what the Bible has to say...you do work because you are saved and out of love, and put those things in context, then you have to apply them in your life in a loving way. You have to be humble, and destroy your self-image...when you've been rubbed raw in a few places, then you find a holy man who has a direction which is essentially Biblically oriented, Christ centered, without self. You take another man who hasn't gotten rid of self, yet, he still wants to make money at what he's doing...So a minister who says 'I'm

involved in politics' for his own self interest, he should get out of it...but if he really believes, as I think Jerry Falwell does, that if we don't produce more Godly men in control of this country, its not going to be the kind of country we like to live in...If we don't produce that kind of Godly men, in government, then how's anybody to know...that we should be giving some of our money, not just to spread the gospel message, but that we should give some of our money to the poor down in Haiti. If you don't apply what you know, it doesn't do you any good to know it. [How do you feel about the political content of the 700 Club] [Mrs. R8] Because homosexuality, abortion, becomes a political, adultery, all of this is becoming apolitical issue...you have to be involved because it is Biblical. [You think that some denominations are involved in the wrong kind of politics...how did they get there?] I think its awfully easy to find yourself into the networks, some of its apathy. How did Whittaker Chambers get involved...look at what they did to Oppenheimer...there was a man who was so involved with people of his own academic and peer level, academically, ethnically, who were Communist, that the brush painted him so pink that McCarthy nearly got him. It is so easy to drift in through the doors.... I believe you'll find that the KGB solicits people like that and they look for them and they do enough favors for them...that they can say 'hey, you owe me one'. [What is it about this infiltration that is attractive to a church denomination?] These churches, most of them that I know of preach the 'social gospel' as opposed to a real Gospel...they believe that man, himself, can make himself good...that this can happen without being born again...man doesn't control, God controls. [Are any of the broadcast organizations of this bent?] None that I know of. [Mrs. R8] I think the church is going through a state of apathy right now, that these things creep in, and they're completely unaware of this."

They were then asked if there had been an "evangelical revival" in America.

"...This started in the twenties, really...its a roar that has become deafening...and it has to be God's will, that this comes increasingly for his glory...this goes



back to the ages when the Bible began to be questioned [referred to Biblical criticism traditions in modernist theological education.]..and it has come out, slowly that this was against God...and slowly the conservative, or evangelical approach began to come through...this dates back over eighty years...even the reasons for denominations goes back into the fourteen hundreds. [In the old days we--evangelicals were less able to be prominent] ...we didn't have the opportunity to be on television. I can remember as a child listening to Fuller out in California, every Sunday night after church...there hadn't been the means to bring it on to television and publications, m they didn't have the money to put it in everyone's home like they can today."

"Is there any danger in using television--there are people who say 'sure its a wonderful medium for spreading the Gospel, but there are concessions you have to make to be on television, that water down the message."

[Mrs. R8] "My mother is eighty...she can sit at home and hear Christian television [she's deaf] through her hearing aids, and its a source of real blessing and joy. And she's known up in that area as 'God's secretary' because she writes to the old and the sick, and tells what Charles Stanley or Pat Robertson said on their program."

They were then asked how religious television relates to conventional television.

[Mrs. R8] "You have to believe what they say, that the letters they get from people who were saved, lives have been changed. Now if I were not a Christian, I would probably not turn Christian television on, so I don't understand...but God's leading these people, and we are praying for sinners, so thier hearts are being prepared for this work. [Mr. R8] "Its hard to define, to say what good radio or television does...its like saying what good does advertising do for Bloomingdales, you can't tell whether identifying a believer, or converting a non-believer... you can't say whether its more

important to gather a body of believers and edify them or to try to save souls...its an argument you can't find an answer to, or how much money it is worth...I listen to it because I'm edified, and occasionally entertained...I just don't tune to the stations with standard programming [describes how he's set all the buttons on his car radio to various Christian stations. [Mrs. R8:] "...before we could get CBN or PTL, I used to have KDN [a Christian radio station] on, when you have somebody reading the Bible in the background, or singing praises to the Lord, or counting your blessings you can't...you can get annoyed, but you can't stay annoyed...the kids can spill jelly all over the counter, but they can learn 'seeing the Christ in every crisis', so you see its very uplifting to have these things in the background, and no matter how the devil tries to get in and ruin your day, Christ is lord of all and he's the one who's in control. [Isn't that like Muzak?] Yes, well it is...even Glenn Miller can take me back to precious moments.

Tell me about music on these programs.

"I like the traditional...I also love the Jewish, the Israeli, the Psalms, and because we have this burden for the Jew and have been to Israel several times, we are familiar with that uplifting chant. Most modern music we have trouble relating to...but you can't beat the 'Old Rugged Cross.' [Mr. R8 notes a number of contemporary evangelical composers, and says he appreciates them for their theological content.] [What about someone like Andrae Crouch?] [Mrs. R8] "...now well we went down to one of his concerts, down at the Dell, and it was just alot of noise...it was not advertised as a Gospel concert...it was a little 'rocky'."

They were asked what they would think of a Christian television station being opened up in Philadelphia. It was pointed out to them that often these stations have to carry programming that is not explicitly christian, and they were asked what they thought of the practice of showing Leave It

To Beaver, and other such programs. "If I've got my choice of watching all this [prurient stuff on regular TV] and watching "Beaver," it'd be Beaver every time."

They were then asked about what they thought of current motion pictures. "Mostly they're garbage, so we seldom go." [Are they better or worse than ever?]

"We don't know for sure because we don't go...we went to the Natural, and the runner, and I [Mrs.] went to see Yentl, because of the Jewish thing ["How did you like it?"] I liked it, the history sense was good, I just, the nudity and everything else, I just feel dirty, I want to shower when I come out...so we don't go, seldom...[what do you feel about other media, newspapers, magazines, books...] [Mr. R8] "I stopped a subscription to an otherwise good magazine, National Geographic, because I got fed up with the fact that I never saw any indication that there was anything but the humanistic view of evolution...[Mrs.8 : Everything evolves, nothing is created...] ...it really makes me ill, because they can't prove their position...why, if they can't prove their position, are they given so much prominence...[Any others?]....Time, we cancelled that, and I wrote to Life, saying I didn't want it coming into the house, with my young daughters...before their eyes... we know it exists, but you don't have to feed on it...you don't deny it, but it doesn't have to be there all the time.

"How is it, do you think, that we've gotten to the place where the media carry so many of these questionable values?"

"It amazes me, because most of the people we know don't embrace it... I look at people and say 'they don't embrace that,' and all I can think is that there must be alot of people out there who do." [Mrs. R8] [Mr. R8] "...its covetousness...most businessmen get ahead by making money, and more power, and they get to the place where they know if they get ten percent more readership by doing this, then they get more money and power...its

covetousness."

They were asked if people in the neighborhood who watch the program. There are, including a couple who found the Lord through the program. Mrs. R8 reports that there are friends who do not watch, "...good, Christian friends...but its a matter of taste. They prefer Donahue, but I find that boring." Mr. R8 reported that not many colleagues of his were 'born again,' and few of his business contacts give opportunities for witnessing.

Respondent 12

The R12s are a couple, both in their second marriages (both are divorced.) They live in a middle-to-lower suburb on the west side of the city. They live in a modest Cape Cod house. Their home is neat, but not decorated with much attention to any one type of taste. There is a great deal of "Christian Kitsch" on the walls, on the end tables, and in the bookshelves. There is an Interpreter's Bible on the shelf, along with several commentaries, suggesting that someone in the home has had serious scholarly Biblical or theological training.

Mrs. R12 is a short but plump woman with blond hair, in her late 30's. Mr. R12 is at least ten years older, greying, thin, and very quiet. He speaks as though his dentures do

not fit well. Their class would seem to be lower middle, judging from the occupation of Mr. R12 (shipping clerk) and from their lifestyle. He is dressed in work clothes, she in double-knits.

Very early in the interview, it becomes obvious that the R12s are not heavily integrated into traditional religious organizations. They express less confidence, for instance, in either religion or in their local church, than they do in science or in medicine. Their confidence in organized religion, for instance is the same as their confidence in press and television, and unusual phenomenon. They reveal that they recently left Their local church, for "doctrinal reasons." (this will be discussed in greater detail later.)

They voted in the 1980 election, as did all respondents. They classify their political views as "conservative." They are attitudinally conservative, as well, opposing abortion, favoring capital punishment, and favoring tough laws on pornography. They also oppose the nuclear freeze. They take the absolutist position on sexual matters. They split on the question of women working outside the home, with Mr. R12 agreeing that women should not work outside the home, and Mrs. R12 disagreeing. Mrs. R12 is also "soft" on the question of women being happiest at home, but generally

agrees that they are. They do think, however, that minorities get "less than their fair share."

They read the Bible and Pray frequently, and take the less literalist position on the Bible. They expect the second coming in their lifetime. They have both had powerful religious experiences, and consider themselves "born again." They believe in miracles and in faithhealing, and have both experienced physical healing.

They favor the charismatic movement. They attend religious services every week, through the fact that Mrs. R12 leads services weekly in prisons, and hold prayer services in their home. They do not generally attempt to attend church just to do it, however.

"...I'd say 'more than once a week' would describe us...we're really not [faithful Sunday Morning worshippers]...but that's because of the schedule he [Mr. R12] has...he had to work today, I was up very late after our [Bible] study taking people home and talking to people so often that [Sunday] is a time when we rest, especially when we, as we are not recently, when we are not involved in a local church its easier on us in a way because our schedule is so hectic with meetings and services and things, and for us that is not a problem but we think most people should attend faithfully on Sunday...."

The fact that they've recently left their local church means that they have not been recently involved in social activites and giving there.

"...again, the problem on that is that we have our own

ministry through which we give a great amount of money, to provide for prisoners, and to transport ourselves back and forth to prisons...I'm going to Lewisburg Federal Penitentiary on Tuesday, to Muncie State Prison on Wednesday...so if you're going to be strict on interpretation of local church you'd have to say our total giving is down, but if you mean overall giving which includes [these ministries] we'd say 'up'....as far as, we say towards the Lord's work and we don't worry very much whether that is a local assembly or what, just as long as it's where the Holy Spirit leads."

They watch very little television. Most of what they view is, however, the 700 Club, and other religious programs. They haven't been able to see the Club recently because the cable company has cancelled the CBN network in favor of PTL, and they are not home at the times when the club is on UHF. They also watch Time of Deliverance, Schuller, Stanley, Another Life, Rock Church, World Vision, Billy Graham, John Osteen. They do watch the PTL program itself now that they can't see the Club but, would prefer to see CBN programming.

They have been regular contributors to several religious programs, but the 700 Club is the main one. Recently, however, they have been sending less because of the demands of their own "ministries."

They have called or written the Club only "occasionally", but only for prayer or healing for someone else.

The whole question of their religious affiliation is one

that elicits the following discussion.

"...[we have] no denomination" [when you were members of a congregation...] "we never had a denomination..." [was this an independent church you were members of?] "...yes..." [Mr.:] "...one time we went to the Woodland Baptist..." [Mrs.:] "...but we were never Baptist...and that was only a little while, and that was independent Baptist...I'm sorry but we've never had a denomination."

They are not now members, they assure, of a church.

Mrs. R12 was an evangelical, born-again Christian, Mr.R12 was a "nonbeliever" but he did attend Sunday School "occasionally" in a Nazarene (fundamentalist) church.

Mrs. R12 has a graduate degree in psychology, and Mr. R12 has a high school degree. Mrs. R12 claims not to be employed in spite of the fact that she runs a prison ministry program.

Their viewing of religious television they can place at no particularly significant time in their lives. They can only say that it was a long time ago, about seven years. Their explanation for viewing is that they, as believers, are just interested in Christian programming, even though they do not always agree with what they see.

"We'll watch something to see what they're teaching, how they're coming across, even how they're coming across to other people, we get concerned, pro and con, about that... whether they're helping or hurting...we watch, not for food for ourselves, for out of curiosity to see what kind of programming they're doing for the country...and then for the fellowship, the



inspiration....we do enter into it, the singing the praying, sometimes. I have used CBN to keep informed when I have the time, because I think is excellant for that. I used it to keep on top of world situations from a Christian viewpoint, industry, technology, government, everything...we've always been fascinated with what the Lord is doing in the lives of other people, so the human interest stories, I watch them, and make notes and report them....Since CBN isn't on cable anymore, we've really lost touch with things in the world. We really depended on it...."

They report that they may have heard about the program from other "spiritual Christians" before they began watching it. Once they began watching it, they watched it everyday, sometimes twice a day, with Mrs. R12 watching in the morning when she was at home, and Mr. R12 joining her to look at it again as it was repeated at night.

They were asked to compare the PTL and 700 Club programs.

"...[Mr.:] the caliber and type of programming and the level of spirituality is much higher on CBN." [Mrs.:] "I feel that CBN appeals to a better educated person on a whole, it is very carefully formatted...and I really feel that they have an excellant, high quality on their program, which compares favorably with the commercial networks, whereas I can't say the same thing about PTL. Its more of a 'down home', 'folksy', 'informal thing'...I can enjoy watching it...but I can't respect it from a commercial, television, communication standpoint as much. I have high respect for CBN's programming." [How do the viewers of the two shows differ?] [Mr.:] "I think that new believers, those that are immature ...would lean more to PTL" [Mrs.:] "People who would be a little more 'experience' oriented would be attracted to PTL...even though the 700 Club certainly believes, and teaches, and demonstrates the experience of God working in miracles...still, tthere still seems

to be a more mature emphasis on the word of God, more careful teaching of that, and more of an application to the broad spectrum of life...the arts, especially, the application of Francis Schaeffer to the arts, I don't see that hardly at all on PTL. We think that probably a southern pentecostal person would love PTL, and a more traditional person in church background would like CBN, because its less music, and less slapping on the back kind of thing, and more nitty gritty content, real factual content."

The R12s feel that the "immature in the faith" viewers who would be more attracted to PTL, are "unbalanced, too interested in experience, and not grounded in the world. They were asked to comment on the way the two programs deal with the charismatic movement. Did they agree that PTL is more obviously supportive of the movement than CBN? "That's true [that it is obvious from watching that PTL is more 'charismatic']...but Pat and Ben both are very much part of the movement of the 'holy spirit'...we've been down and sat in the audience, and got to know them that way." They also report that they've read their books, seen their books and heard their tapes. While its "patently true" that the Bakkers are more obvious in their involvement, it is also true that CBN supports it, as well. Why is it that this difference appears in content of the programs?

[Mrs.:] "...I don't want to be condescending about this, but I think it has to do with the cultural and educational background of the people involved. Pat Robertson is an intelligent, well-educated, widely versed man, Jim Bakker, and Tammy, are sweet people, and

they simply are not any of those things. They're kind of simple, down home, country church, hand-clapping, jumping, "holy-roller" types, she just said that last night, she said, 'I'm a holy roller and I'm proud of it,' and I thought that was kind of sweet, because I understood where she was coming from, but I couldn't imagine Pat or Ben saying that...."

As another question, they were asked to describe how they would describe Tammy. Do they see her as contradictory to the values that underly the program.

[Mrs.:]"...we talk about that, too...this is something we never talk about to people outside the home, we feel that we don't want to be critical of them, but we feel that there is perhaps a degree of shallowness there.... I feel that there is a degree of emotional pain, that she is a young woman who needs some healing on the inside, some deeper level of self-acceptance... and I feel as though success sort of went to their heads, and they have things they've never had before...to me, she looks like a dear little girl, having a great time and dressing up, and just not able to cope with the fame, and money, and notoriety...I have prayed about it, that she will outgrow some of it, because I'm embarrassed when people who are not Christians have stated to me frequently over the years, if they say anything about it, that she looks like a clown, or that she looks just like the unGodly women on the regular networks, with her clothing, jewelry and makeup...I wince, I feel some sense of embarrassment, and shame." [Some viewers, you know, send her jewelry as gifts.] "...I have talked to people, or listened to people...I have heard people sound so fond of her, older ladies particularly, seem to just dote on Tammy...they practically adopt her. I've even seen them show promotional spots where older ladies watch the show...they think of her as a granddaughter. ..some people do recognize her as being unprofessional, for television behavior."

They don't think of anything about CBN which they found similarly troubling. They compare the sophistication of CBN

with that of conventional television, but they don't care for the content of conventional TV. They feel that they can find some things on television that they like, like old movies, where they find some "spiritual values." For the most part, they deplore most of television, with the exception of old shows and films, and sports. The latter bother them, in fact, because of the beer commercials. Mrs. R12 likes cultural programs, like opera or ballet. They are quite happy with the public television alternative.

They see Christian television as a type of alternative, as well, and one that sets an example for all of television. "...its an opportunity for the programmers on the other networks to see that Christians can come up with clean, decent programming."

They were then asked to describe how they know that a program is a Christian one? How do they discern that such a program as Another Life is a Christian show, when it is intended to "catch" regular soap-opera viewers.

[Mrs.:] "...sometimes a character would state Christian principles, or they would state that they've had a conversion experience, or they'd openly witness on the show...and it was the fine wholesome family values in the show...on the whole, I would say that it is the way that negative things are presented, such as permarital sex. The overall view you get is how much pain that inflicts on the parties involved, instead of what a big thrill it is...they didn't try to claim it wasn't fun, but they tried to show the consequences...you show that

people have sexual affairs, but you show what the consequences are."

What do they think of the tendency for the 700 Club to include less "religious" elements and more cooking, etc.

"...if they didn't have prayer, and talk about the Bible's viewpoint on these things...this is what is happening in the Middle East, and here's what the Bible says, and here's what is happening in the financial world, and here is the hope we get from the Bible...tying it into the word, and then having prayer for people, make it Christian. [Mr.:] They would lose their effectiveness if it just had to do with improving the circumstances of everyday life and not preparing people for eternity. [Mrs.:] They have to have the spiritual dimension, which is missing on most of the television programming."

The R12s feel that there is a danger of religious television harming local churches, but if this does occur, its the fault of the churches themselves, not meeting the peoples' needs. "And if that's the case, the local church can't bellyache, because the person's need being met is the most important thing."

"...we feel that in many cases the local church is too ingrown, too selfish, and this is not because we've had some bad experiences, though they have taught us...[Mr.:]  
...they'll give a wrong interpretation of scripture, like in Malachi 3 where it says to bring a tithe into the storehouse, they'll say the storehouse is the church, and that people shouldn't support these other programs. [Mrs.:]...we believe

that the storehouse could be anything that is the Lord's work, not only the local assembly...the local assemblies in Bible days were not what they are now. Like today we have organized them into an institution, and I fear that much of it has to do with a self perpetuation...ingrown, competitive ..we think that those things grieve the Lord. If CBN is serving needs, then they should be supported."

The R12s give some insight into the sense of translocalist sophistication, which they see to be an important aspect of the programming.

[Mrs.:] "...we have often said, how many people in this area have a church like Rock Church to attend, [another religious television program] and just to watch it and see the congregation worshipping and praising and entering into the whole services rather than sitting rigidly in rows...most local churches aren't giving that kind of food from the pulpit or participation from the pew and therefore a person might benefit more from watching that programming than from a local church. Local churches do offer personal contact and all, but many of them don't do that well, anyway...do you say 'just go to church because you're supposed to' when people could be home watching some terrific program."

Would ministries which aren't on TV, but itinerate around to do revivals, fit in there as well?

"...we listen to more Christian programming by radio than we watch on television ..often someone from radio or television will come to the area. We find those to be very exciting, stimulating meetings which have the effect of breaking down the denominational ingrown barriers, little doctrinal differences, and bringing the body of Christ together to worship and learn and love and pray, and we think that's terrific, and again, we

think that deserves support...we very often go to concerts of Christian groups who are coming through the area, and take others with us to those, and to us, that meets a great need, too, because alot of the local church's music is very poor, or very old-fashioned...we would spend our money to go and hear [lists a number of Christian music groups]. My favorite thing, as far as gathering together with other believers is to have a large gathering where people aren't concerned about their labels, and where they are concentrating on their one-ness in joining that fellowship." [Tell me about why you left your local congregation] [Mrs.:] "...we didn't want to...it hurt, but we're not 'young christians'...[Mr.:] Our pastor was very legalistic, and he was putting us in bondage...at first we didn't know he was like that...but when we got into the inner-workings of the church, we learned that was the case. [Mrs.:] Let me describe this, because I was the object of most of it...we were both officers in the church, and loved the pastor and loved the people...quite suddenly, he began to preach on things such as 'women shouldn't wear pants, because that is Ungodly'...we had just, two days before, gone to a Sixers game as a congregation, I had organized it, and I was there, wearing pants. So, everyone in the church saw me like this...I have privately asked him on other occasions, when no one else was around, if I was offensive to him, wearing pants, he said 'no'...so when he spent half an hour harranguing on that subject...[Mr.:] He was attacking my wife...it upset me a great deal [he gets a catch in his voice and tears fill his eys]...you can see that...he was zeroing in on my wife. [Mrs.:]It was mainly painful, not only on the personal level, but because I felt bad for him...we had a good relationship with him and we were giving--it was a tiny, Black church, and we were the only white people other than people we would invite sometimes. [Husband] was teaching the only adult Sunday School class, which was teenagers on up, and I was evangelism director, and I would sometimes preach, and help with communion and whatever--I am ordained--so it was a great sadness and shock for us to see him more or less bit off his own nose. We didn't want to leave, and neither did we have a desire to take over, we were very careful about that ["were there other issues?] ...yes, such as he began to hint about makeup, things that we call 'legalisms' that

other people call 'holiness,' or 'strict living,' or such things...he started getting into that all your tithes should come into the local assembly, and he was very upset that a great deal of our gifts to the Lord were used to support the ongoing ministry God has given us, which has a name, and workers. He had promised to support us, but he didn't. It was all legalism. [How did you come to be members of the Black church?] Well, I'm very drawn to minister to the Black community. That is something that God has called me to do...they are more poorly taught, on the whole, that Black Christians tend to have less good Bible instruction, and careful, systematic teaching, than do Christians at large. And, we're concerned about that. We have a great love for our Black brothers and sisters. I minister ..probably, I never think about it...probably more to Blacks than to whites and others in the prisons...we're drawn to minister to the needs of the Black community. Our Bible study is attended equally by Blacks and Whites...we hold it here in our home. There's alot of discussion, testimonies, prayer, etc."

Mrs. R12 describes that she got into the idea of ministry when her parents were called to a ministry as Sunday School teachers in a Black Sunday School in the inner city of Philadelphia. Mr. R12 suggests that after their marriage (second for both) in 1975, he gradually was drawn into her work, and into the prison ministry they founded in that year. They feel that the Lord had tied them to the prison ministry. She saw as a major turning point an invitation to speak at a prayer breakfast in Philadelphia. She used the scripture "freely" throughout her sermon. This group was Black, and the fact that the participants were so pleased, confirmed for Mrs. R12 the calling to minister to Blacks. Her own



"non-denominational, interracial" prison ministry grew up on its own at the same time.

They got into prison ministry after an appeal was made for prison workers at the church they attended. Mrs. R12 had worked in skid-row missions in Philadelphia as a child. Mr. and Mrs. [but particularly Mrs.] describes their work as a ministry, as a profession, or a vocation. Again, and again, this sort of imagery comes up in the conversations.

They differentiate themselves from the charismatic movement, "we're not part of it, not antagonistic, just not part." They split with the original prison work because it became too concentrated on tongues, and not enough on "preaching the word."

As with the R3's, they got their start at a Chuck Colson meeting. They feel that God placed a burden on their hearts to go into this full-time.

They report that a major climactic event in their lives was their marriage, after the death (by suicide) of Mr. R12's first wife, and after the annulment of Mrs. R12's marriage after she discovered that her husband was a bigamist and a felon--facts she discovered the night the FBI came to the door to arrest him. She has not seen him since. They got together, as they tell it, because Mr. R12 was looking for a

Christian wife, because he had two daughters at home, one who was retarded and handicapped. The Lord brought them together, they feel.

Mrs. R12 reports that the stigma was worse for her than it was for Mr. R12 in that his wife had died [suicide] but her marriage had broken up.

"...I had all my dreams and hopes pinned into that [marriage] and it was a shock for me for it to break, and a horror, and very humiliating because now I was a divorced woman and that was horrible, and I had go through a long process of pain and inner healing...I had a dramatic time of inner healing of memories and scars, a very dramatic release, and an understanding of my dead father, and mother, and my dead sister, and all these traumas I'd been through, very severe deep things, and then I was filled with the holy spirit, I was baptised in the holy spirit...no one laid hands on me or instructed me, I couldn't have pinpointed what happened to me at the the time, but that was what did happen. I didn't speak in tongues until three years later so it wasn't right interconnected...coming out of that I just wanted to give everything, I always had but in a whole new demension now, the pain was healed, and I felt full of love and joy, and I couldn't wait to have him use me to touch other people, in a whole new demension. He'd bring suicidal people to me, and all kinds of troubled people to me and train me how to listen to his spirit and minister to them.... So that when I head from my family that [Mr. R12] had been through this horrible thing of his wife shooting herself right in front of him, I really felt there were few people who could identify with him like I could...and I prayed in a really strong fashing, with tears, that God would give him whole new life, and ministry and make him fruitful...he showed up at my church...while we were still just chatting at the church one night, he asked me how old I was, and we very quickly came to an understanding...he thought it looked good to him because I was a good cook and a good homemaker...."

Mrs. R12 then went on with some insights into relationships expectations among their cultural cohort, in the midst of describing how they fit together as a couple.

"What I have found over the years of our marriage is that he is very unusual for a Christian man in that he is not intimidated by the fact that I am "a", more educated, "b", [pauses] more intelligent--so much so that we're not ashamed to say it, though I don't say it outside the house, that's why I said it so carefully--more cultured and all of those things. However, he is consistent, and humble, and kind and whole-heartedly committed to serving the Lord. He loves to have me teach anywhere, preach anywhere, serve the Lord anywhere, he never holds me back from serving the Lord. Indeed, what I prayed came true that I definitely serve the Lord better in my case, married. Divorced, would have limited me a great deal. Married to this particular man helps tremendously, because he prays for me on the road. He is thoroughly involved in whatever I'm doing. He is more the quite observer, the supporter, the provider, though he has his own ministries, too. I'm more the vocal person. We've looked at it that this is the way I'm gifted, and that's the way he's gifted. It doesn't fit people's stereotypes and they try to change it around, but we're never comfortable with that." [Mr.:] "My wife is such a great communicator. She's intelligent, and well-versed, and I get blessed just listening to her." [Mrs.:] "See how humble he is...how can you beat that? He just ordered a podium because he's got a Christian rock band which he's got all worked up and he wants me to preach at it, and he says 'you've got to have a podium for your Bible and your tissues,' I can't imagine very many husbands being able to tolerate their wives...being, uh, but I'm not away from home a whole lot...some of my ministry is carried out during the day, but I do a lot of counseling right here at night."

The R12s were asked how the Club relates to their other activities and ministries. Was it something they watched for themselves, or did they recommend it to others, or did they

use it in their ongoing "ministry" activities?

"...we do consider it an outreach aspect of our ministry...we like people to get other sources of support than we can give."

They were then asked to talk about the dichotomy between the "social" and "spiritual" aspects of religious television. Specifically, they were asked to talk about whether it was alright for some programs to bring in political content.

["Is it bad to mix politics and religion?"] [Mr.:] "I would say 'no', but its a question of balance, its when its [politics] the focal point, and the main point of their ministry, when it occupies most of their time, then in hinders their ministry and only attracts a small number of people." [Mrs.:] "...I think that it has to do with what your gifts and your calling are. We need people in all aspects of ministry. Some people, like Billy Graham, are called to almost pure evangelism. Other people are to teach and disciple. Others are called to ring warning bells about what is happening in society...others are called to be involved in aspects of society... Pat's [Pat Robertson] great at that...we both very much admired Francis Schaeffer...and people like him whos ay Christians should be involved in every aspect of society. ..our own gifts and calling of the lord, are in the area of getting individuals right with the Lord. We feel people have to get organized and fight abortion, we're somewhat involved with these things, but we can't do it all, and we choose not to get involved in the school board, but we hope other Christians are...its not an 'either or' to me. I think Jerry Falwell, and the magazine, the Christian Enquirer has an excellant function here, there has to be a balance."

She goes on to point out that while the "major networks may make fun of Pat Robertson's ideas and his value system, but they can't make fun of his intelligence, or grasp of the

world and its problems." This fits with the general sense from Mrs. R12 that she is well aware and conscious of how the outside world considers evangelical Christianity. This theme continues as she was asked whether she feels there has been an evangelical revival in America, and if so, how is it felt?

[Mr.:] "...I don't think that has happened on a large-scale basis. Its just sporadic. In alot of different areas, and I doubt whether its taking in any large or huge areas...I think Christian programming is largely responsible for that." [Mrs.:] "I think that God has used Christian programming to stir up the religious climate in America. Bringing Steve Bartkowski right into your living room and telling how Christ is now more important in his life than Football, I think that has a subtle effect on local Christians. To hear Julius Erving say 'I've been born again,'...he's willing to come out of the closet, and speak boldly, and say, 'I'm a Christian,' that does have a big impact...it becomes less objectionable to talk about those things in public. When I was a little girl growing up, you were really wierd if you walked around talking about being saved or born-again, or said 'Jesus' except as a swear word, or something, you didn't do that. Now, its quite accepted. It makes it for me...it gives me a climate where I can be very bold with my proclamation of the Gospel. I can walk into a restaurant and start eht waitress talking in a very short time about spiritual things, without her being embarrassed. She'll sit down with me right away...or in prison, I'll have a girl say 'Oh, are you into God?'... I said 'yes.' I didn't get cutesy with her because she was a psychiatric patient. ..We don't consider it a revival, its less objectionable to talk about sex, politics... you never used to talk abouty those things...religion, cults, whatevwer...there's more openness in soceity about all lsorts of controversial subjects. The Rock music and all that that the kids listen to, makes everything that used to be secret, shouted from the housetops. Certainly, if they can shout 'gay freedom' from the housetopes, we can shout 'Jesus is Lord' from the housetops, but I don't think we'd call it a real

revival, yet...[Mr.:] "Of course Christian programming brought it to the attention of the Christian community that this is something that should be happening, with days of prayer for revival, but as far as it actually happening, I'm waiting." [Mrs.:] "...Christian programming, we're very proud of it. We use it ourselves, in our witnessing, we're very proud that instead of just 'Bible thumping', as it used to be in the old days on TV, which was mostly embarrassing, really no that great content, it was mostly the salvation message and nothing much more, or something negative, something out of touch with society. Now we're not ashamed because now there is excellant Christian programming which is very much contemporary, and in touch with society, and not afraid to discuss controversial issues. And I don't think that Christians are acting 'wierd' anymore in people's perceptions of them. Hollywood and Madison Avenue will still try and make us look like a bunch of Elmer Gantry's and wierdos in general, but basically speaking, people think its OK...its like the young guy who said to me when I was actively witnessing to him and giving him a Bible,..."oh, you're a militant Christian, I've never met one before, that's very interesting'...whereas twenty years ago that would have brought embarrasment unless that man was already thinking about or prepared for this...he would have said, 'back off, lady' but now its respect that you are a 'militant Christian.'" ["What is the impression that Hollywood and Madison Avenue have of Christians?"] "...Archie Bunker is a good example. Any kind of thing on there that had to do with Christians was mocking. You have to be a little bit stupid, and quite old-fashioned, behind the times, out of touch, to believe that the Bible is really God's word anymore, after all. With everybody teaching evolution, who is going to believe in creation...this bothers me expecially, this humanism that Pat talks about all the time...that no intelligent, thinking person can believe in the inspiration of the scriptures or believe in creation...you don't have to park your brains on the shelf ot be a Christian, and Hollywood and Madison Avenue say that you do...you have to be a little devious, and out for money to be a Christian...the movers and the doers, the people who create the images on television, the advertisers, the movie producers, other than "Chariots of Fire," and minor exceptions here

and there, their way of showing a fundamentalist or Gospel-preaching Christian, is to make it look like a total idiot, or a con-man, one or the other, they leave out the obvious choice that we are decent good people and are telling the truth, and are legitimate."

Respondent 14

Mr. and Mrs. R14 are a retired couple, each on their second marriage. Mr. R14 was a minister and Mrs and worked as a teacher. R14 ran a bookkeeping service with her former husband. Both were widowed, by the way. They live in a working-class neighborhood in a suburb of the city, in a neat, small house. There is new dark wood paneling on all the walls. There is little "Christian Kitsch" art on the walls or on the coffee table. There are mostly religious books on the shelves. The television set is prominent in the room, but is an old one. Mr. R14 is the most talkative of the two, Mrs. R14 is opinionated as well, though, and often disagrees with him, particularly in the initial questionnaire phase of the interview.

Mr. R14 was born in the Soviet Union, and was brought here by his parents soon after the white Russian revolution, fleeing the disruptiosn there. They had been peasants in Russia. Mrs.R14 is of Scotch-Irish descent, and was raised in protestant churches in the same city where they now live.

The R14s speak most about their current major

involvement, that of running a ministry to vacationers who bring travel trailers to certain parks at the seashore. The R14s have their own trailer and park it in one of these parks for the entire summer, returning to their home only a few days in the middle of the week. Much of the discussion about current issues in religion and religious institutions refers to this ministry.

The R14s are conservative on most issues, religious and secular, expressing nearly the lowest levels of confidence in institutions of any respondents in the sample. The one exception is their local church, where they do have a good bit of confidence. Mr. R14's response to the question of confidence in "organized religion" is a good example of his/their overall attitude, expressed out of knowledge, in this case, of religious institutional relationships which are particularly salient to him as a former pastor.

"...Well its getting bad, I think [organised religion] when the conservatives are criticized for their fundamentalism...I think its good when we can get doctrines that are similar, but the Roman Catholic church, they're very selfish, and they want things always for their benefit and you can't blame them, in a way...so organized religion, the National Council of Churches, practically none, they're giving out monies to help out these revolutionaries in Africa and different parts of the world, this is what our conservative magazines tell us...."

Their confidence in the press and general television are



very low, as with all other issues. They are conservative on most political issues, and they call themselves conservative. They disagree on abortion, with Mr. R14 taking a "depends on circumstances" position, and Mrs. R14 taking an absolutist anti-abortion position. Their health is excellent, and they have not been confined to home due to health. They take the traditionalist position on women working and keeping house.

They are conventionally religious, as are most of the respondents. They pray, read the Bible, and attend church frequently. They take the literalist position on the Bible, believe in the second coming, and both call themselves born-again Christians. They believe in miracles, and in the power of healing through faith. They do not oppose the charismatic movement. Their level of contribution to their local church has increased in recent years. Both feel that minorities get their fair share of resources. Mr. R14 gives his experience of being "born again" in response to the question about religious experience.

"...I was about eighteen when I gave my heart to the Lord in a small Ukrainian Baptist Church. When I was young, I couldn't express myself. We'd have these preachers come and tell us we must witness for the Lord, and give a Gospel invitation, and put pressure on us, and I remember the night I went forward to give my heart to Jesus officially...the evangelist was a missionary from Africa. I went forward, and made this prayer, 'Lord, I don't want riches, I don't want anything and I don't want anything but that I might be able to speak to

the Lord and make a witness...and now I've been able to speak to governors and those running for governor, personally, and politicians, and getting to the subject quickly, and professors from Swarthmore College around here, and other places, coming to the point, not just a mere evangelical witness, but its on creation, or something specific. ["Was this a sudden thing, then?"] ..my pop had a wonder conversion, and mom did, too, after coming here from Russia and leaving the Russian church...and we had a conservative upbringing, no smoking, drinking, or gambling, that was a good thing, alot of things we couldn't do. Don't get me wrong, I'd sneak out from time to time to the movies, and see Tom Mix and all...but growing up in a strict background, I've never been in the world, I've never smoked or drank, or anything, and that kept me ready for the experience then, and I've never been in the world since, and I'm glad about that."

They are heavily involved in church and para-church activities of a large variety.

[Mr.:]"...we've been appointed to be in charge of the mission-education program at our local church. That involves being sponsors of young missionaries, and missionettes...and we teach how to do presentations, etc. This is a weekly activity."

Their basic conservatism is well illustrated by their response to the question of whether minorities get their fair share of resources in the US.

"...there are attempts to make it better for the minorities, but you have to get a sense of God's standards...I think it is true that people who have not been taught to value things, there's deterioration, they won't go out and work but if they do, then they immediately want \$5 an hour instead of \$3.75 because they think they know what to do once they've been told what to do...."

They watch two to three hours of television a day. They

watch some news and public affairs programs. They watch some nature and history programs, and some sports, including football, basketball, and baseball. Most of their viewing is, however religious television. They watch the 700 Club, PTL Club, Jerry Falwell, In Touch, Kenneth Copeland, Jimmy Swaggart, Fred Price, and no local programs. They prefer the Club to the others, though they do watch the others regularly. Charles Stanley (First Baptist Church, Atlanta--a major Sunday Morning religious program) is their favorite preacher, they find PTL a bit too emotional for their liking. They listen to a good deal of radio, as well. They are seekers of information on spiritual matters, and have a nearly insatiable taste for this sort of thing.

"...you see, inspiration, even spiritual inspiration, comes from information...so when your spirit senses that this man is preaching and it comes from his heart, with facts, with humility, and with power, you sit there with your tongue sticking out and your jaw drops. [Do you watch any local religious programs?] [Mrs.:] We would, if we knew of any [Mr.:] no, not necessarily, I don't think. We have our good men who are top men. The other men are men of God, but when you get a man like Charles Stanley, he's the man for me."

They are regular contributors to four of the ministries, including the Club where they send about \$1000 a year.

"We're always broke, because we believe in sending to them."

They send a great deal of money for tapes and books. They have called for prayer "for other people," at times.

They are currently members of the Assembly of God, though they were both American Baptist before retirement, and Mr. R14 was a minister in that church.

They were then asked to describe how and when they first began watching the 700 Club.

[Mr.:] "I first began watching it accidentally, on a Saturday, I just turned on the television and here was this fellow talking about Israel and Israel going through its agony in the six-day war. And this fellow was aflame, I thought he was an [conventional] announcer or something, and I said, 'this fellow must be a Christian'. It was Pat, you know, he was pleasant, and he enunciated, and he was for Israel, and I began listening, and took down his name, and made sure of the number and time." [Mrs.:] "How long ago was that?" [Mr.:] "Ten or twelve years." [Mrs.:] "I also began watching him on a Saturday morning. [Mr.:] I went to work the rest of the day and thought about it, and said 'boy, there must be alot of these announcers who are Christian,s but they just don't come on because of circumstances...and I just kept listening, and sending for magazines. I read the magazines and everything he said was Biblical, as far as I could tell. ["Have you been to Virginia Beach?"] Yes, he invited us down, once we began giving heavily, and to their special conference of 'special friends,'...and I like where there is administrative type of leadership, persons who can interpret the position we have as Christians. [Did he write or did he call to invite you?] He wrote, I think but he does call us every now and again. [He does call you?] Yes, Pat himself, boy, I could of...my hair stood on end. I don't know whether it was a recording or not.... We went down, stayed for three or four days. I was excited to meet a man face-to-face who has the education, and degrees, who is so pleasant, and humble, he's a servant of the Lord, not a 'somebody' to show off his abilities or anything like that. And then there was this charismatic Lutheran minister, Harald Bredeson, and that was the first time, publically he called people to come forward...and my heart was ready...I went forward and I was there, and there must of been five thousand

people there, and I said 'I'm not going to be embarrassed'...these people love me, they don't know me, but they love me, and I thought I should go up and make a public confession, and the first thing I knew some sounds were coming out, and what I was thinking of when they come out was the sixth chapter of Isaiah, with the angels and seraphims, and all...and I just felt like there was the Lord, and I didn't know what vocabulary to use, to glorify, to worship the Lord, and just using pure English language wasn't good enough, and I thought I was using a heavenly language. I don't know what I said, but I was worshipping, he was worthy. [Mrs.] had had the baptism earlier, and she complimented me....

The R14s describe their experience of pilgrimage to Virginia Beach in very similar terms to those attached to pilgrimage experiences in anthropological studies.

[Mrs.:]"...the whole trip was fantastic...from the time we arrived at the hotel, the best there is, and they paid for it, and they called us over and gave us name tags, and they gave us a schedule, and we were busy every minute. [Mr.:] and the thing that shocked me, but I expected it, every person loving you, hugging you...they'd say 'praise the Lord,' and it's not that they were fanatical, these were people who had college degrees and whatever, and had been in manufacturing...for some reason as you got into conversation, they were people who could express themselves...and for the first time I said to myself, 'this is a taste of heaven', every person, loving you, smiling, you felt free, you felt like flying around. Occasionally, I'd pick out a couple who had just met, and I'd overhear, and they were talking about Jesus, about how great he is...and there was this sense of 'melting to Christ.' ["Had either of you had an experience like that before?"] [Mrs.:]"I have with conventions, you go to conventions and they're like that...what impressed me was this whole thing was so organized, and yet the Holy Spirit was in control...everything was done top-notch. Nothing was left to chance, from the entertainment, the food, the service, you stayed in the best hotel, you really felt like you were 'king's kin'. We especially enjoyed

touring, going into the buildings.... [Mr.:] and this fellow Bredeson, this Lutheran man, with a turned-around collar and all, I said 'this Lutheran, a charismatic?' but boy, it wasn't till he'd said ten words before I knew, I cocked my ear and knew... [Mrs.:] But we've been to Full Gospel Businessmen's Fellowship meetings and its a similar thing a similar experience, there... [Mr.:] But it isn't, you see...here [CBN] you're getting leaders ..they're not just the lay people, there's a difference. I try not to feel that I am greater than people in the church. Humility is important, but here you could tell by the people and the way they talked, the vocabulary and everything else, the things they expressed, and their spirituality. I like dedicated hearts, and people with degrees, who can say and believe these things. I was at Wheaton College when Billy Graham was there, and his wife was there...and I heard Billy Graham, and both of them were walking around and dealing with people...wow, and here to listen to a consecrated woman, a college degree, and she's winning souls which you suspect, but her presentation was simple and to the point, and the blessing I had from this woman was incredible. I get a blessing from people with degrees, top people, who are servants. I love people with degrees, consecrated...and the other brothers and sisters, too, of course, but there's something special about these top people."

The R14s were asked then to contrast the 700 Club with the PTL Club. Mrs. R14 answered first, as she is the one who watches the latter program the most frequently.

"...PTL would be more on an emotional level...I don't mean they base their decisions on emotions, I mean its a talk show, but they discuss issues, personal problems more so than the 700 Club...of course they've been building this big complex, so he's been talking alot about that recently, talking about the 'needs'... Pat Robinson [sic], maybe more apt to tell something about someone who is not saved...because he covers news, issues, 'man on the street' interviews...PTL, I think the Christians who are watching are getting more spiritual material, more entertainment, and the average Christian, I think would respond to that more quickly

than to Pat Robinson [sic]...[Mr.:] Pat Robertson appeals more, I think, to the leaderships that are found in the different churches. People who may be experienced, and people who want information...I have this phrase the Lord gave me long ago...'inspiration comes from information' and when you want information on methods that go with the skills God gave you, you will go for information. ["Who is attracted to PTL and who is attracted to CBN?"] "...my guess would be that all types of people are attracted to PTL, those with degrees, and those who don't have them. ["Because its entertainment?"] ...well, no, there's inspirational emphasis, and sometimes I sit there and get moved...[Mrs.:] If I had my choice, I'd watch 700 Club all the time, because the true stories that come on there, are so powerful. [Mr.:] ...at one time I didn't care much for Bakker's wife, Tammy...but now, nobody can say anything, I really, really, believe she's a woman of God and a child of God, and get's the leadership...I've never sensed from her in any part of the program that she's presented, I've never sensed that she's out of the spirit in anything she's had to say, never, never. If she had, I would have sensed it...now at one time I would have said 'she has no right to put on these wigs, and everything like that'...but now, no one can talk to me about her. I say, 'God's told her to be that way,' she's winning souls, and sure, its a glamorous appeal, but what does it matter, more Christians are coming closer to Christ...so what, I say, she's not out there in the world. People's hearts are touched, and people want to go down there and pay a thousand dollars a year to go to their vacation center. [Mrs.:] If I were to compare the two programs. I think that people have so many financial needs and other problems, and Pat will say to people 'now, here is help for your problem.' I tell my students--I still teach at business school at night--I tell my students 'just watch it today, and sometime during the hour, soemthing will be said or someone will come on there that will just hit your need.' I'll be able to say for sure that that will happen. I would know that maybe a Basketball player will be coming on [the program] and maybe you're not interested in that, but then a girl will come on who was maybe on dope...or lost her love, or something.Both types of programs are needed."

"People have told me before that one difference between the programs is that with PTL it is more obvious that it is a program involved in the charismatic movement that is the case with CBN. Would you agree with that?"

"...Yes, we'd agree with that [Mr.:] ...but you're appealing to two different types of people. Some are leaders and not that there's leaders among the PTL, but there's more leaders, people with college degrees, and people who have the gift of leadership, than with PTL. Their appeals are different, but...[Mrs.:] ...but when Pat gets to the gift of discernment, that's very holy spirit oriented...I would say PTL is more emotionally charismatic, but 700 Club, you can't watch it without...that's the power there, that you know that the Holy Spirit is doing something out of this world, that is not the average thing, and in that way, I think CBN is better. [Mr.:] And they both have leadership, people who are college graduates. I think there is a relationship there...not only that, but training. [Mrs.:] but even though 700 Club has more news, and all, I still think it is evident that the power of the Holy Spirit...its not your average program, by any means."

They were then asked to comment on the question of whether these programs should meet the needs of non-Christians or persons who are not highly religious. They were specifically asked whether it is alright, and the extent to which it is so, for religious broadcasters to make their programs attractive, and not-too-consciously-religious in order to attract such viewers.

[Mrs.:]"...as long as its not their motive to be sophisticated, like television. Behind it has to be that God told them to do it that way, otherwise they're just adopting the world's methods."



The R14s were also less than helpful on the question of how they know that a given program is actually authentic or a worthwhile ministry. If some programs need to be 'like television' in order to have credibility and impact, then the question of how one knows they are actually religious, and worthwhile religion, is critical.

[Mr.:]"...I think the biggest factor that it is necessary for a speaker to have is a strong a sense of the sovereignty of God, that God is in control, even if we do not see it. God never makes a mistake...the sovereignty of God is the unique factor...it has to be strong. This man in Virginia, Falwell, very strong on the soveriegnty of God...[and so on] [Mrs.:] I would say that what determins this is that a great deal of prayer has gone behind it, and that the lives of people who are connected with it [are exemplary] ["How do you know, as a viewer, about these things?"] ...as a woman I go on intuition, but sometimes the very first time, you sense in your spirit that this is of God...the first time we heard Charles Stanley, your spirit immediately says 'yes,'...the other night we saw a young man who turned us off right away, he had alot to learn. He might appeal to some people, but my spirit, I took it that he just was not quite right. He was on the PTL program...I said 'Lord, forgive me, but I just don't care to hear him.' Your spirit knows that Pat Robinson [sic] is genuine, your spirit knows Jim Bakker is genuine... [Mr.:] Its important that these men, as they are preaching, is are they answering the heart needs of people.... [Mrs.:] ...are they lifting up Jesus Christ? That is the question. Some of them seem to be talking so much about themselves. Their technique seems to be coming through more than Jesus Christ is pre-eminent. He's the one, he's your life. So they should be lifting up Jesus Christ, not lifing up their particular ministry." The discussion moved to the question of

whether religious television hurts local churches, or helps them.

[Mr.:] "...I think it helps, here's why. The average minister just doesn't have what it takes to prepare heartfelt sermons. You have to put together four or five hours of reading in order to get together good sermons...one of the main reasons people watch these programs is for the sermons, and then they'll go to church for the same thing. [Mrs.:] ...besides that, though isn't there a problem with people watching those programs because they're more attractive than church?...I mean, I don't think so, because I think it actually gets people hungry for the holy spirit."

The faith history of the R14s is fairly complex.

Mr. R14 was a Baptist (mainline) minister. Mrs. R14 was a charismatic Christian. In part because of his marriage to her, Mr. R14 became interested in Charismatic expression, but did not have a "Holy Spirit" experience until they went to a CBN meeting. It was there that he had his first charismatic experience. His level of religious experience thus became more focused both as a result of his marriage and the influence of CBN.

Both of them were evangelical in substantive religiosity terms from their youth. Mr. R14 thus found the content, etc., of the 700 Club consistent with his basic religiosity. The American Baptist church was entirely too liberal for him during the time he was a pastor. It was a constant struggle against the "machine" of the American Baptist denominational leadership. He has not related to the denomination since he retired, belonging now to the pentecostalist Assembly of God

church. Mrs. R14 was always more spiritual than the denominations she related to, as well, first as a Christian Scientist, and then as a Methodist. After the birth of her fourth child, she was "born-again" under a travelling evangelist. She reports that her third child was healed at an Oral Roberts service, and that she was asked to leave her Methodist church, when she began to tell of this experience in Sunday School classes. She was a widow, Mr. R14 was divorced.

They both feel that the spiritual climate of America has changed in recent years. They agree with other respondents in that this is obvious in terms of the fact that it is so much easier to talk about religion now than it has been in the past. Mr. R14 often passes religious tracts to people, and finds that much easier to do, and people much more accessible than in years past.

#### Respondent 18

R18 is a Black woman in her early 70's. She in many ways fits the profile of members of Black independent Baptist churches. She holds evangelical personal beliefs, and her church encourages such beliefs as acceptance of speaking in tongues, need for personal salvation, and the mandate for Christians to evangelize for their faith. Where the Black

church in general, and R18 in particular, differ from members of the white evangelical church is on social and political issues. For example, R18 opposes capital punishment and feels that minorities do not get their fair share of resources, in response to those items on the formal questionnaire. She is a frequent church attender and Bible reader, and prays frequently as well. She reveals that she has had a religious experience, as a result of being healed of the flu once. She is also a "born again" Christian. She speaks in tongues, and has had the gift of tongues, and visions, since she was a child. Her daughters also have the gift of visions.

She is a regular contributor to her church. "The Lord multiplies what I have when I give to others."

She views several religious programs regularly, including the 700 Club, the PTL Club, Charles Stanley, Dr. Drummond, Thea Jones, and Jerry Falwell. Her healing experience and the vision that came from that, was the result of her viewing the 700 Club.

"...a few years ago, when I was sick with the flu. The doctor said I would be in bed for about four weeks. So I called in for prayer and they prayed with me and all of a sudden, had a sensation of a soaking sensation of perspiration...the lady [on the phone] said 'get out of bed, you're healed,' and she said 'get out of your wet clothes,' and she didn't know my clothes were wet...this was the 700 Club counselor. So I got up and took a bath

and put my clothes on."

She is a contributor to the 700 Club, sending in about \$35 a month. She watches 2-3 hours of television a day, including religious television. She listens to religious radio a great deal. She also watches the news, and watches some public TV, but her most regular viewing is of the 700 Club, which she watches every day. She receives the CBN channel on cable, but watches little of the other programming there, other than the Club. She claims to watch more religious television recently than in earlier years. She does not write or call frequently.

She was raised independent Baptist, and is still a member of an independent Baptist church.

She began watching the program 700 Club in the 1970's because one of her daughters, one she had been "praying for to be saved," started to watch it and was saved through the program. More recently another daughter, who was home sick and watching the program, and was saved by it.

"...My daughter was not born-again. Now she attended church every week, but that's different from being born-again. Lots of people go to church, but not all of them are truly saved...I always had my kids in church, so when I say 'born again,' I don't mean church attendance. She really became 'born again.'"

R18 has watched continually since her daughters' experiences. She has not visited the center. She has seen

Ben Kinchelow in the Atlanta airport. She spoke to him, and he was glad to see her.

Her faith history is fairly straightforward.

"...I was merely ten years old, and was led to be a Christian through my dear mother. My father was a minister, and my mother worked with him. They were in a missionary program, a state-to-state missionary program. There were eleven of us and we were all trained, and my mother used to pray to the lord that all her children would become Born again Christians at the age of twelve. All of us did but one, who didn't until he was twenty-one...you know, being a born again christian at that early stage in life, there's alot of growing and learning to do.... I've never been back in the world, but there are alot of things I never understood about Christianity and about being a Christian...The Christian Broadcasting Network has given so much to me, as a Christian, because I had a beginning, but I learned so much from CBN. I'm seventy-four years old, and the things you learned back then and you do now, are different, you know. I've gotten a different impression of heaven and hell, of being a good Christian. I used to just think that if you loved the Lord you did what you were supposed to do, and that was it. I've come to realize that doing things to help other people is actually part of Christianity, that your walk with the Lord is giving of yourself, you know...I've learned more and more about things, and I'm still learning...I've also learned to express myself better. I'm not ashamed now to talk to anybody and tell anybody how much I love the lord and what the Lord has done for me."

Mrs. R18 was asked then to compare and contrast the Club with PTL.

"I like the 700 Club because you can depend on them to give you the news. Now and again, I get a little bit mixed up...and the same about the political things, I'm a little mixed up about them, though I trust them that they know where they're coming from in their faith and attitude. [Some people are critical of Tammy Bakker, how do you feel about her?] I wouldn't condemn her, I've

felt differently in the past...she butts in too much. [How do you feel about the way she dresses?] ...she dresses too flashy, but its okay with me. I think she is real."

She was then asked to compare the two programs in terms of who would be attracted to each type of program.

"...I think the 700 Club is for someone who would like a well-rounded program...it really works on the world, as well as spiritual matters. PTL, I think that it is more concentrated on emotional things, on spiritual things. [Is the 700 Club any different in its handling if the charismatic movement?] I suppose the program deals with it less, but I think the fact that Pat's a Baptist, and that I'm a Baptist, I just think I know where he stands on it...I know he favors it. Perhaps its just from a quality standpoint in the prayer life of the program. You see that its obvious from the prayer in the program. I have his books, as well."

The discussion then turned to the issue of whether or not there has been a religious revival in America.

"I think its happening, I really do...I've been around to a variety of churches, and in several states, and alot of people are going to lots of little churches, spirit-filled churches, and they are growing. I've also been to a Catholic churrch to a meeting of the Charismatic Renewal in the Catholic Church, and that is a strong movement. The Holy Spirit is moving in the world in this way, and I see it everywhere I go.

The proposition is put forward of whether the popularity of religious television can be partly explained by viture of a failure of conventional churches of some kind. Are conventional churches failing?

"...yes, some churches are failing to fulfill their witness. If the churches were living up to how a church should, then there wouldn't be as much need for

religious television and other things. [Is religious TV a substitute for church for some people?] I don't think so...because nothing ever stopped me from going to church. The only time I went to religious television instead of church was when I was sick and couldn't leave the house. Television can really never replace church, though. [Who do you talk to about religious television?] ...I talk to anyone about it, people on the street, on the bus, anywhere. I talked to a woman just this week about it, because she had just retired and was depressed. She's told me she was happy I told her about it, and has been watching since I told her. [How about your pastor?] No, I haven't had the occasion...My pastor, I know he loves the Lord, but that isn't enough...our people need to get out and spread the word, and he's not doing that. I think I should tell him about the 700 Club because that might help him see... I know of churches that are just bubbling because of the movementn of the spirit in getting people out to spread the gospel.

R18 has a variegated religious background as the result of having converted to Catholicism at a young age, and then converted back to the Baptist Church. She was proselytized by a young Catholic priest who invited her to church. She changed at that time, because this priest really ministered to her. She went there for several years, but never felt that she was getting what she wanted. The final motivation to move back to her Baptist church came as a result of a dream where a man asked her to help her search for lost sheep. As a result of this and other visions she decided that she was being called to return to her Baptist roots and minister and serve as a local member. "I feel I've been sent to this church to save it...so a group of us ladies got



together and prayed for the church once a week."

She is a very religious person in both a conventional and a substantive sense. Her husband continued to go to the Baptist church while she was a Catholic (this lasted ten years) and is pleased that she is back in the fold, with him.

R18 is convinced that her dreams and visions mean she has a special role to play in her church, but is not yet fully certain she has found out what that role is.

"...I still feel that there is something to do with the Church, that the Lord has me there for a real reason. As a matter of fact, I told a lady that and she said, 'there's nothing to that,' and I said 'don't tell me what...I have faith in him, that I shall see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living...and that church is going to come to life...that is what I mean. [Do you think the pastor is going to be involved in that comeback?] Yes, I do...my daughter, one of my daughters has a gift of prophecy, and she was here one Wednesday noon from out of town this Summer for a prayer meeting, and she said she had a message for the pastor. She gave us part of it, but only part of it because she said that the message was intended for the pastor himself...my children have always walked with the Lord...she said that he was divinely called, and sent to our church."

R18 does not like conventional television very much.

She feels that television and motion pictures have gotten worse in recent years. She used to feel that she could take her children to movies, but now most aren't fit for them to see. She has been to see a couple of Billy Graham films in recent years. "I don't care for movies...and I have to watch

the television my grandchildren use, too, alot of it isn't fit for them."

She and her husband watch Falwell, as well, she mentions, though she couldn't remember his name.

She thinks that all of the programs are too political. Sometiems she is not sure who they work for. "People should be encouraged to get out and vote, for who they support, but the pastor should not tell them who that is."

R18 and her husband subscribe to small number of religious magazines and papers, including CBN-produced magazines, and Charles Stanley's ministry. Her husband gets Baptist magazines.

She says, in closing, that she finds the news and information content of the Club is interesting "...I feel we are getting accurate news there," but that it sometimes overcomes the more spiritual content, which she feels is the most important and valuable.

Respondent 19

R19 was one of two upper-class respondents in the sample. She is a married woman of about fifty, whose husband does not view with her. She is a large contributor to the 700 Club, and is the only person in the sample who volunteers to work for CBN, working as a telephone counselor at the

local CBN center three days a week.

She and her husband are politically conservative. They live in a pricey suburb of the city in a very tastefully decorated home. She grew up in Atlanta, and speaks with a slight accent. She is eloquent, and has no problem with any of the questions asked.

Her responses to the questions about confidence in institutions follow a general pattern of some confidence, but she makes a statement in conjunction with the question of her confidence in organized religion, which is very interesting in the insight it gives into her religiosity, and her attitudes about religious issues.

[How much confidence do you have in organized religion?] "Well, what can I say?...that's denominational? [Yes, organized churches] ..I think alot of time, alot of the stuff involved with the denominations is just feuds with one another. I think that we should just do away with that and have a universal church...a Church of Christ, and concentrate more on the Bible than on denominations."

She likes her own church a great deal. She has little confidence in the press and television. She describes in great detail how much of a waste of time conventional television is, and how she cannot understand women who want to sit home at watch soap operas instead of working to serve the Lord, or do something interesting. She did vote in the 1980 election, and considers herself a political

conservative. She opposes the death penalty, favors pornography legislation, opposes abortion, (even though she feels she could not carry a child if she were the victim of a rape.)

She takes the absolutist position on the sexual ethics battery. She is a bit soft on the women's battery, feeling that women should not work if there are children at home. As with many other respondents, she suggests that the feminist movement has convinced women that they should be dissatisfied, but that the innate drive of women is to be mothers.

She is a frequent Bible reader and prays frequently, as well. She takes the literalist position on the Bible, believes in the second coming of Christ, and expects that event to occur soon. She bases this latter conclusion on a timetable stretching from the founding of the state of Israel in 1948.

Like others, she believes in miracles, and believes they occur in everyday life. She believes in faithhealing, but has never experienced such a healing herself. She feels that she is a "born-again", but that her experience of revelation, which she feels was more subtle than many people experience, was more important to her. The "born again" label seems to

be just that, a label, to her.

She is a frequent attender at services at her own church, and she participates at non-worship activities frequently as well, though not weekly. Her contribution to her church has increased over the past three years. She feels religion is very important in her own life.

She watches only about one hour of television a day on average. She does watch the 700 Club less than daily, only a 'couple of times a week.' This is largely because she is at the CBN center most mornings and is unable to view the program itself. She and her husband watch the Schuller program on Sundays 'before we go to church.'

They are regular contributors to the 700 Club only. They give \$100 per month. This level of contribution has increased over the past three years. She has called the program herself three times within the past year, to ask for materials, and prayer. They are members of an evangelical/charismatic Presbyterian congregation in the suburbs. R19 is a housewife, and her husband is employed as an attorney. They do have cable television in their home.

R19 cannot remember how she began viewing the 700 Club. It was 'about 8 or 9 years ago.' She describes how she went from viewing only to working in the center as a counselor.

"...I began to realize that there was such a need for this [counselors] and I just couldn't sit and not help. I realized that there was such a need when Pat said so on television. When I became a Christian, I realized that there are so many people who need to talk to people, and they have no one to talk to. There are hundreds of people who call up and say '...I don't have anyone to talk to about this'--I'd get a Black girl who'd call up and say, 'my husband is living with another woman, and pray for her and pray for him'--and I'd give them prayer. You see, they can talk to me because they don't know me, and they can talk about things they couldn't say to anyone else. I'm always there. They can't pay for a counselor, they don't have any money. You just don't know what good you can do. We all need people who can really hear you and listen to your needs. [How long have you been doing this?] About eight years. [Was there training?] A very little. They do more now, they are more selective now. There are people they turn down, people have to have it together in their own lives before they can help others. [Are there any definite 'don'ts'--things you aren't supposed to talk about?] Well, we really aren't supposed to counsel in a psychological sense--this morning, for example, a woman called who was having trouble with arthritis. I could pray for her, but I was also able to recommend some books that I think might help her--I read health and nutrition books, so I recommended her some. I got led to help her in that way. And I prayed for her."

R19 was asked to compare PTL and the 700 Club.

"Well, I really just don't care for PTL much at all. They turn me off. I don't know, I can't pick one thing, but they really turn me off. I know they do good work, but they turn me off. [Who might be attracted to each of these programs?] I seldom watch PTL, and when I do, I turn it off. I think Tammy is the one who bothers me the most. She turns me off. She doesn't contribute much to the show. She just flits around, and I don't think people can take her seriously. People who look in on that show, they're looking for Christian programming, and she just kind of flits around. She is probably a very dear person, but she just turns you off...Ben [Kinchelow, of the Club] he is the sort of person who

just turns you on...you want to know him, he's such a sincere person. Tammy may be a good person, but she's just not coming across that way. [These programs are both viewed occasionally by people who are not Christian. What is their reaction to the two programs, do you think?] I think that PTL would seem strange to them, probably, where the 700 Club deals more in real life issues and stories. It brings things from the world into a Christian context. PTL is to "showy," to "revivaly." And PTL talks about money entirely too much. Every day there is something about money on there. [Some people say that PTL is actually a more Christian program because there isn't as much time spent on news and public affairs, and things.] ..well, let me tell you a story. I know a woman, a good friend of mine for years. She was a wonderful, a beautiful person, a Christian Scientist, she was watching the 700 Club and became a born-again Christian because of it. All of her children now are still in Christian Science...and of course she realizes now that Christian Science is a "cult." And she tried to get her daughter to watch the 700 Club...her daughter saw Pat Robertson coming on and giving world events, giving, appearing knowledgeable in world affairs, in history, in things happening in the Middle East, and she sat up and took notice, and said, 'mom, this is the most interesting program,' and she found the content so interesting and enjoyable, where someone was just preaching, preaching, preaching, maybe...so she's now listening. Now Ben and Pat pray, and do a little of everything. I think that if you make it so interesting...now my husband, if he were home and could listen to Pat give things on the economy and world affairs, he would be attracted...I think you can get their interest going and then they watch this and hear the Bible preached, and all, as well. [Is it necessary at some point in the program for you to become conscious that it is a religious program?] Oh, yes, they have Dr. Koop on there, they used to have Francis Schaeffer, a wonderful man, men from the State Department, all of these different types of people, and this interests people, but then you must know that this is in a Christian context."

R19 was asked whether she had ever visited the CBN center in Virginia. She has not, though she has driven by

several times on trips. She reports that Dede Robertson [Mrs. Pat] was a guest in her home at one time, when she was speaking at an event in the area. R19 has been invited to dedication of new buildings, and other events down there. She reports that her husband is still unsure if he would want to go, or would like it, though he does not oppose her involvement in the ministry.

She was then asked to go into her faith history. She was raised in Southern Baptist churches in the south (Atlanta). She feels that she was raised in a Christian home, but feels that when she was married, she moved to Washington, and then to Philadelphia. She was always a faithful church attender but felt "...in the back of my mind..." that she was somehow not quite a Christian, in spite of these activities. She was "...just kind of in church, not a real dedicated Christian. I was singing in the choir, just there, but not really close to God." This began to nag on her, and she feels that she always knew that someday she'd become a real Christian. She used to fear that she'd be killed in a plane crash and that God wouldn't let her into heaven. In 1976 she was listening to Pat on the 700 Club, and decided that she just had to try.

"...so I got down on my knees and prayed with Pat, the sinner's prayer. And God must have known because



[pauses, begins to choke back tears] a few months later our son died...within six months he was dead--committed suicide...It makes me cry to talk about it even now. So in those six months I needed it [faith] bad. He was twenty four, a graduate of University of Penn, Wharton, and such a fine young man...so if I hadn't had God, I wouldn't be here today. He pulls you through, and you just melt, you just can't get away from God, he pulls you through. There's really no way I'd be here today, if it weren't for God. [When you became born again, how did your husband react?] Well, we'd been to Bible Class a few times, led by a wonderful man, and I said there that I knew God, I felt close to God, and [husband] said, I knew there was something new and different...I think he's a Christian, he's so wrapped up in business, though, he's a workaholic. His work comes first. I believe his a Christian, I don't know, I want to believe he is, though I'm not sure. [he'd watch the program, if he were home?] ...absolutely, he has watched it before, and he watches Schuller with me sometimes...but that's about all he'll watch except Pat. He'll watch Pat because he likes his intellect ..he's really intelligent. I could listen to anyone, but I'd be more impressed with someone who really knew what they were talking about. Jerry Falwell is fantastic, he is one of the most dynamic men in America, and look at who he brings in, and Dr. Schuller, look at who he brings in. .and Scott, he brings in a different group, so each group, certain men appeal to certain groups. Jim Bakker, he appeals to certain people, and no one else...God uses them all, and I would never, never criticize them. I think that maybe people, their lives are changed from listening to PTL."

R19 and her husband, born and raised Southern Baptists, found themselves dissatisfied with the Southern Baptists churches in the north, and searched for a congregation they liked better, finally settling in a Presbyterian congregation in the suburbs. The Baptist churches were small, they just didn't do anything for her. She visited all of the churches

on the mainline, and settled on the one she now goes to.

This church turned out to be a significant source of support for her in the crisis with her son. She describes in detail some of the social support networks available through her church, including contacts with other parents of children who committed suicide, and contacts with places where she could attend Bible studies [in the homes of people of her class] and opportunities to provide service and witness, such as working with teenage drug abusers, and volunteering at the local CBN center.

She is particularly intrigued by her contacts with two other families who lost children "...very soon after they found the Lord...."

She talks to many people about the program, but particularly people who "feel close to God." She feels that she can mention the program to nearly anyone, particularly because the Club has such interesting content. People at her church and the pastor of her church also view, so she feels no shyness about talking with them about the program.

She feels that the program would help people become more involved in the church, though there are some people who call her who don't go to church anymore. Overall, she feels, the program intends that people will be led by their viewing to

attend church. She asserts again and again, though, that the function of the phone counseling is merely to lend a "listening ear." She sees this as a service that can come from common sense.

She is asked if she feels that there has been an evangelical revival in America over the last ten years.

"...I don't know, I think that people are getting so fed up with sin, you know, the evil in the world...sexual exploitation, the cities, you know. My daughter works in Los Angeles and I worry about her out there, and people just get killed out there. All of these things concern people, and I think they just are looking for a deeper faith. They are drawn to church, and they are drawn to the 700 Club, and they are looking for new faith. [What are the signs of this for you?] I go to the Bible studies. [Digresses about the Bible Studies on the Main Line which are held by Nancy De Moss of the DeMoss foundation, and which involve a thousand people in Bible study picnics during the summer on the DeMoss Estate out there] These go on all up and down the Main Line, Julie Eisenhower was there...just all kind of people. These started small, but they just kept getting bigger. I can see these Bible classes growing. They started in a backyard, then had to go to a church, and then had to move to the Radnor country club because of the size of them. Some people are on waiting lists to get into these Bible Classes because they are so filled."

She is not generally very interested in books, magazines, and films. She doesn't like commercial television, but she does watch public television. She does watch talk shows, like Merv Griffin. She is asked to compare the 700 Club to conventional television, like Merv Griffin, Is it only because it talks about the Bible.

"...on these regular programs, I just get so bored. Its always the same old Questions. Like they'll have a rat-punk, I mean a rock-punk star, and its just the same old things over and over again. I turns me off, and if he has someone like a nutritionist on, I watch that, but I just think they're boring. [Does the presence of the 700 Club have the effect of reforming all of television?] I think it does. You have heard of Ephrim Zimbalist, Jr., haven't you? I heard him speak, and he said he had everything in the world...that he had a real emptiness inside. So one night he just flipped the dial until he saw the 700 Club...he couldn't sleep...he said he laughed his head off. He thought this was funny, these Christians and all. And he watched the next night and said 'just listen to this guy, I can't beleive what he is saying!' and so became addicted and said he had to know more about what this guy is saying, and gradually he became aware that Pat was speaking to him...he's been a guest on the program...you know Pat sometimes speaks right to you, right to that big old hurt you have right here in your body. I was not relaly a bad person, but he spoke to me and helped me, I had that feeling that I needed soemthing, and that is what happens...God knew I would have my tragedy, and that I'd need to come to him to get through it."

She was asked if she feels that churches are failing, and that might explain the attraction of programs like the 700 Club.

"...churches do fail, though the programs are responsible for that. Churches fail because people can't get out, because people don't have any motivation to make an effort. God works through some churches and through spiritual Christians. Now, there are those churches that fail, and people use television instead. Some people can't get out, and have to stay home, or they don't have the clothes to wear to go to church, or something. They will watch television because it doesn't have that problem for them...I don't think television can ever really replace the church, though, because in church we have fellowship. Television can't bring that. We have the phones and all, but that is not the same...not all television shows are good, either,

some stress money too much, and let their good slide away."

Respondent 20

R20 is a Catholic, Italian man of about forty-five. His life is currently dominated by the recent experience of his daughter having died as the result of what he considers to be malpractice. She had had acute leukemia, and had her immune system suppressed through chemotherapy, and had died of chicken pox she contracted at school, even after they had warned the doctor and school officials there was chicken pox in the school, and they were ignored. The case is further complicated by the fact that the daughter had been taken to a healing service two months previous to this, and had immediately gone into remission. The doctors had not believed that she actually was healed, and had kept her on therapy, in spite of blood work which had indicated remission. The healing had been done by a charismatic priest who was brought to town under the sponsorship of a radio program aired in Philadelphia. He describes this experience in great detail. It takes over half of the allotted time for the interview.

R20 had already been a viewer of both PTL and the 700 Club before the experience with his daughter. For instance, once this healing had taken place, he immediately had told

both programs about it, and CBN had sent him forms to fill out, and for the doctor to fill out that would document the healing, so that the family could appear on the program and tell their story. The nurse of his doctor, who is a 'spirit-filled Christian', offered to talk to the doctor, who was skeptical, and get him to fill out the forms. She did warn Mr. R20, though, that if they attempted to take the daughter off medication because of this, that the doctor would probably "...take them to court."

After three months of blood tests that were normal, the doctor still maintained the medication level. The medication did, however, make the daughter susceptible to diseases such as chicken pox. Her Catholic School did not warn them that chicken pox was active in the school. She did contract it, die, and the autopsy found no trace of leukemia.

His story is compelling and moving, and certainly sounds [from his perspective] to be a case of malpractice, or at least negligence.

He is generally conservative, politically, and takes the conservative position on most social and political questions, except for the questions on women's roles. He is a frequent Bible reader, prays frequently, takes the moderate position on Biblical literalism. He believes in the second coming,

but does not think it is imminent. He believes in, and has experienced, miracles. He calls himself a political conservative, is currently unemployed, and watches about four hours of television a day. He describes himself as a "born-again, spirit filled" Catholic, and is a regular, faithful attender at Mass. He also attends many prayer meetings and events related to church outside of worship services. This event with their daughter has been a major faith-testing and faith-building one for them. R20 feels that he is a stronger Christian than ever for having been through it, and feels assurance that his daughter is "...with Christ now." His wife is just as committed to these beliefs as he is [though she was not interviewed due to a conflict].

Both of them were raised in Catholic parishes, and have been Catholic all of their lives. They were originally from South Philadelphia (they are Italian) and moved to the west side of the city about fifteen years ago. They became involved in the local Parish, and took up the life of typical suburban parishioners.

The first break with this scenario came for them when R20 began to attend meetings of the "Holy Spirit" or "renewal" (charismatic) group in this parish, and to go to inter-parish events. He became a "spirit-filled" Christian

on his fortieth birthday at one such meeting. His wife followed him into this movement. They have remained devout, practicing Catholics throughout this period of involvement.

He had been employed most of his life as a frameman in a factory. His wife, who now works in insurance, had been a housewife, but had supplemented their income by giving houseware demonstrations, and he had assisted her.

"...I have always had this ability to read minds. I don't know it was just a gift I have, and I used to go along with her and go to these acts where I'd read people's minds...sort of for entertainment. I had this thing I did using a crystal ball, and we came home from the party one night where I'd used this crystal ball--you know it's not an occult object if used properly--but, I don't know, there's some connection, anyway I collapsed, dead away, at the bottom of the stairs, this was seven years ago--and I was diagnosed as having epilepsy, and I've been on Social Security now for seven years. At first, I couldn't get social security, they weren't sure I was disabled...but it was diagnosed as Grand Mal Epilepsy. I was out for a month...then the company tried to get rid of me because of it...finally I gave up and applied for disability...I got disability paid by the company for a year. Then the doctor suggested I apply for Social Security."

Times became tough for the family after his disability. He had to appeal for Social Security. They were on food stamps, which they found to be humiliating. They got behind financially, and they were about to lose their homes

"...I said, I'm disabled, give me a break...but they scheduled a Sheriff's sale on the house...my wife, meantime, started watching the PTL Club...and it came to the point where I was being harassed by a collection agency. I decided, well, I've tried everything, so I



called the PTL prayer line. ..I called and asked for prayer. I had tried everywhere I could, family, freinds, everywhere to borrow money. The Lord gets you to apoint, where You can't go any farther, and then snaps you in. Well, I called, and a couple of days later, I was worried, because on Friday, I had to have my money. So anyway, on Thursday, or Friday, I forget which, I said, 'I've got to have the money by five o'clock.' My wife prayed to the Lord, that he should speak, and whatever way he wanted it to go, it would go that way. She was going to go somewhere, and all of a sudden, I felt that I should call a sister-in-law of mine, her husband and her are teachers, whether or not she would have given it to me, I don't know, but something spoke inside of me, and I'll never for get this as long as I live--this voice said to me 'you doubt me, you doubt me' almost like a deep, male voice, and I was looking around to see if anyone is in the room, speaking to me. I told my wife what had happened, and she said to go ahead and make the call. Just as I was about to call, the phone rang, and it was this lady I had only know for three weeks, through a prayer meeting. [he digresses at this point into a story of how, when they were on the way to this particular prayer retreat, one held by the Catholic 'marriage encounter' movement, they were interfered with by car breakdowns, weather, and other complications, as if the devil were trying to keep them from attending. They did persevere, and had a "blessed" experience, R20 believes.] ..they had been praying for my financial situation, and she asked what my need was, and I said I needed \$500. She said '...I was praying, and the Lord told me to call you...I don't know why'...you don't know why the Lord does things, if it was logical, then it wouldn't happen. Anyway, I said, 'well, the Lord just spoke to me a few minutes ago' and she began to weep. I said, 'why are you weeping?'...she said, 'becasue the Lord is using me, you see I have this money, \$500, that I don't need.' So she said I could have it and that I could pay it back whenever I wanted. I paid it back in two months...so I had the \$500. I called the creditors, and told them I'd have the money Monday. But these total strangers loaned me this money."

He feels that his wife is also spirit-filled, even

though she does not go to the charismatic meetings with him. The influence of this movement on him has been to make him a bit less tied into traditional Catholic doctrine. After the experience with the money, the programs, PTL and CBN, have both "continued to bless" him, and his general religiosity has begun to focus on involvements in the "holy-spirit" movement, and in the religious programs. The R20s are heavy contributors to the programs. "Most Catholics are just Catholic because they always were, and many people call these programs and criticize the Catholic Church, but Pat says you can work within the Catholic structures, in spite of the doctrinal differences." Are those differences significant? "No, I don't really care about things like intercessory prayer through the saints and like that, but that bothers many Catholics about Protestantism...I think like he does, that you can work within Catholic structures, for the Lord...."

"...I deal in a one-to-one basis with the Lord through prayer. Most Catholics would disagree with that that you can do that...but when you look at these programs, you see Catholics there, you see Catholic priests and nuns on the show, spirit-filled people, so there is more openness for this kind of interrelationship, than before. Jimmy Swaggart, and all, they are pretty critical of Catholics, and I don't like that. [Which programs do you prefer?] I don't like CBN as well as PTL, because the new format deals too much in politics...I respect that program, I support it, I don't buy all of his philosophy on the show...I think that they

don't espouse an anti-Catholic message as much as Swaggart and that is good. They, too, emphasize that we are all ONE, that we are all Christians, and that I like. They've had good Catholic priests good spirit-filled Christian priests and nuns and that inspires me. ..Pat deals more with the political aspect now in the new format, and I just have the opinion that there should be more prayer and Bible teaching. I like Ben, he really blessed me one time in the 'operation blessing.' I had this car, and I was thinking of selling this car, and Ben said one time, that we should call in things we could contribute to this operation blessing, so I called and offered my car, and they found a mission group here that needed it...sometimes the Lord uses people just like me...Ben said 'you have something you know you want to get rid of, call operation blessing'...I felt he was talking directly to me, so I called and offered my car, and they came and got it. The guy said 'we've never had a car before' but they needed it, they found a use for it, and for me that way.

He was asked to compare the two programs.

"...the formats are different, with PTL dealing more with spiritual matters. I support both, but I have been to visit PTL. I'm sure it would have been the same to visit CBN, but I visited PTL, and it was great. [Do you support both the same?] ...I sometimes have to wait until my Social Security check comes in, but I always get caught up then and make a hundred-dollar contribution if I'm that far behind. [How do the audiences for the two programs differ?] ...I think that the 700 Club is for the more intellectual audience, and the PTL Club would be geared to entertainment, and geared toward the average person who is not of the intellectual classes, necessarily...both would appear to charismatics.... [what about the rest of television?] ...I think it is entirely too permissive, that the things that are there usually are too gruesome. Things that are shown could be shown without going to the extent that they go to. I do like to watch television. I like to watch Cable shows. I originally got cable to look at the 700 Club and that is the reason I got cable, but since that I've been looking more and more at cable because the quality of television is so low. [What is

the most important effect of religious television]...they reach a large audience, they reach a diversified audience. They reach into homes probably that never would have been reached otherwise...that never would have thought of going to church. They break the old taboos. We as Catholics are taught that it is wrong to go to a Protestant church, that it is evil to do that, and these programs show us that we're all 'brothers in Christ'. Protestants learn that Catholics are no good, but we can all watch these same programs and learn and grow from them without the old taboos. People growing up today with this knowledge will make a better world. [Would you say there has been an evangelical revival in America?] ..I see it all around me, my own life story is typical...many people are like me, and many people are now in church, or are now back in church. Lots of Catholics are now learning what the faith actually is. There are Catholic people and Catholic authors who are now saying that it is no longer correct to try to make it appear that there are these great differences among Christians, they just aren't as important anymore.

R20 has no reluctance to talk to people at church about his viewing of the program. He is so vocal about the experience with his daughter's death and his viewing is related to that, so he just tells it all "as a package." He feels, incidentally, that his sharing of this story at his parish has served to bring people in his parish closer to the Lord.

"...we wouldn't know the Lord as well as we do, if it weren't for Jim Bakker, and Pat Robertson...others, the evangelists that are on TV. [Do you subscribe to Christian magazines or other such things?] Yes, the Catholic renewal magazines, and magazines from PTL and CBN."

Respondent 22

R22 is a white woman of 70-75 years of age, though she is very spry and active, not at all confined to home. She is a Penn graduate, having been encouraged by her mother to get as much education as women were allowed to in her day and age. She was trained as a high-school teacher and taught languages and English until she quit to get married and raise a family. After marriage, she began working as a volunteer and then as a paid Xian education director at her church, a Presbyterian (mainline) congregation in Germantown.

The thing which is most memorable about R22 is her level of involvement and commitment. She describes a vast array of involvements in Bible teaching and is a financial supporter of a wide range of "ministries." She even admits that, due to her heavy schedule, she doesn't really watch the 700 Club at all. As with most other informants, she has a story of personal tragedy to share. As with others, she sees this in a way which is informed by her faith, but the role of her involvement in CBN as relating in any way to her tragedy (her husband's death in a car accident when she was driving) other than being part of her religiosity, is unclear. R22 lives in a fifties-era suburban tract neighborhood, in a rather large ranch style house. The neighborhood is spacious and

middle-class, but most houses are beginning to show their age, and nearly all of them could use a coat of paint, and some careful lawn-care work. The area looks very much as a place where many people settled as part of white-flight from Germantown (which in fact it is) and which has received less than special care since then.

R22's living room is flocked wallpaper and furniture of taste and quality, if a bit old and worn. There are religious objects throughout the room, religious paintings on the walls, and religious magazines and books on the coffee table. The decor is modest. R22 herself looks less than her age (72) and is dressed in a flowered dress befitting her age, and sits with a stack of papers on her lap, including the mailing she was sent in advance, a pamphlet of some sort, and her own handwritten notes to herself, made out in expectation of the interview. She is very articulate, uses language very precisely, though easily (as befits a Penn graduate!!!) and has obviously given a great deal of thought to all issues in the interview.

During the interview, R22 begins to make important points as early as the formal questionnaire stage. She has clear ideas about organized religion.

"...yes, I feel that they are truly trying to carry out the commission that Jesus gave us to do, and each in a

different way...I also feel each group should present it in the way they see it but should not criticize the others."

She then goes into a discussion of her work leading Bible schools, which she sees as a living out of her belief in this pluralism. She uses the Living Bible translation (which translation to use is a major bone of contention between some faith groups) with her Bible School classes because "...modern translations mean alot more to the children [in Bible School] and also in the foreign countries." [this latter a curious point--in spite of her education, she actually feels that a specific English translation would make a difference in foreign mission evangelism].

R22 shares with the other r's a general dislike of factionalism, holding that such things as which translation to use, and specific doctrinal issues pale in comparison with the overall commission given by Jesus.

"[Jesus said] 'Anyone who's not against us, is for us'...when you criticize other groups, you turn off people who do not listen to what you have to say."

R22 has less identification with her local church than other R's. In response to the question about her confidence in it, she said,

"...we had some ministers who were sincere,...but some ministers don't really have enough love for people, they

know their subject, and would probably be much better as theologians, teaching in a theological college....If you aren't sincere, people aren't going to hear what you have to say...."

R22 was very specific here in referring to ministers who had served her former church in Germantown. In response to a question about her confidence in the church she's in now, she says,

"...after we moved away from Germantown to here I began to be very much involved in the organizations which were trying to reach people with the Bible...and my support went heavily in that direction."

She thus did not move into church membership, but directed her efforts in para-church directions. She named quite a number of involvements.

"Slavic Gospel, Underground Evangelism, Christian Truth Cinema, Billy Graham, Vigilance, 700 Club, Campus Crusade for Christ, ..its a long list. [also names an unintelligible crusade for decency or against blasphemy, noting that 'another horrible blasphemous film about Jesus is in the works.'] I also began to take meals on wheels to friends in Germantown. I went at church time because they were in wheelchairs and couldn't go....I just became involved in serving and witnessing in the world, but I didn't go to any church here. [her current residence] I still am very interested in the church in Avalon, where I have my summer home because I started the vacation Bible School there twenty years ago. And also a Black Church at Swainton, offshore there, about three miles from Avalon, I run one there, so while I'm there I go to their church services and I send checks to them other times...I haven't really joined any of these churches, though, I guess I am still a member of the Presbyterian Church in Germantown where we lived before we retired."

R22 then gave a brief history of her church membership



and religiosity.

I attended a Methodist Church from about age five to age eleven, and it was there that I really learned to, that I accepted Jesus. And I think I still have a very warm place in my heart for the Methodist Church. I at this point, I write a great many letters and read a great many books and do a lot of studying, especially about prophecy and send out xeroxes of these things to my friends. I mean, you can have a witness of your own.

R22 expresses little confidence in the press and television, as is the case with most other respondents. She contends that both Television and the press are "too negative." However, she watches some television (old movies, etc.) when she is not too busy. "But if I happen to tune in on most other things, they are so full of screaming and violence, and you know....I can't look at them." She did look at two "...in 1980..." one about aging, and another about another social issue.

She is a voter, but considers herself, after hesitation and a questioning of the terms, themselves, a "moderate." She does not watch television news or read newspapers, so does not have a concept of these things "...other than in people's conversations. I read more prophecy than I do that....[news]" She is undecided about the death penalty, but favors tougher laws on pornography, contributing to "...Dr. McCarty's committee against blasphemy...."

"...He, with the help that was given was able to stop

one dreadful film, but there is now another in the making. I think that unless there is some sort of program, [of control over film content] things will just continue to get worse, as they will after the rapture. I think there should be control of the worst ones."

She opposes abortion and thinks premarital sex is wrong, but is troubled by this in her own family. (Her adult granddaughter is in a long-term live-in relationship with a man who R22 likes, but she has a hard time accepting the relationship.)

"These things don't depend on how you've raised your children. I think a great many people to whom it hasn't happened yet will criticize the parents and feel it will never happen to them. I had a discussion with the minister down there [Avalon] who has four year old twins. I was very self-conscious about the situation because I was teaching the adult sunday-school class and I mentioned it to him, and I could tell by his reaction that while he was standing there, he was saying to himself 'this will never happen in my family'. But the Apostle Paul said 'take care, lest you take your stand where you will fall,' because we aren't any of us immune to these things, we will never know when these things will happen to us. And so I don't condemn them, I just disciple them. Also, I wouldn't wish anything bad on them, but there are times when we can only grow through these dreadful things. [Here she is referring to persons such as the minister, who she feels may experience such dissappointments himself, and grow through them, as she has] Another thing, God takes everything and draws on it to work his will."

R22 then launched into an extensive exposition of several Biblical passages and several anecdotes, intended to illustrate that adversity in life is not a sign of God's failure to help people in trouble, but rather is a gift from

God, intended to make people stronger and more insightful in their religious consciousness. "...so you get to the point where you see these things happening, but you can't pray 'get them out of it, Lord,' because you don't know what good he's bringing about." As a further illustration of this point, R22 reports about her early experiences of trouble in normal school (low grades) which were resolved for her through persistence, and which resulted in her being successful at an Ivy League University, and later as a teacher. Her story is one of continued adversity, however, as her career was interrupted by various things, and her husband lost his job the day before they got married. She lost her first baby. Her loss of her husband in the accident, she also looks at philosophically, and speaks about almost dispassionately.

She considers her health excellent, reads Prevention magazine.

On the questions dealing with women's roles, she doesn't think you can generalize.

"I'd like to say, off the record, that one of the dreadful things that has happened is that so many women are out of the home, and I think so many times when they say they need it for the money, they spend more money on their clothes for the job and meals out and all that I think...now, during the depression, we went without an awful lot of things...we just didn't buy them.... but, then again, we didn't have to have a car, we didn't have to have a phone, we didn't have to put our trash out in bags. There are a lot of things that we didn't have to

do in those days, but we really do today. So, this is why you can't compare...our generation keeps saying, 'in the old days' but you really can't compare. You can't compare the minds of these young people with our minds. They've been raised in an entirely different environment, subjected to entirely different influences. In response to the Prayer issue, she says "...prayer is

a constant thing...."

She then goes on to a very interesting digression (again, one that is typical in substance to concepts from all the interviews) about an experience she had with crank callers. Her number had accidentally been placed in an ad of some sort on the "Card Sharks" program, and she began to get calls at all hours of the day and night "...mostly from Black people, and from children. I began to wonder if I was linked to a drug ring of some kind." Finally, she found out what was up, called the station to complain, and began to give out the correct number to any people who continued to call. "One woman said to me 'my, you must have been inconvenienced by this, but you are taking it very well and being very nice and helpful about it.' I said, 'yes, but that's the way a Christian is suppose to act.' She said, 'yes, but so few do,' and I said 'yeah, I know, but we all make mistakes...'"

"....it got so that I could get that in in a number of places...there really is no...I often talk to people at the Acme. If they say something first, and you get into a conversation and they say 'boy, isn't news awful,' then you can say 'isn't it nice we have a lord who knows what's going on.' You can even use a thing like that

[the telephone incident] ...it really was a horror show here for awhile, it really was, because I began to think I'd soon see faces at the window."

She takes the literalist position on the Bible She then tells the interviewer the story about her husband's death. It occurred ten years ago, when they were on their way to an alumni dinner at Penn. "I see now that destiny had a hand," she says. They couldn't go to the dinner after all, but drove their daughter to pick up their car instead. The daughter's need to pick up the car, and a friend's reluctance to go to the dinner (thus preventing them from going as they were to ride into the city with her) are now seen by R22 as part of the destiny of the event. After they picked up the car, the daughter said (for instance) "You go first, I'll follow you" but then pulled out first, for some reason.

"And once we got out on the highway, [her husband] said, 'go out this little street,' so I did. Each one of these things would change the time element, you see. I looked, it was dark, and I saw a little light way down, and another light way way down, and I pulled out, and the next thing I knew, we were hit head on, and the car was totaled, and my husband was hurt. I learned later that his head went through the windshield even though he had a seatbelt on. I almost...the door, I wanted to get out the door. But his head was down in my lap so I never saw the way his face was shattered, and I think that that was one of God's greatest gifts. Well, they came and got us and put him in one ambulance and me in another, and the in the emergency room he was in one end, and I was in the other. They x-rayed my ankle, I had a broken ankle...it was a wonder I didn't lose my ankle. Anyway, I asked them, 'well, how's my husband,' and they said, 'oh, just minor injuries,' so I was

conscious, but when I tried to get up to go home, I was dizzy, so I stayed. They put me in a curtained-off area in the corridor. After five hours a doctor came and said, 'your husband died, but we don't know why.' And I said, 'well, I guess that was in the hands of the lord,' and, incidentally, my daughter said the same thing when they called her. At that point, there was a sort of a cloud above me and out of that came the words that I haven't forgotten in ten years, 'this was the way it was supposed to be, you take it and do the best you can with it.' I don't know why the words were just like that but they were the words. And then, I started to say to myself 'isn't it good that your daughter and granddaughter still live with you so you have them and they can help you at home, and help you bury him...and by morning, I just couldn't weep and say 'why did this happen to me.' Because I knew that was the way it was supposed to be. I had an experience similar to that when my first baby was taken. When he was born, I saw this funny sort of cloud, and in it I saw my sister who had died when she was young, and she was in a coach, as if she were waiting to take this new baby,...and he did die later, he had four things wrong with his heart. I had had German measles and didn't know it. Those things you just feel, and they are definitely unaccounted for...."

R22 would say that she's been born again, "back in that Methodist Church, I think."

R22 explains her belief in miracles with a story about her and her daughter. Her daughter, she explains is a Virgo, while she herself is a Cancer [this astrological ascription is very unusual for fundamentalist Christians...for whom such thing smacks of paganism and the occult, both condemned by Biblical prophecy.] What this means, she contends, is that her daughter sees several sides of issues, while she tends to see things along the straight and narrow. One time last

summer, she says, her daughter brought a teacher friend down to visit her at her summer place. R22, being uncomfortable about the granddaughter's relationship, took the occasion when the daughter was out of the room to confide this feeling to the daughter's friend (a woman, incidentally). The daughter flew off the handle and she and R22 did not speak again during that visit, with the daughter departing the next day. R22 says that later that week she was teaching a Sunday School lesson how one should forgive others if he/she needs to be forgiven. "...so that Friday night, after the first two-week VBS session was over, and getting ready for the next two weeks, I was sitting at my desk writing out Bible verses, and a voice said 'why don't you call Mary?' and all that darkness and blackness [the feelings surrounding the tiff with Mary] dissappeared just like that..."

"...So I called her and we had a grand time....So, I was teaching the adult SS class that Sunday, and I had a stack of xeroxed things to give out there...and one of them said 'sometimes God can just break through with a new glimpse of Jesus just when you need it most.' And I said to them, 'I guess thats why this happened to me, so I could tell you that of yourself, Satan's got such a grip on you that you don't want to get out of it you don't even want to get away from it...you've been sending Bible verses to people all these years, you know all the answers, but your in the grip...."

R22 also takes an interesting approach to the question of healing. After detailing that her own experience with

healing has involved interventions of her own (i.e., new diet and medications) she observes, "...I think God heals you by suggesting these things to you." Her attitude about speaking in tongues is mixed. She does not, herself know much about it. She has never seen it, and never experienced it. She attends religious services on Sunday only during the Summer when she is on vacation. She doesn't attend regularly when at home during the winter. "...I've been asked to come to one of these up here, but I've been hesitant because, as I say I am the type of person who gets in and would eventually be helping in so many areas...I can't do anything half. I feel it would take away from all of the things I'm doing now." This situation has not changed measurably in the twenty years since she and her husband moved to their current residence. R22 worked at the church she attend in Germantown, both as a volunteer, and later as paid staff, and some of her reluctance to become more regularly involved since her husband's retirement seems to have been related to her feeling that she had "...done enough..." of the conventional church activity while working at the church in Germantown, and that now, she would like to pick and choose her religious involvements, which she sees very much as personal ministry.



R22 does not watch much television, other than old programs, "Leave it to Beaver, Hogan's Heroes," etc., she does watch some old movies on television. She is also, interestingly, NOT a frequent viewer of religious television.

"...When you said you were coming up, I wondered how,...I really do not look at many religious programs." [do you watch as frequently as once a week?] "No, I really do not...I do see the Billy Graham Crusades because my daughter likes to look at those, [again, her daughter lives with her] and I have been a contributor to the 700 Club for years, and to Christian Cinema, which is on, I think that's on TV too....The reason I don't [watch religious TV] is that I like to read the books that are available, written today, and they're all preachers, and most of them come from Texas, Texas theological schools must be wonderful...I read all of them, Francis Shaeffer, etc., and the parts I like I can write down, or xerox...and that seems to be the valuable thing about the television programs because occasionally they'll offer a book, or a pamphlet you can write for, and then they have something concrete, which you don't get after most sermons. Some pastors do xerox their sermons so people can take them home. [So if I were to ask you to list the programs you watch even occasionally you'd say it was a short list?] Yes...sometimes I look in on Jimmy Swaggart, and I think he's awfully good and Dr. Estep, the King is Coming, but as I say, I don't make a practice of viewing any of them."

R22 is a regular contributor to religious TV "...and to alot who aren't on TV, like Jews for Jesus, and Slavic Gospel, and Underground Evangelism, .." Her average contribution to the Club is \$25.00.

"...I raised it when he went to the Middle East, and Mike Evans, I send him money because he's trying to get the president to recognize Jeruslam as the capital of Israel. I don't know, I have a feeling that the United States will not support Israel. In Ezekiel, where its

describing the attack of Russia with all the many allies she has today, there is in 38, verse 13, there are two people who watch this attack, one is the merchant Princes of Tarsus, now Tarsus was a seaport that the Phoenicians built, and from there they colonized Great Britain, the United States and the rest of the world. So the young...something or others and the Merchant Princes of Tarsus stand by. They give very weak criticism but nothing backing it up. [Have you seen these things written up by others?] Oh yes, many writers, I have many prophecy books...."

R22 goes on to an explanation of the role of prophecy for the believer, that it is not used to put off worry about the present, but rather to reassure the believer that history is in God's hands. She also contends that the US role vis a vis Israel is not as its savior and steadfast friend, but that prophecy sees the US abandoning Israel. In this she disagrees with Jerry Falwell, who has the view that a dual salvation for Israel and the US, is fortold. R22 does agree with Falwell, though, in that she believes that the US will prosper so long as its policies stand by Israel, a stance she sees as eroding due to interest in Arab oil.

R22 cannot, based on these points, be taken to be totally out of touch with day-to-day reality. Her religiosity and her consumption/participation in RTV are related to day to day life, and inform it for her, but are not a substitute for it. No informants so far could be said to be escaping into religious television or into their other

involvements, (other than in a general sense implied by Marx's 'opiate of the masses' theory of religious function).

This discussion led to a more general discussion of society and politics. Responding to the election-year climate and recent news accounts of the various candidates questioning each others Christian credentials, R22 noted,

"...I think Reagan is a fine Christian, I think Mondale is, too... but there are so many things influencing them and keeping them from doing what they want to do. I read, Reagan says on the one hand 'I believe this and that and the other thing' and then he goes ahead and signs these...and it isn't that he's changed his belief, but he can't do it."

R22 has never called or written the Club. She gets books and materials from Billy Graham, where she has contributed for years, and from most organizations she contributes to. She has very clear ideas about the activities of organizations she contributes to. She notes with displeasure the activities of Jews for Jesus and a Messianic organization, which has recently received publicity for moving into Jewish areas of Philadelphia. "That's no way to do..." she says, "because they immediately are on the defensive. You have to be very gentle."

She takes a particularly cavalier attitude about her affiliation and membership in formal terms. Asked if she's still a Presbyterian (the denomination of the church she

attended in Germantown up until 20 years ago) "...I think you'd have to [call her a Presbyterian] 'cause once your a member of that church, you always are. I don't like some of the things...they've changed the creed and all that." She was a Methodist at age 16. Her whole demeanor in discussing these things is not serious. She laughs off denominational distinctions, and the question of what it means to still be a member at the church where she worked for so many years.

Asked how she first became involved in the 700 Club, she has to think for awhile.

"...Its just possible that I was on that list from being on some other list...." [did you watch it after you started to contribute?] I have watched it at times, but, uh, let me tell you, I bake cookies every day and I give them to everybody, in fact I have a box here for you to take with you [they were very good--I shared them with other students when I got back]. and I have this house to take care of, and I'm over at the Library xeroxing things...and I really don't have time. You see, I'm always working. I am always after a miracle, you know. [She walks over to a counter where there is a wooden sign, made out of tongue depressors cut and glued onto a dark background, spelling out 'jesus'] Does this say anything to you?...I use these in Sunday School with the children..."

She continues with a story of how she had car trouble one time and the service station manager who worked on her car could not read "jesus" on the sign (when looked at close up it forms a perceptual illusion, and the letters are harder to see.) The manager finally saw the word there, and was so

excited that he left it on his cash register, and R22 is convinced that to this day people in the service station see that sign on the cash register, and he talks with them about Jesus. The message of the sign, she asserts, is that it is not always easy to focus on Jesus, but we must try to do so all the time. She makes kits for these signs out of lumber and art sticks, and gives them with patterns to children in her VBS classes. As they make them, she explains the symbolism of the exercise to them.

R22 has some very strong feelings about current male and female roles.

"These days, men have to work hard at their jobs, and then go home and in many cases its the man whose doing it...my son, is working, when he comes home on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and on Saturdays after ten o'clock, he has the children, he gets their meals, he cleans up, he takes them to the Library, he reads to them, and I wouldn't have dared to do that with my husband...I always felt I was the one to keep house and to get up with the babies, and he had his job, but when he came home...I think the men now are expected to do entirely too much.... I'm not in favor of this women's lib thing at all, really. Now, there was a time when he was between jobs, and I suppose today you'd go right back to work, I suppose I could have...but there again, I think that the fact that there wasn't money, and we did without made him realize that that was his job and he had to get back to the work. I think that by womens' working and all, men have discovered, 'well, its kind of fun not to have to work, and not to have to go to college and get an education, and they've taken the responsibility away from the shoulders of the men.

R22 was then asked if the various organizations she

supports, including religious broadcasting, are needed because conventional churches are failing, somehow.

"I feel that the Gospel has to be offered in hundreds of different ways. We are all individuals, and we all have to get it in different ways. I do think that eventually the church will be the apostolic church that's in prophecy. But I don't think it will be because Television has supplanted it. ..Many people will turn on the TV, they're bewildered, they're hurt, they don't know what the answer is, I think that we feel that because the church is there or that maybe even the children will have gone to SS for years, they didn't get the message...now I'm not blaming the church, either. They've really never heard it in a way that they could listen."

R22 was then asked about her involvement in the committee against blasphemy.

"He started to write to me...and I think I get on all of these things from the other lists...I guess for two or three years. Then there was a very pornographic film about Jesus that came out, or was about to, and through his [Dr. McBirney of the CAB]] work, he persuaded the producer not to produce it because...not for that one movie, but because, not for that one movie, but he claims that if any of these awful movies are allowed to be shown, that they will make so much money, that then there will be many of them...and he's trying to stop it. There's another one as I say, I can't remember all of these things that come in the mail and all that business, but there's another one that speaks of Jesus and uh, oh, I don't know, it's terrible. And he's working to... we have to do what we can. I was thinking the other day that there was censorship in the movies years ago, and the Catholic Church used to tell their members not to go. [do you think that would be a good thing now?] I don't know if people would listen. That is the...all of Christianity is a paradox. You know the direction in which it is going to go, the Bible says. At the same time, Jesus said to be working as hard as you can, as long as you can to reform all this, to prevent these things from happening, so you work

against it, but you feel as though eventually its going to happen."

R22 was then asked whether she feels there has been an evangelical revival in America, and what it is due to, and how she knows it is happening.

"Yes, I think that fundamentalism had a very bad name for a very long time, but I think that people are viewing it differently now, and I think that, yes, I think there has been a very great effort to get the Gospel around the world. The latest Christianity Today [a well respected intellectual journal of the Evangelical center] has an interview on Robert Schuller, and I agree with him entirely. I think that, first of all that television is first of all a mission. It is also a church because you have born-again believers in it. [something that Schuller, incidentally, would never say] But it can't be handled in the same way as a church because there are alot of people in it who really aren't believers. So you can't conduct it in the same way. But he says don't ever forget you are on a mission. Now I feel that the Avalon Church (the one she attends when at her summer home) has lost its opportunity because it could be a mission church, there are thousands of people who go to Avalon in the summertime, and if a dynamic, joyful...you know he's [the pastor] a dear man, he's young, but he's the original vacuum cleaner salesman who knocks on the door and says 'you don't want to buy a vacuum cleaner, do you?' I often think, 'Bob, what you have to tell them is wonderful. Every day miracles can happen...but he hardly ever smiles."

"When you say that some of the people in religious broadcasting are not Christian, do you mean some of the people in the audience, or the broadcasters themselves, are not Christian?"

"I mean most of the viewers...now he [Schuller] was saying that you can't have communion, etc., with these people who are not church members, but he said don't

ever forget that you are preaching to unchurched people and trying to... 'make them comfortable'. I think that is very true... If you are going to antagonize people, and use language that goes against their grain they'll turn you off.

I then asked R22 to think about the problem of when the message gets watered down too far in exchange for attempting to reach a larger group of people who will not be turned off.

"I guess I think you have to say something in the beginning which would appeal to their need. They have problems. The successful books talk about their own experiences, just like I talk about my own experiences in what I'm trying to tell everyone else. If you tell them about the troubles you have had, and how you've been helped... I don't think the preacher ever does that. He's up there and he's afraid to let on that he's the same as you 'down there'. [R22 seems to carry within her worldview a real dislike of formal institutions and the clergy]. [You think that TV allows you to do that on a better level] Yes, I think they do."

"How do you know that you are watching a religious program, and how do you know its one that is effective, or one that is actually a worthwhile ministry?"

"It's difficult. If you admit some of your own failings, and then in ways that God, in spite of yourself can help you. I don't know how you make a TV program that will appeal to everybody."

Who does she talk to about the program? R22 launches into a long discussion of her involvement in the AARP and in Penn Alumna organizations, and ends by revealing that she does not discuss her faith or her religious work very much with them, they are just not interested.



"...I talk to people on the street and on buses, and I knit teddy bears, and I get people talking about them, and then I give them away, and it gives me a chance to witness." "...but my friends say, when I say the grace before lunch [at AARP], they say 'keep it short.'"

"You have spent most of your life in a denomination that is more liberal, more modernist..."

"...it didn't used to be, its changed, Francis Schaeffer explained that....the new curriculum wasn't Bible stories, it was just 'God loves you,' and I would supplement it...and they finally gave all the children to me because there was a shortage of teachers, but I couldn't do it permanently because that would effect their records. When my husband and I first began to go there everything was fine, but then in the '30's, we began to say 'what's going on?'...Francis Schaeffer said in the Church and the Watching World, that the moderator, the fundamentalist moderator, had been put out and a liberal one put in, and then the other churches kind of followed suit. But now they've gone back...I think that all of this ecumanism and the World Council of Churches is the Babylon church, I think, I don't think there is any doubt about it. But I think there are still some very fine churches." [So you felt you were where you belonged, the Church moved?] "When we started it was fine... but it was the Presbytery that changed things by ordering the ministers around in spite of the fact that the Session Book holds that the minister should be subject to the congregation."

#### Respondent 29

R29 is a single man of about 55 years of age. He is on full disability from his job as a foreman in a factory. He chain smokes and (as he admits later) drinks a bit, unlike most other respondents. He lives outside the City limits in a modest working-class suburb in a modest one-story house of 1950's vintage. It is a fairly small house, and is decorated

as one would expect a single man of his age to decorate. Furnishings don't quite match, but everything is neat and orderly, and the house has been cleaned recently.

R29's aunt lives with him, but she suffers from senility, and is currently (at the time of the interview) in the hospital for treatment of a chronic problem.

As with most of the later respondents, R29 is asked some of the questions on the quaire, and answers most of the off-handedly, almost too quickly. (Other r's ponder more, question the interviewer more.) He seems eager to talk, eager for company. He invites the interviewer to stay for lunch afterward.

R29 describes himself as a frequent Bible-reader, but an infrequent pray-er. He describes himself as having been "Born Again," but does not claim to have had "a religious experience." He is almost unique among respondents in that he has NO formal religious affiliation, but claims that he has always been, in some way, "religious." He has recently experienced a re-awakening of his interest in religion, through his involvment in the ministry known as "the Way", which, it turns out, is antagonistic to the TV ministries, an issue he discusses in some detail.

His responses to the quaire issues are interesting. He

considers religion only "important," not "very important," as all other R's have. He has contributed to the Club only for the past year, [odd, since he must have been a contributor to have been on the list from which he was selected, which comes from 1983]. He calls or writes occasionally, "...they call here, sometimes...." He watches the Club by himself, his aunt is really too infirm to get anything out of it. He has no affiliation now, other than "the Way," but was a Methodist at age 16. He does not subscribe to cable, since it is "...all garbage...."

R22 began watching the 700 Club in 1981 "...when my mother was sick...."

"...I just put it on...its that other stuff, you say 'religion' [in the context of the question, 'how did you start watch religious TV?'] but "The Way Ministry" [for instance] is not a religion, its personal relationship with Jesus. Alot of people say as soon as you talk about Jesus your talking about 'religion'...but most of religion is just tradition....I turned on the show, and he had something there from oversseas...they were telling how it was really happening...and in the [news]papers it was altogether different."

R22 was asked to give his faith history.

"When I was four or five, I used to go to Sunday School or children's Bible Class and I used to study the Children's Bible. I went to Sunday School off and on in later years, like until I was 13 or 14. The I just stopped. Never stayed with it. On occasion, when someone invited me, I did go...it didn't matter what church. Even though I didn't attend during those 'middle' years, I didn't attend, but I still believed in God, and I still said my prayers and everything....as

far as church, I never went to church... 'course alot of people who go to church are hypocrits."

R29 had responded that he speaks in tongues, so was asked how his involvement in that practice came about, when he had not been attending church. He responded that, after he had been watching the Club for a few months, he happened to pick up a hitchhiker who was involved in "the Way," and who got him to go to a meeting. R29 has been going, infrequently ever since, and has become quite sensitive to criticisms leveled at such cults.

"...After I was watching the 700 Club...I used to do a little gambling...I was on my way to the racetrack and picked up this girl, seventeen or eighteen, who was hitchhiking. I asked her if she wasnt's cared to hitchhike like that. She said "no, Jesus is with me.' And we got talking, and she invited me to go to "The Way." She told me how she'd been involved in drugs and all, and how the Way'd straightened her out, so I went....I still smoke, but I don't drink as much. I went through their Bible course and all ..then, I'd get a call to go to 'a twig' [the term for social gatherings called by The Way members, where religious activities are combined with social ones] every month or couple of months. [R29 describes how "The Way" appeared in an Inquirer magazine piece recently, in an unflattering way. He produces a shopworn copy of that issue, with the organization's founder on the cover.] They called it a 'cult'...now anything can be a cult. They got those young people...[who were on drugs, etc.] and they have to get their minds changed to do it...."

R29 was asked if the Club led to his involvement in The Way, or if it went the other way around. He misreads slightly the sense of the question, and takes it to mean,

'...were you led from one to the other.'

"...its possible I was led from one to the other...one thing that happened was every time I'd try to go to a meeting...something would get in my way. Something would pop up to keep me from going there to finish the course...."

Asked what he gets the most out of about the Club, the news, or the spiritual material, he responds, "the sermon and faith stories, but I like the news, too." Asked how he knows its a religious program [given the amount of the content devoted to news and interviews about secular matters and financial analysis--all things which are part of the program that got him watching in the first place] he responds,

"Its not a religious program...they're trying to explain what Jesus was like...like someone trying to describe what a neighbor or someone else is like to someone who never met him...Jesus can be just like your neighbor, and the program leads you to him that way...." Is the Club successful because regular churches, and

regular religion have failed?

"...they're [the Club] building to learn people the way they should be...in other words, some churches and places, they take the money and all they're doing is making the place bigger..they're not learning the people what they're supposed to...Like this fellow here trying to say a Jew can't be a Born-again Christian [a reference to news stories about the controversy over congregation Beth-Jeshua in Overbrook park, a messianic Jewish congregation]...I don't understand it...why don't they leave them go...one fights against another and that's no good."

Attempting to get at this credibility issue (how do you

know who's right and who's wrong?) another way, R29 is asked..."How do you know how to trust Pat Robertson. I mean, he's building alot of buildings, and just raising money to buy air time?"

"...I don't know for a fact, but I don't know how the people are going to come out of there [CBN University]....They're building a University to teach people to live up to the standards of the Bible... but they're [conventional churches] are not teaching people how to do that sturr outside [the Church.]...that university [CBN] will learn you the way you should do...treat the other person right...the Church will just tell you to love your fellow man, but not that particular item,...you don't know how to [apply Christian principles] to your field...."

"Who do you talk to about the program?"

"...I talk to my buddy about the show, you know...' hey, Pat Robertson says,' but his wife doesn't like him to watch and doesn't want to talk about the show 'cause she's a Catholic." [Did you talk to your buddy about religion at all before you started watching the show?]  
"Yeah, we used to talk about the universe and satellites and the supreme being... there has to be somebody behind all of this...trees and molecules and neutrons and all that stuff, space in general and dark holes...and all that. I talk at the Way, but they don't like the show, they say 'he's just takin' money to buy transmitters and buildings.' but I talk there....There are alot of things that are similar there [similar to ideas and values of the Club], like for instance, they can smoke...drink and smoke [R29 means that this is a difference between the values of the club and the way, though he says it differently] ..with the way though, some things I don't feature...like you should drop everything, if there's a meeting, you should go...I argue with a couple of them [about this] but I have to think of something in the Bible to tell them...to counteract why...they're really deep... now they're taking the bad [drugs, etc.] away...but they're getting them [the addicts] so involved...they do do things that

I wouldn't do...."

"Who do you think watches the 700 Club?

"...I imagine alot of Blacks watch because they're more religious... older people, or people who are confined because it makes them feel better...its part of life [the Club is] [Reads quote from Pascal about belief in God]...I cut this out of the paper...[goes onto discussion of philosophical issue of atheism]...the atheist says 'I don't believe in God'--but he is admitting God exists, he just doesn't believe in him...." [this old saw is a standard of blue collar religio-social philosophy, which I heard time and again as a youth from scoutmasters, mechanics, ranchers, and others who waxed eloquent about such things--look out Eric Hoffer.]

"Have you ever met an atheist?"

"...no, the first time I ever ran into anyone who didn't believe in God was at the Way...I was talking to a girl who [used to be an atheist]...I never knew there was people like that around...you see, that's the problem with doing things like taking Bibles out of school, there's no harm in it...just let children know there is a God...then they can find their own way there when they get older...."

Asked about his consumption of other media, R29 reports that he reads the Inquirer and a local paper, subscribes to the National Rifle Association magazine, but doesn't read much else, including materials from the Club besides the Bible. He doesn't care for the rest of television "...it is just too suggestive...I mean, some people, kids, might look at it and say, 'hey, I'll give that a try....'" He doesn't go to films, other than "Kung Fu" movies, "...I might go see Red Dawn because that's a real possibility someday...."

Finally, R29 is led into a discussion of morality and moral instruction via the program. Asked about how his smoking [a behavior he has already noted is a salient moral issue for the club, but not for the way], R29 responds...

"...I know it ain't right to smoke, but I smoke...I know it ain't right I know it ain't right to drink, but I drink. I know it ain't right to gamble, but I gamble...I used to go into a bar...I would tell myself, 'look at the people getting slopped up', so I just quit...I feel a little guilty now [when Pat Robertson talks about smoking]...One time I almost quit when I was watching the program...but it didn't work...you just have to lead your life the best you can..."

Has the United States experienced a change, a revival of fundamentalism? [This is an interesting question to ask, because some respondents begin to answer you, as soon as you get the words "...some people say there has been a change in the US in recent years...." it turns out that about half of them say its for the worse, and half say for the better. R29 was in the former group.]

"...sure more people are reading the Bible than ever, but the percentage is what makes the difference...eventually there'll be an effect, though, when people begin to see that the people who live right and treat other people right are getting ahead more and getting enough to eat...there are going to be shortages, you see...somethin really big like that's gotta happen to wake people up...."



Respondent 31

This respondent is the only one with whom a personal interview was not possible. Due to the opposition of her husband, R31 asked that the interview be conducted by telephone, so she was spoken to for about 90 Minutes. R31 was particularly attractive because she is a Conservative Jew, and holds to her Jewish faith in spite of membership in the 700 Club. Therefore, It was decided to carry out the interview by phone instead of losing the opportunity to talk to her.

R31 is forty years old, married to a man for whom this is a second marriage (it is her first.) The overall impression of her is that she is politically conservative, holding to beliefs which are not typical of most American Jews (i.e., she favors the death penalty, calls herself politically conservative, supports Reagan, opposes abortion "...except where there is proven rape or incest...." and thinks that minorities get their fair share "...though they tend to want more, and aren't utilizing what they have...." She goes on to add, "...their so-called leaders don't speak for them and don't speak for me...like the NOW women for instance, the TV Network leaders, the political leaders, they presume to speak for me but they don't...."

She and her husband have no children.

She expresses more than average confidence in institutions, more rather than less apprehension about violence, and feels that premarital sex is wrong "only sometimes." Women's roles should be oriented toward the family, though she does accept women working outside the home under certain circumstances.

She is a frequent reader of the Bible, and a frequent pray-er, and accepts the most literalist interpretations of the Bible (by which she means the "Old Testament" only, considering the NT to be interesting prophecy, a typical Talmudic interpretation of it. She does not accept any particular role for Jesus beyond that of prophet. She would consider herself "born again" in the sense that she has experienced a personal re-affirmation of her Jewish faith as a result of health problems. She supports speaking in tongues generally, though considers it to be only a Christian activity, though she seemed to feel that praying in Hebrew was somehow analogous to it.

She and her husband attend Temple less than once a week but more than once a month. They are regular financial contributors to their Synagogue.

R31 watches the 700 Club regularly along with PTL (less

frequently), Herbert Armstrong, and the Catholic drama program, Insight. She has called only the 700 Club, has done so only once or twice, but gives \$25 to the Club about four times each year. She contends that her attendance at Temple and giving there have not changed since she began viewing the program, and that her giving to the program is also fairly stable. She usually views the program alone, though her husband watches with her when he is not at work.

She and her husband were raised Jewish, though he was Orthodox, and she Conservative. She regards herself as having "converted" from an inactive laissez-faire faith as a child and a young woman to a committed faith as an adult. She and her husband sought out a Synagogue where they were comfortable, and settled on a Conservative one, where they now attend. Her husband is a salesman. He is not a member of the 700 Club, and rarely views, due to work conflicts. Their family income is between \$15,000 and \$24,900. They were a two-income family until her illness, which dominates discussion with her, and their SES slide has been a source of some pain and frustration to them, apparently.

The dominant issue for R31 is her health, which is fair. She has always had spinal disease (since childhood) which has gotten progressively worse. Finally, four years ago, at age

38, she was forced to quit her work (as a medical assistant) and to stay home for extended recuperation. She now is in a wheelchair. She began to watch the 700 Club at this time,

"...I started watching TV, and ended up with Pat Robertson. He kept talking about God and Jesus, so I listened, because I believe in God. I believe in the values and morals of the show, besides being an informative show... I was depressed, I had no feeling in my legs... he [Pat] was instrumental in pointing me back to God."

When asked if she reads the New Testament as a result of the Bible teaching she appreciates so much in the show, she replies,

"I read the Old Testament stuff because that is the Jewish Bible, and Pat quotes the New Testament stuff alot, so I follow that. I have a Catholic friend, and he has a Catholic Bible, and he and I talked and discussed, and interchanged ideas."

Asked what she was attracted to initially about the Club when she first saw it (she just passed by it on the dial once and started to watch.) she said,

"I had been watching Donahue, but he doesnt' discuss anything important...I was looking for substance, I needed something real, something to hold onto...there was no way I was going to get better. I wanted something that made sense to me...."

Asked if the program had thus contributed to progress in her health, she said,

"...It pointed me back in a direction I leaned on, but I needed it more than I had anything in my life...."

Did she write to Pat Robertson about how it had helped

her?

"I did write to him, and told him how much the program had helped me. I didn't get a personal letter back, I got a form letter, and I was a little disappointed. He's a busy man, though...."

How would she compare CBN and PTL, both of which she is familiar with.

"CBN is much more in depth, more substance, a magazine format. PTL is good with what it does, marriage counseling, etc., but it doesn't have the intellectual content CBN has. The Saturday morning shows [Insight] show you no matter what kind of trouble you're in, if you turn to God, he'll help you help yourself get out of it...."

Do Robertson and [Herbert W.] Armstrong differ?

"Armstrong is scary. He tends to put more fear into people, with his prophecies. He looks at what is happening in the world, and can explain some of it, though. Robertson's just softer about it all."

What about the rest of TV?

"We have little regard for commercial TV, we prefer public TV...the MacNeil/Lehrer Report, the music programs, the nature shows. Network news is too one-sided, not objective. The only report what they want you to know. MacNeil/Lehrer is better, but still not totally free.... The world news, they never tell you what the real news is... I don't see how you can separate morality from politics, but they're scared to talk about abortion, at least they have been until recently. I'm more worried about abortion than I am about prayer in the school, but that's what they're concentrating on because they don't understand it. I don't see anything wrong with prayer in the schools. I had to pray in school when I was young, and read the Bible, and I was alright. I don't understand what the

media are all upset about. And no [Jewish] 'leader' can speak for me about prayer in the schools. Channel 3 is the worst of the television stations, 6 moderate, and 10 better, they've tried to clean up their act. None of them are objective about Israel, though. The network news just refused to see the whole story there.

Asked about the inevitable tension for a religious broadcaster between being true to his/her religious mission, and needing to water it down so as to not turn away viewers who might be put off by too-obvious religiosity, R31 responded that the Club was doing alright in that regard. A general discussion followed regarding credibility, that is, how it is R31 knows Pat Robertson is really right or a man of God when he appears in a medium which restricts the extent to which he can say that. R31 was no more help than other R's with this question. She simply did not have a good explanation as to why/how a figure such as Robertson comes to be credible for her.

A test I frequently use on this point is to get R's to discuss Tammy Bakker, who is the most dissonant of the major RelTV figures, a woman who dresses in revealing clothing, wears too much makeup, and acts quite odd on camera. R31, as others do, drew away from being too critical of Tammy.

"I like Tammy...there are a bit too many pleas for money on that program, though. That money thing is the thing I like the least about PTL. I'm not concerned about the way Tammy dresses because she is her own self [a common sentiment among the R's--'at least she's being

true to herself']. What we wear has little to do with what we have on the inside. They're [Jim and Tammy] counseling, and what they do is good--a different purpose than 700 Club."

[This reluctance to criticize Tammy is fairly consistent with other R's responses in the sample. Few of them can bring themselves to openly criticize any of these broadcasters or performers, though this reluctance does not extend to their estimations of "secular" figures.]

The specific issue of this R's Judaism pervaded nearly all responses in the interview which dealt with religious topics (not surprisingly). However, the last area of discussion looked specifically at this, by asking whether there were any aspects of the Club which made her uncomfortable, specifically as a Jew, watching the program. Her response was that in general, there was nothing about the program which bothered her, with one exception.

"It makes me uncomfortable when they have someone who was born Jewish, and then "accepts Jesus." I Understand that, but it makes me uncomfortable. I think they are in need of something tangible when they go this way. When we're in desparate shape, we need something tangible, and therefore, Jesus, who is tangible to so many people, may seem attractive to Jews. I believe that we're all here, Jews, Christians, and Islam [direct quotation] for a reason. We all have something to share, and all have a part in God's plan to eventually redeem the world....I don't accept Messianic Judaism. We learn that Elijah will come before the messiah, and will tell us he's coming. I expect, any day, to see Elijah at the door, but the Messiah has not come. Elijah will tell us, and the Messiah will bring peace."

Asked if Jewish viewers might be converted by watching the 700 Club, she responded,

"I don't think that Jewish believers would be converted just by watching Christian Broadcasting....If you're secure in what you believe, you can't be converted...you can co-exist. Jews must plant the seeds at home. It's not the churches and synagogues that are failing, its the homes. I tell people at my Synagogue this, why worry about 'Jews for Jesus?', just plant the seeds at home."

Who does this R talk to about her viewing of these programs?

"...Everyone! I talk to neighbors, to people at Temple, to people on the street, to friends. In the beginning they were hostile, but I say 'wait a minute, look at all the good it does.' People are more afraid than they used to be, of everything ...the last 25 years of liberalism in this country has destroyed the family. If you don't plant the seed right, you don't get a strong tree....A Catholic friend and I learned from each other, even though we're from different faiths. We're both still believers in family structure and place...I'm afraid of hate and bigotry. That's what all this liberalism has brought about."

Finally, R31 was asked if she thought the emergence of religious broadcasting was because churches and synagogues had somehow failed.

"No, its the accessability in the home that explains their success. Religious television is just something different from church altogether. I desparately hope for a turn-around in this country, and I think that Religious TV is part of that."

R31 is significant for two or three factors. First, her health situation is unique among the respondents, and is very



closely tied, for her to her viewing of the program. Whereas all other R's have experienced some sort of tragedy, only R31 attributes real, material, progress in her physical health to her viewing of the program. She shies away from saying that the program actually healed her, however, pointing out that Faith-healing only occurs with a great deal of intervention from real-world sources (doctors, diet). "God helps you help yourself."

A second significant thing about R31 is her political/social conservatism. She attributes a curious blend of social ills to the recent pre-eminence of liberalism, particularly as its engineering has messed around with the "traditional" family. One sensed in the interview a certain wistfulness about children and family (she cannot have children due to her condition) and this might be said to inform a heightened level of anxiety about familyt in general, were it not for the fact that ALL respondents felt similarly. Her overall indictment of liberalism, and the way things have been going in this country is the dominant impression of her social outlook, however.

The third dominant feature of this interview has to do with her being Jewish. The fact that she is able to maintain (even strengthen) her faith in Judaism through her viewing

is, to say the least, interesting. This fact reinforces the sense from other interviews that this activity, which we so readily imbue with great substantive or functional powers for the individual viewer, is in many ways an ephemeral, or at least, a tangential activity vis a vis their foundational religiosity (measured in traditional terms.)

Respondent 35

R35 is a woman of forty-eight who has recently moved to a new home in the far western suburbs. The move was the result of a serious financial and legal crisis she and her husband got into that involved personal bankruptcy. She was still very much in the middle of this crisis at the time of the interview, and much of what she had to say reflected the strain of having just gone through this situation. She was raised as a Lutheran (mainline Lutheran) and still belongs to a Lutheran church, though, as a result of having gone through the crisis, and having moved, she is now attending a more evangelical congregation, and plans to join it soon.

Her current self-designation as an evangelical is relatively new. "I have just become a Born-Again Christian, and so all of my beliefs aren't quite set yet," she tells the interviewer. She feels that it was through the intervention of Born-Again friends that she came to live through the

crisis she is experiencing, and her involvement in the 700 Club has been instrumental in the process, as well.

In the questionnaire phase of the interview, she expresses very little confidence in the government, press and television, and some confidence in the other institutions. She is liberal on most of the social issues, perhaps the most liberal of all respondents, and classifies herself as a liberal as well. She opposes the death penalty, favors choice on abortion "depending on circumstances," favors a nuclear freeze, and thinks that premarital sex is "wrong only sometimes." She disagrees (takes the liberal position) on women's roles, and thinks most people can be trusted.

She reads the Bible frequently and prays frequently, and curiously, takes the most literal position on the Bible. In spite of this latter opinion, she does not expect the "Second Coming" soon. She expects and believes in miracles. She believes in healing, but feels that intervention of doctors is often necessary. She feels she, herself has been healed of a stiffness in her hands. She has heard of speaking in tongues, and is ambivalent about it. She has not seen it happen, but believes that it does. She and her husband attend religious services infrequently, as a rule, but she contends that this frequency will increase soon. She also

attends Bible study frequently. All in all, she is, at the time of the interview, undergoing a change in her attendance and other behaviors, as a result of her coming to be more involved in the church she now attends.

She feels religion is very important in her life.

She views television about eight hours a day, including 700 Club twice a day. She has also recently come to view Jimmy Swaggart. Her levels of viewing have increased within the past few months. She is a regular contributor to the Club, giving over \$100 per month. She has called about fifteen times in the past month, calling the local number most frequently. She calls for prayer and counseling, and to get literature, and occasionally gets Bible verses to read. This calling has been entirely in the context of the personal crisis she is undergoing.

She is currently a member of a Lutheran Church, though she has most recently attended a Methodist church where she used to live. Since the crisis, her faith experiences, and her move, she has started to attend an independent evangelical church on the main line [Church of Our Savior, Wayne]. She feels quite close to other members, and has a friend who helped her through the crisis, and who attends and got her to attend there. She has gotten her husband, who is

Catholic, to begin to attend the new church with her. They have four children between them. It is the second marriage for both.

She began watching because of the serious personal problem discussed above.

"...I guess I was searching for something, some help, and I'd go to church just to pray. I had alot of time on my hands, and not much money, so I'd watch television alot, and I guess...like you hear so many people say, I just turned the channel and it [the Club] was on. I watched from that day forwardy...they just did what I needed. [Did you call them about your problem??] I talked to them about the problem, I learned to pray. You think you're always a Christian, I went to Sunday School. I played the organ in church, I read the Bible. So if someone would say 'are you a Christian,' I'd say 'yes,' but when I started watching the 700 Club, then I realized I wasn't reading the Bible like they say to read the Bible.... I've never read it all the way through...they said things that came right o my heart, and I think they made me feel better. They were teaching how to pray. I thinks sometimes before I would go to Church, and it was just that simple, you went to Church on Sunday...not that I didn't listen, but I don't think I really listened. Now I certainly pray everyday, and I guess I've gotten closer to God. [Have you had a religious experience of any kind as a result of the program?] ...yes and no. As I said, I was going to this Catholic church to pray. And I just asked God for help, I just wanted to know, 'please help me', and a light came into the church and it wasn't a window, it wasn't sunny...that was just at the very beginning of watching the program. [Were the two things related?] I don't think so, I was just having such a horrendous experience that I was searching for anybody or anything...I'd go anywhere and listen to anybody....It all happened at once, and its only been a year now. [How do you relate this experience to being "born again?"] At the time I had this experience, I don't think I even knew about being born again. It was just that God was there, and he heard me, and I had help. And then, like I said, I

heard the 700 Club...I'm not the type of person, the reason I like the 700 Club is that it is low key. I think Pat is low key. I don't like anybody with fire and brimstone, who walks up and down...I don't doubt their fervor, but it doesn't do anything for me. [So when did you become born again?] ...I think after watching the 700 Club, they have this prayer, and I said that, so it had to be from that show that I was born again,...also, I have a nephew who heard about our troubles and he came over to the house, and he was a born again Christian, and he prayed for us, and sent some literature. My husband wasn't into this until just recently. My husband was a staunch Catholic all the time, and he [nephew] brought a friend and he said 'when did you become a Christian?' and I was really insulted, but then I sort of remembered from the 700 Club, and I said 'yes,' but I was all flustered, but I know that's what they mean, after you've said the sinner's prayer and become born-again, and really asked Christ to come into your life. [So you are comfortable saying that now?] Yes, just,...I think now I'm comfortable with people who also are Christians, I'm not yet at the point where I could come up to somebody strange and talk about it, but if I'm at Bible study, or with other people that I know, and they talk, then I can talk. I'm very comfortable within myself. [you say you would have called yourself a Christian before, what is different now?] "...I always believed in God, and I always believed in the Bible. I always believed that Moses parted the Red Sea. I didn't have those type of doubts, but I didn't have Christ in my life...then when this problem came up, well you know, who can you trust? I always believed in God, that Jesus died for our sins....I think I was always a Christian, but now I really have the Lord in my life. [Tell me about your husband's reaction.] ...originally, my husband is a good person. He'd let me go anywhere I want, he'd buy me anything I want...no matter how petty, or frivolous, I could have it. So when I found this, I thought he'd be as happy as I was. Instead, I found it hard to talk to him, strangely. I would put the show on when he was home sort of when he was around. But then after I started to go to Bible Class, a girl I met started to have a Bible study, and I asked him to go with me. He said he did not want to go. I was shocked, I think that was the first time he had ever refused me anything....

So, I went myself, and he didn't mind. I wanted my husband to be part of this new life I was experiencing.... Finally this friend and her husband came over, and my husband got comfortable with them, and he's gradually coming along. He's now gone to the new church with me twice. Also, Nancy DeMoss has these Bible studies...as I look back, I think that God must have a plan, because I can't believe all of these awful things have happened to us if God doesn't have a plan, anyway...a long time ago, I had been invited to one of these Bible studies at Nancy DeMoss' house, but I didn't have time. Last year, all of a sudden, I got an invitation again, and I went this time. The invitation said 'how to be happy in spite of...' because everybody has their own reasons for being unhappy, anyway, I had lots of time, and no money so I went this time. So this all happened all at the same time. Also about the same time, I remembered an old friend (I had lost most of my friends by this time) who used to have meetings for wives, Christian meetings on how to make you marriage happier. Now, I'm very happily married, and didn't need that part of it, but I was very lonly and upset, so I called her to see if she still had these meetings. She said no, but that she was going to Church of the Savior, and that they had such meetings, and would I like to go. I didn't have a car by that time, so I decided to humble myself, which was hard to do, but I did and asked if I could have a ride because [husband] needs the car. Now she knew something horrible must have happened if I didn't have my own car anymore, but she said yes, and gave me a ride. After that, someone from the church came and invited me to Bible studies, and prayed with me, and this all happened at about the same time. [So you're gradually getting more and more involved in the church?] Yes, and stronger in my faith.

R35 was asked if, as a result of becoming closely involved in an active evangelical church, her attitude about the 700 Club was still the same. Was it still useful and meaningful to her?

"...I now get more...compared to last year, I now realize what a 'baby Christian' I was when I first

started watching, and how I get even more out of all of these things now. We certainly have received God's love with our problems. They're not over, but every day, every week, as we go along, things improve." [What do you like most about the Club?] "...Pat Robertson is low key...he certainly has his times when he asks for contributions, but I don't get the feeling that that is the most important thing, and logically, since he's on television, he has to get the money for that somewhere. I can see it...I never felt pressured by what he was saying. [Do they ever contact you?] Once, and I was pleased about that. They just called on the phone and said thank you for your contribution, and did I want prayer...and if I had time, they had this little tape of Pat that they played, and it was cute, like he was talking right to you. It made me feel like I was appreciated, and involved. That you're not just a number or a nobody. [Have you ever been invited to any events in this area?] Yes, and my husband went along. It was out in Valley Forge, and they previewed 'Don't Ask Me, Ask God,' [a prime time special aired in January, 1984] for us. Pat wasn't there, he was on a big screen, by satellite. There were a lot of other people there, and my husband didn't feel threatened by that, it was a crowd."

She was then told that there has been a great deal of controversy about religious television, over its relationship to conventional churches. She was asked if she thought it would hurt local churches by taking people out of the church.

"I don't think so, I think it is getting people who don't go to church, and who wouldn't go to church, and it catches those people, and if you really get into it you will go to church. Pat Robertson says, read the Bible, mingle with Christian friends, and go to church. He never says, go to any special church, just go to any church, so I don't think it hurts churches. I think it's also wonderful for people who can't get to church. There are a lot of poor people who can't drive to church. [Do you ever talk to people at church about the



program? Do they approve of it?] I think so, I think they approve...our minister watches the program himself."

R35 was asked how she would compare the Club with the Swaggart program.

"...Swaggart is just too emotional for me. I'm sure he is a good man, and everything, but he's just too emotional. I just don't like him as well personality-wise. He teaches the word, so there's so much you need to know and can know about the Bible. You learn so much by rote, but he explains them. Now, when I read the Bible, I prefer the King James version, sometimes you think you have the meaning, and then someone will say something, and you'll say "...ah..." so sometimes when he does his thing, it does help me...he asks for money alot of the time, and that bothers me. Intellectually I understand that he has to do that, but I still prefer the way the 700 Club does it. Now right now they're having "Seven Days Ablaze" and they'll do nothing but raise money, but it is kind of like Channel 12, when they're done, they're done."

She has some literature, pamphlets, and books that she has gotten from the Club, and from others. She has recently been to a meeting where Chuck Colson spoke, and she bought his book. She has gone to Christian Bookstores to buy materials, and her son recently bought her a new Bible, something she feels was quite a move for him, as he is a skeptical College student.

She describes an experience last Christmas where she and her son had bought things for a Christmas basket to take to a poor family in Chester. She feels that it was good for him to see people who had nothing, because he feels disadvantaged

as a result of their recent financial troubles.

She was asked what kind of people must view the Club. She was asked if she felt that the audience for the program was specialized just because of its news content. She does not think that there is any real differentiation between it and Swaggart along the lines of the Club attracting a more intellectual audience. This is surprising, given the fact that nearly every other R felt that this was, in fact the case.

The discussion then moved to whether she thought religious broadcasting had become successful as the result of the failure of local churches.

"...I think so, I mean, I was real disappointed with the Methodist minister. I thought that they should come to the house, and when we had our troubles, they never showed up. I think that there is a real need fulfilled by religious television...I think there is a revival going on. [how do you see that?] I think more people are willing to talk about it, more ppeople are 'celebrities' who've come out and said they're Christian. I do think there's a revival. [Were you aware of that revival before your own experience?] ...no."

She was asked if anything about the program makes her uncomfortable, and she said there is not.

It was decided to pursue a bit the fact that she is politically liberal, and the question of how she goes about viewing a program which espouses different views. "...your

feelings about abortion, for instance, you feel strongly that it is wrong, and you wouldn't want your daughter to have one, but you feel compassion for people who are in that situation and feel that should be an option for them. In this way, you disagree with Pat. How do you resolve that? Do you think he's going to convince you?"

"No, I think he's just taking the Bible literally...sometimes you come accross some things in the Bible...like your whole life is in there. There's one verse in the Bible that says 'don't charge interest.' Now if someone asked me where did this come from? That would have been the last place I would've seen that...Now abortion is wrong, technically, and Pat Robertson is very clear on that. I myself, if I was raped by a Black man, I would not want to have that baby. My niece has had an abortion. In her case, I don't know wnat else I would have done. My stepdaughter has adopted a baby. And if someone would not have given that baby away, then she would not be so happy and have a baby now. It sounds awful to say, but I don't think I could have a baby and then hand it to someone. I think if I had the two choices, I'd have the abortion. That's terrible. I haven't come to any clear cut...I don't know. People have died from off street abortions. I think it is better that people can go to hospitals and have safe ones, yet in my heart, I know that if you're going to believe, you believe, but I haven't come to an opinion."

Now Pat would also disagree with you on the nuclear freeze. Can you forsee an occasion where he might change your mind on something like that?

"...I don't think so on issues like that. He can lead me along through the word and the Bible, but I have my own ideas, and to me, the nuclear freeze is a vital thing and it is not a theological issue, though the bible says 'thou shalt not kill,' and my husband and my

son were in the service, so I'm conflicted. [So you would say that there are things that have a religious connotations and those which do not?] I think so, in a way. I feel as if he can lead me into the Bible, and he can explain things to me and I love what he says, but I just feel like anybody, you have your own opinions....I feel like I like to have him explain things to me, that is valuable, because he really does know the Bible. He has the right to say what he thinks the Bible is saying about things, but just because he's a religious figure he can't say 'follow my path.' [Who do you talk to about your viewing?] My husband, and I have a friend I have brought it up with. I find it is easy with a friend from before our troubles and who does not go to the church we go to now, and has come down with cancer. I felt myself able to say to her, 'I am praying for you.' whereas I never would have used those words before. [How did she responde?] She did well, you know its unfortunate but people often turn to God at times like that, I did...and you hate to say it, but that is when people beging to turn to God. [Are there any people you wouldn't talk to about the program?] I think most people, I would talk to if it came up, but, I don't just bring it up. If they bring it up first, unless I was just talking with people about what we had all seen that day on tv then, I might mention it, but I'm not to the place yet where I will just bring it up. I'm not evangelistic like alot of people.

A discussion then ensued about the quality and content of conventional television. R35 is asked if she watches very much televsiion and what she thinks of it.

"...I watch alot of television, alot of junk, and I think there is alot of junk on television. Everybody I know watched Dynasty last night. I think that's junk and I watched it anyway, and I'll continue to watch it. I think that the kids' programs are a disgrace, but nursury rhymes are also violent. I watch soap operas in the afternoon, and that is junk. I watch the news, and you don't even know if it is true. [Is the news on the 700 Club better?] Sometimes the news-news is slanted...according to who is putting it out. Up until just a couple of years ago, I would have just said that

I didn't think the United States government ever did anything wrong, and I don't feel that way anymore. I really do think that the CIA has done wrong. I always felt that you believe in God and Country...I don't feel that way anymore. I think that the news is slanted that way [supports the government]...now Pat Robertson, I had the feeling he is for Ronald Reagan, and I'm not this year. Now you have your own feelings and I don't think anyone can say anything and not have their own feelings come through...when I say they 'frame the news' I mean that if you leave out a little something and you don't say the beginning part that person did say that, but you didn't show them saying this part first, I mean if you just switch channels you can see that...the same story told by two different people. Now with the Middle East, I think it [the Club] is not slanted. [You think then that network news is Pro-government?] I think yeah, you get whatever the government gives out don't you think that is what the news gets? [I do, yes] [How do you feel about films and movies?] ..what do you mean, violence and sex?... I used to go to films more. Now don't get me wrong. I'm not a prude, by any stretch of the imagination. I don't think some of it is necessary, and it does not do anything for me. I went to see Deep Throat, and I was stunned, but I went to say that I went. I will never go again. We just went to a film and it had a part where the girl was nude at the top, and I said 'that's just ridiculous, unnecessary' they just put that in for effect. I don't think I have as much trouble with violence. My husband loves that, like Charles Bronson and all. I don't think that just because you see violence in movies or on tv that you'll be violent. If you have a kid who has a tendency, then that might happen, and you want to be careful, but...[How would you feel about your daughter going to see Deep Throat?] ...she's thirty two years old. She probably has. Is that what you mean?...I believe in sex education. Young. Because as a child I never had it in school and felt I needed it. I favored it when the teachers ask about it for my son who was in first grade. I had forgotten I said that one time and he came home, and this homework which was 'seven methods of birth control,' and I was startled, but I was in favor of it. Now I don't think he should have seen Deep Throat in sixth grade, but as an adult, why not. I would hate it if they made a practice of it. And I feel very offended

that down int he shopping center here there is a theater that shows X-rated films, right here in Exton Mall, and I was stunned."

"Do you think it is important for Christians to know things like that, to know what's happening in the world?"

"I don't think you can insulate yourself and just say 'here's all the good people, we're all good' and everybody out here they do terrible things. How do you know they're doing terrible things unless you're out there yourself. Now, like I said, you don't have to stay. As far as pornography, it shouldn't be around, and child pornography, I don't favor it. But you can't get too upset. Like I found Playboy under my kids' beds. I think all kids are curious, and do it. When Hustler came out, my nineteen year old had that and it was open on the bed and it was disgusting, and I said, 'this offends me,' as a woman, and as your mother I am telling you I don't want you to have that in the house." R35 is the most liberal of all the respondents

interviewed. Her attitudes about "the world" and about sex are unique in this sample. The fact that she has recently become "born again" may mean that over time she will become more conservative in these matters, (the social pressure would certainly be in that direction). She is conscious of the norms of Christianity, at least evangelical Christianity. Yet, on "social issues" such as the nuclear freeze and abortion, she feels free to differ from Pat Robertson. Whether she will continue to differ with contacts at her place of worship is another matter.

Respondent 36

Respondent number 36 is a Black man of 38. He is

divorced, but his daughter lives with him about half the time. He lives in a working-class neighborhood in the western suburbs, in a frame house. The decor is nice, but reflects at least several years of neglect in cleaning and maintenance. R36 is on full disability from his job, and, in terms of worldview, is very similar to the other single, male disabled respondent (R29). The disability is not the focus of his concern, and did not turn out to be a salient factor in his recent involvement in religion, as was the case with R20.

R36 expresses an interesting type of religiosity. He does not describe himself as a particularly religious person, and has little involvement in formal religiosity. Only in recent months, subsequent to his beginning to watch religious TV, has he come to attend church and engage in other activities frequently.

R36 expresses a great deal of confidence in most social institutions, with the exception of the press and television (which he rates the lowest of all.) He voted in the 1980 election, and would consider himself a liberal, though his initial answer was "conservative" and was changed. He opposes the death penalty, tougher laws on Pornography ("...I mean, to each his own, ok?")and abortion. He favors a

nuclear freeze. He does not fear violence, and feels that premarital sex is not wrong at all. ("Its up to the person, really.") He feels that extramarital sex and homosexual sex are wrong.

His health condition, the one that has him disabled is a work-related injury to his neck, and has had him hospitalized several times over the past few years, including one stint of a month in bed very recently. He feels you can't be too careful with people. On the women's roles questions, he feels that women are not necessarily happiest when they are taking care of a family, but feels that they should not work outside the home if a husband can support the family.

He reads the Bible only "sometimes," but prays "frequently." He takes the literalist position on the Bible. he believes in the second coming, and that it will occur in his lifetime. He has has a religious experience, and would describe himself as "born again." He has experienced physical healing through faith and prayer. He is favorable toward speaking in tongues. He attends church only once a month. His attendance has decreased, partly because of health. His contribution to his church has remained the same.

He regards religion as being "very important" in his



life. He feels that minorities get less than their fair share of resources.

He watches eight hours of television a day. He feels that this is largely the result of being home with his disability.

He watches religious television "frequently." He regularly watches PTL, the 700 Club, Jimmy Swaggart, and Fred Price. He feels that his viewing has dropped off. He contributes only to the Club but not to the others. He sends \$25 per month to the program. His contribution has increased over the past year. He has called the Club about twenty times. He calls for prayer, or when he has problems. He has also called one of the radio programs "from Texas" as well. He usually watches alone.

He would classify himself as a pentecostal since he goes to a pentecostal church, the Grace Bible Church in Wallingford. He feels close to other members. He is a former Catholic, and attended Catholic schools, as well. He is divorced. He has cable.

His story of watching the program is that he had watched it from time to time "...just watching, you know" but that he had had a religious experience as a result of it recently.

"...since I became Born again, I was watching it on Christmas eve and I had an experience, and then I just

started watching it all the time. [You became born-again as a result of watching the show?] Oh, yes... [When was that?...] December 24, 1982...I had seen it before, but I had never really followed it. They were saying the sinner's prayer, my hand had just hit the button and they were there saying the sinner's prayer, and it was a mistake, really, I hadn't planned on watching it.... [And you continued to watch the show? --he does not continue the story-- What do you like about the program?] I like the all around presentation of the show, I like to see about all kinds of people's problems...they'll give you the hope that it can happen to you, too. I also watch Jimmy Swaggart, I have been "back-sliding" a little bit as they say, because I was...that experience I had on Christmas eve, I was healed of everything in an instant. [What were you healed of?] ...that's why I say I'm backsliding. I was healed of smoking cigarettes, alcohol, drinking, in a matter of seconds, it went away, just like that...I've never went back to drinking but I do smoke. [He smokes during the interview.]

R36 is wearing a neck brace, which is the result of his work disability. he reports that he has asked for prayer for his neck through the Club, but, interestingly, not at his local church. He is asked to compare the Club with PTL.

"...they both have the same goals, to bring more people to Jesus Christ and teach them the word...and I don't understand how they're different, I don't think they are, because they both have the goal of bringing people to Christ. I don't understand why they're not together, why religious organizations don't join together, I think they could do it better, if thjey were together, instread of 'this guy's got this money coming in and this guy's got that.' But they're not. [R36 is unique in his feeling this way, at least in verbalizing it. All other R's see very clear differences and distinctions between the two programs.] The fact that they're not together is the only way I can see that they differ. [Why are you a member of CBN and not PTL?] ...I couldn't afford both, and I got save by the 700 Club...that's a good question, I had contributed to

both, but with child support, I couldn't afford them both, so I figured, why continue to support both.... But I give to other charities, and couldn't keep up with all of them. I still give to Christian Children's Fund, where you adopt a child overseas, and to World Vision, to feed the hungry. Just to watch people starving to death is unreal, when you have so much....

R36 was then asked to go through his faith history, from being a Catholic to being "born again." He describes his Catholicism as something imposed on him because he went to Catholic schools, and that he just did. After high school he fell away from church altogether.

"...up to '82, I never went to any church, at all, I never even read the Bible, up until the time I became born again...at that time, I had a feeling to just go out and, well, I talked to a counselor [a CBN phone counselor] and they said I should go around and find a church I could be comfortable with, and everything...I went around to all denominations, I would say, and the differences...well, I didn't go to the Catholic Church, because after reading the Bible, there are so many discrepancies that they have...like confessions, and I know the only one you should confess to is Jesus Christ, to God, and not to a man. So there were so many fallacies I saw. I went for twelve years to Catholic church and never had to read the Bible, so that made me not really consider them. The counselor said she'd recommend no denomination, that I should go out myself and try a bunch of them...visit different churches...this church in Wallingford, I really got involved, the pastor was so friendly, he called me up after the first time, and came by and talked to me. The reason I went there in the first place is that my daughter was going to Bible study there, and I said to myself, my daughter is going to Bible study there, and I don't even know where she's going. So I went to visit, and I really liked it. [How did your daughter start going there?] ...they used to have a summer program where they'd come over and pick up the kids for two weeks and take them to Bible study for two hours. Then

the rest of the time they'd take them once a week. I thought that was great because Wallingford is a real rich neighborhood, and I thought it was great the program they had because they'd come into the community...and pick up the kids....We've got churches right here in our own community that won't even do that, and I thought that was something special....Plus I saw the word of God, the pastor asked me to join, to become a member...but when I became 'born again,' then I knew I was ready...I knew that since I've backslid a bit, that I wanted to be really ready before I joined for real. There's no use playing around with Jesus Christ unless you're ready to go all the way. [So you haven't been Baptised there yet?] No, not until I'm ready.

R36's self-reported sudden experience is surprising, and leads the the interviewer to speculate that there was some sense in which R36 was always "ready" for this sort of experience, that it was not, in fact, as sudden as all that. He was asked if he thought very much about the Bible or God in between when I stopped going to church as a youth, and had this experience.

"...It was in the back of my mind, all the time. I never talked to anybody about it, but it was always in the back of my mind, I always prayed...even now, I always prayed...I never just took it for granted. I always believed that there WAS a Jesus Christ, and there was a God, you know...my grandma, she was a Jehovah's Witness, and she used to bug me to death, and I'd say 'hey, when I'm ready, I'll...' Nobody, can make you go to church, I was even against the church at one time, I didn't want to hear that stuff, and most people don't...now when I tell people the words, they don't want to hear that, they thought I was crazy...they knew what kind of guy I was, my friends, and I had this experience, and as a matter of fact, I was hurt from work when I had this experience, and I went back to work, and I was preaching the word to everybody, and they'd say 'what's going on here'...but they knew what kind of guy I was, and they

saw all of my bad habits go away...its like i wasn't playing with them, because they were my friends...I couldn't even believe it myself. I shocked myself. But I knew what had happened to me as I got stronger in the faith, I knew what had happened to me.

R36 was then asked to recall what had happened when he began to talk about the program to people at church. He responds that he did not discuss the program with anyone at church right away, but that he had had a conversation about it with the pastor recently.

"...I did tell the pastor when he came to visit me, and he was amazed. He asked me to come to church and get in front of the congregation and tell them, what I had to say...a couple of persons have asked me to tell my experience to meetings, but I don't. People don't want to hear it from you, they'll run from the word. Now I was like that until that night, and I think the Lord knew I was ready that night. Thats the reason I had that experience. [If you hadn't seen the program before you had that experience, would you have known what was happening to you?] I didn't know what was happening to me, then. I think I was seeking, though, seeking the Lord. And the Lord knew it. When I had that experience...they guy was saying 'hey, do you want to be saved, then say the sinner's prayer along with us,' and I said it and meant it, and that's when it happened to me. [Before your experience, would you have known that you were seeking?] ..no, I didn't even know what happened to me AFTER. I didn't know what 'born again' meant, I was just shocked. I just sat there and cried for fifteen minutes, and then I found myself sitting there talking to them on the telephone...I didn't even know what had happened. The lady on the phone was who explained to me that I had given my life to Christ and that I was now a new person. I was, I seen it...I was healed of drinking, and cigarettes in an instant and it was unbeleivable, and some other things, too, it was fantastic. [Would the other programs have the potential to do the same thing?] ...Oh, yes, I went to see one of the radio preachers a couple of times, when he came to

Philadelphia. [Did you ever go to visit the 700 Club? ...No, I've been invited a couple of times to their banquets here, and I have been down to Georgia, and could've gone, but the devil stays busy. I want to go to Virginia Beach and to PTL. The guy across the street just came back from there this Summer, and he said it was beautiful.

R36 is asked then who he will talk to about the program.

He reveals that he talks regularly to people at church about the program, particularly if there is a special or something on.

He was then asked about his parents' religious background. Were his parents religious people?

"...my mother was a Catholic, still is. [What does she think about your experience?] She can't believe it, I mean no one knows more about me over the years than she does. She can't believe it. My brothers, couldn't believe it either. One of them, in Phoenix, says 'if it could happen to you, it could happen to me,' and he has alot of problems himself...it was so unbelievable, that the Lord told me to go to Phoenix to talk to him and show him. I had just got back to work, but I still had two weeks vacation coming, and I called the airlines to check on costs, and I said there's no way in the world I can afford to go. It was \$800. I didn't have the money. About a week later, I got a call that I can go for \$200 and my daughter could go free. I had vacation coming, and it was unbelievable and perfect. My boss thought I was crazy because I had just come back to work from this injury. I took ten days and went and talked to my brother. Just gradually, it got to him that I had changed. We used to party all the time, to go to bars. And he wanted to do that, and I wouldn't. I tolkd him that bars have nothing for me. I used to raise some cain before I got born again, and that is one of the things I've gotten out of, and I wouldn't go back into it. I've come back to cigarettes and small things, but I've basically made the change. My brother is on the way, but it will take time.

He was asked if his home life was religious, if there was prayer or Bible reading at home. He reported that there was not. His father had 'no religion.' He joined the Jehovah's Witnesses about ten years ago.

The the discussion went to whether the 700 Club hurts local churches because people will watch instead of going to church.

"...I know it is true in some cases because I know I had done it...I didn't feel like going to church, and I stayed in my home, even though the Bible says you should go to church. I think that it is all the word of God, whether it comes from church, or from TV. And then, older people, who can't get out, they can benefit from the television. [Is the success of 700 Club due to the fact that regular churches are failing in some way?] ...uh huh, I mean, that is a tough question. I think that if you read the Bible, and you've gotta be born again, but if you read the Bible, people see what's wrong with their churches. People stop going, or they go to new churches that come along. I remember when I went to Catholic church as a kid, there were packed houses at every service. Now you go and there is just a handful, so that's definitely, and people have fallen out of church and over to other churches. [What is wrong, what are the reasons people are dissatisfied?] I think that if a person does read the Bible, if they see what the churches are teaching, the teachings are wrong...I think if you're a Christian, if you believe you're a Christian, then there is no reason for you to keep on going to that church. If it's not teaching what the church says...that is the bad thing. So many people believe that they are going to heaven just by going to church every Sunday and putting their money in, and that is wrong.

"Aside from what you know in your own life, which is obvious, how do you know that someone like Pat Robertson is

doing good work?"

"...you can see it. If you read the Bible, you can see the things he does. He is going to all the world to minister, that is what he is doing. If its not him going, its someone else. They've got cable TV all over the world. People couldn't even see it before and now its coming right into their homes, and stuff. And their ministering the word, because every city has people going out and doing charity work, and coming into homes and praying. I know I had called for guidance, and they sent a pastor right into my home. I mean, I know my money is not jsut going to be thrown away...I've used it myself, many times. They send you tapes about the word, and literature, so you know that...i can say I know the 700 Club is not just taking money and throwing it away. Like PTL, maybe some of the programs [projects] they've got are alright, but they got all those hotels, and this and that and the city, and I think they should be giving monye to starving people...they're starving to death. Instead of building cities and... thats not what it is all about. You can see the program on TV, why would you waant to ask people to come down and visit a city and spend their money on that when it should be going to starving people? I mean, there are people starving every day...right in the US. And there are thousands and thousands of people dying overseas. [Alot of people criticizew the PTL Club more than they do the 700 Club because of Tammy Bakker. What do you think of her?] ...well, thats a tough question...I don't like to judge people to tell you the truth. She knows what she's doing. She's got to answer to God for herself, so I don't like to judge people. She is extravigant, with jewelry and all, but its not for me to judge people. [Would she give the wrong impression to people who really don't know what she's like?] Thats definitely it. People always want to judge a person for what they look like, not what they are. Nobody really knows what she spends her money for. They explained one day on there, that she sells her own records, and she speaks around the country, and she makes her own money. Its like me, I can spedn my own money."

He was asked to describe what difference he saw between Swaggart and Robertson.



"...those are two different programs, they're two different people there. You see Swaggart speaks the word, from the Bible. Pat Robertson's program, I mean he prays and all, but it is a totally different format. Pat Robertson, he has a program that is showing people that this is going on in the world. Showing them different situations that have happened, trying to show people that no matter how far you go down, you can always come back up. There's always a way. Jimmy Swaggart is a preacher, which Pat Robertson doesn't profess to be...I don't know what his religion is or anything, but Swaggart is a great musician, and has a great ministry. I used to watch Swaggart, but you can't watch everything. Swaggart really turned me on, really motivated me. He was a great preacher. Really inspired me." [What do you like most and least about the 700 Club?] "I like the prayer, and where people call in and they're saying someone is being healed of this and of that, and they go back months later and re-create the scene and show that someone really was healed, and that is the best part about it. There isn't anything I don't like about it. [What about the news and information?] I think that it is a unique show...if there were too much preaching, and not enough showing of what is going on in the world, the show would be worse."

R36 was asked to reflect on what happens when he and Pat disagree about something. For instance, it is pointed out to him that they probably don't see eye to eye about pornography laws. How does he resolve such conflicts?

"...I guess I'm a very liberal person. I say, 'to each his own..if you want to go watch that stuff, even though you know what the Bible says about it, who am I to judge a person and tell them that that is wrong? Pat Robertson is there to do that, to encourage people not to do those things, like that is his job. I've got a job I go to everyday, and that is his...to stop abortions, pornography, adultery, and all, but that is not for me to do."

R36 is on full disability, as was said earlier, and has

been injured several times. He does wish to return to work, because he feels better when he is working. He is unique for his liberalism, for his "loose" association with his church, and for the quality of his religious experience. The fact that he feels that he was born again as a result of the 700 Club makes him the only one who can say that they credit the program itself with such an effect. R35 also feels that the club helped her in her faith and through her problems, but saw the experience as more involved, brought about by the intervention of her nephew, friends, and the program. R36, instead, feels that he accidentally saw the program, and became born again as a result, without such intervention. He feels that he is backsliding and that he may need to try harder to actually be worthy of his new faith. He has not yet joined a local church.

Respondent 40

Mr. and Mrs. R40 are unique in that Mr. R40 is a full time military chaplain. They are in their mid 50's, and have three children, all grown and out of the home. They have three grandchildren. As with all other R's, they each have an important personal story to share, in this case, Mr. R3's bout with terminal cancer (from which he was saved--which he attributes to both radiation therapy and his faith, he does

not clearly state "I wouldn't have been saved by the medical treatment..." or, that "...it was the therapy that saved me." He was, however, put out of the service on full disability, and considers that the Military was expecting him to die. After three years of recuperation, he was declared cured and allowed back in the service.

Mrs. R40 had a serious traffic accident within the last three years, and feels that it was foretold by several friends in dreams, and that she did not die because of the prayer of these same friends. She is also convinced that her husband's healing was the work of God, and that he and she had visions in which this was revealed to them.

The R40's have been evangelical, saved "born again" Christians for a long time. Mr. R40 was in the Navy before college, and met and married Mrs. R40 after his discharge. He was not a religious person before this, but joined her church while they were dating. Mrs. R40 was a member of the Church of God (Cleveland, TN) which is a more conservative, legalistic denomination than the larger Church of God (Anderson, IN). Mr. R40 sees his involvement in this denomination, and his accepting Jesus in one of its local congregations, as the beginning of his faith. He further felt called to the ministry in the denomination, and thus

went to four years of college and three and one-half years of seminary in preparation for that. He joined the chaplain corps for an interesting reason. He finds the legalism and closed-ness of the Church of God too confining, and finds the chaplaincy a way to "...preach the word without the legalistic doctrine...."

This issue of closed-ness versus more universalism is one which we addressed a bit with other R's, especially the r3's. In this case, the issue came up in the discussion of the credibility of various television ministries, specifically that of Tammy Bakker.

The R40's launched into a wide-ranging discussion of their feelings about various of the television ministries in response to probing about Tammy. They were convinced that she is sincere, but that she has psychological problems. "...she is flightly, shallow, showy, brassy, has identity problems." says Mr. R40. "She must be a good person under there, she visits prisons, and all," says Mrs. R40. They see all of the television ministries as benefiting from boredom and stagnation in the conventional churches, and since the Bakker's home church (Assemblies of God) is the fastest-growing one in America, "they must be doing something right." Among those evangelical R's for whom denominational

differentiation is a salient point, there is a real antagonism under the surface concerning modernist religion, particularly the mainline Protestant churches and their ecumenical agencies, such as the NCC. The R40's waste no love on such groups. (The R3's, by contrast, who agree with many of the theological points of the R40's but who belong to a mainline denomination, do not speak that antagonistically of modernism, except in socio-political terms.) It seems that, for fundamentalist or holiness members, the substantive, or doctrinal issues are seen to be the failure of the mainline churches, while for the mainline members who are evangelical, the social stuff is more important.

At any rate, this discernment that there are "dead" and stultified religions in American stretches to other "electronic church" ministries, as far as the R40s are concerned. Robert Schuller is particularly disliked, "...its too show-biz, that's all it is...."[Schuller is a mainline minister, but so is D. James Kennedy, who Mr. R40 likes]"...I don't like to see people building up kingdoms for themselves on earth." [referring to Schuller's 'Crystal Cathedral'] Oral Roberts is also disliked "...does nothing but ask for money, PTL is kind of the same way...Pat does it once a year, and that's it...." When probed a bit more for how they would

explain how people from a holiness tradition [pentacostal fundamentalism] could possibly find Tammy credible, when she dresses so flashy, wears makeup and revealing clothing.

"...Tammy comes from a very closed, holiness background. Its a sociological fact that when people grow up in these holiness churches, they can overdo it when they come out...like Dolly Parton says, 'when you're dirt poor all your life, you promise yourself you'll never do without again.'"

"Was it being on TV that brought Tammy out?"

"No...I don't know when it was, maybe it was working with Pat [Robertson] at CBN that did it. Seeing the whole world out there to be lived in, and seeing all the money they could raise using television."

"What kept you from being like Tammy? Didn't you come from a similar background?"

"...we were more conservative...more legalistic. I think one reason I'm in the military is to be able to preach the word without having to pay attention to petty legalisms. I can just witness to Christ without worrying so much about dogma...We aren't like Tammy because we read scripture differently than she does. She takes grace to be license, we don't...."

Thus, Mr. R40 sees that, while Tammy's reasons for being like she is are functional, sociological, not substantive, his reason for not being like Tammy is substantive. However, he is still not comfortable with this legalism and its ramifications. He tells the story of a friend of theirs who is "...a beautiful Christian," a woman who happens to be blond and "well built." She has no credibility in their home

church because people won't look beyond the surface and see what she is really like. Thus provincialism and legalism get in the way of witness. The R40's are reluctant to lay the same trip on Tammy.

As with nearly all R's, the R40's just happened onto the 700 Club one day in 1972, and have been watching it ever since. They like the program for both the "informational" and "substantive" dimensions of it. Asked "what they like about the program," Mr. R40 responds,

"...the truth, the wisdom, and the work that they do, around the world, as well as in this country."

[Mrs. R40]: "...the spiritual aspect of it, plus they keep you informed of everything that is going on around the world, so you're not getting just one view of it."

[Mr. R40]: "One other thing we felt is that dollar for dollar they were accomplishing more than probably local churches were accomplishing." ["did you find yourself wanting to support that more than you could your local church?"] "...no, it was just in addition. We wanted to see that work go forward because they were reaching people the local churches couldn't reach." [Mrs. R40]: "...we continue to tithe to a local church back home even though we're here, and involved on a military base."

"When you say that the Club can do more than the local church, do you mean that it can reach more people, or do you mean that somehow the quality of what they can do is better than the local church?"

"...I think its both...obviously he can reach more people, because he's satellite and he's worldwide. But I think that the quality is better, too, because in my denomination, which are small churches, and mostly

farmers, and workaday people, and not doctor-lawyer-indian chief, college-professor type, you know, small churches are always struggling, and they don't have the wherewithal to do big things...and the 700 Club can do alot of things a small church can't do, and do them well....[What are you thinking of when you say 'quality' in that sense?] well, I think its the quality of Robertson's teaching, wisdom, his exposure personally to alot of people and alot of events that the poor local pastor somewhere, you know, timbuktu, Iowa, just doesn't get...Robertson is a 'high vis' person in America. He's well educated, his father was a senator, his wife is a representative, he has a law degree from Yale...so its just that, echelon he travels in, is exposure to the things that come back to the local church through the people who watch, and I think that that's the kind of quality you just don't get when you're pastoring a local church...I watched the program when I was a pastor just to inform myself [the news/information stuff is meant here] ..you don't have time to read everything, the newspapers, the magazines, I take three or four religious magazines,...so that kind of quality, the quality also of 'operation blessing,' too, cause the prinicple of multiplication, that translates into power. They're able to feed many more people, cause here again, he got hooked up with these big supply houses of food and he was able to start these big warehouses of food...the little old local church, what's he going to do, he's going to go to the local supermarket and get dented cans...and I think that's quality as well as quantity." [Mrs. R40]: "...I think you take all of the qualities the man has and mix them with the spiritual qualities, and I think that just makes for a well-rounded program."

They were then asked about the balance of the "spiritual" vs "temporal" elements of the program.

"...I think, from my standpoint, that he has changed from what he was ten years ago, and I think there's been an imbalance. Its become a little too much of an informative show, and I'd like to see more of the...Pat used to do more teaching [you mean Bible teaching?] yeah, Bible teaching, and now its more of a travelogue type of thing, with guests marching through.



The R40's were then asked for their faith histories.

[Mr. R40]: "...I came from nowhere, literally, no religious upbringing whatsoever, and I was born again after I got out of the Navy the first time, I was twenty-one at the time, and I had a tremendous experience, my born-again experience was tremendous, it was earth-shattering, it was life changing, dramatic, and from there the process of growth, study of the scripture, prayer, baptism of the holy spirit [speaking in tongues], I then felt the call into the ministry, and started college when I was twenty-eight and then straight through grad school. [what churches have you been affiliated with?] As a young boy, I was packed up by my parents and taken to the neighbors to be taken to a church, that was Church of God, Anderson. My other exposure was to an EUB church occasionally, and then to summer Bible camp occasionally. Then when I got married, I got into the Church of God, Cleveland."

[Mrs. R40]: "...I was born-again at the same time as [husband]. I grew up in the Church of God, though."

Mr. and Mrs. R40 then go into a description of both of their health experiences, his cancer and her accident, already discussed. "We owe both of our lives to God's intervention," says Mrs. R40.

The R40s were asked to compare different programs, particularly 700 Club and Swaggart, which they watch more regularly, but also PTL with which they are familiar, but which they do not watch frequently.

[Swaggart and Robertson] [Mrs. R40]: "...are totally different, though the beliefs are the same. [Mr.]: it's a matter of approach or methodology more than it is real differences, I think. I don't think there's any difference between them theologically, I think it is all methodology. I think they appeal to different audiences. ["how do you think the audiences differ--could you describe them?"] Its hard to say,

because Swaggart doesn't have call-in, he doesn't have guests on his programs...he's more of an evangelist, its more of a crusade-type thing...[Mrs.]: Robertson, he doesn't do that at all, he's not a crusader...I think that, overseas, they do do some...[Mr.]: Swaggart is mostly evangelistic, where Robertson is mostly teaching. [so, do you think the audiences would be radically different?] No, I wouldn't say radically different, no...I'd say there are some differences, but as to whether I could identify those differences...." [how about the 700 Club and the PTL Club?] [Mrs.]: "I don't think they're that similar...[the format is similar, isn't it?] ...well...[Mr.]: ...I think that the PTL is shallower [Mrs. agrees] if that is the kind of definition you're looking for, its shallower, it doesn't have the content that the Club has, its not as informative...they're into a little differnt thing, too, down there...Robertson is into making extreme incursions into the government, into economics, to change a whole system, whereas PTL is not into that, they're into hotels, and other things...Robertson is building Universities, and one of the finest libraries supposedly. [Mrs.]: Its more of an intellectual thing, it think, PTL kind of deals with basic day-to-day problems. They have seminars, like marriage seminars for people who are having problems...they're building a home now for girls who are pregnant that don't want to have abortions."

They were then asked what other media they consume besides religious TV.

[Mr.]: "...I watch the news every night, that's my source of input, I don't have time to read the newspaper. I watch the evening news, local and national. I watch CNN news...I like to watch documentaries, historical or political, I will probably watch the [presidential] debate though I think its an exercise in futility, and I like to watch old westerns. [Mrs.]: I watch whatever he watches, and nothing much else."

"Who do you talk to about these programs?"

"...our people in the chapel, in our Bible study, they

watch them, too. I encourage them to watch...I deal with a lot of new Christians, people who've been converted through my ministry and I turn them onto the program, especially the ladies. Its a good source of learning." [do you talk with the other chaplains here about it?] "...one of my chaplains, one who is where I'm at theologically, he watches and we talk about it. Two of the other chaplains, who do not watch or are not in the same place theologically that I am, we really have very little in common." [Mrs.]: "...I listen to religion on radio more than I do watch television...there's a whole list I listen to regularly. [who do you talk to about the programs?] [Mr. interrupts] "...we have a team ministry, so she sees many of the same people I do..." [Mrs.]: "...these are Navy wives primarily...there are a few young girls who are in...." [what magazines do you subscribe to] "...Christianity Today, Fundamentalist Journal, Ministries, Leadership, Christian Woman, Bon Appetit, Consumer Reports, Prevention, Reader's Digest, Guidposts."

They were then asked if there is anything about the 700 Club that they disagree with.

[Mrs.]: "...one time they had on, a long time ago, some kind of dancers...." [Mr.]: "...well, they had on there Marilyn McCoo. Some of the people they choose to have on there we have some real questions about where they're at because of the lifestyle they live in the world. Marilyn McCoo is on that Solid Gold show and

comes on the Club and talks about how much she loves God, and yet I think that's a ribald show, Solid Gold, people up there half nude going through all kinds of contortions. We have questions about that, and I think the reason they do that is that, you know, they've got so many slots to fill up that they sometimes bring people on who, you know...yet they need to be more selective, and anyone who marches through claiming to be a Christian...definition and view of Christianity is not as broad as alot of peoples'....[to Mrs.--"and you saw one time a dance routine?"] "...yeah supposedly, some kind of religious dance they were supposedly doing on there. Ballet, it was supposed to be an expression of religion of some kind. [do you approve of dancing?]  
 [Mr.]: I don't approve or disapprove...I don't do it because I don't dance. Certainly in the tenets of our church its not to be done...but I don't agree with all the tenets of my church, but I think if a guy's gonna dance he ought to dance with his own wife, not with somebody else's...I don't want anyone dancing with mine...I think that's just plain sinful." [Mrs.]: "In a class I took in sociology, in college, they said that dancing and drinking are the two worst things you can add to a marriage."

"Do you every disagree with anything theologically that you see in the program?"

[Mr.]: "...I don't think anything major...one of the most difficult things about being a preacher or a teacher is that you don't ever agree with everything...but if there were anything major I'd withhold my funds, I wouldn't continue to support him."

The discussion of Tammy, referred to above ensued here, followed by a direct question of whether they thought the electronic church hurt the local church. The general antagonism of these R's to mainline churches came out clearly in their response.

"...on the contrary, I think religious television helps

the local church. You've gotta divide that up though between the mainline denominations that were grasping at straws and dying anyway and the strong evangelical movement...now those people are losing, but they were losing to start with. In fact, there was a study that was just done, it was in Christianity Today, I think that even Annenberg did it, didn't you?...it came out to the contrary...in fact it supported the local church, it turned people onto God and made them stewards of their money and they went back and became stronger in local churches...now the ones who were hurting if I remember, the mainlin denominations were hurting...but they were hurting anyway." [so you think the problem, in the case of the mainline denominations, is deeper than the electric church?] [Mrs.]: "...Oh, definitely, you walk into some of the mainline churches and people will sit there and fall asleep, they're bored. I mean, they'll give you a movie review and give you this, and give you that instead of the Gospel."

Respondent 45

Respondent R45 is a woman of about 67 years of age. She is married, though her husband does not like religious television, and does not watch with her. They have only been married twenty years, and have no children. Mr. R45 is not physically well. He appears to be fairly feeble. R45 is in good health (excellent, she says). They would appear to be mid-middle class, living in a clean, single-family home in Northeast Philadelphia. Both of the R45's were employed in white-collar professions before retirement, and they seem to live comfortably.

R45 is a devout Presbyterian, but was raised Lutheran. She reports that her family was very religious as she grew

up, though she does not appear to have been raised in a fundamentalist or evangelical household. She has not had a religious experience, and would not describe herself as having been born again. Religion is very important to her.

Her social attitudes are fairly conservative, though she types herself as a moderate. She disagrees that a woman should not work outside the home if her husband can support the family. She thinks minorities get more than their fair share of resources.

She reads the Bible frequently, and prays "constantly." She does not exhibit any of the classic evangelical discourse dimensions, such as "hoping for Jesus to come tomorrow," which has been common with some R's. She expects Jesus' return in her lifetime. She believes in faithhealing, but it is not a major motivation for her. She has no opinion about speaking in tongues. She attends her church frequently, and takes part in non-worship activities frequently. Her contribution to her church has decreased, as she has recently retired.

She is one of the most truthful and positive television-viewers interviewed. She estimates her daily viewing of all television at seven hours. She watches a great number of religious programs, and, like R53, seems

almost to view religion as a sort of "entertainment." When asked what she views, she says,

"...Jimmy Swaggart, he gives you an interesting, a more instructive show...the 700 Club, I do watch that if they have something interesting or I switch off, now they have more money drives, they've had a money drive the last couple of weeks, so you get fed up with that and switch it off. Then they have topical shows, often, interviews, or maybe historical things...I used to watch Thea Jones, but he's off, now. Of course, if I'm home on Sunday, I watch Jerry Falwell...different ones, I like to just turn on different ones because they give you the whole thing, you know, even some of the wild ones, like Portee, and Bakker's I put them on this morning, and they're still asking for money. You get a little tired of the money stuff...."

She sends money to the 700 Club, for projects dealing with children. She id send money to Thea Jones once. She is the first R to indicate that the primary contact she has had through the mail or by telephone, has been initiated by the broadcasters themselves, and that the contact had a political motive. Apparently, both Falwell and the Club have organized school-prayer campaigns within the past year, and both have contacted R45 for her support, by writing her senators. She did write.

She began viewing the program just by happening on it. The guests attracted her the most. She used to watch twice a day, but since it is not on that much anymore, she cannot see very much of it.

In describing her religious background, R45 is again

non-evangelical in her discourse.

"...of course, we all went to Sunday School and Bible class and then it was just the thing we were supposed to do. As you got older it was more and more interesting at least it was to me...I was just starting to learn...there were so many things that you thought you understood before, that you don't really understand until later."

She continued to go to church all her life, and to be actively involved in her church as a volunteer. She changed from a Lutheran to a Presbyterian church when she married, because her husband did not want to change. The change was comfortable for her because "...the Presbyterian church supports things like a home for retarded children. I am most interested in things which help children." She also found the new church comfortable because the style of worship was similar to that she was familiar with from the Lutheran Church of her youth, a liturgy which was changed along the way, and she was never fully comfortable with the change.

She was then asked to describe how the various programs she watches differ.

"...the other programs have mostly music [besides Swaggart and the Club] spiritual, southern spiritual, Baptist, mostly spiritual content, which is alright, but I like to hear the sort of information they can bring you instead, studies of current events that are connected with things in the Bible and things like that....The 700 Club, sometimes they'll have on a whole lot of people who've been healed and like that, and they come on and tell their stories...sometimes the same people they had on six months before. Swaggart does a



discussion from letters, he has a format where its just he and his wife and she'll read a letter to him and he pretends to...he'll start with a hymn or a song that he sings himself the show doesn't get into big abstract things, you know, its very personal, and tries to explain questions and answers that come in from the audience. And the last couple of weeks he was taking a trip to the Holy Land which was very interesting, and he showed pictures...very interesting. He has to occasionally ask for money. But, on the whole he has a more personal touch to him." [the kind of teaching he does, is it something new to you, or did you encounter that sort of thing before in your life, in your church, or somewhere else--meaning, is it unique, and thus a gratification?] "...no, I mean, well, it is the kind of teaching you get in Sunday School, that's different." [is he better than Sunday School?] "...I wouldn't say that, but on the whole he is on a good level for most people to understand."

"What about the 700 Club?"

The 700 Club is a good variety of things. There's news, and then some Bible teaching, and all of those reports from around the world. Its on the up side of things, and I like that. It could be depressing, they have alot of guests who could be really depressing, but its on the up side and never gets too depressing for me...lots of information--they go in spirits, though, sometimes the interviews are the same old thing. It is a current, up-to-date show, though, like they cover Lebanon, its a good place to get that sort of information...."

"You say that you occasionally watch some of the 'wild' shows. Tell me what you mean by 'wild' shows?"

"...I mean jumping around, healing, strange things that people do and say on some of them, I watch for the sake of seeing what they do...Portee, he says its ok for him to have all of those fine clothes, and things, and people believe him...I watch them anyway [she even sent money to one of them, Thea Jones]... I think I mean they are more 'showmen' than anything else but I watch some of them anyway." [thinking about the Club, now, do you think it is well-balanced between the informational

or news stuff, and the spiritual material?] "Yes, it is ok, but it used to be better, there used to be more teaching, but recently they've put more interviews and things on...now PTL, they've stayed with prayer and preaching, but they really don't do anything for you, and they're always asking for money."

"Do you think it is a real problem for the local churches that there's this much religious broadcasting on? Some people say that religious broadcasts hurt local churches because they take members and contributions away. Do you think that is true?"

"No, I really don't think so, people have lots of reasons for not going to church, and religious television isn't really a good one. People would do the same thing [not go to church]...whether they're in a local church or not, they'd use it for an excuse...some churches are failing, though, like a friend of mine whose daughter was in a cult, the minister could have talked to her, but he just said, 'put everything in the hands of God,' and he should have done something. [are there alot of churches and pastors like that?] ...well, I don't know about that, there are some, but at the same time, some people may expect too much, you know, rather than from themselves, they expect too much from somebody else."

Asked to talk about what she does and does not like about conventional television, R45 responds,

"...most of it is just fair. Alot is not too great...I'm not great on car races, shooting and stuff. The violence is really bad...I like mysteries and comedies...but most stuff is noisy and confusing. Alot of that has to do with the time of day things are on. Even David Letterman has improved, its funnier humor now. He could do the same things in the morning and they wouldn't be nearly as funny, but when they're on at night, he's real humorous. I like him alot. Timing is very important, the time of day things are on."

Does she talk to anyone about the program?

"Yeah, I do sometimes. If I think it will help them. When the 700 Club did a series on Nicaragua, I recommended it to people who were keeping some Nicaraguan missionaries to help them understand that situation better...alot of people don't know about the 700 Club, if they haven't tuned it in, they've been advertising on KYW, on the radio, that should help. [would it be possible to get people to understand the program and to watch it just by describing it to them, or would they have to watch it first to understand what it was really about?] ...I think they'd have to watch it first."

R45 has not been to any other events scheduled by the Club in this area--dinners, etc.

She was then asked if there was ever anything that made her uncomfortable about the programs. She responded that there was not. She was then asked what she thought of Tammy Bakker.

"...well, the first time I saw her, she looked like she should be on Broadway [this does not appear to be a compliment, or intended as a positive statement.] or something, you know...mostly its that she's there to give that impression. ..that's what I thought. You saw the article in the paper about them...well they had another group on there this morning, asking for money...I mean, you wonder, you really wonder. I look on that Portee as another one, I mean he has all those clothes and those Cadillacs...he's a child of God [he claims] he should always have the best. That's his excuse, and I think Tammy is the same way... I mean its ok to a certain limit, but it can get to far. [who do you think watches PTL compared to who watch the 700 Club?] I haven't ever heard anyone talk about PTL so I don't know who watches it. It seems like every time I see it, they're almost on the verge of tears, they're out of funds...and they never seem to have anybody else on...occasionally they have another guest to help them cry a little bit."

"Do you talk with other people at your church about these programs?" "Oh, a couple of times, but not to any great degree." [What do you think they'd think if you did?]

"...they're sort of, their minds are already set, they think

they know everything, you know..." Do you ever talk to you pastor about it?"

"...oh, I asked him on Sunday, I told him that I was going to be in this research, and he said he was familiar with the study, and that he had already seen a report this thick [indicates about two inches with her fingers] ..so I said, 'good, you can give me an opinion to relay,' and he and he said, 'I never watch religious television, so I have no opinion.'"

Finally, R45 was asked if she believed there is a religious revival under way in America.

"That's another thing that goes from one extreme to the other. For people who sort of had that in their background, might be more...thinking that way now, than they did for awhile...others that weren't interested to start with, it wouldn't phase them anyway...if you have it in your background, that's the thing, it'll crop up again, when things get questionable...anytime that things are changing, and it bothers people, then they come out when there's an aberration of events again. [what kind of changes are you talking about] Historical conditions, alot of countries are changing their economic systems, and you 've got alot of poverty...I think there's more interest in the poor now than ever and there's more interest in betterment...." [why did you start contributing to the 700 Club?] "They were going to build a satellite station to reach all around the world, and they did that, didn't they?"

R45 is unique for her lack of evangelical-pentacostal zeal and patois. She expresses little of the usual interest in the substantive nature of the programming, but is interested in it as "teaching" on the theological side, and interested in some social dimensions, but sees it as a type of entertainment, almost. She is also quite cynical about the motivations of the programs she does not like.

She is very critical of the fundraising on the programs, but yet is a regular contributor to the 700 Club and to Swaggart.

Respondent 46

R46 is a woman of 56 years in age. She is semi-retired due to a serious traffic accident about six months ago. Prior to that, she worked for the city as a secretary in one of the prisons. The most significant thing about her is the fact that her youngest child (of three), a son, suffers from a very rare and debilitating birth defect that might have been corrected when he was younger if the R46's had known therapy was available. Now realizing that he missed a chance for a normal life, the son has developed serious psychological problems as well, and requires nearly constant attention and therapy.

As a result of this ailment in her son, R46 has had fewer outside involvemnts and contacts than she would like, and than other people of her age and class cohort would have. She especially describes a limited involvment in and relationship to church, though she and her family belong to a local church, and the pastor is described as having been very helpful to the son on occasion.

"...we have a disabled son, and it really ties us down socially, and every other way...."

Still, nearly all the motivations and descriptions of R46's use of religious television revolve around the fact that it is simply more convenient for her to satisfy her tastes for religious experience and religious involvement by watching religious television than it is for her to go out to church or other settings. In this way, R46 is one of two bona fide examples of viewers who view this program simply because they are home-bound in some way, though in spite of this R46 and R31 (the other example) both do get out to church occasionally.

As tends to be the case with other r's, R46 does hold some baseline conservative and fundamentalist views, views which are supported or spoken to by the religious programs she views. She was among the clearest and most forthright in describing how America had suffered from secular humanism and liberalism, and in describing her fears of Communism.

R46's husband is a moderately (judging from their home) successful insurance agent, and other than the disabled son, all children are grown and out of the house.

She really prefers CBN to PTL, but views both.

She expresses much confidence in social institutions, with the exception of press and television. She voted in the 1980 election, and considers herself a conservative. She

opposes the death penalty, favors porn laws, and is somewhat flexible on abortion. She opposes a nuclear freeze, and thinks premarital sex is "wrong only sometimes," but that extramarital is always wrong. Her health is good, she feels that women are not necessarily happiest when at home and can work if they like. She reads the Bible only occasionally, but prays "constantly".

She takes the middle ground on Biblical literalism. She is not sure about Jesus' return to earth. She has had religious experience, but would not describe herself as born again. She believes in miracles, is not sure about tongues, and attends church only "several times a year." Her attendance has increased, recently, as has her contribution to her local place of worship. Religion is very important in her life, however. She believes minorities get their fair share of resources.

She watches between four and five hours of television a day. She watches a good deal of religious television. She watches PTL, 700 Club, Schuller, Falwell, and occasionally others, who she does not name. Her viewing has increased since her accident, and her availability to view. She contributes only to the 700 Club. Her contribution has increased in the past year. She has only called once or

twice, for prayer for herself and her son. Others also called for prayer for her, when she was in the accident, she reports. She usually watches religious television with her husband. She and her husband are Presbyterian, and have been all their lives. They don't feel very close to other members, since they cannot attend very frequently. Both were Presbyterians as children, and she reports that they met through the church, through an active social program for youth that the church ran during the war.

She as attended technical school after high school. They do not have cable television in the home.

R46 says she started watching the Club because she is a night owl and it used to come on at 12:30 am and she would watch it in bed. Schuller, she watches because she can't get to church. "...so I can have a church, religious experience on Sunday...." She first watched Schuller and the Club just by "happening on them." No one told her about them. She compares CBN PTL this way.

"...well, I like the 700 Club better because they, PTL spends too much time asking for money, really...CBN is more rounded, bringing in all the news from around the world, conflicts, economics, Pat Robertson even has a way of making these things understandable to me...economics has never been easy for me, but he gets out his charts...and he combines the religion in very nicely, he has personal experiences, people who've had healings. [How would you compare the kind of person who would be attracted to each of these programs?] "...I



think a fundamentalist would be attracted to PTL. To CBN it would be people who like to keep up with what's going on in the world, with the Christian aspect of the things that are happening all around, and how to deal with them, you get much better education in that way with CBN. People who are, have to be "whipped up" more for PTL, I think. Jim Bakker has a way of shouting every now and then. Bakker is very sincere, I know he feels how he acts.

In her faith history statement, R46 describes an interesting experience, or set of experiences.

"I started out in a Methodist Church as a child, eight or nine. Every so often we'd have a revival where they'd ask us to come up the aisle, when I was 12 years old I felt that this was the way for me to go. And I had an experience one night, you know when your about that age, you sit out on the front steps, and you look up at the stars and wonder where did it all come from, and how did it all start, and is there really a God, and I looked up and I prayed, 'if there really IS a God, and he had a son Jesus, would you please let me know about it?' And that night, in my...I don't know if I was awake, or in a dream...I would say it was more like a dream, that I saw Christ so plainly, and rays were coming out of his head and all I could see was relay the upper part of him and his hands, with light all around his hands, and my whole body tingled, I mean it tingled, and I awoke and I said what an amazing thing, that was an answer to my prayer, so ever since that I've been a believer in Jesus Christ as a son of God. [did this happen before or after you had gone forward in the revival?] After... 'cause you know its kind of an emotional thing, these revivals...I knew they were emotional, and I went up with my cousin and everything, but afterward you say 'could it really be?' and I had to make sure in my own mind, intellectually, that this could be.

She is philosophical about her son's condition. He was born with all of his organs outside his body. Therapies have been inadequate. A turning point for the worse was a visit

with a famous local pediatrician, who told them that if he had seen the boy earlier, he might have been able to help. The son has developed psychological problems as a consequence. His life has been a series of traumas for them. She does not connect this illness as a faith-building experience for her or the son, and really spoke the same way about her accident, though she reports that prayers of friends helped her overcome that difficulty. She credits these interventions with helping her recover, but she does not make a large matter of this, as do most other respondents.

She was then led to discussion of how religious television affects local churches. It is here that her own experience clouds a bit her assessment of the situation. She takes the question as though it asks only about her own personal situation. She is asked if she thinks that religious broadcasting might harm local churches by getting people to watch instead of attending church, she responds.

"I think that is a valid reason....[is that because churches are failing somehow?] ...I can't blame it on the church because we never really got involved with the people here, in the church. We've lived here for 16 years, we joined right after we moved. We had our membership transferred...but we just never got involved. I can't blame it on the church, or the pastor.... If there's any lack, it would be with us. The minister has been very kind to our son. We don't know anybody, we never got involved with the other members...because we

didn't have time for all the different organizations...and we give less to that church, unfortunately, because we give to CBN, and to faith partners (Falwell's organization)." [do you think your experience is common?] ...its hard to judge, because of our inability to get to church so much because of our son, and our husband has a mother who is in Norristown state hospital, and he visits her every sunday...."

Asked if there is anyone she does not talk to about CBN, she says, that there is not, that she frequently mentions the program to her friends, and coworkers. She would also not be shy about discussing the program with her pastor. What, specifically would she talk to about the program? She responds, "...most of the people I work with are very liberal, and they rely on me for advice, they think of me as a mother image..." "So, you tell them about the program for what reason.?" "Because I think it has good ideas, good advice in it...."

She was then asked about Tammy Bakker.

"I feel the program would be better without her. I think she's too, I think to put it bluntly, she's always 'butting in'...she's probably sincere, but of all the people I've seen on these programs, I would think she's more of an actress...I'm not sure of her sincerity, although I've seen her in tears, talking about God and Jesus, I've seen her in tears, but I still doubt her sincerity."

She reported that there is never really anything about the program that makes her uncomfortable. With this in mind, she was asked if there is anyone she wouldn't talk to about

the program.

"I don't make it a point to say, like 'now I'm going to tell so-and-so about this today, unless they've been having an experience that is similar to someone that they interview, but there is no one I wouldn't talk to if I felt they could relate to anything I had seen. ...I used to watch Jimmy Swaggart, and I enjoyed that very much. He was on, and he's very calm, very sincere, there are no plugs, he'll ask you very quietly at the end, and not every day, if you enjoy it and can be a help to him...he has a really good Bible study...people would send him questions and he would answer them...I really enjoyed that, but he's on at 5:30 inb the morning now." [you've mentioned several elements of programs, like Bible Study, excitement of PTL, etc., thinking back on your childhood, your home church, were these elements there, or are they new?] "CBN is new, to put the Christian aspect on world affairs, on government, that was entirely new to me." [you'd never seen that done before?] "No...we had one minister I can remember who would ever mention government and he would get very excited about it, but he was the only one in all those years."

Do they subscribe to any journals or publications?

"Only Jerry Falwell...he sends us his paper, [goes to look for a copy] we don't subscribe, but he sends it to us, we're not supposed to get it because we haven't given him money in months...what's it called? [ponders for some time] Moral Majority its called, the Moral Majority....[its actually called the Moral Majority Report]"

What does she think about the rest of television and other media?

"I think a good deal of it is written by very liberal, immoral people, even some of the programs...it would be hard to name them, that, oh, what is his name, Aaron... [Aaron Spelling?] ...right, Aaron Spelling, some of the comedies, the weekly things that go on every week, they make extramarital affairs, and sex before marriage an everyday thing like everybody should accept it....and

they present it in a comic situation, a situation that looks like it could be fun and a good deal of these weekly shows I don't like to go for that...." [do you watch many of them?] "No, [chuckle] no, because of that, we watch Channel 12, you know."

Do you watch the news on local and national TV? [yes]

What do you think of that?

"I think it's good as long as they don't try to get their personal points across or personal opinions, such as this current election, if you ask reporters how things are going, I guess they can't help themselves, but now suddenly they have Reagan as being very tottering...they have to build it up, to make things closer, I guess for more excitement...but they're supposed to be reporters of the news, not opinion makers.? [can you think of other examples of where reporters are shaping the news, other than the election?] "...oh foreign affairs, they certainly get their quarter's worth in, nuclear...I've often wondered why we don't have several candidates from the news media running for president."

Does she think there's been a religious revival in the past 20 years?

"...I think there has been...I think that the younger generation is being influenced...I think we've come to the point where we have seen the end results of some of the things that they have thought were OK...abortion, the end result you find trash bins, not little cans, huge trash bins, full of tiny heads and feet, and right there is your end result of an immoral act...we allowed sex before marriage, the end result is that there is a lot more venereal disease...homosexuality, AIDS has come into being, scaring to death...and I think that in the time has elapsed that they've seen the results. There are always consequences for any act, and I think that they will, they are being influenced by this...too much sex." [So you think this revival is happening among the young?] "I think so...what they call the Baby Boom generation, my oldest daughter would be considered a part of her generation... two out of three of this

group are voting for Reagan, I heard this this morning, which is a surprise to the media...[but it is not a surprise to you?]....I would say it is a surprise to me. [and you think that is a result of them realizing these other things you were talking about?] "yes...they were all over the campuses protesting and that...my oldest daughter did that...but when they get out there in the working world, the real world so to speak, away from the liberal intellectual professors, its a different world...I heard one young man say, a young father, that he didn't want Mondale's taxes, he didn't want his nuclear freeze...he was an engineer.

Do you think it is alright for people like Falwell to get involved in politics?

"...I certainly do. The liberals have been vocal for years, and they've been spreading their influence, people like Aaron Spelling, they get onto their with their cute little plays [sneering] and programs and they've been very active for years, and all of a sudden there's a big hullabaloo because the other side is putting in their ideas and influences."

Respondent 47

R47 is a Black woman of about fifty-five. She is married to a doctor, and is a home-maker, though she spends a great deal of her time on volunteer activities, including extensive involvement in the Church Women United (CWU) group, of which she has been the president of the City chapter. CWU is generally considered to be a liberal organization, made up of women from mainline Protestant churches, and has takes such stands officially as pro-ERA, pro-choice on abortion, and pro nuclear freeze. R47 is a bit more conservative than those stands would indicate, though she opposes the death

penalty, favors nuclear freeze, and is pro-choice.

She and her husband live in a co-op apartment complex in an affluent integrated section of the city. There is original art on the walls, and fine furniture. R47 is watching the 700 Club during the interview, and leaves the set on for the duration.

She and her husband have four children, all now married and away from home. Her husband does not view religious television with her, though he does not oppose her involvement in it. They are both members of the mainline American Baptist Church.

She expresses a great deal of confidence in most social institutions, excluding the Government, which she feels she does not know enough about to really say. She is troubled by having to judge "...the people running" the government, when she does not know them. She voted in the 1980 election, and would call herself politically "conservative" (though her individual views on social issues are not consistent with that designation as commonly understood.)

She has no confidence in television, and little in the press.

She feels that premariatal sex is always wrong. She would say her health is excellant. She feels that you "can't

be too careful" in dealing with people.

[Having the Club on in the background of this interview turned out to bring some interesting juxtapositions and ironies. Immediately before the interview progressed to her opinions about pornography, and immediately after she had said that there is too much sex and violence on television, the Club began to hype their next segment which was on "teenage prostitution," including film clips of prostitutes in short skirts on the street plying their trade, and some double-entendre teasers before breaks.]

She feels that women are happiest at home. She reads the Bible frequently and prays frequently. She favors the nuclear freeze, and goes on to share that she participated in a CWU project which made a "peace quilt" to use to wrap around the Pentagon, a demonstration which occurred last year.

She takes the less literalist position on the Bible, believes in the second coming, but is not millenarian. She does not feel that she has ever had a "religious experience" but does feel she is "born again". She believes in miracles, and in faithhealing. Her son has been healed. She is opposed to speaking in tongues. She and her husband attend church weekly, and participate in non-worship activities.



Their contributions to their church have increased in recent years. Overall, religion is very important to her. She feels that minorities get less than their fair share of resources "...as long as there is discrimination. "

She feels that she watches about three hours of television per day. She watches, besides religious television, only the news, and occasionally Donahue or something on public television. She listens to a great deal of religious radio (station WKDN). She watches, besides 700 Club, Swaggart, PTL, Oral Roberts, Robert Schuler, Charles Stanley, and D. James Kennedy. She says she watches more religious television now than she used to, finding that there is more on to see. She has called only once or twice, to 700 Club, and she contributes to the Club and to PTL. She sends about \$50 per month to each, and has not responded to special appeals.

She began watching religious television after she happened on the Club one day, though she reports that she often used to watch Billy Graham and that she was familiar with Sunday Morning programs, though her viewing increased after she started watching the Club. She is the only respondent who specifically mentions a program she does not watch for ideological (not aesthetic) reasons. She does not

watch Bob Jones' program because of his racial attitudes, and avoids Falwell because of his political involvements.

She describes her attraction to Robertson very much in terms of the program's gratifications.

"...Pat Robertson relates today's political life, today's situation with Biblical history. He's good at that, very eloquent...the effects of present history, and that the Bible has something to say." [And Robertson does that more than PTL?] "PTL is my favorite...I like the music, I like the enthusiasm, the outlook, and interpretation of the Bible. It looks on the bright side of life, and that's good to see...they're just so enthusiastic, and they're enjoying what they're doing, so that's enjoyable."

She was then asked to compare those two programs (Club and PTL) to Swaggart.

"...he's sincere, and deep...some of his interpretations are troubling for me. He favors capital punishment" [What do you do when his interpretations bother you? Do you just ignore it?] "It's hard to know what to do...you can't judge a person by that one issue. You're gonna disagree with him, but I enjoy his teaching, and ..my husband teaches Bible study, and he likes Swaggart more than 700 Club." [Why would that be?] "...He wonders about the 700 Club, he's suspicious of what its purpose is...they raise too much money."

"Some people would say that a program like the 700 Club where there are a lot of interviews and all, that it's not as clear that this is a religious program, because there isn't enough prayer, or Bible reading. Could that be your husband's problem, do you know people who feel that way?"

"...I think it is clear because they relate life to the Bible. But I relate it to the body, the body of the

person. There are hands, and feet, and different parts, and each has its purpose. The purpose [of the Club] is different."

Both R47 and her husband were raised in Baptist churches. R47 was baptized at thirteen, and has been active in the church all her life. She raised her children to be Baptists, and all are now devotee, she assures. She and her husband are regular church attenders, and she is actively involved in women's activities, ecumenically, and in her own church.

She was asked to comment on the idea that religious broacasting might be harming the local church by drawing away members and support.

"I don't know whether many people use that [watching religious TV] as an excuse [for not attending church] or not. I'm sure people realize that when they sick and need help the television is not going to come to them....to the shut-in and those in hospitals, those who can't get out, I think it is an excellant replacement. I don't know how many use it as an excuse and don't go to church at all." [You don't think that the programs themselves draw people away from church?]" "No, I don't" [Are regular churches failing, is there something they are failing to do?]" "Oh, definitely. Most of them, I think, they do outreach programs... most of us, though, just do little things within our own little group and not do alot of helping...extending a hand like we should. We turn people away. You go to church and everybody's all dressed up, and there's no encouragement...they don't encourage people who are not dressed to come....They make outsiders feel uncomfortable and out of place. [Would people who've had that kind of negative experience use religious TV instead?]" "...could be." [Do you see these programs as filling any need that the churches are not?]" "...yes, I

think that their teaching is the thing. Our churches don't teach alot. They don't teach...young married couples need to be taught and young parents. There ought to be some way in the church that they could have support. The church doesn't do that, and the programs do. They get together to play cards and like that, but they don't get together to trade information and support through difficult situations. Our young people don't get enough guidance in the church. They get a little, but not enough. When I was young, I would've appreciated having something like this [the program] to help me, but it just wasn't available. Nowadays, women are working, so they aren't home to hear this."

Nothing about the 700 Club makes her uncomfortable. She says she just enjoys them the way they are. The instruction and interpretation. She was then asked about her impressions of Tammy Bakker. She was asked how she responded to the criticism that Tammy wears too much jewelry and makeup.

"...about her jewelry and all...I can understand the criticism, because I felt that at first. But Jim has explained a couple of times, and probably everybody doesn't hear it...that she doesn't worship those things. That's part of her personality, like somebody likes red and somebody likes blue. and she just happens to like jewelry, and I don't think she worships it. She wears alot of makeup and I don't like that, but it doesn't bother me, I've gotten over that, I don't think thats that important. Like the people who wear no makeup, and drab clothes, I don't think the Lord made us to be ugly...to not make ourselves look nice. I have no objection to that. [What would you tell someone who said they were put off by Tammy?] "...the important thing is what they're saying [the Bakkers] and the life they're living. Not what they look like on the outside. I think she's sincere, that she believes what she says, they're honest...."

She was then asked who she will talk to about the program and whether there is anyone who she will not talk to about it.

"...I talk to everyone about it...I have a Jewish friend I haven't talked to, but it just hasn't come up. [What about your pastor?] I haven't talked to him much...I've asked him if he watches it, and he says 'no' and I don't know why...."

She doesn't think much of the rest of television.

"...I don't watch much television, because I don't think much of any of it except the educational programs. I watch the animal programs, and some of the comedy shows that are...I enjoy Webster, and the Jeffersons and Gary Coleman. Three's Company, I'm suspicious of that. And the Soap Operas, sometimes I think that they're the cause of the evil of the world. I used to listen to them on the radio, and I used to get so upset, and my life wasn't anything like what I was seeing there. So I soon had to stop because it affected me so...I'm sure it affects people and they just don't know it, their attitude, outlook, their feelings. They took off Another Life, and that was good, and they took it off. There need to be shows that give strength to people...and television just caters to so much evil."

She was then asked to talk a bit about her feelings about the charismatic movement. She said, during the formal questionnaire, that she opposes speaking in tongues. She was asked how she felt about the attitudes of PTL and the Club to that activity (both favor it.)

"...I know they stand that way, but they don't flaunt that themselves. I disagree with them, but I just don't believe in the tongues. Not for this day and age, I believe that was for then. [Both PTL and CBN are involved in the charismatic movement. How do you feel about that?] "...That part of it they just don't flaunt

it on television. I went to visit PTL, and it was obvious there. I went to a Full Gospel Businessmen's Fellowship, and it was there, too...but on the programs it is just not noticable, not noticable."

Who does R47 think watches the PTL Club?

"...I think people who are concerned and interested in living the Christian liufe, who are serious about their lives...and to get spiritual food." [How about CBN?] "...700 Club is good for their educational outreach, for the young people. To be in the world, and not of the world. [Thinking back, was there any part of your church that did for your parents what this does for you?] "...They didn't have that much of it because there isn't that much of it in church or Sunday School...the churches haven't changed that much, this is an addition. The church hasn't changed as much as it should...they're growing, and thats something, but this is a help." [Is the mission program of the CBN program a competition for the church mission program?] "It should be an inspiration, not a competition." "...people are so hard-hearted. I don't know how they don't want to know I'm wondering if these programs, on in the morning...they're not on in prime-time when people are at home...they should be on then, to give people a chance. I'd like to see a couple of them on at seven or eight in the evening...."

R47 had said that her son had once been healed and she was asked to describe it. It turns out he had ringworm on his head, and where it usually takes this several weeks to heal, she prayed for this healing along with Oral Roberts. This is probably twenty years ago.

#### Respondent 51

Mrs. R51 was interviewed in her home, and was ill at the time. She still agreed to an interview, which lasted about 70 minutes. She did not want to be taped.

R51 is a woman in her fifties.

She expresses less than a great deal of confidence in the people running social institutions (as do all respondents). As with all respondents, she did vote in the 1980 presidential election. (Also like all other R's, she indicates in no sense that this voting behavior is in any way based in her viewing of religious television, or even based in her fundamentalism.) She types herself a conservative, as do all R's, though they all hesitate a bit before answering this one, or argue with the classification before answering. On the question of Capital Punishment, she now thinks "...its ok, though I used to think it was not right...."

She is in favor of tougher pornography laws, opposes legalized abortion, and thinks premarital sex is "always wrong." She considers her health excellent, reads the Bible and Prays frequently, and takes the middle position on Biblical literalism. She does consider herself "born again," but does not think she's had a "religious experience." Other questionnaire questions were skipped, due to shortness of time.

R51 is a full-time homemaker, and her husband is an insurance underwriter. The home is well-furnished, small, and comfortable. Most furniture is new, and the decor does

not include 'Christian kitsch.' She views the 700 Club, Schuller, and Swaggart. She was a member of the United Presbyterian Church as a youth, and changed to the LCA when she was older, and now she and her husband belong to the LCA (a mainline denomination, the least liberal of the Lutheran bodies--but she was very specific about the denomination, something that all R's seem to be able to be.)

Asked how she would compare the Swaggart and 700 Club programs, she compares them in terms of format. "...the format is different, Robertson is news, Swaggart does Bible teaching. [How do you feel about the Club being so devoted to 'news?' Is that a problem for you? Is it out of balance?] ..no, its news from a Christian viewpoint, and that is important. Its unbiased, you see. So much of what you get on television and in magazines is biased."

The comparison of the Club with PTL is easier for her to do. She prefers the Club because of "...Jim and Tammy are so emotionalistic...the guests appeal to me [on PTL]" ["Tell me about the two programs and their attitude about the charismatic movement. People tell me that its obvious where Jim and Tammy stand on speaking in tongues, but it is less obvious where Pat Robertson stands, do you agree?"] "...speaking in tongues is Biblical. No one who reads the



Bible can be 'against speaking in tongues'...it comes through in both programs that the charismatic movement is ok by them...its part of their Biblical teaching. [Tell me about Tammy. A lot of people criticize her and say she's not a good representative for Christianity...] ..I can't criticize Tammy, I can't be judgmental of her. She reaches a lot of people...her authenticity comes through, she's being genuine, I'm sure. I don't like her emotionalism, but that doesn't mean I'll criticize her.

What about the balance between "news" or "secular material" and "sectarian material" in the 700 Club? Is the balance ok?

"...the balance is fine with me. I watch other programs as well, so I get more spiritual substance, more Bible teaching elsewhere. Each program seems to have its own mission and goal. Robertson strikes a balance well, and does what he wants to well...."

Asked to compare some of the other programs with each other, R51 makes a quick response. "...Schuller is real dramatic, real forceful. Swaggart is a crier, very emotional, very involved." Asked what changes she would recommend in the programs she views, R51 could think of none, offhand. Asked specifically if she felt that Schuller was '...not evangelistic enough.' [a criticism of him from another interview] R51 replies, "...true, but he's

approaching it from a different angle. You wouldn't be able to give the full message in any one program. Each has its place...Schuller speaks with more of a variety of people....."

Asked to review her faith history, R51 reports that she started in a Presbyterian church, a neighborhood church in the Northeast, and then joined the Lutheran church also in the Northeast, after researching various churches with her husband. She chose the Lutheran Church because of the pastor. She would describe herself as an "...evolutionary..." born-again Christian, meaning that she experienced no great revelation or great turning point where she became a Christian. She easily moves into a discussion of her viewing of religious television in the context of this history, reporting that she just happened on the show one time, and continued to watch because "...I like the program right away because of teaching, and because it made it clear what it meant to be a Christian. I used to watch PTL all the time, too, but they started to have the same guests all the time. Lately, though the 700 Club has changed, and they have different kinds of guests than PTL." [how do the guests differ?] "...the guests on the 700 Club are strengthening of Christians, not inspirational. PTL would be for people who

need to be inspired, the 700 Club for people who need to be built in their faith...."

Asked if she feels that religious television helps or hurts local churches, she says, "...no, it helps local churches. Its a support."

Asked who she talks with about the program, R51 responds,

"...I talk to other people who I know are viewers of the program. I also suggest it to strangers, say people who are talking about current events in the check-out line or at the hairdressers'. I say, 'if you want to see the news from an inspiring perspective, to see a worldwide picture of things...' or, if their faith is faltering...." [Do you think there is an evangelical revival overtaking America?] "I find that fundamental churches are growing...such as the Church of the Savior in Wayne. Those that are fundamental, that tell the whole Gospel, are growing. I also find that it is much easier to talk about religion than it was 25 years ago, when I was looking for a church. Fundamentalists are more outgoing than they used to be...." [Some churches are growing, some are failing, though. Is this the reason religious television is successful, because of the failure of some churches?] "Churches fail when they water-down the message of the Bible. There's been too much questioning of the Bible, too many theologians and preachers get up there and raise questions about the Bible. The local church is not strong on the Bible. The local church is too weak on the fundamentals. Its hard to explain what fundamentalism means...I believe it like its told...." [What made you a fundamentalist?] "...I believe it was my Presbyterian background...I believe I heard it then...."

"Tell me, in a few words, what you like about the various programs you watch."

"...Swaggart, I like his teaching, his interpretation

of the Bible. He wants to probe and evaluate the Bible. That's the core for him, and that's the way it should be. Don't criticize it, look at what its saying. The 700 Club is easy to relate to. It appeals to those who want to know God's spirit is active today. The PTL Club, well, its their guests, they have some spiritual guests...also, my husband watches the 700 Club for financial information."

"We're more at home in a fundamentalist church, and always have been. Ministers make the difference, you see. We have one now, well, he's a wonderful person, but its never clear where he stands on the Bible. I'm interested in the Bible. I've been more literalist in my life than I am now. Now I see, because of the Swaggart and Robertson programs, I think, that the Bible does have some contradictions in it. Like the most recent time I wrote to the 700 Club was about the fact that there are two different creation stories in Genesis, did you know that?...[yes, I did know that] ..I haven't heard back from them on that. Do you know why that is? Do you know the answer? [Well, I was told in seminary that its because the two accounts date from differnt historical times, they were meant to answer different historical questions. R51 seems to be surprisingly satisfied with this answer.] ...So God inspired them at different times in the history of the Jews? [yes]."

At this point the interview ended because R51 was feeling tired. However, it was satisfactory, and yeilded much important data, including these last reflections on Biblical Literalism. This "universalizing" "effect" of religious television is something also seen in other interviews.

Respondent 52

Mr. R52 is currently unemployed, awaiting a new job, actively seeking employment. He and Mrs. R52 have no

children, and are in their early 40's. Mrs. R52 currently holds a job as a customer service representative in a manufacturing firm. Mr. R52 was a trucking dispatcher until he was laid off about a year ago.

They live modestly, and have had to severely cut back on their lifestyle due to the reduction in income.

Mr. and Mrs. R52 do not watch the 700 Club together, due to the fact that Mrs. R52 works. Mr. R52 watches alone, at home, when he is home, and even though they could watch together in the evening because they now have cable television, they do not often do so. When they do watch religious television, their first choice is Charles Stanley (on Sunday only) followed by the Club, and Jimmy Swaggart. Their average level of viewing of television altogether is low, and they dislike much of what is on TV. Mr. R52 was the one interviewed, due to difficulties in scheduling an interview where they would both be present. Mr. R52 is subsequently referred to as R52.

R52 began watching religious television over ten years ago, though he cannot recall precisely which religious program he first began to watch. He thinks it may have been Howard Estep's. Why did he/does he watch?

"...inspiration, understanding, those are the reasons. Estep was covering the prophetic scriptures [his

emphasis on 'prophetic' here leads to the conclusion that he sees prophecy in millenarian terms, that current travail--his and the world's--will only be relieved through God's direct intervention. This 'gratification' of millenialism, that somehow you, and the people you know have a line on the 'end times,' gives hope and strength to tattered, powerless lives. This is the sense in which R52 seems to take and mean 'prophecy' and 'teaching.'] and I am interested in those scriptures, in understanding them and how they relate to the contemporary world." ["You see current events as having been foretold in the Bible?"] "Yes, definitely, and there are people such as Estep and Swaggart, and Robertson, who know how to work all of that out for you...."

R52 could recall little about his first experience with religious television, and was not pressed once he became irritated at the questions. He felt it was enough to say "I used to watch Estep, now I watch Robertson," with little understanding of or appreciation for the distinction between the programs and their various formats, etc.

R52 was then asked to give his faith history. He was one of the few R's who considered religion "important" instead of "very important," and reported that he and his wife attend an "Orthodox Presbyterian Church," a denomination that is unknown to the interviewer.

"At home, my parents always took me to a Baptist church...a Southern Baptist church first, and then an independent church....I grew up with religious training, Bible School, Sunday School, and all, and then in my teens, I slipped away from it. I was rebellious for awhile, I did things I'd rather not think about...some years later, about in my early twenties, I started to realize that there really is a Jesus and a God, you

know...it started to impress me what the scripture teaches and what the world is, but I started more and more to fix my eyes on the Lord, to lean on him. [Did you have a charismatic, or 'born-again' experience? Was there a specific date or time, you could specify?] No...it wasn't a dramatic experience.

At some point I was saved and my confidence in Christ just kept increasing. [What happened to your church attendance through all of this?] At some point, I started attending an Orthodox Presbyterian Church. [What kind of a church is that?] Well, its a church with mostly converted Jews in the congregation, its a fundamentalist church." [Does your wife share a similar history?] No, my wife was a Baptist, so when we got married...I was about 30...we joined a Baptist Church in Rosslyn. Now we both belong to the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. [was there a dramatic point where you decided to switch churches, or anything, how did it come about that you switched congregations?] ..the Presbyterian one was more convenient, that's all."

All of this sounded so mundane, so un-involving for the R, that it was decided to go on to discussion of the relationship between local churches generally and the electronic church. R52 was asked, "Thinking now about a program like the 700 Club, do you think such a program is a help to local churches, or does it hurt them, just what is its relationship to the local church, do you think?"

"I'm sure broadcasting helps the local church. It helps get them new converts because it allows the general population to be exposed to religious concepts and to accept Christ as their savior and then encourages them to attend church and then enhances local churches. People can't get fellowship and support except by a local body. The local church is the body of Christ."

Then...paydirt....having to do with "who's in" and "who's out", theologically.

"Don't get me wrong here, I think that there can be plenty of things wrong with the local church. Like for instance, I disagree with a lot of things about my own church...there's a doctrinal difference between me and my church...they're Calvinistic, believers in infant baptism. It's really a small point...or that they teach pre-destination...I disagree with that. I really want to be in full agreement with my church, but I am not. I have friends there, so I go--I've never disagreed with the message from the pulpit...never disagreed with anything specific like that. [so, is religious television a place where you can find yourself in full agreement, a place that supplements your church experience?] No, I wouldn't say that, there's plenty I disagree with on TV too. I mean, does anyone ever completely like their church?"

R52 was then asked to compare his two favorite religious programs, the 700 Club and Charles Stanley.

"Stanley is more toward maturation of believers in Christ, building up their capabilities in light of their daily lives. The Christian way to do things is through a church, but there are people out there who he can help move along in their development....Robertson looks into current issues the world over, world problems, current problems. He has a wider appeal. Non-believers might enjoy his program more than they would Stanley's. [would you say that Stanley's is a more 'Christian' program, then? Just how do you know you're watching a religious or a Christian show? How do producers know how to walk the fine line between appearing 'too religious'--turning off viewers--and appearing not religious at all?] ..they're [700 Club] being true to their mission. The society is very pluralistic and diversified, there's need for a variety of evangelistic approaches. [Do you think the audiences differ between the two programs?] Charles Stanley is a Baptist, so he's narrowed to Baptists and people who accept his teachings. Pat Robertson has a more general audience."

What about the rest of television?

"...It seems to be spinning its wheels to satisfy people...it's a treadmill...no one is really satisfied



by television, they just go from one titillation to another and come up empty in regard to any real fulfillment...its misleading because it pretends to have appealing values in it but their [the viewers'] needs are never satisfied...it keeps people from thinking about important values."

"How does religious television relate to regular television?"

"I don't think there's any connection at all...one kind of thing is pandering to people's tastes and desires, while the other is meeting their real needs...I don't see any relationship." [Do you think that religious television can have a positive influence on the rest of television?] "No, I really don't...its just an alternative, that's all...."

R52 was then asked about whether he felt that part of the explanation for the success of religious television was that local churches are somehow failing, that religious tv somehow fills a void left by the local church.

"...I really don't think so. It may be that local churches, some local churches, are failing, but its not important if they are, and I don't see how religious TV could have had a role in that."

"Who do you talk to about your viewing of religious television?"

"I talk to my wife, of course, and to some friends, but not to people outside that group. [how about people at church?] Just my friends at church, not others, not the pastor."

R52 was then asked if anything about his viewing of CBN, or if any part of the program ever made him uncomfortable. This could mean either specific guests or other incidents,

regular elements of the program, or one-time occasions.

"...I've seen people come on where people had revelations that they've been to heaven, or that they've seen angels, or that they've been to hell, and there's discrepancies between their stories [and those of others who report similar experiences] and that just adds confusion for the unbelievers, it just adds confusion. I think they ought to be more careful who they have on there...some doctrinal things bother me, too. I don't disagree with speaking in tongues, I don't do it, but don't condemn it...but to say that to receive the holy spirit one has to speak in tongues is misleading. Charles Stanley gets in less trouble about this stuff, cause he's preaching. He thinks that a ministry should be evangelical...CBN gets the Gospel out, but its not as useful as it is from Stanley, useful to the believers. CBN tries to be fashionable. ["what do you mean, 'fashionable?'] I mean, well, fashionable, it tries to deal with a wide variety of issues, and bring a wide variety of guests...lets you know what's going on right now, while others deal with the viewers' spiritual lives."

R52 was asked the question about whether there is an evangelical revival in America, and he agreed that there is "...a change afoot that is positive" and he knows this because more and more people feel free to talk about religion and their faith. He was then asked if he thought the mixture of "secular" and "religious" material on CBN was appropriate, or whether he thought there should be a change. He felt a strong mixture is what is needed, a strong mixture of strenghts and weaknesses. "...numbers [of converts] aren't as convincing as far as evangelism's overall effect is concerned..."

"...People need to know Christ in a fuller personal way, they don't need more religious experiences, they need to personally know Jesus...they need to get saved but that won't happen just from Christian Television, they need to get into a Church body and then grow in the Lord. The 700 Club doesn't give out doctrinal emphasis enough, it needs to go more for a heterogeneous group."

Respondent 53

R53 was a referral through a friend of the author's.

She was chosen as a participant for three reasons. 1.) She is a recent viewer, only having begun viewing within the past month; 2.) She is a Catholic, and a devout one at that; 3.) She is criticized by her husband and family for viewing.

R53 gives atypical (for this sample) answers to most questions on the questionnaire. She did vote in 1980, but is a political moderate, not a conservative, as most have been. She opposes the death penalty. She favors tougher pornography laws and opposes abortion. She opposes premarital sex,

"...It is wrong, always...there should be punishments for it, in my opinion. They should not be allowed...there should be more programs on why it is wrong because everybody think's it is ok for the last ten years...."

She considers her health excellent, feels most people can be trusted, and takes a conservative stance on women's roles: "...positively, most of the problems we have today come from them [couples] both working."

She answers the Bible question in an interesting way.

"I read alot of religious books and pamphlets. I do have a Bible, and I used to read it faithfully, but when you put it away, you don't see it. It should be somewhere where you see it...but we do put it away."

She does, however, take a literalist approach to the Bible. She believes in the second coming, but does not think it is imminent. She reports no "religious experience" of her own, but her grandson was healed, though it was through the standard Catholic healing service at her parish, not through television, or through an evangelical healing service, or anything.

She is a very frequent attender at Mass. "...I go to Mass every week, and sometimes more than that. I go to the first Friday services every month." She and her husband do attend social functions at their parish, but only several times a year. They tithe to the parish, and have increased their contribution recently. She considers religion to be "very, very important." Minorities get less than their fair share of resources, as far as she is concerned. She is an infrequent viewer of television, preferring to crochet in the evenings, or to visit, thus leaving little time for television. She does not watch the news, though her husband does. She estimates daily viewing at 2 hours.

She does, however, watch a great deal of religious

television. She watches the Mass every Sunday, and watches all of the religious programs "on UHF" starting at 8 p.m. She has done this for years, but has only recently begun watching Swaggart, the 700 Club, and the PTL Club. She has never sent money to any of these programs, and feels that she never will. "...they're too plush, too affluent...." she says, preferring to send money to help the poor and needy of the world.

She called the program [the Club] once, within the past two weeks, to ask for healing for her brother. She always watches these programs alone. Her first reason for watching "...is to see the healing. I've watched any program where there was going to be healing or talk about healing. I also go to all the healing services at my Parish."

She has always been a devout Catholic, as has her husband, though he converted from Anglicanism to marry her. They have six children and myriad grandchildren. They are both retired, in their 70's. They do not have cable television.

Asked to talk about how and when she started watching religious television, she goes into free-association.

"...I started watching religious television years ago. I've always liked programs that had lots of prayers and healings in them, and I used to watch programs just for that. It's something I enjoy watching, like other

people like sports or something. I particularly like the evangelical programs. I don't like all the talk about money on them...I don't argue with that, though...I know they have to raise lots of money to stay on, I just don't like it, and I don't respond to that...I know some people do. [What do you like about religious TV?] ...so many people who don't go to church, and don't ever go, or want to go, could be led to go by watching...programming should lead them to go to church. I just think of religious television like the other kinds of television I watch. I like educational shows, and shows about health, and about religion, that's all." [who do you talk to about religious TV?] "I mention it to neighbors, to different people, to relatives, and to my husband, of course, though he doesn't approve of me watching. [what doesn't he like about it?] He doesn't approve of all the appeals for money. Some of them, that's all they talk about, money. My neighbors and relatives, they say 'that's Protestant programming, and you're a Catholic' but I watch for interest and inspiration. Its Christian programming, not just Protestant programming." [what do your friends say is so Protestant about the programming? are there specific things that look Protestant about it?] No, nothing specific, they just criticize it for raising all of that money. That bothers me, too. Some people resent it when you mention the programs to them. They mind being told to watch, so I try to be careful." [does anything make you uncomfortable, yourself?] "Yes, the affluence, the furnishings on the 700 Club and the others bother me. There's just so much money involved, I don't approve of that. I don't see how people could watch both shows [CBN and PTL] and contribute to both. I think that would be sinful. Its just so much money. They should be giving that money to the poor."

asked who she liked and disliked among the characters in the programs, R53 wasn't too critical of any of them. Asked specifically about Tammy Bakker, R53 responds, "Tammy is darling, I like her. She's very talented and bright. ["Is she effective in reaching people, Christian and

non-Christian?"] I think she's very effective and very real...she cries with nearly every prayer...."

R53 is convinced that the current balance between the "spiritual" and "temporal" on the 700 Club is a good one, but she reveals her primary interest in watching these programs, when she says,

"...I like stories where they show healing...I also go to the healing services at my church, whenever I can [do you need healing yourself when you go?] ...no, its not for me, I pray for others, the ones who really need it. [have you seen a healing?] Yes, my grandson was healed of chronic headaches about three years ago. He wasn't convinced he should go, he was 19 at the time, but his mother and I took him, and he finally went forward. Now its years later, and he's still without headaches.

The thing that is most interesting about this experience with her grandson's healing (particularly compared with the evangelical protestants in this sample) is R53's rather blasé attitude about it. Far from describing it as integral to faith or a faith-building experience in the way an evangelical protestant would, she just accepts this healing process through her parish's regularly scheduled healing service as a normal part of religious experience, regular, not irregular, almost a sense of "...just one of the services offered by Catholicism."

R53 was asked to talk a bit more about how her relatives criticize religious television. Noting that she had said

earlier that they base their criticism on the sense that it is "Protestant" programming, R53 was asked if there were specific things about the program (the Club in particular) which seem "Protestant" to her or to her relatives.

"...I don't think they really see anything specific to complain about if they watch. They just say 'It's Protestant, and we have our own religion,' but you know how it is when people just don't want to listen to something, they'll give you any reason for not doing it. I just think that we're all Christian, aren't we, and we all worship the same God and believe in the same Christ."

"What kind of people do you think watch religious television?"

"...people who are at home or are invalid, who can see it and see the way it is...viewing was probably higher recently with the unemployment rate we've had...."

R53 has been an occasional viewer of religious television for years, starting with Billy Graham, going on to the more recent programs, including the club, until she was unable to view it for a number of years (she was babysitting during the day) and then getting back to it recently.

R53 leaves two major impressions. First, she does not see her viewing is substantively religious behavior, but rather as almost an entertainment alternative. She says, emphatically,

"...I don't watch it Purposely, you know, I just watch it for a change, I'm tired of looking at games and everything else. ..television's terrible, most of it.



Informative things about health, and education, I think are great, and religious television, of course."

The second thing that stands out about R53 is her dislike/mistrust of the fundraising aspects of religious programs. She is not a member of any of these ministries, has never sent any money and probably never will.

"...there's too much affluence there, on the sets and everything. They're building all kinds of buildings and buying air time and equipment. I know they have to do that to stay on, but I'd rather they sent that money to the poor. My money goes to hunger projects of my church, and to the poor. My church has mission projects you know."

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