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RELIGIOUS COMMITMENT AND MEANING IN LIFE

by

Merrill L. Barfield

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree

of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

in

Psychology

Approved:

UTAH STATE UNIVERSITY  
Logan, Utah

1976

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To my wife, Maura, whose unfailing devotion has been a comfort to me, and who had to be also mother and breadwinner for five little ones, I wish to dedicate this thesis.

Merrill L. Barfield

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## ABSTRACT

Religious Commitment and Meaning in Life

by

Merrill L. Barfield, Master of Science

Utah State University, 1976

Major Professor: Dr. William R. Dobson  
Department: Psychology

The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between meaning or purpose in life as measured by Crumbaugh's Purpose in Life Test, and the degree of religious commitment of college students, with particular interest in the members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS). Religious commitment was measured by Hoge's Intrinsic Religious Motivation Scale (IRM).

Two hundred and fifty-five undergraduates, 122 males and 132 females, enrolled in introductory psychology and sociology classes at Utah State University during spring quarter, 1975, served as subjects.

A two-way analysis of variance calculated separately for the LDS and non-LDS groups was used to test three hypotheses: (1) there will be a significant difference among the mean PIL scores for the high, moderate, and low religious commitment groups (in that order); (2) females will be significantly higher in their sense of purpose in life than males; (3) females will be significantly higher in their sense of purpose in life in all religious commitment groups.

Hypothesis 1 was significant beyond the .05 level for the LDS group. A Sheffe test indicated the difference was between the high and

the low religious commitment groups only. Hypotheses 2 and 3 were not supported. None of the three hypotheses were supported for the non-LDS group. T-ratios computed between the three corresponding levels of religious commitment for the LDS and non-LDS groups were significant beyond the .05 level.

A significant positive relationship for males beyond the .05 level was found between sex and religious commitment. No relationship was found between sex and purpose in life. A significant positive relationship beyond the .05 level was found between religious commitment and purpose in life. No significant differences were found between year in school, marital status, and socioeconomic status on either purpose in life or religious commitment. Significant differences beyond the .05 level were found between religious commitment and church attendance, and between religious commitment and activity in church organizations.

It was concluded that the results support the premise that religion can have a significant impact on an individual's sense of purpose in life as defined by Frankl (1963), particularly if the individual's religion encourages active involvement on the part of the individual. The effect is especially strong if high religious belief, high religious participation, and social activity outside of church occur together.

## CHAPTER I

### Introduction

In his writings on logotherapy, a psychotherapeutic theory-technique based on existential philosophy, Viktor Frankl (1955, 1963, 1967) laid the foundations of what has become known as the "Third Viennese School of Psychotherapy." Logotherapy derives its name from the Greek word "logos," or meaning. Central to logotherapy is the meaning of human existence, or more specifically, man's search for meaning.

Frankl contended man's search for meaning is the basic motivating force in man, and not a "secondary rationalization of instinctual drives." He did not mean, however, that values drive a man, or even push him, but they do pull him. In this way man retains the freedom to make a choice between fulfilling the meaning that presents itself or rejecting it. In denying the existence of a moral or "religious" drive, Frankl (1963) said,

Man is never driven to moral behavior; in each instance he decides to behave morally. Man does not do so in order to satisfy a moral drive and to have a good conscience; he does so for the sake of a cause to which he commits himself or for a person whom he loves, or for the sake of his God. (p. 158)

In sociological theory, the symbolic interactionist explains behavior from the same premise. Glenn Vernon (1974) affirmed the importance of the "will to meaning" in human behavior, but not as a drive. He stated,

Behavior is in response to symbols or meaning and any set of meaning is legitimated or validated by other symbols with religious symbols being the basic type involved. In any event, meaning is the basis of human behavior. Understanding meaning then, is an essential ingredient of any study of behavior.  
(Personal communication)

According to Frankl (1967, p. 15), man finds meaning through his creative works, his life experiences, and the stand he takes toward fate.

The frustration of the individual's will to meaning in any or all of the ways to find meaning in life Frankl saw as the cause of "existential vacuum." He defined "existential vacuum" as "a total lack, or loss, of an ultimate meaning to one's existence that would make life worthwhile." Frankl contended that existential vacuum is present, to a degree, in most individuals in Western Civilization. It is a problem the young as well as the old have to deal with.

Some writers in existential literature refer to existential vacuum as "existential anxiety" or merely "anxiety" (Tillich, 1952; Good & Good, 1974; May, 1953). Still others refer to it as alienation, or "anomie" (Durkheim, 1890; Elmore, 1962).

Tillich (1952) identified three types of anxiety: (a) the anxiety of fate and death signifying man's awareness of the "complete loss of self which biological extinction implies;" (b) the anxiety of emptiness and meaninglessness, or anxiety about the loss of ultimate concern; (c) the anxiety of guilt and condemnation referring to anxiety produced by self-rejection or condemnation of one's life. He asserted that the three types of anxiety are interconnected and blend into a single state of anxiety. Any of the three may be dominant but

all contribute anxiety which manifests itself as despair. As does Frankl, Tillich contends that anxiety exists naturally in varying degrees in most individuals; its extreme form leaves one totally without hope.

Rollo May (1953) recognized the existence of existential vacuum as a widespread phenomenon among many individuals in Western Civilization when he referred to them as the "hollow people." He asserted that these individuals are lonely. They have a feeling of "emptiness or vacuity" and powerlessness in their ability to be effective in the world about them. This emptiness, like Frankl's existential vacuum, manifests itself in degrees ranging from boredom in normal individuals to futility and despair of a more pathological nature.

Both Frankl (1963) and May (1952) were impressed with the increasing frequency that the more pathological form of existential vacuum, which Frankl termed "noogenic neurosis," is showing up in psychiatric clinics, comprising as much as 20% of the caseload. With these individuals, Frankl claimed, conventional methods of psychotherapy did not work. The way to help them was not to spend years in psychoanalysis with them, but to help them rediscover their meaning or purpose in life and restore their hope.

Instruments that measure one's state of mind are important tools for helping the psychologist to understand the individual with whom he is working. A number of instruments have been developed to measure the existential conception of "meaning" (Kotchen, 1960; Elmore, 1962; Crumbaugh & Maholick, 1964; Good & Good, 1974). Frankl used a

questionnaire to measure his client's existential vacuum. Crumbaugh and Maholick (1964) developed the Purpose In Life" test, which will be used in the present study, from Frankl's questionnaire. The Purpose In Life (PIL) test measures the degree of purpose, or meaning (as opposed to complete boredom, or noogenic neurosis) one feels life has for him. By measuring the degree of one's purpose in life or lack of it, the PIL test is also a measure of one's existential vacuum (Crumbaugh, 1968).

Purpose in life is not a static quality. It is constantly being readjusted as new experiences are encountered, new goals are formed, and life situations change. A number of variables appear to influence the meaning an individual feels life has for him, the most significant being religion.

Frankl (1955, 1967) as did May (1953), Tillich (1952), and Vernon (1965) suggested that religion can have a great influence on the PIL of the individual. Vernon (1974) suggested that religion interpreted in its broadest sense, the "ultimate components" so to speak, is in fact synonymous to purpose in life. Though Frankl does not equate spiritual meaning with religion, Vernon's suggestion is reasonable and consistent with Frankl's discussion of "drives." If a man accepts his religion as the ultimate meaning or purpose in life, then his commitment to religion would serve to pull or "drive" him in the manner Frankl suggested. Recent studies dealing with both purpose in life and religious commitment appear to support this assumption (Acuff, 1967, 1968; Crumbaugh, Raphael, & Shrader, 1970; Yarbrough, 1971).

Of these studies, Yarbrough's was the only one to investigate the relationship between the two variables in detail. It is interesting that some of his results concerning certain aspects of religious commitment and purpose in life were inconclusive when the literature suggests there should be a significant relationship. It is possible that this is in part due to his attempt to measure religious commitment, as do many other studies, across denominations rather than within one specific denomination. Glock and Stark (1966) and Cardwell (1971) have suggested that this is a major problem with such studies because of the diversity of religious orthodoxy and religious practice across and within religions. Cardwell, however, asserted that measurements within one specific denomination would yield better results than measurements across denominations.

A review of the available literature has so far turned up no research investigating the purpose in life of members of one specific religion and the degree of religious commitment the individual feels. The present study was an attempt to fill that gap.

## CHAPTER II

### Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between Frankl's conception of meaning in life, as measured by Crumbaugh's Purpose In Life Test, and the degree of religious commitment of college students who are members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS). Religious commitment in the study was measured by Hoge's Intrinsic Religious Motivation Scale (IRM). The IRM scoring system is inversely related to religious commitment, that is, those who score high on the IRM are considered low in religious commitment, while those who score low on the IRM are considered high in religious commitment. The students who are the bottom 1/3 scorers on the IRM will be considered the high religious commitment group. The middle 1/3 scorers will be the moderate commitment group. The top 1/3 scorers will be the low commitment.

The objectives of this study were to: (a) determine if there is a difference between students in several categories of religious commitment in their sense of meaning in life; (b) determine if there is a difference between males and females in their sense of meaning in life.

Based on the review of the literature three hypotheses were proposed for testing the above objectives:

1. There will be a significant difference among the mean PIL test

scores for the high, moderate, and low religious commitment groups.

2. Females will be significantly higher in their sense of purpose in life than males.

3. Females will be significantly higher in their sense of purpose in life in all religious commitment groups.

As indicated in the procedures section, any differences between LDS and non-LDS subjects were also investigated.

## CHAPTER III

Review of LiteratureReligious Commitment

There have been a number of attempts to measure religious commitment in the past. Some attempts have been relatively successful, while others have fallen somewhat short. One of the problems involved in such a task is in deciding what aspects of religion will give an accurate picture of an individual's degree of religious commitment.

Many of the studies that included religious commitment as a variable investigated its relationship with prejudice. Using church affiliation as their religious commitment measure, Merton (1940), Gough (1951), Blum and Mann (1960), and Rokeach (1960) found church members to be more prejudiced than non-members.

However, as Gorsuch and Aleshire (1974) indicated, religious affiliation alone is not sufficient for measuring this variable because of the disproportionate composition of committed and non-committed members of any single group, or in larger view, of religion as a whole. Because the majority of church members are not active, the results of the above and similar studies may not be reflecting the attitudes of the committed members.

It may also be inappropriate to consider religious membership and religious preference as interchangeable indices of religiosity. Finner (1970) found that by using one term or the other, the size and

composition of the "no religion" group were affected. Apparently, not all of the subjects in his sample who listed themselves as belonging to a particular religion actually preferred that religion, or any other. Yarbrough (1971) ran into a similar difficulty with church affiliation and church organizations. Some of his subjects apparently "did not consider the church a religious organization when responding to the item concerning their membership in religious organizations" (p. 30).

Kinsey (1948, 1953), Reiss (1965), Christensen and Carpenter (1962), Sutker, Sutker and Kilpatrick (1970), and Kilpatrick, Sutker, and Sutker (1970), defined religiosity primarily in terms of church attendance, an aspect of religious commitment that has been shown to be a fairly reliable measure of the variable in much of the literature.

Religious belief is another aspect of religiosity which seems to be a more reliable measure than church affiliation alone. However, for investigators who have measured religious commitment by church attendance or religious beliefs (Raschke, 1973; Davidson, 1972), or a combination of the two (Hoge, 1972; Allport & Ross, 1967; Davidson, 1973; Allen & Spilka, 1967; Faulkner & DeJong, 1966; Glock & Stark, 1966) the question of "dimensionality" emerges.

Glock (1962; Glock & Stark, 1966; Stark & Glock, 1968) identified five ways, or dimensions, in which an individual can be religious. Originally, he labeled these dimensions the ideological, ritualistic, intellectual, experiential and consequential. Due to the confusion and argument that arose from the labels, he later dropped the abstract terminology in favor of more common terms in which the above became

the belief, practice, knowledge, experience, and consequences dimensions respectively.

The belief dimension encompassed the basic theological outlook to which individuals were expected to adhere. Religious practice included the acts and ceremonies, both public and private, which religious adherents were required to perform to demonstrate commitment. The experience dimension included the religious feelings, emotions, and experiences which placed the individual into contact with what Glock calls the ultimate reality, or God.

The knowledge dimension referred to the basic doctrines of the individual's religious faith with which he was expected to be familiar. The consequences dimension, while different from the other four, could be observed through the effects of the other dimensions. It was viewed as the consequences or "works" that followed from the operation of the other four dimensions. This last dimension, then, is composed of the social and psychological consequences of religious commitment.

In discussing the above dimensions, Glock (Stark & Glock, 1968, p. 17) rank ordered them, placing the belief dimension as first in importance, closely followed by the practice dimension with the knowledge and experience dimensions sharing the least important positions.

To assess these dimensions Glock and Stark (1966) developed a lengthy questionnaire for use in their study of Christian beliefs and anti-semitism. The questionnaire was the source of a large quantity of data, much of which formed the basis of their later three volume work on American piety (Stark & Glock, 1968). Mauss (1972) later modified

the questionnaire and used it in his study of differences in religious attitudes of Mormons and non-Mormons.

Following the guidelines proposed by Glock in 1962, Faulkner and De Jong (1966) developed a 23-item instrument to assess Glock's five dimensions of religious commitment. Although the basic structure of the instrument was influenced by Glock, many items were also drawn from the work of Allport (1948) and Lenski (1961).

Faulkner and De Jong's instrument provided support for Glock's theoretical position on the multidimensionality of religious commitment, but found the ritualistic (practice) dimension ranked third instead of second in importance as suggested by Glock. There were also fairly high positive intercorrelations among the five scales, as hypothesized, which indicates considerable overlap. However, Faulkner and De Jong indicated that by using the Guttman scaling technique, adequate unidimensionality was obtained within each scale to assure validity of the items.

Ruppel (1970) and Orme (1974) reported using a shortened version of Faulkner and De Jong's 5-D scale in a study of the relationship between religiosity and sexual permissiveness and marriage role expectations respectively. The shortened measure is a composite scale consisting of eight items (three from the belief scale; two from the intellectual scale; and one each from the ritual, experiential, and consequential) which they considered to adequately represent each of the five dimensions as postulated by Glock.

In addition to Glock's theoretical contribution, another theorist has contributed much in the literature toward the dimensional approach

to measuring religious commitment. Gordon Allport's (1950, 1954, 1959, 1960, 1966; Allport & Ross, 1967) writings have also generated a great deal of research in this area, particularly in the development of measuring instruments.

Allport's concept of Intrinsic-Extrinsic religion developed over a 17-year period. In its final form (Allport & Ross, 1967), Allport defined the intrinsically motivated individual as one who finds his major concern with religion. His religion becomes an internalized code and ultimately, a way of life. As he and Ross put it: "Other needs, strong as they may be, are regarded as of less ultimate significance, and they are, so far as possible, brought into harmony with the religious beliefs and prescriptions" (p. 434).

The extrinsically oriented individual, on the other hand, tends to use religion for his own ends, "to provide security and solace, sociability and distraction, status and self-justification" (p. 434). His religion means little or nothing to him other than for what it can bring him socially and economically.

A concise treatment of Allport's development of the Intrinsic-Extrinsic (I-E) model of religious commitment and a review of several attempts to measure the variable in terms of the model was presented by King and Hunt (1971).

With Allport's help, Wilson (1960) developed the Extrinsic Religious Values Scale (ERV), a 15-item scale in which all items were stated extrinsically and was therefore intended to measure only one side of the I-E continuum. The reason for this, King and Hunt contend, was in

part because the intrinsic side of the continuum had not yet been clearly defined.

Another of Allport's students, Faegin (1964), used an I-E scale of 21 items developed in one of Allport's seminars. On inspection of the items of Faegin's scale, it appears to combine the five dimensions of Glock into one scale, a point which Glock was aware of but strongly disapproved of on grounds that the ability to explain religious commitment would be seriously weakened (Glock & Stark, 1968, p. 18).

When Faegin submitted the scale to factor analysis, two major factors typifying the I-E dimensions were revealed. While Factor II (Extrinsic religiosity) separated relatively pure, Factor I (Intrinsic religiosity) included items concerning personal commitment and practices, with practices having the highest loadings.

Allport and Ross (1967), King and Hunt (1969) and Hood (1970) reported some difficulty in adequately measuring the "intrinsic" dimension when using Faegin's items in their own scales. However, McConahay and Hough (1969) and Strickland and Shaffer (1971) were able to obtain two separate I-E factors which were significantly correlated in a negative relationship, suggesting that the I-E dimensions were opposite ends of the same continuum.

Recognizing the problems encountered in the development of adequate instruments to measure the I-E conceptualization of religious commitment, Hoge (1971, 1973) also developed a religiosity scale through factor analysis. Hoge, however, went a step further and validated the items by using them on subjects, predominately Presbyterian Protestants,

who had been previously identified by their ministers as either intrinsically or extrinsically motivated.

The items were based on Allport's writings and included 8 from Allport and Ross' (1967) instrument and 22 new items developed in the same seminar. The 9 best items from the preliminary validation study were then included with Faegin's 21 items for use in the final study (population not reported). The 10 items with the highest loadings in the final study were selected for the scale, which Hoge called the "Intrinsic Religious Motivation (IRM) scale. The IRM correlated well with ministers' judgments in the final study.

The discussion, to this point, concerning the problem of measuring religious commitment is certainly not comprehensive, but as Gorsuch and Aleshire (1974) point out:

From the wide variety of instruments used to define religious attitudes and beliefs, ... it is apparent that no consensus exists as to the best distinctions for the area. Instead, many investigators have simply designed their own scale. Such scales are seldom obtainable by other investigators, and basic data such as reliability are usually nonexistent. (p. 284)

For the purpose of the present study, the choice of an adequate instrument for measuring religious commitment appeared to lie in favor of one that would: (a) measure a minimum of two dimensions; (b) have demonstrated reliability and validity; (c) be quickly administered; and (d) yield a total score of religious commitment for statistical analysis. The Intrinsic Religious Motivation Scale mentioned above seems to meet each of these criteria.

Faulkner and De Jong's original 5-D measure required too much time to administer. Their shorter version of this instrument (as presented

by Ruppel, 1970) was adequate in administration time. Both instruments, however, lacked sufficient validity data. There was also some question as to whether either 5-D scale was an adequate measure of the five dimensions of religious commitment as conceptualized by Glock and Stark (see Gibbs & Crader, 1970, p. 108-109).

### Studies Dealing With the Measurement of Meaning

As was mentioned in the introduction, several instruments have been developed to measure the existential conception of meaning. This section of the literature review will consider them.

Frankl's questionnaire (as reported in Crumbaugh & Maholick, 1964) was perhaps the earliest attempt to measure an individual's sense of meaning, or rather, lack of it. His questionnaire was simply a series of questions he asked his clients in an early interview to assess their degree of existential vacuum before beginning therapy. It was this questionnaire that Crumbaugh and Maholick (1964) used, along with Frankl's writings and lecture materials in his Harvard seminars, to develop the Purpose-In-Life Test (PIL) mentioned in the introduction and which will be used in the present study. More details of this instrument can be found in the methodology section.

Other instruments could be considered for the present study besides, for example, the PIL test, to measure the existential conception of "meaning" (Kotchen, 1960; Elmore, 1962; Shostrom, 1964; Good & Good, 1974). Kotchen's measure is a 32-item questionnaire designed to measure seven aspects of meaning: uniqueness, responsibility,

self-affirmation, courage, transcendence, faith-commitment, and world view. These aspects were drawn from the publications of several writers. Two were taken from Frankl's writings, two from Tillich's, two from May's, and one from Allport's. Each aspect of meaning comprised a subscale containing from 3 to 6 items. The measure will not be used in the present study for three reasons. First, it was developed on an all-male sample with a narrow age range. Second, only two of the aspects of meaning measured were drawn from Frankl's writings. Third, no validity or reliability data were reported for it.

Elmore's (1962) instrument is a 72-item paper-and-pencil test. It was developed through factor analysis which isolated six factors he grouped under the term "psychological anomie." The six factors were meaninglessness, valuelessness, hopelessness, powerlessness, aloneness, and closed-mindedness. The Elmore Scale of Anomie (EAS), as it is called, was not considered for two reasons. First, there are insufficient reliability and validity data on it. Second, it was tested on an all-patient population in its development phase and its subsequent validation study (Elmore, 1962; Elmore & Chambers, 1967). Since Frankl's writings on existential vacuum had an influence in the development of the scale, it is not surprising that there are some similarities between the concepts "psychological anomie" and "existential vacuum." There is evidence, however, that the two concepts are different enough to treat them as separate constructs (Crumbaugh, 1968).

Good and Good's (1974) instrument is a 32-item self-report measure of what they call "existential anxiety." The items are answered on a

true or false basis but the scoring method is somewhat ambiguous. While the authors report an acceptable split half reliability coefficient of .89, the mean total scores (4.79, SD 5.37) for the test appear to be quite low for a 32-item measure. Although they developed the measure from Frankl's writings on existential vacuum, Frankl never referred to existential vacuum specifically or indirectly as existential anxiety as far as this investigator can determine. Since the test is still in the research stage and has not been validated, it was considered unacceptable for the proposed study.

The Personal Orientation Inventory (POI), developed by Shostrum (1964), was designed to measure the degree to which an individual approaches the ideally functioning, or self-actualized, person as conceptualized in the writings of Abraham Maslow. It is a 150-item test with two major scales: Inner Support (I) containing 127 items; and Time Competance (TC) containing 23 items. Within the major scales are 10 subscales containing from 9 to 32 items each.

The Boros Seventh Mental Measurements Yearbook lists 123 studies using the POI in their investigations. It does not include validity data for the test, but one reviewer reports some studies have indicated the I scale is a fairly valid measure of the "feelings, values, and attitudes appropriate to self-actualization." The POI was not considered appropriate for the present study, however, because, besides the time needed for administration, there seems to be some reservations as to whether the POI measures the same thing to which Frankl refers as "meaning" and which Crumbaugh calls purpose in life. Frankl and Maslow

seem to come from slightly different theoretical positions in their writings, so measures based on their respective writings would be expected to measure differently.

For instance, the POI is negatively correlated with the D, Pt, and Si scales of the MMPI, but positively correlated with such variables as extraversion, college grades, and creativity measures (Boros, 1970). The PIL test has similar correlations but is apparently unrelated to the POI (Elmore & Chambers, 1967), which suggests that the two instruments are measuring different things. Other results summarized in the Seventh Mental Measurements Yearbook indicate that while some individuals score high on the POI, they may not be performing like self-actualizers.

#### Studies Relating the Measurement of Religious Commitment and Meaning

There are a number of studies in the literature that either directly or indirectly investigated the relationship between religious commitment and meaning. Some of these studies found no relationship between the two variables. In an attempt to measure the relationships between psychological anomie, existential frustration, and self-actualization, Elmore and Chambers (1967) administered the Elmore Scale of Anomie (ESA), the Purpose In Life test (PIL), and the Personal Orientation Inventory (POI) to 107 patients in a VA hospital. While all of the patients completed the ESA, only 94 completed the PIL, 32 completed the POI, and 53 had previously recorded MMPI scores.

In the study a number of demographic variables were also correlated with the ESA, PIL, POI, and MMPI. Religion was found to be unrelated to any of the above test scores. Elmore and Chambers did not define what they meant by religion but it is assumed most likely, by this investigator, that church affiliation was used as the criterion.

Pishkin and Thorne (1973) identified a kind of religiosity in one of the factors of the Thorne Existential Study questionnaire which they called "Dependent Religiosity." No significant relationship was reported between religiosity and existential anxiety.

The study by Dean (1968) investigated the relationship between anomie, powerlessness, and religious participation. He used the Dean Alienation Scale, developed by him, to measure both anomie and powerlessness and a 3-item religiosity questionnaire designed to assess the subjects' activity level. His results indicated no significant difference between the various religiosity groups and their levels of anomie. He did, however, find a curvilinear relationship between powerlessness and religious commitment.

Similarly, in a study of alienation, liberalism-conservatism, and presidential preference, Steininger and Majdanik (1974) found no significant relationship between anomie scores, as measured by the Srole Anomie Scale, and scores on a measure of religious fundamentalism and church attendance. The subjects included both college students and non-college adults.

Since Pishkin and Thorne's (1973) measure of religiosity was named on a post hoc basis, there is the possibility that they were not

actually measuring religious commitment. Steininger and Majdanik (1974) and Dean (1968), on the other hand, were using measures (belief and practice dimensions) that the literature has shown to be reasonably valid (Allen & Spilka, 1967; Faulkner & De Jong, 1966; Hoge, 1971). There is evidence, however, that instead, there might be an inverse relationship between the two variables (Keedy, 1959; Lee & Clyde, 1974; Schweiker, 1969).

Keedy (1959) found in his study of anomie and religiosity that the two variables were inversely related to each other but were influenced by authoritarianism and ethnocentrism. In a study extending the work of Dean (1968) and Bell (1957), Lee and Clyde (1974) also found an inverse relationship between religiosity and anomie as did Keedy, but not between anomie and socioeconomic status. Schweiker (1969) was interested in the integrative potential of religion for the group and the individual. Religiosity and integration were measured by an instrument that incorporated subscales from several sources. He found that those who participated in secular organizations (such as veterans, service, political and fraternal) could be as well integrated psychologically as individuals participating in religious organizations, but religious participation combined with secular participation produced the highest degree of integration in his subjects.

Klingberg (1971) in his study of the effects of sensitivity training on self-actualization, purpose in life, and religious attitudes of theological students, found that T-groups tended to change

scores on the PIL and POI tests in both directions. The same was true for scores on the Religious Attitudes Inventory (RAI). These results, however, may represent no more than a statistical regression toward the mean, a phenomenon frequently seen in psychological testing.

At least two studies in the literature have found an inverse relationship between religiosity and self-actualization (Graff & Ladd, 1971; Hjelle, 1975). Graff and Ladd administered the POI and the Dimensions of Religious Commitment (DRC) scale, a dimensional measure very similar to Glock's, to 152 Protestant college males. The results indicated that the scores on the two scales were inversely related to each other, or "the less religious Ss tended to be more self-accepting, more spontaneous, more accepting of one's natural aggressiveness, and more inner-directed and less dependent than Ss with a high level of religiosity" (p. 504). Hjelle's study of 63 undergraduate male Catholics using the POI and religious participation as correlates resulted in essentially the same findings and conclusions.

Two recent studies related the existential and psychoanalytical ideas of the "fear of death" and religiosity (Lester, 1970; Williams & Cole, 1968). Lester's study found that religious denomination did not seem to influence one's fear of death. Religiosity did, however. In Protestant subjects, low religiosity was related to high fear of death of self while high religiosity was related to a high fear of death of others. A word association test revealed no significant differences in unconscious attitudes towards death among subjects.

Williams and Cole (1968) investigated Freud's position that religion was an outgrowth of insecurity and the fear of death. Four

instruments were administered in the study: Ligon's Religious Participation Scale, Maslow's Security-Insecurity Inventory, Sarnoff and Corwin's Fear of Death Scale, and the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI). The results did not support Freud's position. Active religious subjects exhibited the highest level of adjustment. Low religiosity was associated with the greatest degree of insecurity. There were no differences among the various religiosity groups in their fear of death, however.

There are only a few studies investigating the relationship between purpose in life and religion. Most of these studies indicate there may be a positive relationship between the two variables. In fact, only one study (Elmore & Chambers, 1967) found no relationship, positive or negative.

Acuff (1967, 1968) completed two studies which dealt with retired clergy and professors. In his 1967 study, 57% of the retired clergymen and professors of a southwestern state responded to a 67-item questionnaire which included the Neugarten Life Satisfaction Index A and the Purpose In Life Test. Three variables were considered: adjustment, purpose in life, and religiosity. He found that retired clergymen tended to be better adjusted and have higher PIL scores than the retired professors. Both religiosity and continued professional activity were significantly related to high PIL scores. In his category system, the religious-active in both professions showed significantly better adjustment than the less religious-inactive category. Acuff concluded that "both professional activity and religion contribute to

the adjustment of retired professionals living under ideal conditions while religion alone may contribute to high purpose in life."

Acuff's 1968 study matched 50 retired professors on eight demographic variables and investigated the relationship between religiosity, professional engagement, and purpose in life. He found religious professors to be significantly higher in purpose in life regardless of whether they were professionally engaged or not.

Crumbaugh, Raphael, and Shrader (1970) investigated the motivation of trainees in a religious order and found they scored as high on the PIL as did the highly motivated business and professional men in Crumbaugh's 1968 study. However, there were no significant differences between PIL scores of those who completed training and those who dropped out.

Yarbrough (1971) found that among the college undergraduates he studied, those who belonged to religious organizations, believed in an afterlife and prayed more frequently, scored significantly higher on the PIL.

#### Studies Dealing With the Measurement

#### of Religious Commitment in LDS

#### Populations

As Glock (1962; Glock & Stark, 1966) and Cardwell (1971) have pointed out, a major problem with studies measuring the religious variable is the tendency to measure across denominations rather than within one specific denomination. Relationships that were inconclusive in Yarbrough's study above may become significant when investigated within one religious population.

The Latter-day Saint (LDS) religion has fostered a subculture in most of the small towns in the Intermountain West (Utah, Idaho, Montana, Wyoming, Arizona, and Nevada) that serves as the environmental background from which the individual finds meaning as suggested by Frankl (1967, p. 14-15). Descriptions of the subculture have been recorded by O'Dea (1954), Nelson (1952), and Vogt (1955). Given such a strong, church-oriented social environment, one might expect, of those who are affiliated with the LDS church, that members who are highly committed to their religious beliefs would score higher on the PIL than those members who were less committed.

While there is no research in the literature on the relationship between the PIL scores of LDS individuals and their degree of religious commitment, there are a few related studies which deal with the religiosity, or orthodoxy, behavior, and certain other variables using LDS subjects.

Smith (1952) compared Utah Mormons (LDS) with non-Utah Mormons with regard to the religious beliefs and practices usually associated with orthodoxy (Word of Wisdom, tithing, sexual behavior, etc.) among Mormons. He found no significant differences, when church attendance was held constant, between the two groups. In two follow-up studies (data are presently in process for publication) spanning two decades, Smith found some significant changes in the direction of increased orthodoxy in his non-LDS samples. Again, there were no differences between the Utah Mormon and non-Utah Mormon groups when church attendance was held constant.

While Kunz's (1964) study on Mormon and non-Mormon divorce patterns used college students, it did not deal with the students per se but with their parents. He found that religiosity, measured by church attendance, was related to the type of marriage (civil, church, or temple) Mormons preferred and the subsequent divorce rate. For instance, among the Mormons in the study, those who were less religious tended to have civil marriages; those Mormons who were moderately religious had church marriages; and those who were most religious chose temple marriages. The divorce rate was negatively related to religiosity, i.e., it may be reasonable to expect, from Kunz's findings, that other aspects of the LDS individual's life are influenced by his religion, including the meaning he feels life has for him.

Christensen and Carpenter (1962) investigated the prevailing sex norms in three Western subcultures of college students in Denmark, the Midwest, and the Intermountain West (Utah in this study). Of the three samples, the Intermountain sample was the most conservative. The investigators attributed the difference to the influence of the Mormon culture. Ten years later, Christensen and Gregg (1970) replicated the study with similar results. Trend analysis of the data, however, showed that females in both U.S. subcultures became more liberalized in their attitudes toward sex at a faster rate than males, but the Intermountain sample was still more conservative than the Midwest sample. The latter study would seem to indicate that the influence of the LDS religion is still strong in the Intermountain West.

Vernon (1956) studied some background factors in an LDS congregation (called a "ward" in LDS terminology) which he found to be related

to church orthodoxy. He found that more males tended to be at the extremes of the orthodoxy continuum than females. There also appeared to be a cyclical pattern of orthodoxy on the age variable ranging from high orthodoxy in 18 to 19 year olds to a decline in 20 to 29 year olds and then an increase in orthodoxy until about age 60 where it declined once again. A similar pattern was evident with regard to income level. Those who had served on missions were more orthodox than those who had not and those who were converts to the church were more orthodox than those who were born into the church.

In a study of marriage-role expectations and religiosity, Orme (1974) found no differences between Mormons and non-Mormons with regard to marriage-role expectations. All subjects in his study tended to be moderately equalitarian in their marriage-role expectations, but the inactive females, both Mormon and non-Mormon, were significantly more equalitarian than the active males and females.

Edwards (1975) investigated the relationship between the perceived feminine role orientation of females and a positive self concept. She found that the highly committed LDS females in her sample held a more traditional view of their feminine roles than the non-LDS females, yet had an equally high positive self-concept.

### Summary and Conclusions of the

#### Review of Literature

This review of literature has been an attempt to cover: (a) studies attempting to measure religious commitment; (b) studies dealing with the measurement of meaning; (c) studies relating the measurement

of religious commitment and meaning; and (d) studies dealing with the measurement of religious commitment in LDS populations.

Following are some of the conclusions which can be drawn from the studies reviewed:

1. Some aspects of religion such as church affiliation or church preference do not reveal much about the religious commitment of the individuals studied or necessarily yield valid results for generalization to the religious population as a whole.

2. While fairly valid results can be obtained using a unidimensional approach to measuring religious commitment, it is probably better to measure two or more dimensions in order to get a more discriminating measure of the variable for better understanding.

3. While purpose in life and self-actualization are both necessary components to the healthy personality, the two constructs, as operationalized by Crumbaugh and Shostrum appear to be unrelated.

4. There appears to be some conflicting results in the literature concerning what constitutes purpose in life and its relationship to religious commitment.

5. Anomie and self-actualization are inversely related to religious commitment.

6. Individuals with high religious commitment, both LDS and non-LDS, are more likely to be involved in the public and private practices (rituals) of their religions.

7. LDS males can generally be expected to have an equal or higher degree of religious commitment than LDS females.

8. Young LDS adults, as a group, generally exhibit high religious commitment.

9. Highly committed LDS females tend to hold traditional feminine role expectations, i.e., they should be expected to conform closely to those role expectations and consequently exhibit high purpose in life also.

## CHAPTER IV

MethodologySample

The subjects comprising the sample of this study were 255 undergraduate men and women enrolled in introductory psychology and sociology classes at Utah State University during spring quarter, 1975.

Of the total sample, 115 of the subjects were freshmen, 81 were sophomores, 39 were juniors, 13 were seniors, and 7 did not respond to the question (see Table 1). There were 122 males and 132 females, making up 48% and 52% of the sample respectively. One subject did not record his or her sex. The subjects ranged in age from 18 to 38, 68% of whom were between the ages of 18 and 20, and 90% were under 22 years of age.

Regarding religious preference, 67.8% were members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS). In the non-LDS portion, 27.5% were Christians, 3.1% were non-Christians, and 1.2% were Atheists. One individual could not be classified (see Table 2).

The majority of subjects (221) were single, making up approximately 87% of the sample. Twenty-six were married and five were divorced. Seventy-seven percent came from average to above average economic backgrounds (see Table 3). The majority (69%) of the subjects in the sample came from small towns in Utah or the Intermountain states with 25,000 or less population. More than 90% of the subjects were Caucasian. Most

Table 1  
Sample Breakdown by Year in School

Year in School	N	Percent of Total Sample
Freshman	115	45
Sophomore	81	22
Junior	39	15
Senior	13	5
No Response	7	3
Total	255	100

Table 2  
Religious Affiliation of Subjects

Religious Affiliation	N	Percent of Total Sample
LDS	173	68
Non-LDS Christian	70	28
Non-LDS non-Christian	8	3
Atheist	3	1
No response	1	0

Note. Percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number.

Table 3  
Geographical Background of Sample

Home state or nation	LDS		Non-LDS		Total N	Percent of total sample
	N	Percent of LDS subjects	N	Percent of non-LDS subjects		
Utah	146	84	19	23	165	65
Non-Utah Intermountain	11	6	9	11	20	8
Non-Intermountain state	13	8	42	51	55	21
Foreign	1	1	9	11	10	4
No response	2	1	3	4	5	2
Total	173	100	82	100	255	100

of the minority students were either Oriental or American Indian, the exact numbers of which are not known since the subjects were not asked their race.

LDS college students were chosen for investigation in this study for two major reasons. First, the LDS religion is the dominant religion in Utah and in many of the small towns of the Intermountain West. It is also the dominant religion represented on the Utah State University campus, providing a readily accessible LDS population for study. LDS students represent 60 to 70% of the student body, a percentage closely matched by the sample of this study.

As was mentioned in the introduction and literature review, Cardwell (1971) and Glock (1962; Glock & Stark, 1966) suggested better

results would be obtained if one denomination was used in studying the religious commitment variable. As might be expected then, the LDS subjects in the study are of primary interest.

Second, Vernon (1956) and Smith (in press) found this age group of young LDS adults to be highly committed. The LDS church takes the majority of its full-time missionaries from the 18 to 22 age group of its members. LDS missionaries pay all their own expenses on their missions. This represents a great deal of time, expense, and commitment on their part. For this reason, a fairly high level of commitment and purpose in life was expected to be present in many subjects in the sample.

#### Procedures

The investigator first obtained permission from the class instructors to administer the instruments in questionnaire form to the students in each class. Appointments were then arranged at the convenience of the instructors. Because the questionnaire was short and required only a short time to administer, the last 20 minutes of the class period were selected for this purpose.

Since some of the laboratory sessions in one of the large sociology classes met at the same time of day but in different buildings, it was not possible for the investigator to be present in every classroom to administer the questionnaires, so the aid of the class instructor's teaching assistants was enlisted.

In order to minimize variance in the way the questionnaire was administered, instructions pertinent to the administration were written down. The teaching assistants were briefed in a discussion as to how

to answer any questions which were likely to arise. The class instructors and teaching assistants introduced the investigator to the class in a brief lecture concerning research techniques and the students were asked to participate in the study. In those classes where the investigator was not present, the teaching assistants followed a similar format and presented the instructions themselves.

After the questionnaires were passed out to the class, the following instructions were given:

"As you can see, this questionnaire is composed of two test instruments and a general information sheet stapled together. Please do not separate them. They are stapled together because your names will not be on them in order to insure anonymity. Please do not sign your name to the questionnaire. The information obtained from this questionnaire will be used in a Master's thesis. Answer Part A of the Purpose In Life test only, but all of the IRM and the general information sheet. Please answer every item with your true feelings. I will be here to answer any questions you may have. There is a chair by the door where you can put the questionnaires as you leave the room."

A complimentary copy of the questionnaire was given each instructor and a promise to report the results to each when the data were analyzed. Interestingly, it was expected that few, if any, students would refuse to participate in the study when asked as was indeed the case. For the most part, it seems the students take invitations to participate in studies during the class period as part of the course requirements and few were willing to take the risk of not participating, even at the

insistence of the instructor that there would be no penalties if they refused. Only two or three students in each class refused to participate, or, as was later noticed, failed to answer all parts of the questionnaire.

### Analysis

A two-way analysis of variance was used to test hypotheses 1, 2, and 3. Scores on the PIL test were the dependent variable. The independent variables were the mean scores on the IRM for the high, moderate, and low scoring groups for religious commitment, and sex.

The data were also analyzed by calculating a point biserial correlation for sex and scores on the PIL test, and for sex and scores on the IRM scale. A Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was calculated for scores on the PIL test and IRM scale.

In all statistical computations the 5% level of confidence was chosen as the point to represent significance.

### Instrumentation

Two instruments were used in this study: Crumbaugh's Purpose In Life (PIL) Test and Hoge's Intrinsic Religious Motivation Scale (IRM). There was also a general information sheet which had questions pertaining to demographic variables such as age, sex, religious preference, year in school, college major, frequency of church attendance, membership in both church organizations and social organizations on campus, and socio-economic status.

The Intrinsic Religious Motivation Scale (IRM). The Intrinsic Religious Motivation Scale was developed through factor analysis by

Hoge (1971). It is based on Allport's (1966) concepts of "intrinsic religion" and "extrinsic religion." For the intrinsically religious individual, religion is a way of life, an end in itself. The extrinsically religious individual uses his religion for what it can do for him socially and economically. It has little or no meaning for him otherwise.

In developing the IRM, Hoge combined the items from instruments developed in two previous studies (Allport & Ross, 1967; Faegin, 1964) with some of his own. The items that had the highest factor loadings were retained for the IRM. The result was a 10-item measure in which each item is scored in a 4-response Likert scale. The responses are strongly agree, agree, disagree, and strongly disagree. The responses are scored 1, 2, 4, and 5, respectively, for the extrinsically stated items, and 5, 4, 2, 1 for the intrinsically stated items. The total score is obtained by adding up the scored responses for each item.

The reliability of the IRM is reported at .901 (KR 20) with item to scale correlations ranging from .60 to .85. The investigator also used the method of rational equivalence to calculate the reliability coefficient for the present study. The reliability coefficient obtained was .91 (KR-20).

The validity of the scale was established in two separate studies (reported in Hoge, 1971) using Protestants (predominately Presbyterians) as subjects. The final validation study reported a correlation of .585 with ministers' judgments concerning the intrinsic or extrinsic motivation of the subjects.

The Purpose In Life Test (PIL). The Purpose In Life Test was developed by Crumbaugh and Maholick (1964) from the Frankl Questionnaire and was designed to measure one's purpose in life. It is also a measure of existential vacuum since, according to Frankl (1967), one who has high meaning or purpose in life is low on existential vacuum. The test is a self-report instrument composed of three parts: A, B, C. Part A has 20 items; each item being scored on a Likert scale from 1 to 7. The scored items are then added up to give a total score. Parts B and C must be scored subjectively and therefore were not used in the study.

Crumbaugh and Maholick (1964) reported a Pearson reliability coefficient of .81, Spearman-Brown corrected to .90. Crumbaugh's (1968) validation showed a slightly higher Pearson reliability of .85, Spearman-Brown corrected to .92. Butler and Carr (1968) reported a reliability coefficient of .79, Spearman-Brown corrected to .87. All three reliabilities were calculated by the split-half (odd-even) method which was also the method used to calculate reliability in this study. The reliability coefficient obtained in this study was .89, Spearman-Brown corrected to .94.

The PIL manual reports a concurrent validity coefficient of .38 with therapist's ratings of the degree of purpose in life demonstrated by patients. It also reports a concurrent validity coefficient of .47 with minister's ratings of the purpose in life of their parishioners. Cronbach (1970, p. 135) said that it is unusual for a test to have a validity coefficient above .60 and that a test with a coefficient of only .20 can still be useful. The PIL test's validity coefficients of

.38 and .47 are in a range that suggested the test was adequate for this study.

The construct validity of the PIL is reasonably good also. Crumbaugh (1968) correctly predicted the order of the means of four "normal" groups who ranged from highly motivated and successful individuals such as successful business and professional personnel to indigent non-psychiatric hospital patients. While the PIL discriminated between the "normal" and psychiatric groups, it didn't predict the order of the means in the latter groups as well. It did, however, support Frankl's prediction that schizophrenics would score high on the PIL.

Further evidence for the construct validity of the PIL is found in some studies in which the investigators were able to successfully use the PIL test to confirm predictions based upon Frankl's writings on meaning in life. Dorries (1970) found that, as expected, students who participated more in campus activities and organizations experienced more purpose in life than those who participated less. Nawas (1971) used the PIL test to help assess the lack of purpose in life of his client and the client's subsequent improvement in therapy. Strom and Tranel (1967) found that the PIL was able to discriminate between alcoholics and non-alcoholics. Butler and Carr (1968) found that the PIL was able to discriminate between the students who were actively involved in social action and those who were only moderately involved or uninvolved.

## CHAPTER V

Results

Because the LDS portion of the sample was of primary interest in the study, the results for that portion will be presented first, the non-LDS portion second, followed by a comparison between the two groups.

LDS Sample

In order to test the hypotheses statistically, they were restated in the null form. Table 4 summarizes the two-way analysis of variance used to test the three hypotheses in Chapter II.

The null form of Hypothesis 1 stated that there will be no significant difference among the PIL scores for the high, moderate, and low religious commitment groups. In Table 4 the main effect variable for Religious Commitment tested this hypothesis and was significant beyond the .05 level, indicating that there was a significant difference between the religious commitment groups in their perceived purpose in life ( $F = 7.60, df = 5, 167$ ).

A Sheffe test on the combined means of the three religious commitment groups resulted in an F-ratio of 6.97 between the high and low religious commitment groups, which was significant beyond the .05 level. There was no significant difference between either the high and moderate religious or the moderate and low religious commitment groups. Thus, the null hypothesis was rejected and Hypothesis 1 retained essentially as stated with one qualification; the moderate

Table 4  
Analysis of Variance of LDS Subjects

Source of variation	Degrees of freedom	Mean squares	F-ratio
Total	172	283.92	
Sex	1	136.57	.51
Religious commitment	2	2029.95	7.60*
Sex and religious commitment	2	9.26	.035
Error	167	267.25	

\* Significant beyond the 5% level.  $F = .95 - 2.21$   $df = 5, 167.$

religious group did not appear to have separated enough statistically from the high and low religious commitment groups to stand as a distinct group.

The null form of Hypothesis 2 stated that there would be no significant difference between the PIL scores of males and females. As can be seen in Table 4, the F-ratio of .51 for the Sex variable was less than the necessary F value of 2.21 and is not significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis was accepted and Hypothesis 2 rejected as stated. LDS females in this sample were not significantly higher in their sense of purpose in life than males.

The null form of Hypothesis 3 stated that there would be no significant difference among the mean PIL scores of females in the high, moderate, and low religious commitment groups. Again, Table 4 reveals a non-significant F-ratio of .035 for the Sex and Religious Commitment

interaction. The null hypothesis was accepted and Hypothesis 3 rejected as stated. LDS females in this sample were not significantly higher in their sense of purpose in life than the males in all religious commitment groups.

A point biserial correlation was calculated for sex and scores on the PIL test for the total sample. A point biserial correlation coefficient of .07 was obtained, indicating no relationship between sex and one's sense of purpose in life. A point biserial correlation was also calculated for sex and scores on the IRM scale. A coefficient of .27 ( $p < .05$ ) was obtained, indicating a slight positive relationship between the two variables. The male subjects exhibited more purpose in life than females.

Finally, a Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was calculated for scores on the PIL test and IRM scale where a coefficient of  $-.29$  was obtained, indicating a significant negative relationship between scores on the two instruments, also significant beyond the .05 level. Since the IRM scale is scored in the opposite direction of religiosity, e.g., low scorers on the IRM having high religious commitment, a slight positive relationship can be inferred between purpose in life and degree of religious commitment.

Separate analyses of variances were used to determine if purpose in life was affected by the demographic variables Year-in-school, Marital status, or Socioeconomic status. None of these variables produced significant F values (all F values were less than one).

A chi-square analysis was performed on the Year-in-school, Marital status, and Socioeconomic status variables that had been cross-tabulated with the three levels of religious commitment. Again, there were no

significant differences between the various religious commitment groups on these variables.

Two variables, however, Church attendance and Activity in church organizations, did produce significant differences between the three religious commitment groups. Church attendance was significant beyond the .05 level ( $\chi^2 = 85.53$ ,  $df = 8$ ). As can be seen from Table 5, 96% of the subjects in the high religious commitment group attended church on a frequent or regular basis as did 75% of the subjects in the moderate commitment group. Ninety-two percent of the subjects in the low religious commitment group attended church only occasionally or not at all.

Table 5

Frequency of Church Attendance of LDS Subjects  
By Degree of Religious Commitment

Church attendance	Religious Commitment					
	High		Moderate		Low	
	N	% of group	N	% of group	N	% of group
Regular attendance	79	89	40	57	1	8
Quite often	6	7	13	18	0	0
Sometimes	2	2	10	14	2	15
Rarely	2	2	5	7	8	62
Never	0	0	2	3	2	15
No response	0	0	1	1	0	0
Total N	89		71		13	
Total %	100		100		100	

Activity in church organizations was also significant beyond the .05 level ( $\chi^2 = 42.37$ ,  $df = 2$ ). Table 6 indicates that 83% of the high religious commitment group were active in church organizations as compared to 52% of the moderate religious commitment group, and only 8% of the low religious commitment group. The pattern of inactivity of non-LDS subjects shows an opposite trend.

#### Non-LDS Sample

The hypotheses stated in Chapter II were also tested with a two-way analysis of variance for the non-LDS portion of the sample. The analysis was limited, however, to the non-LDS Christians because the IRM scale was developed on a Christian population and apparently made little sense to the non-Christians and Atheists in the present sample. Most of the incomplete questionnaires came from the latter groups.

There were no significant main effects or interaction effects for the non-LDS subjects. The resulting F-ratios were .62, .79, and .64 for Hypotheses 1, 2, and 3 respectively. All three hypotheses were rejected as stated.

As with the LDS group, Year-in-school, Socioeconomic status, and Marital status had no effect on the PIL scores of the non-LDS group. The Chi-square analysis also revealed no significant effect on religious commitment for this group.

Church attendance and Activity in church organizations apparently were significant variables for the non-LDS subjects also. Table 7 shows a similar pattern for non-LDS subjects on church attendance as Table 5 does for LDS subjects although the percentages are considerably

Table 6

Comparison of LDS and Non-LDS on Levels of Religious  
Commitment and Activity in Church Organizations

Activity in church organization	Religious Commitment					
	High		Moderate		Low	
	N	% of group	N	% of group	N	% of group
LDS						
Active	74	83	37	52	1	8
Inactive	5	6	21	30	9	69
No response	10	11	13	18	3	23
Total N	89		71		13	
Total %		100		100		100
Non-LDS						
Active	3	27	4	12	1	2
Inactive	7	64	12	34	29	81
No response	1	9	19	54	6	17
Total N	11		35		36	
Total %		100		100		100

Table 7

Frequency of Church Attendance of Non-LDS Subjects  
By Degree of Religious Commitment

Church attendance	Religious Commitment					
	High		Moderate		Low	
	N	% of group	N	% of group	N	% of group
Regular attendance	5	46	4	11	0	0
Quite often	1	9	7	20	0	0
Sometimes	3	27	11	31	6	17
Rarely	0	0	6	17	18	50
Never	2	18	3	10	9	25
No response	0	0	4	11	3	8
Total N	11		35		36	
Total %	100		100		100	

smaller. The difference in the expected frequencies of attendance for the various religious commitment groups was significant beyond the .05 level ( $\chi^2 = 37.68$ ,  $df = 10$ ). The occasional church attender comprises a much larger group in the non-LDS sample. The major difference on the church attendance variable appears to lie between the high religious and the low religious commitment groups. The moderate religious group appears to be nearly equally divided among attendance levels.

Activity in church organizations was also somewhat different for the non-LDS groups. There was a significant difference in the expected

degree of activity in church organizations ( $\chi^2 = 6.46$ ,  $df = 2.0$ ).

The non-LDS groups were less likely to be active in church organizations in all religious commitment groups. Table 6 shows a higher percentage of inactive than active subjects across all three religious commitment groups for the non-LDS portion of the sample.

Table 8 is a comparison of the adjusted mean PIL test scores according to religious commitment, religious affiliation, and sex. It can be seen from the table that the LDS means are higher than the non-LDS means across every religious commitment group. A t-test comparing the two group means for each level of religious commitment group revealed significant differences between the groups on each level.

A t-ratio of 3.29 ( $p < .05$ ) was obtained between the high religious LDS group and the high religious non-LDS group. This value was significant beyond the .05 level. The moderately religious LDS group also differed significantly from the moderately religious non-LDS group ( $t = 4.5$ ,  $p < .05$ ) as did the low religious LDS group from the low religious non-LDS group ( $t = 8.4$ ,  $p < .05$ ).

An interesting pattern among the means is also evident in Table 8. For the LDS females, the LDS males, and the non-LDS males, the group means have a linear pattern, e.g., high to low. For the non-LDS females there is a curvilinear pattern. This curvilinear relationship did not reach statistical significance for this sample, however.

Table 8

PIL Test Adjusted Mean Values According to Religious  
Commitment, Religious Affiliation, and Sex

Religious Commitment	Males	Females	Total
High			
LDS	121.60	119.29	120.40
non-LDS	108.42	109.61	109.01
Moderate			
LDS	111.84	110.42	111.13
non-LDS	104.16	98.73	101.45
Low			
LDS	109.51	105.70	107.60
non-LDS	101.15	105.28	103.21
Total LDS	114.32	111.80	113.06
Total non-LDS	104.57	104.54	104.55
Total Sample	109.44	108.17	108.80

## CHAPTER VI

Discussion

The first hypothesis predicted that there would be a significant difference among the mean PIL test scores for the high, moderate, and low religious commitment groups in both the LDS and the non-LDS portions of the sample. It was expected that the highly committed religious groups would have the highest mean PIL scores, the moderately committed groups the next highest, and the least committed groups the lowest mean PIL scores. The LDS and non-LDS groups were analyzed separately.

For the LDS group of subjects the hypothesis was confirmed in part. A significant difference was found between the high and the low religious commitment groups, but not between the high and the moderate or the moderate and the low religious commitment groups. The difference was in the direction expected but failed to separate the moderately committed persons statistically as a distinct group. This result is in agreement with the results of Acuff (1967, 1968) and suggests that the more committed one is to his religion, the more likely he is to have a high sense of perceived purpose in life. For the non-LDS sample, however, there was no significant difference between the mean PIL scores of the three religious commitment groups, so the first hypothesis was not supported for this group.

While the mean PIL scores of the high religious group in the non-LDS portion were not very high in comparison to the LDS portion of the

sample, the PIL scores for the non-LDS sample were comparable to those reported for college students by Crumbaugh (1968), Richmond, Mason, and Smith (1969), and Butler and Carr (1968) as were the moderate and low religious commitment LDS groups (refer to Table 8 in Chapter V). These groups appear to be no different than other college students around the nation in their perceived purpose in life. The highly committed LDS subjects, however, stand significantly apart from the highly committed non-LDS subjects in this study and from the subjects in the studies just mentioned. Considering the significant relationship obtained when the scores on the IRM were correlated with scores on the PIL test, it is reasonable to assume that religious commitment does in fact significantly affect one's perceived purpose in life. The difference obtained with the highly committed LDS group, however, suggests that the commitment of this group must be different in kind from the non-LDS group.

The moderate and low religious non-LDS groups mean PIL test scores were comparable to the mean PIL scores of the uninvolved college students investigated by Butler and Carr (1968). The females in the non-LDS moderately committed group had the lowest mean PIL scores of the entire sample. This variability among the non-LDS women could account for the significant correlation obtained between sex and religious commitment. These PIL scores were surprisingly close to those reported by Crumbaugh (1968) for hospitalized neurotics. The data from Crumbaugh's 1968 study appears to indicate that as one's PIL score drops below 100, a corresponding rise in existential vacuum should be expected. For the non-LDS women then, a moderate drop in religious

commitment can have a more serious effect on their perceived purpose in life than a large drop. For this study, a large drop in religious commitment did not significantly affect the perceived purpose in life of the non-LDS subjects. A nonsignificant curvilinear relationship was found that was similar to that obtained by Dean (1968), and Keedy (1958). While the relationship is not significant, it does appear to reveal a conflict in the moderately committed non-LDS females. This relationship may be peculiar to non-LDS college women. Both Dean's and Keedy's studies, like the present study, used college students as subjects. It cannot be determined from the research literature if such a relationship exists in non-college non-LDS women. Soderstrum (1975) found that those of his subjects who were confused about some of the basic tenets of their religion tended to have PIL scores similar to the moderately committed non-LDS females in this study. Soderstrum's finding would seem to support the hypothesis of a possible value conflict in this group. It may be that the young non-LDS woman who does not have a strong religious belief and consequently is not active in her religion is more vulnerable to doubts about her religion and other aspects of her life that could affect her sense of well being and perceived purpose in life. The fact that the least committed females in this group have higher mean PIL scores suggests the possibility that the conflict can be resolved in part by rejecting religion and finding purposeful expression in other areas in their life.

One can only speculate why the mean PIL scores for the various levels of religious commitment in the LDS portion of the sample are

significantly higher than the PIL scores for the corresponding levels of religious commitment in the non-LDS portion.

One explanation for this difference may be in the integrative function of religious belief, religious participation, and participation in secular organizations reported by Schweiker (1969). Schweiker found that high religious belief and high church participation tend to be associated with high secular participation. These three variables occurring together produced a higher degree of sociopsychological integration than any other condition in his study. He also found that a significant degree of anomie was associated with low religious belief, low participation; and high belief, low participation was associated with bewilderment and confusion.

The data in this study tends to support Schweiker's findings. The highly committed LDS group scored as high as they did because they evidenced high belief, high religious participation, and were socially active (refer to Tables 5, 6, and 8 in Chapter V). This group's mean PIL scores were comparable to the scores of highly motivated professional and businessmen reported by Crumbaugh (1968) and the PIL scores of trainees in a religious order reported by Crumbaugh, Raphael, and Shrader (1970).

The same could be said, to a lesser degree, for the moderately committed LDS group because of the relatively high level of involvement still evident in this group. There is, however, more variability in participation in church activities which would tend to increase the existential vacuum present in this group, thus lowering the members'

PIL scores somewhat but not significantly. The significant drop in perceived purpose in life apparently occurs when an individual drastically reduces church activity as was the case with those in the low commitment group. It is possible that the moderately committed LDS women did not evidence a similar drop in PIL scores as the moderately committed non-LDS women because their church attendance and activity in church organizations were appreciably higher, thereby increasing their chances of maintaining sociopsychological integration through continued involvement in social and church activities.

The non-LDS group appears to follow a similar pattern with some important differences. First, percentage of church attendance was considerably less for the non-LDS groups than for the LDS groups indicating that perhaps church attendance is not considered as important for non-LDS individuals now as it was in the past. Second, activity in church organizations was much lower for the non-LDS groups than for the LDS groups on all levels of religious commitment. Table 6 in Chapter 5 indicates that while the high and moderate commitment LDS groups were more likely to have a high percentage of their members actively involved in church organizations, the non-LDS group was more likely to have a high percentage of its members not actively involved in church organizations regardless of commitment level. Third, the non-LDS group was less involved socially, but only slightly so, than the LDS group. Any one of these differences could conceivably affect and consequently lower one's perceived purpose in life, but a deficiency in all three probably accounts for the significant differences obtained between the two groups.

One of the interesting differences between the LDS and non-LDS subjects has to do with size of the various religious commitment groups. More LDS subjects are found in the highly committed groups while more non-LDS subjects are found in the least committed groups. This finding was expected for the LDS subjects because of the high religiosity traditionally exhibited by young LDS adults (Vernon, 1956; Vernon & Cardwell, 1972; Cardwell & Lindsey, 1974).

The importance of participation is evident whether the participation is shown in church attendance, church organizations, or social organizations. The social aspect of participation and its influence on perceived purpose in life was assumed and consequently not investigated in the present study. The data, however, tends to support the results of Doerries (1970) and Schweiker (1969) in this regard.

The reason church attendance and activity in church organizations was included in the results was due to the obvious influence the two variables had on religious commitment when the data were being analyzed. These two aspects of religious commitment appear to be the basic aspects responsible for the largest differences in the LDS sample. Church attendance held the highest statistical significance of any variable tested. This was true for both groups but particularly for the LDS group. Activity in church organizations was next but only for the LDS group. The variable barely reached significance for the non-LDS group.

It is interesting that Hoge (1971) did not include the church attendance item in the IRM scale. Only four items on the final scale had a higher loading than this item while six items on the scale loaded considerably below. Failing to include this item may have been an oversight on his part.

Hypotheses 2 and 3 were concerned with the expected sex differences associated with religious commitment and were not supported. The hypotheses were worded in the direction traditionally favored by sociologists and social psychologists in the past, i.e., that females are generally more religious than males, and, if that is still true, then females would be expected to have higher perceived purpose in life also. This apparently is not the case with either the LDS or the non-LDS subjects in the present sample. The Women's Liberation movement may be responsible for the nonsignificant differences in non-LDS females. Changing values may be playing down the importance of previously held religious values and consequently adversely affecting their PIL scores also.

Within the LDS church, however, LDS males are strongly encouraged and apparently do participate actively in their religion. The fact that their mean PIL scores are slightly higher than the female PIL scores is probably due, as Vernon (1956) suggested, to the additional opportunity for reinforcement and reward males have because of the leadership function they serve in fulfilling their priesthood obligations. Vernon (personal communication, 1974) indicated that males and females have traditionally shown equal religious commitment in the LDS and Jewish religions.

As Vernon and Cardwell (1972) and Cardwell and Lindsey (1974) have suggested, however, one cannot assume that males and females are the same because their roles and expectations vary. This apparently is true also for religious commitment among LDS males and females even

though they may have scored equally in religiosity and, for example, purpose in life. Committed LDS males and females achieve equivalent meaning from their lives, but from different roles. Cardwell and Lindsey found that while LDS male and female belief patterns paralleled each other, religious belief is more broadly conceived by the male and is more strongly influenced by the experience and adult ritualism (practice) dimensions (see literature review for explanation of Glock's five dimensions of religiosity). Several authoritative sources are cited by Cardwell and Lindsey in explaining the doctrinal and organizational orientation of the LDS male and female roles in the church to account for these differences.

Religion is a cohesive force within a group, binding the group together and promoting feelings of dependence and belongingness in its members. This is particularly true for the LDS religion, in doctrine and practice. Not only is the highly committed member expected to serve other members in some capacity, the less committed member is actively encouraged to participate and rejoin the group. All of the organizations of the LDS religion are designed to build a strong, unified, interdependent group. An individual of low religious commitment would have to actively resist inclusion to be successful in breaking away from the church. Such conditions may not always be desirable to some of the least committed members, but they do correlate well with and appear to produce a high sense of meaning or perceived purpose in life as defined by Frankl and measured by the PIL test.

## CHAPTER VII

Summary

The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between Frankl's conception of meaning, or purpose in life as measured by Crumbaugh's Purpose In Life test, and the degree of religious commitment of college students at Utah State University with particular interest in the members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS). Religious commitment was measured by Hoge's Intrinsic Religious Motivation Scale (IRM).

Two hundred and fifty-five undergraduates, 122 males and 132 females, enrolled in introductory psychology and sociology classes at Utah State University during spring quarter, 1975, served as subjects. Each subject received a questionnaire consisting of the following: the Purpose In Life test; the Intrinsic Religious Motivation Scale; and a general information sheet to collect demographic data such as age, sex, year in school, socioeconomic status, etc.

A two-way analysis of variance with factors of sex and three levels of religious commitment was used to test three hypotheses: (a) there will be a significant difference among the mean PIL scores for the high, moderate, and low religious commitment groups (in that order); (b) females will be significantly higher in their sense of purpose in life than males; (c) females will be significantly higher in their sense of purpose in life in all religious commitment groups. A

Sheffe test was also used to follow the analysis of variance for further testing Hypothesis 1. An analysis of variance for the three hypotheses was calculated separately for the LDS and non-LDS group. Two-way analyses of variances were also used to analyze each of the factors: year in school, socioeconomic status, and marital status with purpose in life.

A point biserial correlation was calculated for sex and scores on the IRM, and for sex and scores on the PIL test. A Pearson product moment correlation coefficient was calculated for scores on the PIL test and the IRM scale.

A chi-square analysis was performed on the year in school, marital status, socioeconomic status, church attendance, and activity in church organizations variables that had been cross-tabulated with the three levels of religious commitment.

Hypothesis 1 was significant beyond the .05 level for the LDS group. The Sheffe test indicated the differences were between the high and the low religious commitment groups only. Hypotheses 2 and 3 were not supported. None of the three hypotheses were supported for the non-LDS group. T-ratios computed between the three corresponding levels of religious commitment for the LDS and non-LDS groups were significant beyond the .05 level.

A significant positive relationship for males beyond the .05 level was found between sex and religious commitment with males exhibiting more purpose in life than females. No relationship was found between sex and purpose in life. A significant positive relationship beyond the .05 level was found between religious commitment and purpose in life. No significant differences were found between the year in

school, marital status, and socioeconomic status variables on either purpose in life or religious commitment. Significant differences beyond the .05 level were found between religious commitment and church attendance, and between religious commitment and activity in church organizations.

It was concluded that the results support the premise that religion can have a significant impact on an individual's sense of purpose in life as defined by Frankl (1963), particularly if the individual's religion encourages active involvement on the part of the individual. The effect is especially strong if high religious belief, high religious participation, and social activity outside of church occur together.

#### Limitations

Some limitations of this study are evident. First, the use of college students as subjects limits the generalizability to LDS and non-LDS students at Utah State University and with reservations, perhaps to other college students. Attempts to generalize to the general non-college population probably would not be accurate. A comparison sample of non-college subjects collected at the same time would have been better. Second, generalizability is further limited by the use of voluntary subjects as opposed to both voluntary and involuntary subjects. However, as was explained in the methodology section, this problem was thought to be minimized by using introductory psychology and sociology students during class time. It is recognized, nevertheless, that the information was still volunteered by the students and may be biased as a volunteer sample.

Third, the use of subjects in such a narrow age range further limits what can be said from the results. The fact that most of the other demographic variables tested in the study were not significant may be evidence of such a weakness. However, since demographic variables often influence each other, in this study age may have acted as an effective control.

### Recommendations

Some suggestions for future research are:

1. To extend what can be said from these results, it is suggested that a follow-up study include a sample of non-college subjects from an LDS ward off campus and possibly from a nearby urban area to study LDS subjects of all ages, educational levels, and socioeconomic classes.
2. To conduct a study including a self-concept scale and some personality measures in addition to the ones used in this study to further explore inadequately explained differences such as the curvilinear pattern of PIL scores obtained.
3. To investigate the relationship between self-actualization, purpose in life and religiosity to determine if religiosity and self-actualization are counterproductive to each other as some studies suggest (Graff & Ladd, 1971; Hjelle, 1975).
4. To conduct a longitudinal study investigating the effects of various approaches in counseling on the perceived purpose in life of subjects suffering from generalized anxiety.

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Appendix

## GENERAL INFORMATION

School \_\_\_\_\_ Quarter \_\_\_\_\_ 19 \_\_\_\_\_ Year in School \_\_\_\_\_

Age Last Birthday \_\_\_\_\_ Male \_\_\_\_\_ Female \_\_\_\_\_ College Major \_\_\_\_\_

Married \_\_\_\_\_ Single and Unattached \_\_\_\_\_ Engaged \_\_\_\_\_ Divorced \_\_\_\_\_

Home state or Nation \_\_\_\_\_

Church Preference \_\_\_\_\_

Church Activity: Attend regularly \_\_\_\_\_ Quite often \_\_\_\_\_ Sometimes \_\_\_\_\_

Only special services \_\_\_\_\_ Rarely \_\_\_\_\_ Never \_\_\_\_\_

Active in Church Organizations: Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

Economic Wealth: Wealthy \_\_\_\_\_ Above average \_\_\_\_\_ About average \_\_\_\_\_

Get along \_\_\_\_\_ Poor \_\_\_\_\_

Attendance at social parties and gatherings: Often \_\_\_\_\_ Occasionally \_\_\_\_\_

Seldom \_\_\_\_\_ Never \_\_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_

Dates: Often \_\_\_\_\_ Occasionally \_\_\_\_\_ Seldom \_\_\_\_\_ Never \_\_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_

Club Membership: Several \_\_\_\_\_, Two or three \_\_\_\_\_ One \_\_\_\_\_ None \_\_\_\_\_  
(Includes Frats, etc.)

School or Club Offices: More than three \_\_\_\_\_ Two or three \_\_\_\_\_ One \_\_\_\_\_

None \_\_\_\_\_

Indicate the one answer that best describes your feelings about the statement.

1. My faith involves all of my life.
  - 1. Strongly agree
  - 2. Agree
  - 4. Disagree
  - 5. Strongly disagree
2. One should seek God's guidance when making every important decision.
  - 1. Strongly agree
  - 2. Agree
  - 4. Disagree
  - 5. Strongly disagree
3. In my life I experience the presence of the Divine.
  - 1. Strongly agree
  - 2. Agree
  - 4. Disagree
  - 5. Strongly disagree
4. My faith sometimes restricts my actions.
  - 1. Strongly agree
  - 2. Agree
  - 4. Disagree
  - 5. Strongly disagree
5. Nothing is as important to me as serving God as best I know how.
  - 1. Strongly agree
  - 2. Agree
  - 4. Disagree
  - 5. Strongly disagree
6. I try hard to carry my religion over into all my other dealings in life.
  - 1. Strongly agree
  - 2. Agree
  - 4. Disagree
  - 5. Strongly disagree
7. My religious beliefs are what really lie behind my whole approach to life.
  - 1. Strongly agree
  - 2. Agree
  - 4. Disagree
  - 5. Strongly disagree
8. It doesn't matter so much what I believe as long as I lead a moral life.
  - 1. Strongly disagree
  - 2. Disagree
  - 4. Agree
  - 5. Strongly agree
9. Although I am a religious person, I refuse to let religious considerations influence my everyday affairs.
  - 1. Strongly disagree
  - 2. Disagree
  - 4. Agree
  - 5. Strongly agree
10. Although I believe in my religion, I feel there are many more important things in life.
  - 1. Strongly disagree
  - 2. Agree
  - 4. Disagree
  - 5. Strongly agree

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_  
 AGE \_\_\_\_\_ SEX \_\_\_\_\_ CLASSIFICATION \_\_\_\_\_

## THE PURPOSE IN LIFE TEST

James C. Crumbaugh, Ph.D.  
 Veterans Administration Hospital  
 Gulfport, Mississippi

Leonard T. Maholick, M.D.  
 The Bradley Center, Inc.  
 Columbus, Georgia

### Part A

For each of the following statements, circle the number that would be most nearly true for you. Note that the numbers always extend from one extreme feeling to its opposite kind of feeling. "Neutral" implies no judgment either way; try to use this rating as little as possible.

1. I am usually:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
completely bored			(neutral)			exuberant, enthusiastic

2. Life to me seems:

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
always exciting			(neutral)			completely routine

3. In life I have:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
no goals or aims at all			(neutral)			Very clear goals and aims

4. My personal existence is:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Utterly meaningless without purpose			(neutral)			very purposeful and meaningful

5. Every day is:

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
constantly new and different			(neutral)			exactly the same

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Box 3167

Munster, Indiana 46321

Test #168

6. If I could choose, I would:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
prefer never to have been born			(neutral)			Like nine more lives just like this one

7. After retiring, I would:

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
do some of the exciting things I have always wanted to			(neutral)			loaf completely the rest of my life

8. In achieving life goals I have:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
made no progress whatever			(neutral)			progressed to com- plete fulfillment

9. My life is:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
empty, filled only with despair			(neutral)			running over with exciting good things

10. If I should die today, I would feel that my life has been:

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
very worthwhile			(neutral)			completely worthless

11. In thinking of my life, I:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
often wonder why I exist			(neutral)			always see a reason for my be- ing here

12. As I view the world in relation to my life, the world:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
completely confuses me			(neutral)			fits meaningfully with my life

13. I am a:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
very irresponsible person			(neutral)			very responsible person

14. Concerning man's freedom to make his own choices, I believe man is:

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
absolutely free to make all life choices			(neutral)			completely bound by limitations of heredity and environment

15. With regard to death, I am:

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
prepared and unafraid			(neutral)			unprepared and frightened

16. With regard to suicide, I have:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
thought of it seriously as a way out			(neutral)			never given it a second thought

17. I regard my ability to find a meaning, purpose, or mission in life as:

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
very great			(neutral)			practically none

18. My life is:

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
in my hands and I am in control of it			(neutral)			out of my hands and controlled by external factors

19. Facing my daily tasks is:

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
a source of pleasure and satisfaction			(neutral)			a painful and bor- ing experience

20. I have discovered:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
no mission or purpose in life			(neutral)			clear-cut goals and a satisfying life purpose

### Part B

Make complete sentences of each of the following phrases. Work rapidly, filling in the blanks with the first thing that pops into your mind.

1. More than anything, I want \_\_\_\_\_
2. My life is \_\_\_\_\_
3. I hope I can \_\_\_\_\_
4. I have achieved \_\_\_\_\_
5. My highest aspiration \_\_\_\_\_
6. The most hopeless thing \_\_\_\_\_
7. The whole purpose of my life \_\_\_\_\_

Continued—

## VITA

Merrill Lynn Barfield

Candidate for the Degree of

Master of Science

Thesis: Religious Commitment and Meaning

Major field: Psychology

Biographical Information:

Personal Data: Born February 11, 1941, at Jacksonville, Florida.  
Married Maura Trejo Contreras, March 14, 1963.

Education: Bachelor of Science, 1972, Brigham Young University,  
Provo, Utah; completed requirements for Master of Science  
degree specializing in Counseling Psychology, Utah State  
University, Logan, Utah, in 1976.

Professional Experience: 1975-1976, School Psychology Intern at  
Edith Bowen Laboratory School, Utah State University, Logan,  
Utah.