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An Examination of Studies on Beliefs of Christians with Special Reference to Their Validity and Their Insights Regarding Lutheran Youth

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AN EXAMINATION OF STUDIES ON BELIEFS OF CHRISTIANS WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THEIR VALIDITY AND THEIR INSIGHTS REGARDING LUTHERAN YOUTH

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INTRODUCTION

In the last two decades a great deal of research material has been published which seeks to describe and evaluate religious belief and action patterns among Americans. Some reasons for this research can be seen in the need to analyze forces in the lives of people which motivate them toward change in a rapidly changing society. There is also a need to develop ways of understanding people so as to minister sensitively to them in the diverse and often confusing panorama of influences, movements, and institutions.

Many of the studies of religious views and patterns utilize research methods of the behavioral sciences. Although the reliability and exactness of such research methods can be challenged, nevertheless standards have been developed which can predict and evaluate the validity of empirical studies. Standards for psychological research methods are used in this thesis to test the comparative values of the studies examined.

The studies under examination are limited to works of seven researchers done in recent years. To a certain extent these over-lap in using materials from one another. Some of them analyze various religious groups including Lutherans and some use Lutherans only as the "field" of study. Not all of the studies include analyses of youth as specific

categories. Yet where possible the implications of the studies for understanding youth (of teen and college age) and ministering to them are extracted for particular evaluation (in Chapter IV).

Although the seven empirical studies are the chief focus for this examination, it is also a part of the plan of this thesis to supplement and evaluate them with use of other material. One such additional source is the recent volume Research in Religious Development which characterizes religious research over a period of time and points out some of its problems and potential. Another additional source to be used (in a limited way) is in the area of "ideological (or subjective) studies." These are analyses by observers of contemporary youth, which, without the precision of empirical methodology, nevertheless probe the changing influences which bear on people in a different way than the more objective methods. Empirical researchers also to an extent use the analyses of subjective study to provide patterns for developing sensitive research instruments.

The goal of this thesis is to evaluate the accuracy and validity of the findings of specific recent research into the beliefs, values, and action patterns of Christians. This points to ways for utilizing these and other such studies critically and yet positively in the church's ministry, especially to youth.

CHAPTER I

EXAMINATION OF STUDIES ON LUTHERANS AND NON-LUTHERANS

This chapter presents the first of two sections analyzing empirical studies. The three studies examined in this chapter are by Charles Glock and Rodney Stark, by Jeffrey Hadden, and by Gerhard Lenski. Each of these studies deals with non-Lutherans as well as Lutherans. The following chapter will investigate studies which work with Lutheran populations only.

The degree to which any study is accepted should be based on examination of its procedures and its findings for accuracy. Limitations in research can lead to improperly based conclusions with no such intention by the researcher. Each researcher may have to make some compromises in setting up his investigation. In addition, human beings have biases which can lead them to find what they want to discover. There is no completely objective information. On the other hand, accurate research is a valuable source of information.

To get at the study material, which will be more fully evaluated in Chapter III, each of the following studies is examined for its procedures and its content regarding Lutherans.

Studies on Lutherans and Non-Lutherans

Research by Charles Y. Glock and Rodney Stark.[1]

The purpose of this research done at the University of California, Berkeley, was to find the role of contemporary Christian teaching in shaping attitudes toward Jews and it was funded by the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith.[2] The research deals to a large extent with finding the religious beliefs and practices of Christians. It is this element of the research by Glock and Stark, rather than the implications regarding anti-semitism that is dealt with here. However, the very element of concern for anti-semitism, expressed by the authors with certain emotional impact in the introduction,[3] could be seen as having some prejudicial overtones for the research.

The purpose Glock and Stark have in mind in the area of their research under consideration is to develop means for measuring the commitment of individuals to what can be plausibly considered orthodox Christian tenets. Out of seven items on which subjects were potentially to respond, the team selected four to become an "index of orthodoxy."

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[1]Charles Y. Glock and Rodney Stark, Christian Beliefs and Anti-Semitism (New York and London: Harper and Row Publishers, c.1966).

[2]Ibid., p. xii.

[3]Ibid., p. xvii.

These are: (1) The existence of a personal God; (2) The divinity of Jesus Christ; (3) The authenticity of Biblical miracles; and (4) The existence of the devil. On the basis of responses to areas of questioning regarding these four, Glock and Stark established a ranking of zero to four. This is calculated by assigning a score of one for each certainty in a category and of zero for each expression of doubt or disbelief.[4] The researcher also evaluated "ritual participation" in areas such as prayer and church attendance. As noted later, the study correlates the areas of orthodoxy and ritual involvement. For measuring orthodoxy, it might have been much more meaningful to evaluate people with different questions which would probe more important aspects of Christianity, such as these: instead of asking if people accept the "authenticity of Biblical miracles," a question on people's response to the Gospel would have indicated more about their faith; and, instead of asking about acceptance of "the existence of the devil," it would have been more pertinent to Christian meaning to ask concerning their sense of "personal responsibility to God for evil (or sin)." Also, while the rather significant category "there is a life beyond death" was included in the survey, it was not evaluated in the orthodoxy scale.

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[4] Ibid., p. 11.

While Glock and Stark did not specify which responses were from youth, they did separate two groups of Lutherans: Missouri Lutherans (The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod); and American Lutherans (grouping The American Lutheran Church and The Lutheran Church in America, because they found no significant difference between them).[5] The Lutherans scored in the following ways according to their areas of testing:

	American Lutherans (percentage agreeing)	Missouri Lutherans
1. I know that God exists and I have no doubts about it	73	81
2. Jesus is the Divine Son of God and I have no doubt about it	74	93
3. Miracles actually happened just as the Biele says they did	69	89
4. The devil actually exists;		
completely true	49	77
probably true	20	9
There is life beyond death		
completely true	70	84
probably true	23	10
On the orthodoxy scale the following:		
4. (high)	43	66
3.	20	21
2.	12	7
1.	12	6
0. (low)	13	2[6]

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[5] Ibid., p. 5.

[6] Ibid., p. 5-14.

In the area of ritual involvement or participation,[7] the following percentages were noted:

	American Lutherans	Missouri Lutherans
Attend church weekly or nearly so	65	73
Pray at least several times a week	75	81

While categories might have been much more meaningful for measuring the function of faith in the life of Christians, the researchers apparently are seeking to find what correlation there is between orthodoxy and ritual involvement. They do indeed find close relationships between these categories, with only 17 percent of Protestants who score low in orthodoxy scoring high in ritual involvement, and 68 percent of those highest in orthodoxy scoring high also on ritual involvement. They hasten to add, however, that these categories are not measures of the same thing.[8]

Having dealt with areas of orthodoxy and ritual involvement, Glock and Stark seek to identify particularism; that is, to what degree Christians think in terms of an "in-group" (whose beliefs are congruent with their own), and an "out-group" (whose beliefs are unacceptable to them). For a definition of "particularism" the authors use Webster's New World Dictionary with the statements: "(1) The theological doctrine that redemption is possible only for certain individuals.

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[7] Ibid., p. 16.

[8] Ibid., pp. 15-18.

(2) Undivided adherence or devotion to one particular party, system, interest, etc." They also quote the words of Coleridge, indicating the degree to which particularism may go in personal pride:

> He who begins by loving Christianity better than truth, will proceed by loving his own sect or church better than Christianity, and end in loving himself . . . better than all.

The questions and statements used to identify the level of particularism center in insistence on belief in Jesus Christ as Savior as absolutely necessary for salvation; and, the next step, asserting that membership in your religious faith is necessary for salvation. In the former category, Missouri Lutherans had 97 percent answering affirmatively--with 77 percent of American Lutherans doing so. In the latter area, Missouri Lutherans shared a high response with Southern Baptists and sects with 16 percent answering affirmatively. The American Lutherans were not far behind with 14 percent.[9] The study also shows a high correlation between those who scored high in orthodoxy and high in particularism.[10] This forms a backdrop for the further treatment Glock and Stark give to the problem of contributions to prejudice, especially anti-semitism, and also for contrast to more liberal religious views.

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[9] Ibid., pp. 19-21.

[10] Ibid., p. 40.

In their Appendix A, Glock and Stark give a good deal of information on the methodological approach used in their study. They acknowledge that it is necessary to make certain compromises in arranging for collection of research data. As one compromise, they felt it was necessary to exclude non-Christian faiths as well as borderline Christians from their study. The "most painful compromise" was that they focused only on church congregations, not including those not formally affiliated with churches.[11] In addition, their "universe" or population to be studied was severely limited to include only certain counties in the San Francisco Bay area. Their assertion, justifying this, is that correlations between people are stable however broad the sample. Therefore, the regional sample, they felt, is as adequate as a national sample might be.[12] The researchers made an effort to compare their statistics with those of a smaller national study of the American adult population conducted in October, 1964. These national data were sought to confirm empirically that the findings presented by Glock and Stark apply to the nation as a whole and to the general public as well as to church members.[13] The figures show that the national sampling puts Lutherans (and others) in significantly smaller

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[11] Ibid., p. 216.

[12] Ibid., pp. 217-218.

[13] Ibid., p. 189. (Study by Dr. Gertrude Jaeger Selznick and Stephen Steinberg in a series conducted by the Survey Research Center, University of California, Berkeley).

percentages on a number of questions. For example, on the statement that faith in Jesus Christ is necessary for salvation, the national sample lists American Lutheran with 55 percent compared to 77 percent on the Glock and Stark survey, and Missouri Lutheran with 63 percent compared to 97 percent in the Glock and Stark figures.[14] These discrepancies raise some real questions as to whether the Glock and Stark survey has the national significance claimed for it by some. It should also be noted that the national comparative survey included only 146 persons of the American Lutheran group and 45 of the Missouri Lutheran group. The Glock and Stark survey approached 300 persons of the American Lutheran category (6 ALC and 2 LCA congregations) of whom 208 responded; and approached 152 Missouri Lutherans (from 4 LCMS congregations) of whom 116 responded. The survey sampling pattern used for gathering data is also reported in Appendix A of the book.[15] The questionnaire, as well as other research material is included.[16]

Research by Jeffrey K. Hadden.[17]

After stating some of the conflicting points of view within churches--between denominations and laymen and clergy--

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[14] Ibid., p. 195.

[15] Ibid., pp. 225-229.

[16] Ibid., follows p. 266.

[17] Jeffrey K. Hadden, The Gathering Storm in the Churches (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, Inc., 1970).

this researcher utilizes the statistical data he gathered and contrasts it with the material from the Glock and Stark findings and other smaller studies. His aim is to identify some of the critical areas of disagreement between clergy and laity and to make some projections for solutions.

Of major interest is the survey Hadden used with a random sample for parish clergy and for all campus clergy of American Baptist, American Lutheran Church, Episcopal, Methodist, Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod, and the Presbyterian Church, USA. It is unfortunate, however, that the materials from the campus clergy are not utilized, for this might give some insights from ministry directly connected with youth. Nevertheless, the study is significant with 7441 respondents (67 percent) on 524 questions.[18] Some of the questions (paraphrased) and statistics derived are as follows:

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[18] Ibid., p. 42.

Statement	American Lutheran (908 respondents) (percentage	Missouri Lutheran (895 respondents) agreeing)
I believe in a literal or nearly literal interpretation of the Bible	43	76
Adam and Eve are individual historical persons	49	90
Scripture is inspired, inerrant, and infallible, including historical, geographical details	23	76
Understanding myth and symbol are important for Biblical interpretation	62	34
Believe doctrine of Virgin Birth	81	95
Believe in physical resurrection of Christ	87	93
There is judgment after death	91	94
Hell is experienced only in this life	22	6
There is a demonic personal power in the world	86	91
Man by himself is incapable of anything but sin	73	85

In contrasting the above information with percentages from other denominations, the author concludes that Missouri Synod Lutherans are the most conservative or literalistic of those surveyed in reference to beliefs, and American Lutherans are next in line.[19] It is noteworthy that Hadden does not

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[19] Ibid., pp. 44-52.

include Southern Baptists or sects as was the case in the Glock and Stark material.

Hadden compares his research with clergy with that of Glock and Stark on laymen's beliefs. He notes that wording of questions differs and that his ranking is on a six-point continum between "definitely agree" and "definitely disagree" rather than on the four-point scale used in the other survey. Nevertheless, he asserts that the statements are nearly parallel thus permitting some comparison. Equating responses to statements even partially different is questionable, however. In the following contrast of findings (Hadden uses Glock and Stark for laymen; and his own statistics for ministers), only the categories of "completely true" and "definitely agree" are used:

Category	American Lutheran (percentage agreeing)	Missouri Lutheran
Acceptance of Virgin Birth		
Laymen	66	92
Ministers	68	90
Reality of the devil		
Laymen	49	77
Ministers	66	78
Evil Nature of Man		
Laymen	52	63
Ministers	53	72[20]

[20] Ibid., pp. 54-55.

The divergence between denominations and the similarities between clergy and laymen within denominations is striking in the overall comparisons, and Hadden makes note of this. His major conclusion, however, is that "Protestants do not have a common-core creed," which, he says, supports Glock and Stark's similar conclusion.[21] No mention is made of the relative closeness of the two Lutheran groups, which is not paralleled between other groups with the possible exception of closeness between American Lutherans and American Baptists in two of the categories.

An attempt is made to document some divergence from standard belief and action patterns on the part of more youthful churchmen. His statistics do show that younger clergy (in most denominations) are less likely to believe in a literal interpretation of Scripture. The figures for Lutherans noted are as follows (the trend shown among American Lutherans is even more marked in other denominations, with Missouri Synod Lutherans being the lone exception with more or less constancy through the age levels):

Responses to "I believe in a literal or nearly literal interpretation of Scripture"

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[21] Ibid., p. 54.

Age Group	American Lutheran (percentage agreeing)	Missouri Lutheran
35	24	72
44	43	73
54	60	79
Over 55	74	84

Similar data (though not as drastic) appears on the issue of the Virgin Birth. Yet Hadden points out there is no constant picture of greater liberal views on the part of younger clergy, since there are notable exceptions in various denominations.[22] With little demonstration of doctrinal consensus either in his own or Glock and Stark's data, Hadden suggests that there may be humanistic concerns which tend to unite Christians.[23]

In seeking to assess relationships between religious beliefs and social issues, Hadden draws on research done by Professor Benton Johnson (published in 1962, 1964, and 1966). Studying laity in Florida and Oregon and clergy in Oregon, Johnson attempted to establish some correlations between religious posture and political-social stances. While Johnson's data do indicate tendencies for those conservative in religious views to be conservative politically, Hadden himself warns against weighing this research heavily because

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[22] Ibid., p. 59.

[23] Ibid., p. 76.

of the limitations of Johnson's samples.[24] Similarly, Hadden discounts studies he cites by Greeley and Rossi on Catholic parochial school influences on social attitudes and a study of Faith Lutheran Church, Minneapolis, because they use different standards of church involvement.[25]

It is in Hadden's analysis of various views on the civil rights movement that he documents some significant conflicts in terms of his theme of "The Gathering Storm in the Churches." For this he uses data from his basic survey as well as information from a national survey of the American public's reaction to clergy involvement in civil rights activity.[26] His own data shows that overwhelmingly clergy are in favor of achieving social justice for Negroes in America. Finding such social concern among the most conservative groups seems to have been a surprise to Hadden:

> Agreement with this statement "For the most part, the churches have been woefully inadequate in facing up to the civil rights issue" runs as high as 77 percent among American Baptists and drops only to 69 percent among the conservative Missouri Synod Lutherans.[27]

In spite of this general agreement concerning need to do more in the area of civil rights, Hadden demonstrates some decided differences in the way various clergymen and laymen

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[24] Ibid., p. 81.

[25] Ibid., p. 107.

[26] Ibid., p. 116.

[27] Ibid., pp. 117-118.

view the problems and needs. Nevertheless, the data does not seem to support Hadden's contention that a great struggle is involved. It does appear to be true that "theologically conservative clergy tend to see the Negroes' problems growing out of an irresponsible attitude toward life." The table below demonstrates this from his material for the two Lutheran groups involved: "Negroes could solve many of their own problems if they would not be so irresponsible and carefree about life."

Category	American Lutheran (percentage agreeing)	Missouri Lutheran
Fundamentalist	44	55
Conservative	22	26
Neo-orthodox	13	16
Liberal	9	--

The number of "liberal" among LCMS is too small to compute statistically reliable percentages.[28] It is difficult to be sure of accuracy in categorizing clergy into various theological camps as "fundamentalist" or "liberal." The age of clergy is also seen as a factor in greater or lesser openness toward racial justice.

On the same rather racist statement noted above in the table, the Lutheran clergy are pictured with this differentiation: only 14 percent of the ALC and 22 percent of the LCMS clergy under 35 agree. Among the clergy over 55, the

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[28] Ibid., p. 124.

percentages are much higher, 45 percent for ALC and 54 percent for LCMS, and the percentages grow steadily in-between from younger to older.[29] While one can question the suitability of this statement for assessing attitudes toward the civil rights movement, there is a definite indication that attitudes toward Negroes differ among clergy on the basis of theological stance and age groupings.

Another group of clergy, campus ministers, is contrasted with the rest of the clergy later in Hadden's book. On this same statement ("Negroes could solve many of their own problems if they were not so irresponsible and carefree about life") as well as four other statements, campus clergy show a much smaller percentage agreeing than for other clergy--in this case 7 percent compared to 23 percent. An interesting set of possible reasons for this is set forth by Hadden (in part based on his research--in part on research by Hammond and Mitchell):

> Hammond and Mitchell point to a number of ways in which this change--oriented role is realized in the campus ministry. First of all, the churches are able to recruit and hold persons who would otherwise find the ministry too confining. Secondly, the campus ministry is an environment in which innovative ideas can be developed and sustained. Not only is the campus a more permissive environment, but it also has structural features which tend to encourage greater interaction among clergy. . . . Thirdly, the creative influences of the campus ministry are returned to the churches via ministers who themselves return to the parish and through

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[29] Ibid., p. 27.

> their clients (students) who become adult church members. Finally, campus clergy provide an innovative leadership role both within and outside the religious organization. . . . In other words, the campus ministry provides an excellent example of a more general organizational phenomenon, namely the creation of a subsegment within a complex organization where radicalism can be tolerated and at the same time feed innovation back into the larger organization.[30]

This is a part of an argument Hadden develops (and seeks to document with statistics from a National Council of Churches Assembly poll and other surveys) to show that clergy are more liberal than laymen and that the more radical clergy seek and exercise influence from non-congregational positions.[31] Hadden puts it this way:

> The differences in the religious beliefs of church executives, parish clergy, and laity are clearly established. Consistent with our findings on campus clergy, and in accord with our theoretical model, non-parish clergy are less likely to adhere to orthodox theological positions than are parish clergy. But even parish clergy are less orthodox than laity.[32]

In one part of Hadden's argument, the figures he cites do not show a really large difference between non-parish staff, clergy, and laity (certainly not as large as between denominations in other material cited), on basic belief areas ("I know God really exists and I have no doubts about it"--"Jesus is the Divine Son of God," and others).

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[30] Ibid., p. 222.

[31] Ibid., pp. 227-233.

[32] Ibid., p. 230.

Also, some of the statistics Hadden notes earlier in the book indicate considerable approval of laymen for clergy being moral spokesmen. For example, over 80 percent of church-attending laymen are shown as approving the statement "Clergymen have a responsibility to speak out as the moral conscience of this nation."[33] In addition, his statistics show that younger people, and especially those with greater education approve of certain clergy social involvement.[34]

A significant point in Hadden's presentation comes when he is raising questions such as "How can (laymen) feel that clergy should be a moral conscience for society, yet so thoroughly reject American clergy's efforts to be prophetic?" He injects insights from a study of race relations by Gunnar Myrdal, written in 1944, An American Dilemma. Myrdal suggests that while Americans hold idealistic views, including contradictory principles. And perhaps most important

> Myrdal argues that in order to cope with these contradictory belief systems, Americans tend to introduce yet a third set of beliefs which he calls "mechanism of rationalization" which have the effect of reducing the inconsistency.[35]

While Hadden seeks to deal with this suggestion, he acknowledges that little research has been done in this area. What may be needed to get more accurately at the problems

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[33] Ibid., p. 148.

[34] Ibid., pp. 160-164.

[35] Ibid., pp. 165-166.

and potentials of people in the areas Hadden deals with are ways of assessing the complexities of human beings and their society, especially determining what can happen to them as God's Gospel and Spirit confront their inadequacies.

Research done by Gerhard Lenski.[36]

The studies by Lenski, as reported in his book The Religious Factor, although they are a definite contribution to the field of empirical research on religion and its effects in society, fail to distinguish specific categories for Lutherans to any significant degree. Lenski purposely lumps all Protestants together in his figures, because he sees little significant difference between them.[37] The only areas where he singles out Lutherans are in relation to Roman Catholics[38] and in attitudes toward social drinking.[39]

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[36]Gerhard Lenski, The Religious Factor (Garden City, New York: Anchor Books, Doubleday and Co., c.1961).

[37]Ibid., preface, p. xi.

[38]Ibid., p. 65-66.

[39]Ibid., p. 167.

CHAPTER II

EXAMINATION OF STUDIES ON LUTHERANS

This chapter continues the analysis of empirical studies, in this case using four studies done on only Lutheran subjects.

Research done by Lawrence L. Kersten[1]

One of the distinctive characteristics of Kersten's study as reported in his book The Lutheran Ethic--The Impact of Religion on Laymen and Clergy is his attempt to pin-point the factors which would make up a so-called "Lutheran Ethic." The term "Lutheran Ethic," the author indicates, was first used by Ernst Troeltsch in his work The Social Teaching of Christian Churches.[2] Kersten seeks to identify this "ethic" in terms of a "total ideology" including theological beliefs, social attitudes, and religious and non-religious behavior.[3]

The background for his study came in data from three sources in the Detroit area: (1) Interviews with 886 Lutheran laymen in three counties of the metropolitan area drawn from

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[1]Lawrence K. Kersten, The Lutheran Ethic (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, c.1970).

[2]Ibid., p. 16.

[3]Ibid., p. 17.

a random sample of laymen from each of the four participating Lutheran groups; (2) He also had a questionnaire completed by 241 Lutheran parish clergy in the area; (3) His third source was a questionnaire mailed to students of all faiths at Eastern Michigan University.[4] A total of 1,095 students returned this questionnaire from this University, 30 miles from Detroit, with an enrollment of 15,000 students, 3,500 of whom are graduate students and 80 percent of whom come from a 40-mile radius of Detroit.[5] The numbers of students on the list used were: 339 LCMS; 54 Wisconsin Synod, and an estimated 115 ALC, and 115 LCA.[6]

Kersten asserts that his data supports the conclusion that there is a traditional Lutheran ethic as a viable orientation in modern society. This is true especially among the laity and clergy from the theologically more conservative branches of Lutheranism.[7] His conclusions indicate that theologically-liberal clergy and laymen have a more optimistic view of man and their points of view are more in the direction of the beliefs and attitudes of other major United States protestant groups.[8]

In speaking of "grace" and "the law," Kersten makes a statement which has to be clarified by the data given later

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[5] Ibid., p. 240.

[6] Ibid., p. 247.

[7] Ibid., p. 21.

[8] Ibid., p. 23.

in the volume:

> The majority of Lutheran laymen today, in contrast to their views of being saved by God's grace through faith and trust, also say that they are saved by keeping the Ten Commandments and living a good moral life.[9]

When one views the table of responses, it is apparent that while indeed a majority agree with the statement concerning salvation by keeping the Ten Commandments, a far more significant majority state man is saved by God's grace:

	LCA	ALC	MS	WS
	(percentage agreeing)			
*Man is saved by				
Action and works	17	18	9	10
God's grace	75	78	84	83
Man plays no part whatsoever in his own salvation or conversion.				
Lay	14	16	19	26
Clergy	22	33	73	93
People are saved by keeping the Ten Commandments				
Lay	60	59	54	46
Clergy	2	0	1	0[10]

*Not asked of clergy

This indicates at least some confusion on the part of laymen responding, if not double-mindedness. The data also show,

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[9] Ibid., p. 25.

[10] Ibid., p. 156.

however, that the higher the ranking in religious commitment the less likely laymen are to claim salvation by obedience to law.[11]

One source of the "Lutheran Ethic" attitude is seen by Kersten as centered in the attitudes of Luther. Luther's view is pictured as separating "two kingdoms" with emphasis on "personal salvation." Kersten also portrays Luther as very skeptical of intellectual life. And Kersten's data showed that Lutherans today (except theologically-liberal clergymen) hold non-scientific views regarding the origin of man and also see conflicts between science and religion.[12]

In order to measure the impact of the Lutheran ethic on secular attitudes and behavior, Kersten sought to conceptualize the "independent variable of religion." In doing this he built on previous conceptualizations by other researchers. His study uses five dimensions for religious commitment: (1) Religious beliefs; (2) Religious practices; (3) Religious knowledge; (4) Associational involvement (participation in the institutional life of the church) and, (5) Communal involvement. He claims that these five encompass the measureable aspects of religiosity. Laymen and students were sampled in all of these five dimensions but the clergy were sampled only in the area of religious beliefs.[13]

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[11] Ibid., p. 158 and table pp. 160-161.

[12] Ibid., pp. 28-29.

[13] Ibid., p. 32.

Kersten's study indicates that Wisconsin Synod and Missouri Synod clergy are less liberal in beliefs than are laymen. Thus they constitute a conservative influence. The opposite of this is true in the American Lutheran Church and the Lutheran Church in America.[14] He finds a good deal of concurrence between his own research data and that of Hadden in his study of Lutherans all over the country in terms of the views of those in the American Lutheran Church and Missouri Synod on sin and the devil. There is also a definite concurrence between Kersten's research and that of Glock and Stark on the area of sin. The categories Kersten uses, however, are more expansive than those either of the others used, as demonstrated by this table on clergy and lay views on the Bible:

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[14] Ibid., pp. 33, 34.

Statement	LCA	ALC	MS	WS
	(percentage agreeing)			
The Bible is God's word and all it says is true (theologically most conservative)				
Lay	29	35	62	77
Clergy	10	19	74	100
The Bible was written by men inspired by God, and its basic moral and religious teachings are true, but because the writers were men, it contains some human errors.				
Lay	47	47	27	16
Clergy	76	74	18	0
Even though the Bible contains many errors and myths, it still represents God's teachings				
Lay	24	17	10	7
Clergy	12	7	4	0[15]

Kersten's conclusions indicate that there is a relatively low level of religious knowledge particularly in the American Lutheran Church and the Lutheran Church of America. The Wisconsin Synod and Missouri Synod had a larger percentage ranking high in the religious knowledge category. Communal involvement is also high among those noted as "isolationist groups" (Wisconsin and Missouri).[16] Kersten used a method of check-back with organizational involvement and communal

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[15] Ibid., pp. 34-39.

[16] Ibid., pp. 47-50.

involvement to see how these areas tied in with the points of view people had on religious beliefs and religious action.[17]

The conservative religious stance of Lutherans is seen by Kersten as resulting in definite conservative political points of view. A part of the motivation, he asserts, is a sense of a reward in the next world. The conservative Lutherans tend to be against welfare, with the exception of those who were Negro respondents.[18] There are, however, certain humanitarian emphases developing among "liberal clergy" which may replace the conservative "save souls" pattern of the traditional Lutheran ethic.[19]

Kersten identifies a certain sense of status quo conservatism in the Lutheran ethic that sees all callings as spiritually equal and would reject changing them by human means as "contrary to the ethic's ideal." He also sees a definite concept among Lutherans that they hold the "true religion" which results in intolerance, suspicion of Jews, Roman Catholics, and atheists. His findings indicate that laymen are more intolerant, however, than are clergy. The attitude of distrust, he indicates, is general toward all men, and the "ethic" fosters governmental controls.[20] Lesser tolerance is found among those ranking higher in religious

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[17] Ibid., p. 50.

[18] Ibid., p. 65.

[19] Ibid., pp. 68-69.

[20] Ibid., pp. 70-71.

belief and communal involvement. Yet high religious knowledge tends to result in higher tolerance levels.[21]

It is useful to compare some of the study areas between lay and clergy responses and those of the university students. The areas surveyed are similar, but it is unfortunate that in several instances, the questions or statements for which responses were asked are not identical. Therefore direct comparisons are sometimes strained. In the area of "salvation," Kersten's study asked of students:

How do you think man is saved? Responses by Lutheran students showed considerable similarity to the other Lutherans in the two areas which were parallel: by action or--by God's grace. The students, however, were given the additional options of "by devotion" or "by knowledge":

	LCA	ALC	MS	WS
	(percentage agreeing)			
How do you think man is saved?				
By action or works	23	23	13	0
By God's grace	58	59	73	85

The Lutheran students had much higher percentages selecting the category "by God's grace" than any other religious group (with the exception of Baptists, who had 56 percent).[22]

In the area of Bible acceptance, Kersten has only one category for students, and their responses find smaller percentages agreeing than among the clergy and lay poll:

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[21] Ibid., p. 91.

[22] Ibid., table, p. 200.

	LCA	ALC	MS	WS
The Bible is God's word and all it says is true	11	32	43	74[23]

It is difficult to find any really comparable scales between students and the lay and clergy groups on the areas of civil rights and social activism. Students tend to be less conservative in this area, while still conservative, although they are even more opposed to the church making corporate social pronouncements than are laymen and clergy.[24]

Rather direct comparisons can be made between student and the lay and clergy responses in regard to what Kersten calls "morality." The following composite of his tables shows the contrasts:

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[24] Ibid., p. 193.

Statement	LCA	ALC	MS	WS
	(percentage agreeing)			
It is all right for a person to engage in sexual relations before marriage with the person he or she intends to marry.				
Lay	17	17	13	8
Clergy	13	17	17	6
Students	59	44	46	37
	(percentage disagreeing)			
Women who engage in premarital sexual relations are almost certain to have serious emotional difficulties in marriage.				
Lay	36	43	35	37
Clergy	46	49	40	25
Students	67	68	69	59
	(percentage agreeing)			
It is possible that a particular situation could justify extra-marital relations.				
Lay	26	22	16	19
Clergy	44	30	17	6
Students	33	31	26	33
In the area of sex relations, traditional religious standards are no longer adequate.[25]				
Students	59	56	55	33

These statistics display a more liberal point of view on the part of students, as could be expected. And it is in the

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[25] Ibid., pp. 105 and 189.

"morality" area where Lutherans of the lay and clergy groups are more nearly alike that the student views are more divergent. This is among a student population where there is considerable closeness to home communities, homes and churches. It would be interesting to compare student views where the students are more fully out of their "home environment." This research shows little investigation as to "why" one's religious orientation allows for, or causes certain stances in relation to values or actions. Kersten does, of course, seek to make correlations between "high liberal," "moderate," or "high conservative" orientations and certain opinions or attitudes. And he attempts to draw out the "Lutheran ethic" line to use in tracing expected or divergent responses. But this comparison leaves a good deal to be desired in seeking to find why people think and act as they do or in seeking to discover what factors modify behavior. Perhaps this sort of measurement is beyond the capabilities of an empirical study.

In the area of "conclusions," Kersten deals to a large extent with the ecumenical potential among Lutherans. He finds considerable readiness among laymen for further sharing, but a relunctance among clergy, especially of the more conservative branches.[26] On the other hand, in this same connection, Kersten points out the "liberal" trends among Lutheran clergy. He makes some rather un-scientific

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[26] Ibid., p. 207.

statements concerning clergy and lay relationships, such as:

> The theological modernism which affected most other American Protestant bodies early in this century apparently has now permeated Lutheranism. The fact that the trends are strongest among the clergy, usually the defenders of the faith, is very significant for the future of Lutheranism.[27]

In addition, he asserts that "in terms of social attitudes most Lutheran laymen would be best served by Wisconsin Synod clergy."[28] His apparent pre-conception is that clergy should follow rather than lead the laymen of the church--and that emphasis on social concerns is a departure from genuine Christianity. He tends to make his definition of the Lutheran ethic the standard for liberal or conservative labeling and makes some rather unwarranted judgments and predictions on this basis.

Kersten's study, all things considered, is a very valuable piece of research, if it is not pressed into subjective uses. He has taken care to make it accurate and more sensitive to details of faith and action postures of people than some other studies. In addition to the drawbacks of the limited geographical area (Detroit only) and the lack of coordination between the lay-clergy and student surveys, however, he acknowledges that the low rate of response to mailed questionnaires allows a possibility of an

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[27] Ibid., p. 211.

[28] Ibid., p. 214.

unknown source of error which affects the realiability of the findings.[29]

Research done by Merton P. Strommen and associates.[30]

The research on religious attitudes and beliefs by Dr. Merton P. Strommen has been considerable in the last decade. It has, of course, centered on the researching of these categories specifically among Lutherans. In order to form some background for the major area of study, his recent work, A Study of Generations,[31] it is important to look to a certain extent to his previous work in his doctoral thesis and a "Report on Lutheran Youth Research."[32]

The doctoral thesis by Strommen at the University of Minnesota was on "A Comparison of Youth and Adult Reactions to Youth Problems and Sources of Assistance." In tracing some of the background for his research, Strommen notes that, while for a time youth movements had difficulties getting support from the churches, now the church groups are

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[29] Ibid., p. 233.

[30] Merton P. Strommen, "A Comparison of Youth and Adult Reactions to Youth Problems and Sources of Assistance" (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Minnesota, minneapolis, 1960).

[31] Merton P. Strommen, Milo L. Brekke, Ralph C. Underwager and, Arthur L. Johnson, A Study of Generations (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Augsburg Publishing House, c.1972).

[32] Merton P. Strommen, "Reports on Lutheran Youth Research" (Lutheran Youth Research, Minneapolis, Minnesota: c.1959).

interested in youth programs.[33] Strommen's hypothesis for his research was that "youth and adults do not differ in regard to problems."[34]

Strommen decided to develop a Lutheran Youth Inventory and at that time chose from 5,200 ALC, ELC, Lutheran Free Church, and UELC congregations to make investigations.[35] He developed a two-stage sample, one with 200 congregational visits, and, secondly, one which would list the views of selected pastors. He found a decided lack of adult perception of certain youth problems. He noted that while youth do express their areas of concern, adults still are unaware of young people's particular needs. The church, therefore, also lacks information on concerns and problems of youth for development of a new style of youth programming.[36] Strommen later expanded his research to include Augustana Lutheran Church and the Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod and developed a design for 192 congregational visits and a 4 percent random sample of 5,000 individuals. He employed ten research workers who did visits with the sample group. His instrument for Lutheran Youth Inventory was used for this survey, and he also followed up with the absentees. The inventory was developed from problems revealed by 1,115

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[33]Strommen, "Comparison," pp. 1-10.

[34]Ibid., pp. 6-7.

[35]Ibid., pp. 27-29.

[36]Ibid., pp. 117-136.

representative Lutheran youth who responded to a sentence-completion questionnaire.[37] After the survey a random sample of 310 youth was used as a standardization group. Data from them was used to carry on a program of reciprocal averages for selecting and weighing items. Reliability coefficients were computed for each scale to give an average of .92.[38]

Some of the conclusions from Strommen's early research were that for youth, the needs were largest in the areas of "family," "opposite sex," "personal faith," and "self and school." For adults, the needs were in the areas of "lack of perception of problems" and in equipment for such perceptions and that the church was not providing help where youth wanted it and needed it. Rather, youth programs were established in terms of the abilities of a given pastor. Therefore, considerable need for change was indicated. Strommen claimed solid validity for his research and among other things was seeking to find how Lutheran youth differ from American youth in general.[39]

A good deal of Strommen's research was placed into "Reports on Lutheran Youth Research." These reports were made in eight volumes which included various areas of questioning and response. Strommen urges youth ministries to

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[37] Ibid., p. 136.

[38] Ibid., p. 138.

[39] Ibid., pp. 138-142.

integrate and correlate efforts so that youth ministry can be a more dynamic part of God's great mission on earth. There is a need for the recognition that youth are different and need help, and he asserts that the majority of Lutheran youth were not conscious of the Lutheran teaching of justification by faith. Also, he suggests that youth programs in general neglect post-high school youth.[40]

Strommen claims internal consistency for his study and also a high reliability.[41] He assembles information on "help scale responses," "values scale responses," "beliefs scale responses," and "personal data responses."[42] He also assesses attitudes of pastors--finding that 25 per cent (the largest number) indicate that they cannot get close to youth.[43] Strommen also found that there is a very low concern on the part of youth for reaching others for Christ. A rather small interest was expressed in continuing League activities beyond high school. Most youth wanted leadership that would work with them on a "helping basis" rather than as a "superior" in the role of teacher or guide.[44] Lutheran Youth Research also did a cross-validation study with youth of the Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod.

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[40]Strommen, "Lutheran Youth," Introduction, pp. 1-30.

[41]Ibid., Vol. I.

[42]Ibid., Vol. III.

[43]Ibid., Vol. IV, p. 32.

[44]Ibid., Vol. V, p. 16-17.

In the major study, A Study of Generations, Strommen indicates that his purpose is to develop a "family portrait of Lutherans in the United States." This is to identify what members believe, value, aspire to, and do. He develops 78 different dimensions and finds that Lutherans vary to the extremes in each of them. His intention is to identify various sub-groups and also find whether there is vitality in the church. A good deal of care is taken to explain the process of data-gathering and analysis (in Chapter III).[45]

A Study of Generations comes at a significant time, the authors feel: One, because people are questioning the vitality of the church; and, secondly, because there is a willingness to have a spotlight on the church. Because past research has often brought the critique that people have found it "mindless," therefore the study personnel did working papers on "conceptual categories," on "assumptions" and on "organizing and understanding generations.[46] The term "A Study of Generations" is used as the book title because the interviews surfaced a great deal of concern about youth, and the study isolates at least three generational categories: those born before World War I (those of ages 50-65); those born between World War I and II (those of ages 30-49); and those born after World War II (ages 15-24).[47]

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[45]Strommen, Brekke, Underwager and Johnson, pp. 13-14.

[46]Ibid., pp. 14-15.

[47]Ibid., p. 20.

Strommen and associates found in consultation with church leaders and social scientists that these people showed definite concern for detailed information and comparisons about youth alone. Therefore at some points two-year age groupings among those ages 15-18 are reported when association of chronological age variations and belief are being investigated.[48]

The Lutheran Brotherhood Insurance Company funded Strommen's program of research and reporting and wanted to have a scientifically sound survey which would also be beneficial in the ministry of the church. The study group made use of the insights of 75 theologians, educators, pastors, and administrators to see what they would like to have included in the study. The question should be raised, however, to what extent youth themselves were consulted in forming the study that very much concerns them. Of those whose advice was asked, 54 took part in a January 1970, conference to give their insights, and the following spring, laymen from various congregations gave reactions to the questionnaire. The instrument for the survey was developed between September 1969 and May 1970, with 740 multiple-choice statements and questions. This was distilled from a previous 922-question form which had been tested in 20 congregations in the spring of 1970. The pretest was not included in the ultimate findings. So as to give fairness

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[48] Ibid., p. 23.

for responding, the questions were shaped into three booklets: (1) Your Beliefs, Values, and You; (2) How You See Yourself and Others; (3) Your Attitudes and Way of Life. One-third of the people interviewed began with each of the different booklets. The survey was administered by 8 seminarians in 316 congregations. These seminarians also did oral interviews which will be reported on later.[49]

The study procedure dealt with a sampling of the 6 million adult Lutherans in the United States and 15,000 congregations. Of these, 378 congregations were selected at random. Of the 376 available, 316 actually took part, or 85 percent of those invited. In each of these congregations, individual members were selected at random. The survey eliminated those under age 15 or over age 65. A table of random numbers was used for the selection. The congregations themselves were also chosen by a random process. Therefore, according to the researchers' claim, every person and every congregation of the big three Lutheran groups in America had an equal chance of being selected. Of those who were selected, 73 percent, or 4,745 persons actually took the survey. In addition, the non-respondents were also interviewed later and they were found to differ only slightly from those whose responses were recorded in the survey. The researchers, therefore, claim the study can speak with "considerable certainty" about all Lutherans in the United States. They

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[49] Ibid., pp. 24-26.

are convinced the study can be of overwhelming importance to the Lutheran churches.[50]

Probably the most significant part of the research is the area termed "The Heart of Lutheran Piety." For this, fifteen dimensions were assessed under what is called "gospel orientation." Strommen and associates found that most Lutherans reject a fundamentalist or liberal stance, choosing rather a conservative position and reflecting this in their reports of what they believe. (This is quite a different picture than that given by Kersten from his research. The Strommen researchers indicate some of the importance that belief systems have for such wide-spread applications as advancement in medical insights and also in work with under-developed nations. As a basic sense of the law and gospel distinction, the researchers quote Gerhard Forde that "faith should . . . enable man to make the distinction between law and gospel." But the question is raised, do Lutherans know the gospel? The survey found that three out of five, or 60 percent have at least a rudimentary grasp of the gospel.[51]

For the assessment of the "heart of Lutheran piety" these dimensions were delineated:

1. Transcendent meaning of life
2. Knowing a personal, caring God--(An analysis showed that if at any stage persons reject the church and its ministry, they tend to lack a sense of providential care.)

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[50] Ibid., pp. 26-27.

[51] Ibid., pp. 100-102.

3. An emotional certainty

4. Fundamentalist-liberal--(It was found that Lutherans do not require other Christians to believe exactly as they do.)

5. Christian practices--(The use of sacraments, prayer, etcetera, are important.)

6. Attitudes toward life and death--(A definite relation is shown to the certainty of faith.)

7. Age relation to the "heart of Lutheran piety"--(The question is raised whether one who doubts in youth may return to the faith in later years. The dimensions of this movement need to be evaluated in a longitudinal study over the years.)

8. Common patterns of influence--(Lutherans tend to reject the secularist attitude that meaning is only in this world.)

9. Orientation to the doctrine of the Trinity--(Younger people tend to see God both immanent and transcendent and this could indicate needs for change in worship patterns to fit with youth needs.)

10. View of God--(Younger Lutherans tend to have a strong belief that the Triune God is directly involved in their lives; older Lutherans tend to limit their view of God to the transcendent dimension only.)

11. View of Jesus--(Lutherans tend to separate the two natures of Jesus Christ. There is a greater sense of certain faith in Jesus than in God.)

12. Do religious experiences strengthen Gospel orientation?--(Persons showing highest emotional spiritual experience also report the highest level of personal practices and piety.)

13. Do Lutherans exaggerate the truth claim of Christianity?--(A good balance is shown here--the average laity neither rejecting the truth claim, nor endorsing an exaggerated view of it.)[52]

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[52] Ibid., pp. 112-121.

14. Christian utopianism--(Most interests in this area are from those who are insecure and want to build for solid institutions.)

15. The Gospel and life--(An attempt to measure the relationship of knowing the Gospel to the way man lives.)

The researchers conclude that,

> When the church teaches Scripture, provides for knowledge of Jesus and supports love and respect for parents, it can hope that it is helping to make human relationships more honest, tender, and accepting.

The church therefore does have an impact on life, independent of the surrounding culture, the researchers claim.[53]

A further area of great significance from A Study of Generations is in the conclusions regarding youth-adult differentiation and relationships. This and other material from the volume will be utilized in the chapter on "Implications for Ministry to Youth." Some of the insights from this area include the following:

"In general, the tension between youth and adults grows with increasing distance of years."

"Differences between youth and adults are very slight in some areas but strikingly great in others."

"Older Lutherans favor a stable and predictable world, whereas younger Lutherans place less value upon orderliness and the preservation of the past."

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[53] Ibid., pp. 122-126.

"The ages of 21 and 22 mark a time of flux and searching, a time when a large number of young people have suspended judgment in what they believe."

"Lutheran youth's lack of certainty about their faith is matched by an inattention to practices of piety which stimulate and awaken faith."

"Tension is high between youth and adults on matters of social issues."

"Most youth would restyle the traditional role of the clergyman."

"Youth serve as the conscience of the church on matters dealing with people who are strongly condemned."

"In spite of youth's expressed concern over their feelings for people, they do less than adults in performing specific acts of kindness."

"The institutional life of the congregation has developed in such a way that youth feel leadership and influence is in the hands of people over age 30."

"The best predictor of which young people will be disappointed in their church is their feeling of how well they fit in with groups in their congregation."

"There is no research evidence of a generation gap between Lutheran youth and adults."

"Misbeliefs are most likely to be found among Lutherans who have the least amount of education."

"College-educated lay men and women are closer to the clergy (than non-college-trained laity) in their rejection of misbeliefs, their attention to religious practices, and their concern for social justice."

"One misbelief that is found more frequently among clergy than laity is exaggeration of the exclusive truth claims of Christianity."[54]

The sensitivity and thoroughness of Strommen and associates in their research exceed that of the previous researchers. It may be that the great care taken in this research is especially designed to off-set some of the work done by others which tends to give a partial and dangerously questionable picture of people's religious orientations. Time magazine, in reporting on the "Generations" research gave credit to its scholarly reliability and also pointed out the value of its demonstration of the dangers of "misbelief."[55]

If there are short-comings in this most recent research by Strommen and associates, they may lie in the very desire of the researchers to have this report serve with maximum usefulness in the ministry of the church, as directed by the funding group. In addition, some geographical areas seem to have been missed entirely for polling portions of Lutheranism

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[54] Ibid., pp. 293-295.

[55] Time (July 10, 1972), p. 71.

in the sampling method used, even though the research team made adjustments in the geographical distribution.[56]

Research done by Walter Theophil Janzow.[57]

This recent research for a doctoral dissertation from the University of Nebraska by an educator in the Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod examines Lutherans according to "secularization" theories, developed by Max Weber and others. The study utilizes data gathered by Glock and Stark and also by Hadden for a longitudinal analysis and develops data for a cross-sectional analysis.

The conclusions indicate that speed and degree of secularization varies with different conditions and groups.[58] The concept of "secularization" deals with tendencies for people to depart from highly orthodox, tightly knit, and isolationist positions in an orthodox religious group and to move into more liberal, socially active patterns of religious belief and behavior. Thus the area of research employed by Janzow parallels that of other research work examined in this thesis although it is done from a somewhat different perspective.

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[56]Strommen, Brekke, Underwager and Johnson, p. 323.

[57]Walter Theophil Janzow, "Secularization in an Orthodox Denomination" (Ph.D. dissertation, The University of Nebraska, Lincoln, 1970).

[58]Ibid., synopsis.

In order to check his theories concerning tendencies toward secularization among people in the Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod, Janzow prepared a questionnaire and submitted it to a number of people in three groups: lay, parish clergy, and "ecclesiastical elites." For the lay sample, Janzow took a "quasi population" which consisted of the 488 adult men who were official delegates to the Synod's Denver Convention. His assumption is that these are "pillar" types and that other laymen would be somewhat more liberal.[59] For the parish clergy sample, he took a 5 percent sampling of the 4,816 clergy or 239 as listed in the Church's Annual. For the "elite" he listed all the full-time employees of the Synod and Districts of LCMS and all of the faculties of the church's colleges and seminaries. Of the total of 305 he took a 75 percent sample to compare roughly in number to those selected from the parish clergy ranks. Thus 228 "ecclesiastical elites" were selected to receive the questionnaire.[60] The total returns came back from 76 percent of those polled: 75 percent from laymen; 78 percent from parish pastors, and 76 percent from "ecclesiastical elites."[61]

Janzow's purpose was to check the responses of these people on a number of basic ideological components. An

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[59] Ibid., pp. 64-67.

[60] Ibid., pp. 68-70.

[61] Ibid., p. 75.

important part of the secularization process involves changes in the basic ideology of the group. This ideology serves as the sanctioning rationale for the original existence and the integrating logic supporting the perpetuation of the group. In establishing his concepts he drew material from Theodore Caplow in Principles of Organization (1964) and other authorities.[62] Janzow also drew on the studies of persons who examined the relationships between religious organizations and the ideological beliefs of the individuals who belong to them. Here he referred to Jeffrey Hadden, Glock and Stark, Will Herberg, Gerhard Lenski, Liston Pope, and others. Part of Janzow's focus was on an "accidental finding" of these researchers that ideologies not only tend to differ between denominations but they also differ significantly within denominations.[63] His questions were: What makes for these differences and what sociological effects are there in terms of organizational solidarity. His expectations were in part: that status sub-groups within formal organizations are likely to differ sifnificantly with respect to the organization's ideological norms; also that the higher the rank of the status sub-groups in a normative organization the more likely that sub-group members will deviate from the organization's ideological norms; also that age and home community size are factors--the

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[62] Ibid., pp. 25-26.

[63] Ibid., p. 28.

younger and the larger the size of their community, the more likely respondents would be to deviate from the organization's norms; and in addition that the tendency of ideological deviation in a sacred-type (orthodox) organization would be in a secularizing direction.[64]

One of the most significant expectations Janzow projected would show through in his data is that "secularization strain" is present in the church body. This develops, he notes, as members deviate from the organization's norms. And it shows through in two types of response: the deviators work toward changing the normative system; and the "majority group" seeks to get deviators back into the fold--or out of the group. He included in his study an analysis of convention resolutions evidencing such "strain" in five conventions, from 1959 to 1969, in the areas of theology, church relations, social action, and others.[65] Increases in such resolutions, he projected, would be evidences of existence of strain.[66]

The issues to be studied in his research, Janzow notes as "Doctrinal Orthodoxy," "Role of the Church in Social Issues," and "Ecumenicity." In addition, for those who were Synodical Convention delegates, he included questions on their attitudes and voting.[67] He did a pre-test of his

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[64] Ibid., pp. 45-47.

[65] Ibid., p. 88.

[66] Ibid., p. 90.

[67] Ibid., pp. 63-73.

instrument with a mailing to 27 persons, of whom 24 replied, including some suggestions for altering his questionnaire. He did not, however, check back with non-respondents.[68]

In seeking to make a longitudinal comparison, Janzow used the orthodoxy index and results from Glock and Stark and Hadden in research conducted earlier.[69] Although the questionnaire statements Janzow uses are similar to those of the other researchers, he adds parenthetical comments which tend to sharpen the orthodoxy of the statements. His own similar statements to be used for cross-sectional comparison are included in the survey.[70] His use of the parenthetical additions, of course, upset the possibility of direct comparison of responses to identical material. For measurement of secularization, Janzow simply sought to determine the extent to which members deviate from a position of absolute orthodoxy.[71] Difficulties in this method for finding real meaning include the problem of establishing what is orthodoxy and what shades of understanding people have always been deviant and thus represent no change toward secularization.

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[68] Ibid., p. 75.

[69] Ibid., p. 79.

[70] Ibid., p. 80.

[71] Ibid., p. 77.

The scope of this thesis does not allow going into each of Janzow's hypotheses in detail, but it is possible to observe some of the ways he analyzes his results. Although he found that deviation grows from lay to clergy to elites on belief and ecumenical matters, there was considerably less difference on social issues. His conclusion is that people are more likely to be secularized in this area, as the respondents appear more liberal than conservative.[72] He overlooks the possibility that this represents the application of the faith. Janzow finds that age has only a slight effect on religious ideology between status sub-groups. Although he at first sees this as disagreeing with Hadden's research, he does note that Hadden sees Missouri Synod as something of an exception from the assertion that youth and clergy are more liberal.[73] That the lay scores in Janzow's research show up as more orthodox than those of Glock and Stark, he lays to the fact that his subjects are only "pillars of the church" and perhaps his parenthetical additions on the instrument led people to respond in a more orthodox way.[74] In analyzing the data from convention delegates, Janzow notes that of 23 percent who were undecided on the ALC fellowship issue, 3 percent finally voted "no" and 20 percent voted "yes." He received comments from respondents

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[72] Ibid., p. 108.

[73] Ibid., pp. 127-129.

[74] Ibid., p. 153.

on both this and the presidential election issue (where 27 percent and 24 percent respectively were dissatisfied with the procedure) and concludes that there is a "complex web of interaction between sociological and psychological forces" which make for ideological changes.[75]

Janzow lists seven major findings from his study, which are as follows:[76]

1. There is significant "within-organization" deviation from orthodox-type ideological norms among both LCMS laity and clergy. Glock and Stark as well as Hadden found Missouri participants in their study orthodox, but they compared respondents to those from other religious groups. Janzow compares to "orthodox norms" themselves. And in this way he found deviation scores of from 29 percent to 97 percent departure from high orthodox ratings.

2. There is significant difference between ecclesiastical status sub-groups.

3. There is a moderate to strong rank order association between such sub-groups and the degree of deviation.

4. Contrary to his expectations, Janzow finds age is of only slight importance in deviation.

5. The size of respondents' community, also contrary to the researcher's expectation, had only slight moderate and erratic effect on deviation.

6. The direction of ideological change is toward secularization rather than sacralization. This is an inferential finding from cross-sectional data.

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[75] Ibid., pp. 174-175.

[76] Ibid., pp. 183-184.

7. Deviation has resulted in severe organizational strain (substantiated by the convention voting data and the increase of resolutions indicating strife).

These are basic conclusions Janzow draws from his survey.

He also notes that there are psychological and cultural explanations for these results and perhaps more importantly a set of forces explainable only sociologically as components of a social organization.[77] Janzow notes that there were limits on his survey of laity (in addition to those noted before) in that his sample was not randomly selected. Nevertheless, he sees evidences of change in the Missouri Synod, which in its history has had many factors binding it closely together with the "self-fulfilling prophecy" of the image of a "highly orthodox denomination." Now there is a start of a new image, though still orthodox, which is more socially sensitive and ecumenically open.[78] To Hadden's comment that laity might refuse to support a new breed of clergy (too far out of line with their understanding of the role of the clergy and the church), Janzow states:

> Granting the basis is impressionistic rather than demonstrable, he would venture the guess that the present conditions of severe strain and stress . . . will continue during the time the organization is adjusting to a somewhat less sacralized ideology and adapting to a somewhat more sensitive and open ecclesiology. This condition, however, like storm conditions generally, will not last forever. Instead, it will be followed by a new period of calm, a period when fences can be mended,

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[77] Ibid., p. 191.

[78] Ibid., p. 193.

> solidarity restored, work proceed apace, and eyes continue cautiously to scan the horizon, ready to catch the signs that the next storm is approaching.[79]

In rounding out his study, Janzow raises three of the important questions which remain unanswered: (1) To what extent would the findings in this study be matched by similar findings in other "orthodox denominations" or, for that matter, in religious organizations generally; (2) If other forces contributed to the ideological deviation differences that were found in the Missouri Synod, and unquestionably they did, what are they and what is the extent of their influence; (3) Perhaps the most salient of all--what are the conditions under which status sub-group differentiation will have the ascendency in influencing the direction a denomination takes and when will other factors, like social class, or personal leadership, or cultural heritage, play the more decisive roles.[80]

Research done by Kenneth L. Frerking.[81]

Dr. Frerking did his doctoral research in sociology with some eight hundred students of the Lutheran faith at the University of Missouri and Stephens College in Columbia, Missouri. The purpose of the survey he conducted was to

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[79] Ibid., pp. 193-194.

[80] Ibid., p. 194.

[81] Kenneth L. Frerking, "A Survey of Social and Religious Attitudes of Lutheran Students" (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Missouri, Columbia, 1969).

provide a composite picture of the attitudes of Lutheran students on certain selected issues.[82] The dependent variables assessed in the research were: attitudes toward the Christian faith, political anomie, war, race, welfare, the institutional church, and the new morality.

For his instrument, Frerking used existing scales with one exception, as follows: for the Christian faith he based on the scale "Importance of Religion" developed by Putney and Middleton (a six-item scale to determine the personal value and relevance than an individual places on his religion). For "Political Anomie," he used a four-item Guttman scale used by C. D. Farris to measure feelings of powerlessness, cynicism, futility, and apathy in relation to the political system. To measure respondents' attitudes toward war Frerking used a scale by Putney and Middleton, dealing with the acceptance or rejection of war as an instrument of national policy. The research on race, welfare and the institutional church adapted scales used by Gary Maranell in a study of religious and political correlates of bigotry. An "Altruism" scale developed by Maranell was used to measure relations to the institutional church ("involvement in, respect for, and satisfaction with the church as an institution"). Frerking himself developed the scale to measure attitudes on the "new morality," since there was a void in the literature of empirical studies in

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[82] Ibid., introduction to survey instrument.

this area. He used the writings of Joseph Fletcher, a spokesman for the new morality to develop a six-item scale. A sample item of this is: "Moral behavior is always relative to a given situation; what is right in one situation may be wrong in another." These items were included in a four-page questionnaire, including requests for information on marital status, class rank, academic department, size of home community, and parents' political orientation, and others. The attitude variables were related to these background factors. The instrument was also pre-tested with forty-eight students at two other colleges in Missouri.[83] The instrument was revised on the basis of responses from these students where items were considered ambiguous, unnecessary, or otherwise difficult to answer. Frerking checked the reliability of the final instrument with the following results:

1.	Importance of the Christian faith	.90
2.	Political anomie	.92
3.	Pacifism scale	.67
4.	Anti-Negro scale	.86
5.	Anti-welfare scale	.84
6.	Institutional church scale	.72
7.	New morality	.78

The political anomie scale was tested for reliability with procedures used on Guttman scales, and the others by use of the Spearman and Brown formula.[84]

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[83] Ibid., pp. 19-24.

[84] Ibid., p. 24.

Some of the conclusions drawn from this study and its data are that radicalism seems to surge in early college years and subside by the senior year (or the younger students are more radical than those who preceded them); basic attitudes seem to have been set in pre-college years; characteristics of the present generation of students include "historic amnesia," "idealistic humanism," "political activism," and "self-determination." Only 20 percent of the students in this survey had liberal leanings. Females and persons in such disciplines as agriculture and physics tended to be most conformist. The Lutheran students are 3 to 1 from Republican homes. In respect to levels of racial tolerance, the male students, rural youth, and Republicans tended to be more prejudiced. Male students and rural youth also tended to be more supportive of war. However, social science majors were the most critical of war; and church attenders were more accepting of war than non-attenders. Welfare as an antedote to poverty was favored more by female students and by Democrats than others, but less by people having attended parochial school than by others. The sexes showed no distinct difference in either accepting or rejecting the new morality, but the regular church attenders, and those who had attended elementary parochial schools tended to be less in accord with new morality ideas than

others. On the other hand, those who had graduated from a Lutheran high school tended to be more in favor of the new morality concepts than others.[85]

Frerking's study shows some of the difficulty one has in predicting the stance of students in terms of their specific backgrounds. He also demonstrates the complexity of the social, psychological, and religious attitudes of students. His concept that definite change from home environment begins before the time of higher education and may be less drastic by the end of college years seems to be substantiated in his survey. He received 650 returns for his questionnaire sent to 800 students, for about an eighty percent response.[86]

One of the more significant findings of Frerking's research is the students' critique of the church's stance on social and political issues. Only 3.4 percent felt that their denomination was involved too much in social issues and 45 percent felt it was too little involved. Similarly, though in less definite proportions, the respondents numbered 5.7 percent in saying their church was too involved in political matters, and 20 percent felt the church was too little involved politically. Frerking concludes that this

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[85]Campus Committee minutes, Kansas District, LCMS, September 14, 1970, p. 4.

[86]Ibid., p. 3.

indication may result in a church which is more responsive to social and political involvement in the future.[87]

Other conclusions from this research are as follows:

1. There is a positive correlation between the students' valuation of the Christian faith and their attitude toward the institutional church.
2. Frequency in church attendance is a valid index of persons' valuation of the Christian faith and attitude toward the institutional church.
3. There is an inverse relationship between favorable attitudes toward the Christian faith and the institutional church over against favorable attitudes toward pacifism, and acceptance of Negroes and welfare.
4. The progression through the college years indicates more favorable attitudes toward the Christian faith, the institutional church, and traditional morality.[88]

Although it is limited to the Lutheran population at two schools in one community, Frerking's study has reliable information on meaningful variables. Certain very real concerns for the church's role in serving its youth are indicated and will be treated in Chapter IV.

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[87]Kenneth L. Frerking, "Social and Religious Attitudes Among Lutheran Students," Concordia Theological Monthly, XLIV (March 1973), 124-125.

[88]Ibid., XLIV, 125-126.

CHAPTER III

EVALUATION AND VALIDITY FACTORS

There are many difficulties in evaluating studies of religious beliefs, attitudes, and actions. A part of the problem lies in the very inexactness of the tools of the behavioral sciences for precise measurement. However, as will be noted in this section, at least in a brief way, principles have been developed in a rather complex methodology which, if followed, give promise of accurate and reliable results. Perhaps the greatest difficulty in scientific measurement of religious stances of people is in the nature and alterations of religious commitment itself. It simply does not lend itself well to measurement, and, as some observers point out, this is to be expected just because of the un-natural scope of the Christian faith brought and sustained by the Spirit of God. With this background, it may be helpful to compare to what extent alternate methods of analysis can compare with empirical studies. So-called ideological observers will be introduced to provide contrast with the empirical studies and thus aid in their evaluation.

In the volume, Research in Religious Development, which is designed to review 75 years of such research, the editor notes that there is a certain amount of difficulty in defining "religion." He finds that some authors indicate

that any such definition with which all can agree is nearly impossible. There are many ways of perceiving religion and understanding the universal phenomenon because in part it is "culturally shaped and ever changing." For some, being a religious person may mean being affiliated with a religious institution and attending it regularly; for others religion may be assessed in terms of expressed beliefs and therefore those who agree with a number of religious statements may be called strongly religious. Some others may find criteria for people who are religious in religious acts, and there are others who deal with qualities of "mystical experiences." Religion has a multi-dimensional quality which cannot be tapped with only one or some of the dimensions subjected to the gathering of research data.[1]

Over the years a good deal of data has been gathered in various research studies. Menges and Dittes in their book Psychological Studies of Clergymen located some seven hundred such studies. Nevertheless, in the words of one writer in this area the qualities that most often apply to most of the research are: "sporadic, fortuitous, and unsystematic." As to the validity of research in religious development, it must be noted that social science data gathered by one method or type of instrument cannot be equated with that derived in another way. In addition the

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[1]Merton P. Strommen, editor, Research on Religious Development (New York: Hawthorne Books, Inc., c.1971), xvii.

problem of the inexactness of the behavioral sciences constantly plagues such research:

> The natural or physical sciences are exact sciences and the social sciences are inexact ones. The difference lies primarily in the data. One studies natural objects--animals, plants, minerals--on which relatively precise measurements can be secured (e.g., temperature, weight, acidity); the other studies man, on whom the assessment of precise nonphysical outcomes are difficult to determine with any great degree of certainty. Because of the object of their study and their longer history, the natural sciences have a body of commonly accepted laws and theories of explanatory power, capable of yielding precise and reliable predictions. But the behavioral sciences which lack this commonality, have tended (at least until recently) to be identified with warring schools of thought. Each school has had its own conceptual framework and its own way of assessing human behavior. It is not strange therefore that in the behavioral sciences there is disagreement on what is fact, what satisfactorily explains the findings, or what procedures are valid in sound inquiry.[2]

Some indication of the relative unattractiveness of this level of research is indicated by the fact that of doctoral dissertations written between 1942 and 1967, only 2 percent were empirical studies with religion as a variable. An assessment which still has validity was written by Hartshorne and May in 1928: "Moral qualities must be regarded less as static traits and more as dynamic responses to specific environmental conditions or situations."[3]

Nevertheless, a good deal has been done to evaluate the real possibilities for research into religious and character

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[2] Ibid., p. xix.

[3] Ibid., p. xxii.

development. Studies reported in Religious Education in 1959-1960 projected the results of the work of 125 religious educators on "major unsolved problems," and they also projected what problems really were researchable. As of 1962, 50 research projects were proposed and a number of them were in process. The field is therefore drawing some attention in a more organized way with some excellent results than in the past.[4]

Some basic difficulties in measuring religious stances are noted by James E. Dittes in a portion of his material in Research in Religious Development. He states:

> The researchers' dilemmas in defining and measuring religion tend to cluster around two fundamental problems. One has to do with the degree of differentiation between religion and other phenomena. The other has to do with the degree of differentiation within religion. Part A. Is religion comprised of events, experiences, institutions, and other phenomena which are readily distinguishable from other "non-religious" events, experiences, institutions, etc.? Or is religion to be regarded more as a settled dimension pervading all phenomena and not to be identified (though particular individuals and cultures do make such identifications) with any particular phenomena? Part B. Whatever the decision on the first question, do the events, experiences, and other phenomena (or the more subtle, pervasive "dimensions") comprise a cohesive, interrelated whole? Or do they, rather, provide a diverse range of variables only loosely arrayed under the rubric of "religion"?

He asserts that both questions are at least in part subject to empirical determination, especially the second. And the first category especially, he suggests, is subject to "more

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[4] Ibid., p. xxiii.

normative, theological considerations" as raised by discussions of such matters as "secular religion" or "religionless Christianity." Dittes further suggests that this dilemma of definition and measurement of religion was pointed out in the Old Testament as the prophets distinguished between solemn assemblies and righteousness (Amos 5:21-24) and between sacrifices and steadfast love, between burnt offerings and knowledge of God (Hosea 6:6). Nevertheless, he notes some of the progress made through theoretical writings, scaling attempts, and, in the area of measuring the multi-dimensionality of religion, "factor analysis." Here, more sensitive measurements come from those who analyze from the inside rather than from an outside view.[5]

The need for inside evaluation is especially pointed out by K. H. Nederhood in his book The Church's Mission to the Educated American. In seeking to indicate some of the limitations of sociological research over against the dynamics somewhat hidden from scientific measurement in the life of the church, he states that

> sociologists study the church as a cultural given: they examine the church as a social institution. As a social institution, the church is parallel to the family, the school, the government, and other broad social structures which society employs to maintain itself today, and to reproduce itself in future generations. Many social scientists never consider the church as an object of faith, few sociologists approach the object of their investigation from an allegiance to Jesus Christ, the

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[5]Ibid., pp. 79-93.

> head of the church. Whatever his personal religious position may be, a sociologists is primarily interested in the function of the church within society. His work is primarily descriptive of the information furnished by sociological studies of the church . . . and cannot, therefore, directly contribute to a theological judgment of the current situation.

Nederhood does, however, encourage churchmen to use sociological studies of the church to get some idea of whether the church is entering into a "decisive mission relationship" with its environment. Another use, as he sees it, would be in distinguishing between what he calls "church" and "non-church." He laments the apparent reality that social scientists are able to portray the lack of the church with some accuracy, indicating that the church is not as fully church as it should be:

> If the church were continuing in the power of the Holy Spirit, if in the dunamis of Christ, if it were remaining his witness, a social scientist who turned from his study of other social institutions to study the church in the same terms could only be amazed and bewildered. For in the church he would find something which defied cold, scientific analysis, something which broke all the rules he had patiently learned, something which eluded his generalizations with tantalizing recalcitrance. The investigator would have to become a Christian, or deny the presuppositions of social studies.

Thus Nederhood finds that it is to the degree that the church accomodates to the norms of society that is scientifically measureable. And it is in the area relatively hidden from the social sciences research that the church functions genuinely as church in the world. He puts it this way:

> The Church's being, then, originates in the Spirit's power; it is this energy which animates the church, his ineffable work which binds the members of the Body of Christ to the Head of the Body in Christ himself. At the point of sensitivity to prevailing social forces a disastrous exchange occurs: the power of the Holy Spirit is displaced by forces which are foreign to the church's nature. When this occurs the rationale of the church's form and development becomes amenable to natural description. Where this exchange is total, the resulting entity is not the church of Christ, though it may be perhaps religiously nominally Christian; consequently it cannot possibly function as a mission; it has become non-church. Generally, however, the empirical church does not demonstrate that such a total change has taken place, but it is rather a complex structure, including in itself responses to social forces, and also, responses to the Holy Spirit's presence.[6]

Whether one can be as definite as Nederhood about the church-nonchurch distinction, or not, his analysis does point out the relatively "hiddenness" of some of the most important aspects of the life of the church.

Another observer of religious life from within the church--and also in this case a competent psychologist, who struggles with describing the meaning of religion, is Paul Pruyser. In his A Dynamic Psychology of Religion, Pruyser searches for an adequate definition of "religion." Noting some of the very ambiguous definitions, and that of William James, "the belief that there is an unseen order," he takes for himself the definition of "religion" as "a perspective on things, a certain way of looking at the

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[6]Joel A. Nederhood, The Church's Mission to the Educated American (Grand Rapids, Michigan, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1961), pp. 21-49.

world and all reality, including ourselves." His treatment of man and his religion, then, is a psychological perspective on a religious perspective, quite apart from empirical studies.[7]

Some of the problems and yet promise of the behavioral sciences in the area of analyzing the make-up and functioning of human beings is brought out in the book Society, Personality, and Deviant Behavior by Richard Jessor and others. The authors state:

> Neither conceptual nor methodological development has gone far enough to cope adequately with the awesome complexity of social behavior, and the accumulation of empirical knowledge has been far too scattered and segmental to provide a sure basis for scientific insight. What we have been left with, largely, is promise.[8]

In noting the failings of both the psychoanalytic view and the behavioristic view of man, these authors note some helpful directions in more recent developments in personality theories, as they "pay attention to . . . cognative variables in personality--beliefs, values, expectations, attitudes, ideologies, and orientations."[9] If the problems of basic studies of human behavior have been difficult, those in studies of religious meaning have perhaps been even more severe, yet not without the hope and plans for more

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[7]Paul W. Pruyser, A Dynamic Psychology of Religion (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, c.1968), pp. 329-330.

[8]Richard Jessor, et. al., Society, Personality, and Deviant Behavior (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., c.1968), p. 3.

[9]Ibid., p. 83.

successful work, based in part on the serious review of past efforts. Bernard Spilka of the University of Denver in his critical review of "Research on Religious Beliefs" states

> This writer's review of the research literature suggests that theological, social, and personal application of the findings of empirical work on religious beliefs would, in the main, be premature. Not only are the majority of these studies of dubious validity, but they have too frequently been esoterically tuned to the inner voice of "pure" science, which has been noticeably impure in its conceptual and technical aspects. Also, no comprehensive theoretical system has yet been construced which might permit a balanced empirical treatment of sociocultural factors relative to religion. Such a system is needed because the churches of America are tied to the economic, political, and social aspects of our cultural heritage, and the position of religion in this matrix is most imperfectly understood.[10]

Although he acknowledges that "any definition of religion is likely to be satisfactory only to its author" he outlines the questions which need to be asked and answered to approach useful research: What is meant by religious beliefs, their dimensions, institutional bases, and psychological nature? What factors mold their development? Personality? The churches? Society? He also asks to what extent belief systems are correlated with economic class, political affiliation, and such outlooks as prejudice. To what extent do these influence the creation and maintenance of religious beliefs, and in turn influence

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[10]Strommen, p. 486.

other areas of personal and social life? To these questions, he adds the need for recognizing what constitutes good research.[11] Some of his analysis of studies under consideration as to the adequacy of research will be noted later.

At this point it is important to note principles necessary for reliable research. Some of these as well as some of the procedure for such research are noted by Ralph Thomlinson in his chapter on "Background for Social Science Research."[12] The purpose for such research, he states is "the understanding of social life by discerning new facts, documenting or rejecting old ones, tracing sequences and connections between events, and formulating generalizations concerning inter-relationships." He indicates some of the steps social scientists take in seeking to satisfy human curiosity through adding to knowledge: these may include the fact that an area is suggested by a theory, an apparent conflict between two theories, a gap in knowledge, or some other combination of inquisitiveness, creative hunches, and proficiency in the subject. Once one has established an area for research there is the transition into an objectively testable hypothesis, which, says Thomlinson, "demands far more skill than might be supposed by the novice." This conversion of

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[11] Ibid., pp. 487-488.

[12] Ralph Thomlinson, Sociological Concepts and Research (New York: Random House, c.1965), pp. 40-56.

an interesting problem into a researchable form is prerequisite to the determination of exactly what information will be relevant. Next the researcher needs to decide on the manner of securing data and then to proceed with the collection of the data itself. After data has been assembled, there is the step of analyzing the data in a statistical or other manner:

> By computing percentages, averages in a more sophisticated measure, the investigator facilitates comprehension of what otherwise might be a simply chaotic mass of information too vast and complicated to be grasped by inspection.

Following these steps the researcher moves with interpretation of results, presentation of findings and conclusions, and finally the application of results.

Thomlinson also notes that "random sampling" is an important factor in much research. Social scientists are not free to simply use random samples in a hit or miss manner and should make careful efforts to insure that the determinative operator is chance, not convenience, or pleasantness or enthusiasm.

> Randomization is achieved by lot, by mechanical contrivances, or by tables of random numbers. These tables, notably those developed and published by the Department of Statistics of the University of London in 1927 and 1939, and the Rand Corporation in 1955, are lists of thoroughly scrambled numbers from which research workers read off, in any direction, randomly arranged digits. Accuracy is measureable because variability of a random sample follows the laws of probability.

Another type of sampling is to stratify. This consists of the selection of a group of random samples, one from each class or stratum of the population or universe. Thomlinson puts it this way:

> We first divide the universe into two or more strata for classes and then proceed to take a pure random sample within each strata. The rationale underlying the division into classes is that we thereby guarantee that each stratum is reasonably well represented in a combined sample.

The research of Janzow and Strommen, noted in Chapter II, utilized this method, as did Kersten with however some questions as to the balance of the samples.

Campbell and Stanley in their work on experimental designs for research note the importance of randomization and trace it back to the work of W. A. McCall (1923) who gave as his first method of establishing comparable groups, "groups equated by chance. Just as representativeness can be secured by the method of chance, . . . so equivalence may be secured by chance, provided the number of subjects to be used is sufficiently numerous."[13] These authors also state that

> experiments may be multivariate in either or both of two senses. More than one "independent" variable sex, school grade, method of teaching . . . etc., may be incorporated into the design and/or more than one "dependent" variable

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[13]Donald T. Campbell and Julian C. Stanley, Experimental and Quasi-Experimental Designs for Research (Chicago: Rand McNally and Co., c.1963), pp. 2-3.

> (number of errors, speed . . . various tests, etc.) may be employed.[14]

Probably the most important goals for accurate research are to achieve both internal validity and external validity, which the authors explain thus: "Internal validity is the basic minimum without which any experiment is uninterpretable: Did in fact the experimental treatments make a difference in this specific experimental instance?" One needs to know what extraneous variables were accounted for and which were not. The authors note eight variables, which, "if not controlled in the experimental design might produce effects confounded with the effect of the experimental stimulus": history, maturation, testing, instrumentation, statistical regression, biases resulting in differential selection of respondents, experimental mortality, and selection-maturation interaction. The other factor, external validity, relates to generalizeability. "To what populations, settings, treatment variables, and measurement variables can this effect be generalized?" Are there certain aspects of the research which restrict the results to this particular group of subjects, this particular experimenter, or this particular situation? Factors which might jeopardize this external validity or representativeness of the research or interaction effect of testing, the

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[14] Ibid., p. 4.

interaction effects of selection biases, reactive effects of experimental arrangements, and multiple-treatment interference.[15]

It is also important to make distinctions between experimental studies and other kinds of research work. Judson Mills' book on Experimental Social Psychology draws attention to such differences. He states: "By an experiment we mean a study in which the investigator manipulates one or more variables (called independent variables) and measures other variables (called dependent variables)."[16] This is quite different from the observation-type of research in which variables are not changed for testing. Mills adds that one

> may fail to distinguish hypothesis-testing studies whose purpose is to test casual relationships between theoretical variables from descriptive studies. In descriptive studies the purpose is to portray the characteristics of a group or to determine how frequently something occurs.

In the descriptive study there are no independent variables, and the methodology for such a study differs from hypothesis testing "because the kinds of bias that must be guarded against are quite different." Representative sampling is essential in descriptive studies.[17] "In non-experimental studies in which the investigator does not

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[15] Ibid., pp. 5-6.

[16] Judson Mills, editor, Experimental Social Psychology (London: The Macmillan Co., c.1969), p. 409.

[17] Ibid., p. 434.

manipulate the independent variables, it is usually quite difficult to eliminate the possibility that the relationship is determined by some third variable." In conducting this sort of study one has merely observed the "covariation of two variables" and the explanation of their correlation may hinge on other factors which he did not measure or control, which were varying in the situation.[18]

Mills also is definite on the need to be able to generalize from research that is genuine: "When one says that the results of a study cannot be generalized, he can only be saying in effect, that the hypothesis is not true, that results do not provide evidence for the hypothesis." And yet he adds that "a particular result can be taken as evidence for a general hypothesis if it cannot be explained as well in another way."[19]

That the difference between an experimental study and a descriptive or sampling study can make for real problems is borne out by an article by Carl I. Hovland of Yale University, titled: "Reconciling Conflicting Results Derived from Experimental and Survey Studies of Attitude Change." In it he notes that in the area of communication effects similar situations studied by these two methods result in quite different pictures. While he points to reasons for discrepancies and strengths and weaknesses for either type

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[18] Ibid., p. 414.

[19] Ibid., p. 423.

of study, his conclusion is that "neither is a royal road to wisdom, but each represents an important emphasis." The need is to combine the virtues of each method so as to gain maximum reliable information.[20]

With this background on some of the problems and principles for social science research, it is appropriate to apply it to the studies presented and examined in part in Chapters I and II. This will be followed by a look at possible supplementary or alternate methods of analysis by use of ideological studies.

A good deal of disturbance and questioning came after the appearance of the studies by Glock and Stark. Some of this is noted by Bernard Spilka who says that the 1966 study by Glock and Stark Christian Beliefs and Anti-Semitism "will excite controversy for a long time." Although he extends admiration to these researchers he adds that "Unfortunately, alternative explanations for their findings are available."

Dittes (1967) shows that the relationship between the religious bigotry index of Glock and Stark and their measure of anti-Semitic beliefs almost fully reduces to a correlation between two measures of prejudice, since the former instrument is strongly contaminated with anti-Semitic content, as is also the latter. He also notes that the

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[20]Edward E. Sampson, editor, Approaches and Problems of Social Psychology (Englewood Cliff, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, Inc., c.1964), pp. 288-297.

"powerful relationship" between religion and anti-Semitism indicated by Glock and Stark is shown to be only 7 percent above chance in magnitude according to research done by Heinz (1967).[21]

Spilka also calls attention to comparative work done by Strommen on the analyses of Glock and Stark. This work and critique, reported in part in Lutheran Forum in 1967, both questions the research and also gives results of research that produces opposite conclusions. Says Strommen:

> Their approach is unorthodox. The authors freely admit that they do not start with a hypothesis which the data must then support or reject. Rather, they abandon the objectivity of scientists to declare their interpretation in the beginning of the book. . . . The authors freely admit the dangers of making causal inferences from their data. And dangers there are.

Strommen shows that Glock and Stark acknowledge that there are unprejudiced people in their sample, yet they make no provision for them in their model.[22] In contrast to the other research findings, Strommen notes that his research among Lutheran youth concluded that "there is a positive relationship and a significant one between orthodoxy and tolerance." His further conclusion on the basis of detailed analysis of youth is that "a faith which claims absoluteness and finality for Christ does not predispose the believer towards an exclusionist stance. It is not the particularistic

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[21]Strommen, pp. 503-504.

[22]Merton Strommen, "Christian Anti-Semitism," Lutheran Forum, I, No. 6 (1967), p. 6-7.

faith that causes intolerance, but rather, the way the person relates to his faith."[23] It has been said that perhaps one spur Strommen has had for his further research is the inadequacy found in the Glock and Stark material.[24]

As has been noted in Chapter I, the form of questions used by Glock and Stark are subject to question in terms of their sensitivity on several of their scales, thus limiting their internal validity, and their conclusion statistics very considerably with comparative national figures, questioning the external validity of their work.

The work of Jeffrey Hadden is perhaps most questionable in terms of the comparisons he makes of his research data and that of Glock and Stark and others where the statements on questionnaires differ significantly. He also pulls together pieces of research toward supporting his contentions concerning strife between various church people, however useful his portrayal of tendencies within the church may be. In addition, Spilka has this to say concerning some of the difficulties of drawing conclusions from Hadden's work:

> Hadden's immense study (1965, 1967) of Protestant clergymen was partly based on a liberal-fundamentalist continuum. Though this break-down appeared to hold fairly well in terms of adherence to orthodox Christian beliefs, Hadden observed vast differences among the clergy of any specific church regarding these matters. These findings

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[23] Ibid., I, p. 7-8.

[24] James A. Lokken, "Intimate Look at Lutherans," Lutheran Forum, VI (November 1972), 34.

> may, however, again illustrate a wide variety of sociocultural factors as well as specific church teachings, but empirical separation of these factors has yet to be accomplished.[25]

Therefore, while some of the inadequacy of Hadden's work may be in his approaches, some as well lies in the limitation of social science techniques for religious research.

The research of Kersten can be faulted in part by possible pre-conceived notions of conflict between church members or groups drawing on some of Hadden's conclusions. Nevertheless, he is more careful to establish internal consistency in his research. He does a commendable job in outlining elements of the "Lutheran Ethic," even though in some of his theological and theoretical work he is at times in error. The limits of his samples (from metropolitan Detroit only and one college only) may raise some questions as to the external validity (generalizeability) of his work. He does not state how his randomization was accomplished, but presumably it was done according to scientifically acceptable methods.

On the other hand, the research by Strommen, especially in A Study of Generations, takes care to spell out the procedures by which the study was conducted (Chapter II and Appendix A). A good deal of work went into the theoretical studies to develop categories which were clear and meaningful. The development of the instrument also was given considerable

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[25]Strommen, Research on Religious Development, pp. 496-497.

attention with refinement following pre-test. The procedure in securing samples was also worked out on a basis which would insure a definite random selection.[26] Much care was given in assessing and comparing responses by scales, keeping variables clear and establishing multivariate analysis by accepted scientific methods. The researchers did some original work as well to cope with certain problems, and thus established quite clear internal consistency.[27] The Strommen researchers were also very careful to develop their "external consistency," to

> sort out the difference between what is true of the sample alone and what is very likely true of the entire population studied. For example, if 30 percent of our sample clergymen agree with a statement about the Lord's Supper and 40 percent of the sample laymen agree with it, are we reasonably sure that if all Lutherans, clergy and lay were asked that question, there would still be 30 percent of clergy agreeing and 40 percent of laymen agreeing.[28]

One of the few critiques that can be raised concerning this very thorough study is that contained in a Lutheran Forum review which called it "a very in-group thing--a self-study of Lutherans by Lutherans." The tendency is, of course, to find yourself quite all right. Yet as the author continues, the researchers seem to have resisted this

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[26]Strommen, A Study of Generations (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Aubsburg Publishing House, c.1972), pp. 320-324.

[27]Ibid., p. 347.

[28]Ibid., pp. 57-58.

temptation pretty well,[29] and given the church a good deal of reliable information.

The research by Janzow was also well explained in terms of theory and scientific methodology. His sampling procedures were not parallel, as he notes, but for certain reasons in order to gain relatively equal numbers in his groups to be tested. The attempted "longitudinal study" with utilization of the material of Glock and Stark was not very useful, not only because of his changes in the supposedly parallel questionnaire statements but also because, as he noted, not enough time had elapsed between the two studies. His study served to give accurate insights on differences (though his term "deviant" was sometimes prejudicial) between various people in the Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod. Because he utilized statements similar to those of Glock and Stark, his internal consistency is subject to question, as was theirs. Nevertheless, Janzow was very perceptive in pointing out not only the limited meaning of his findings but also the scope of study necessary to get a more detailed and accurate picture of the qualities he sought to study.

Frerking's study was especially well done in delineating the potential accuracy of the questionnaire statements he used, and he was quite thorough in developing his own scale for the area on new morality which was not available in

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[29]Lokken, VI, 34.

previous literature. Since his was not a sample, nor did it compare with material similarly gained from other campuses, the opportunity to generalize from his conclusions is limited. It remains, however, one of few scientifically accurate studies done among Lutheran college and university youth. Thus, it provides some clear analyses of points of view of these young adults in respect to their previous training and their potential future role in the church.

Because of the limitations (at least thus far) of empirical research, one may well ask whether it is not important to utilize what might be termed "ideological analysis" by sensitive observers as at least supplementary or possibly alternate sources for assessing given religious situations. If one were to ask the question: "What is the most accurate picture of Lutheran beliefs and action?" it could be said that at least a portion of that picture could come from current empirical research. If, however, this is pursued further with questions as to how full and complete this analysis is, it becomes apparent that other sources can help round out the picture. This sort of supplementary material may be helpful in getting quicker readings of the fast-changing world of youthful America than is possible through time-consuming empirical research.

Two additional sources of such supplementary material will be noted here as examples of the kind of information and analysis that may be needed to attain a different perspective. One of these, Wayne Saffen's Youth Today, is

written from the perspective of a campus minister, who has served primarily with young people in university settings;[30] the other is Young People and Their Culture by Ross Snyder, who deals with concepts of Christian education in view of the needs and possibilities especially of modern teenagers.[31]

An observer like Saffen (and there are many other, and perhaps better observers) can take broad areas of influences in economic and scientific life in the current scene and apply them to interpretation of the complex youth picture of today. He utilizes information on current trends, as well as personal experiences with youth in developmental situations to make helpful generalizations that can guide the church's ministry. He applies the insights of Erik Erikson's "stages of life" or "Ages of Man" to portray meaningfully some of what young people particularly are going through and becoming. Much of the process of analysis used can be a background for empirical research (and is being utilized by such researchers), yet the combinations of experiences, trends, and influences may be so complex that they would clog the mechanism of empirical research. And, indeed, certain observations can be made by an "ideological observer" much more simply and easily, if, however, without the background of factual data to attest them.

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[30]Wayne Saffen, Youth Today (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, c.1971).

[31]Ross Snyder, Young People and Their Culture (Nashville and New York: Abingdon Press, c.1969).

Saffen, for example, comments on the salutary effect of youthful doubting and notes that this is one area in the study of the development of personal belief systems by youth where the church should understand what is going on. He asserts that adult church members should be available for conversation with youth and insist that their questioning probes deeply enough:

> Just because the questions are not merely academic the church cannot permit students to settle for academic answers. Doubt ravages all the false superstructures of religious identity. It is a purifying fire, a form of faith, a searching by the Holy Spirit. The foundations themselves must be shaken to see if they are on bedrock or upon sand. For a genuine faith can be built only upon the bedrock of what a person is at the core of his identity and being.[32]

Assessment of the positive effect of doubt and conflict for the building of a mature faith can be very difficult for any empirical research, yet it can be substantiated and dealt with usefully through "ideological" observation.

It is important that such an ideological or subjective observer be aware of both the contributions and limitations of research and insights of the behavioral sciences. Saffen gives evidence of such awareness when he writes: "What psychological investigation can do is to expose what is illusory and what is real in faith, what is defense mechanism and what is legitimate certainty, what is automated

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[32]Saffen, Youth Today, pp. 44-45.

response and what is free."[33] He adds:

> Sociologically, there are no absolutes among religions. There are only varying degrees of credibility and intensive belief on the parts of their adherents, plus a measurable effect of the influence each religion has upon its own culture.[34]

Saffen also indicates that while there are certain areas of religious behavior which can be measured by the social sciences, there are also dimensions of the human spirit which are not subject to such norms:

> Jesus, Word, and church are empirical and verifiable and commend themselves as truth, not as proof. Truth is the correspondence between inner and outer reality, intuitively grasped and logically explicate; proof is an empirical demonstration or the conclusion to a logical argument. Proof may be true but it is not the truth. It is only a sign pointing to the truth which lies beyond demonstration, apprehended only by faith.[35]

The insights and writing of an observer such as Saffen, in ways consistent with the work of social science, can add dimensions of understanding of the dynamics of the youth setting (and others) which are not available through scientific methods alone.

Similarly, in the area of observing younger youth, the work of Ross Snyder, seminary professor and influential Christian educator, gives evidence of insights not available from empirical data. At the same time, it would seem that

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[33]Saffen, p. 65.

[34]Ibid., p. 69.

[35]Ibid., p. 67.

an observer such as Snyder could benefit from some of the search for precision in language and description which is characteristic of social science methodology.

A central concept in Snyder's analysis of current youth is that the basis of their growth is the "lived moment." Adapting some of the views of Marshall McLuhan regarding the prominence of modern media in the lives of youth, Snyder develops the following "working hypothesis for building youth culture":

a) The prevailing mode of communication is a most fundamental force that forms people.

b) The new mode of human consciousness is "McLuhan consciousness"---the human existence created by electronic communication. An explosion that is worldwide (wherever the transistor goes!)

c) With this insight, we will conceive a new kind of education. And a new actualization of a world network of people.

d) We still have the other two modes of communication going on. And must have. We do not throw the first two out. Perhaps we must fight to keep them functioning.[36]

Snyder makes a number of applications of this insight, but one especially pertinent to the implications of empirical research in this: that the "lived moment" concept of knowing depends on a person's sense of participation. He puts it further "We know the truth only to the degree that we participate in it." In terms of Christian belief, Snyder asserts that "young people must know Christ as a reality they come

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[36]Snyder, Young People, pp. 24-25.

to terms with now."[37] Where this mode of consciousness is functioning for a young person, his responses to a questionnaire might be rather difficult to assess with accuracy. Though holding to a basic "faith" in Jesus Christ as Savior, that young person could at the time of responding to portions of a research instrument feel that Christ was not actively a part of his life at that moment. Thus a negative response could be registered, whereas the commitment might be even more real than that of an adult with a rather static concept of faith. It could be rather difficult for a researcher to detect what was involved even with varied sets of questions for "check-back" purposes, although a sensitive interviewer should be able to analyze the situation.

Perhaps a more basic application of the need to know the "new frame of consciousness" of youth, as Snyder points it out is in basic communication. As he reports responses of professional and semi-professionals responding to an instrument labeled "Frequent Weaknesses of My Communication as an Adult with Youth," the following were among those frequently checked as "significantly true":

1. The "great words" my church uses in talking about the religious life have very little meaning for the youth of our community; they don't stir up anything real in them. Youth don't use them in thinking about their life, in making decisions, or dreaming futures.

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[37] Snyder, p. 30.

2. Youth feels, thinks, decides, images, with a language different from the one I talk. And dreams about the future with imagery different from mine.

3. I don't know the words which a young person today uses in feeling, thinking, deciding, imagining.

Following a listing of ten additional points, Snyder modestly comments: "Here are blocks to intersubjectivity between adults and contemporary young people."[38]

The insights of Snyder, if valid, point out the need for great care in assessing the meaning of youthful religious expressions. They also give guidance and raise questions for workers with youth in ways difficult to provide with empirical research alone.

A part of the on-going problem of religious measurement, is, as Pruyser points out, a matter of symbols, and their use in communication. Quoting E. R. Goodenough, he writes in part:

> All of us, especially in the West, reject other people's symbols. Modern man is not irreligious because he has no use for traditional symbols; he is still religious because he still envisages and utilizes the tremendum through symbols and quiets the terror which the tremendum would arouse in him if he had no symbol-painted curtains.[39]

After discussing the differences of religious symbols, Pruyser concludes:

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[38] Ibid., pp. 133-135.

[39] Pruyser, pp. 338-339.

> What does matter, ontologically and epistemologically, psychologically, and theologically, is the goodness of the fit (a statistical term indicating "the degree to which a set of empirical observations conforms to a standard. . ."[40]

While he uses this to express man's need to portray the ultimate as accurately as possible, the same can be said for fitting observation with reality as accurately as possible in measuring religious meaning. Some of the complex factors involved in this area may in part be what P. H. DuBois refers to in his book on Multivariate Correlational Analysis when he states:

> In some areas of great interest to the social sciences, the events to be studied transpire in an interacting web of variants completely out of the control of the investigator. In other cases, some degree of control is theoretically possible but impractical.[41]

Because of the complicated nature of man's religious stances, and also because of the developing procedures for social science investigation, it is important that empirical studies be subjected to careful examination. In this process, other analyses, of greater or lesser relationship to scientific investigation can be helpful both in shaping research design and in complementing the meaning derived from research. Workers in the church and perhaps especially

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[40] Ibid.

[41] Philip H. DuBois, Multivariate Correlational Analysis (New York: Harper and Brothers, c.1957), p. 158.

those working with youth, do well to make use of both kinds of analysis. Some of these potential uses are treated in the final chapter.

CHAPTER IV

IMPLICATIONS AND VALUES FOR LUTHERAN YOUTH MINISTRY

As noted in the title of this thesis, one of the goals for the examination of various studies is to apply their findings toward the possible understanding of Lutheran youth. The studies have varying degrees of usefulness in the area of youth ministry. Some of them made no attempt to isolate youth beliefs, attitudes, and practices for special treatment. Others make pointed, and in some cases, exclusive reference to the religious situation of young people. In the latter case the implications are far-reaching for developing adult understanding of youth and on that basis a more meaningful ministry. As indicated in the previous chapter, both empirical and other analyses can helpfully be combined to develop a relatively complete picture.

Despite differences noted, the studies depict a consistency among Lutherans as a conservative group of Christians. Although Glock and Stark as well as Hadden may see the Lutheran Church as involved in fundamentalist leanings and Kersten demonstrates elements of a "Lutheran Ethic," Strommen puts it differently. He states that Lutherans tend to reject both fundamentalism and liberalism and instead have a "conservative stance." Saffen, with

perhaps meaning similar to that of Strommen, uses the term "orthodox" to describe an idealistic function of truth which allows for both growth and conviction:

> The aim of truth is to set man free. It is a mark of man's freedom and truthfulness when he freely accepts the truth as true. Orthodoxy was not originally an imposition of a set of beliefs on authority. It was a belief that the beliefs themselves were true and that there was a right way to think about them. Orthodoxy simply means "straight thinking." Straight thinking means that one has learned to think in conformity with reality itself. Orthodoxy is the "reality principle" of the mind, an utter sense of realism. To be orthodox is to be no longer in error, to have overcome mistaken impressions and wrong notions, no longer to deceive oneself or others. Orthodox dogmas (opinions) commend themselves as true because they arouse the response of clear thinking. Such dogmas cannot therefore be imposed. They are accepted when a freely believing person has thought through his beliefs and found them to be links to experienced reality. For the Christian revelation commends itself as true when one comes to see and believe for himself. Biblically, this is called "the witness of the Holy Spirit with our spirit," the correspondence with and recognition of the Holy Spirit by human spirit.[1]

As to youthful confession of orthodoxy, the researchers consulted in this examination vary in the degree to which they treat this area. Hadden, for example, notes the relative positions of older and younger clergy, but younger Lutheran clergy are not much more liberal than older Lutheran clergy. The differences between older and younger clergy is striking, however, in some other denominations. Kersten's comparisons of college youth and adults show some

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[1]Saffen, pp. 66-67.

variation in their responses as to whether they see themselves saved by works or by grace, yet both for youth and adults there is consistent high percentage in favor of salvation by grace. Frerking's research among college students shows that frequency of church attendance relates positively to valuation of the Christian faith, and that this valuation tends to correlate positively toward valuing the institutional church. His findings also indicate growth in positive attitudes toward the church and its teachings as students progress toward the conclusion of university training.

The research by Strommen is, of course, much more sensitive to the positions of youth. Here there is not only a break-down in terms of high school and college age youth, but also differentiation on the basis of "peer orientation" (A_1) and those "broadly oriented" (A_2). In addition, a well-developed "rationale" concerning assumptions on generational polarities is used, reacting to material from Reich and Mead. This research finds that "peer oriented" youth are more alientated and more critical of the church than others (about twenty percent of Lutherans ages 15-28 are "peer oriented"), but that this orientation lessens in the "transitional" age period from 23-28. Strommen's research finds no uniform predictable pattern of tension across generations.[2] Although there are definite differences

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[2]Strommen, et. al., A Study of Generations, pp. 221-232.

between attitudes of youth and those of adults, for example shown in low scores (in "need for religious absolutism" and "exclusive truth claim exaggerated" among others), these studies show "no tension" in two-fifths of the areas examined. Beliefs of Lutherans ages 15-29 and those 30-65 are relatively harmonious and include closeness in such areas as belief in the divinity of Christ and knowledge of the Bible. Thus these researchers claim: "To speak about a general generation gap between Lutheran youth and adults as a fact of life is a myth." The more accurate approach might be to view "tensions" and to note areas and reasons for these.[3] In addition, Strommen reviews some of the categorization of youth and adults by Margaret Mead, noting in his book, Bridging the Gap, which follows up the "generations" research:

> The idea of a radical break in values and beliefs between youth and adults finds no support in the data on youth and adults in A Study of Generations. Nor are Mead's typologies (three different kinds of culture) useful in classifying Lutherans. Rather, they identify three points of view that coexist in all ages. Some people cling to the past and are strongly oriented to the status quo; and others, close to one in five (18 percent), are ready for serious change. The majority are committed to a process of reassessment that involves the past and the present-youth working with adults--in meeting the problems of the future.

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[3]Ibid., pp. 231-239.

[4]Merton P. Strommen, Bridging the Gap (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Augsburg Publishing House, c.1973), p. 27.

It would appear that a good deal of consistency runs through the belief stances of Lutherans of all ages with a general conservatism quite different from some other denominations. Strommen does note some differences between Lutheran groups (including the finding that people of LCMS have the highest average scores in all dimensions of the "heart of Lutheran piety"),[5] yet basic differentiation seems to be along other lines such as readiness to change or experiment or in felt needs to apply the faith differently in the world. This may indeed fit with the research of Janzow who found that he could not establish "secularization" patterns along age-group lines but did attest variations between what he termed "status sub-groups."

There is some research data which shows that beliefs change during early college years. Typical of this is the report of Havighurst and Keating in an article on "The Religion of Youth." They note a 1968 study by Heath which suggests that a segment of youth shows a growing degree of secularization or alienation from traditional religious beliefs. The average score on the Traditional Religious Belief Index of the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory declined from 45 in 1948-1956 to 32 for 1966-1968. The author concludes that "the principle and most impressively consistent finding is that religious beliefs, values,

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[5]Strommen, et. al., p. 269.

practice and mode of thought of freshmen of the 60s are much less orthodox than those of the late 40s and 50s.[6]" An indication of reasons for this decline of orthodoxy and also a note on the slowing trend for it during the college years is given by Clyde Parker in an article on "Changes in Religious Beliefs of College Students." After reviewing studies over a period of many years, most of which he found to be quite inadequate, he forwards the conclusion:

> The evidence would indicate there is an accelerated rate of change during adolescence when intellectual development is reaching a peak. In stable environment of college, rapid changes occur during the freshman year. By the end of college, the rate of change has slowed once again.[7]

The categories noted in Strommen's research as especially applying for college age youth are ones which imply a certain openness. He cites just six characteristics for them: they are lower than others surveyed in congregational activity, need for unchanging structures, need for religious absolutism, desire to keep socially distant from those of other races and religions, and in identifying truth only with their denomination. (They also have the highest incidence in "questionable activities.") In addition, Strommen's research shows trends for youth ages 15-29 compared with adults (30-65) as less: helping of others in

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[6]Strommen, et. al., Research in Religious Development, pp. 713-714.

[7]Ibid., pp. 768-769.

crisis, desiring a dependable world, fundamentalist, and convinced hard work always pays off. More youth in this age group are: biblically misinformed, favor the church's involvement in social issues, and encourage pastors toward more extreme participation in social action.[8]

It is in these latter areas of desiring greater action on the part of both the church and its leadership in social issues that a number of the studies agree in their findings. Hadden noted that younger clergy are more positive toward civil rights and that youth favor clergy social involvement. Similarly, the work of Frerking found that among Lutheran students he surveyed 45 percent of these students felt the church was not enough involved in social issues (and fewer than four percent felt the church was too much involved). One of Strommen's conclusions also notes that young Lutherans are interested in having clergy deal more openly with controversial social issues. He states in the summary of findings in Generations:

> There is an impatience of youth mingled with strong feelings about what many see as their church's present lack of involvement in social issues. It is the conviction of the majority (57 percent) that far too little has been done. Nevertheless, youth agree with adults that it is equally important to preach the Gospel and to work toward improving the well-being of people. The problem for more of the youth is that they feel these two are out of balance.[9]

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[8]Strommen, et. al., A Study of Generations, p. 259.

[9]Ibid., p. 294.

Although Hadden and Kersten, and to a degree Janzow also, see clashes among Christians in terms of the push for social relevance, and Frerking points out some inconsistencies in this area among students most active in the institutional church, the strong interest of youth in Christian social action is undeniable. In fact, Frerking predicts on the basis of his findings that some definite changes in the ministry of the church of future years will result from this concern. Strommen's statistics point to some of the differences of opinion that need to be considered in this area. Although two-thirds of Lutherans are relatively open to variety and change and most Lutherans favor the goals of social justice, they differ on how such goals should be reached. Some fifty percent are interested in the church as a body instigating social change; yet 70 percent emphasize the importance of respect for the individual conscience. They would prefer that the pastor leads in this direction in discussion settings rather than from the pulpit, since they seek opportunity to discuss and make decisions themselves.[10]

Another matter treated by several of the observers as an area of concern among youth is what Kersten labels "morality" and most specifically deals with sexual identity and action. Kersten's research points out considerable difference between students on the one hand and laymen and

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[10]Ibid., p. 301.

clergy on the other with respect to premarital or extra-marital sexual relations. Over half of the students polled in LCA, ALC and LCMS agreed that traditional religious standards on sexual relationships are no longer adequate. In Frerking's questioning concerning the "new morality" he used this statement: "If people do not believe it is wrong to have sex relations outside of marriage, it isn't, unless they hurt themselves, their partners, or others." While he got no clear majority answer (35 percent agreed; 45 percent of males and 48 percent of females disagreed), he received expressions of confusion from some respondents as to whether the answer was to be based on their views as humans or as Christians. He concludes that campus morality is permissive, with no one condemning another for his personal view.[11] Snyder in his chapter on "Corporate Humanness" speaks of the many influences on youth, including the new morality and calls for a morality which is not seen in terms of commands and laws added on to life but rather a path along which mankind can advance. He calls for equipping parents, youth, and educators along lines of "authenticity," "creative fidelity," and "justice." Communication and "person-perception" are important concepts in his suggestion for a "core morality."[12] Strommen's early

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[11]Frerking, "Social and Religious Attitudes Among Lutheran Students," p. 120.

[12]Snyder, pp. 141-156.

research noted among other needs, the importance of Christian direction for youth in Christian relationships with the opposite sex. In the "Generations" study, he and his team treat this area with the complex on "Unwillingness to Delay Gratification." Of the categories checked among those ages 15-29 in this area, the research shows 48 percent declare premarital sexual relations "not permissible" and 52 percent respond "yes" to various degrees of permissibility. Comparisons show that openness in this area and in the area of approving the life style of the drug culture are predictors of unwillingness or inability to delay gratification.[13] Saffen, in his treatment of this area insists that morality cannot be legislated, and that it should be clear that the church can no longer impose its moral code upon society. His major emphasis is that we need to apply the Gospel orientation to life for Christians in this area:

> It is the church's task to train her young people to maintain a way of life which is not determined by the general culture. Christian young people are to be the salt of the earth, not conformists to the prevailing culture. This means that they receive their sense of sexual identity from God, who made them male or female. It means that they live by the forgiveness of sin, that they are justified by grace through faith in Jesus Christ, not by their own sexuality, and that the Gospel is a transforming, not merely a sublimating, power in their lives. That sex is so often associated with sin and guilt rather than with the Gospel, forgiveness, freedom, and the new life in Christ, is an index to the church's own failure to proclaim the Gospel where the good word from God is most sorely needed. The church cannot justify

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[13]Strommen, et. al., A Study of Generations, pp. 243-245.

> her phariseeism by accusing young people who try to be free and sometimes bungle the job because they lack sympathetic guidance. If young people are estranged from the church because of irrelevance, they are not without good cause. Let the church look to her ministry and stop blaming the youth.[14]

It is indeed important for the church to look to her ministry, with particular attention to the needs and insights of today's youth. The teaching and applying of the faith can be enhanced a great deal by sensitive awareness of the actual picture of the people of the church brought out by various studies. One of the most important needs emphasized in the research material is that of balance. There may be no "storm in the churches" or "deviant versus status quo" battle as the language of some observers puts it, but a certain amount of tension must be dealt with sensitively and creatively. Strommen's concern for the danger in extremes leads him to suggest some cautions. In view of his study he asserts that if Lutheran theology opts for contemporary theology that empties the truth claim of the faith, "most people presently in the Lutheran church will be driven to fundamentalism." On the other hand if Lutheran theology opts for fundamentalism, close to half of the people presently in the Lutheran church will be driven to liberalism. The conclusion is that Lutheran theology must find ways to avoid either extreme. Although a middle position may be subject to criticism and may suggest inactivity, the

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[14] Ibid., p. 303.

need for it seems justified. When youth or campus ministries consider new and experimental ways of worship or social activism, unnecessary conflict can be avoided if leaders learn first where people stand on these proposed actions. Then, with awareness of these stances, progress and change can be initiated in ways which can flow from the corporate involvement of the people who are in a given setting. Strommen, in his later book, notes his confidence in the positive effect of tension and conflict:

> I am convinced that the Christian faith and a sense of commitment become most alive in a setting of conflict. . . . Often the youth who have thought through what they believe and are best able to speak with conviction and clarity are those who have been challenged to give some answers. . . . Here I am speaking of controversy not as a game of intellectual ping-pong among a group of intellectual dilettantes, but the serious grappling with issues that involve the happiness and welfare of many. I am speaking here of issues which touch the heart, the feelings, the very core of one's life and which can lead to conviction and commitment.[15]

It is possible to use studies and analyses which demonstrate differences between Christians to raise fears of division and to increase existing tensions. But it is far better to use such information to promote understanding and mutual stimulation and growth. Among human beings, even in such a relatively uniform body as the Lutheran Church, there are many and significant differences. It is important to be aware of them in order to deal with them constructively.

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[15]Strommen, p. 98.

For with an accurate assessment, the variations can be utilized effectively in ministry without sacrificing faithfulness.

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