SPREADING THE FAITH OR SHARING THE FAITH?
CONTRASTING CONVERSION OPINIONS AND EVANGELISTIC BEHAVIOR AMONG RELIGIOUS YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE UNITED STATES

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ABSTRACT

Adam Layton Long: Spreading the Faith or Sharing the Faith? Contrasting Conversion Opinions and Evangelistic Behavior among Religious Young People in the United States
(Under the Direction of Ted Mouw)

This paper contrasts correlates of conversion opinions and evangelistic behavior of religious young people in the United States by comparing two random effects longitudinal logistic regression models based on three waves of the National Study of Youth and Religion. By distinguishing a) the belief that it is okay to convert others to one's own religion from b) sharing one's faith with people of other faiths, this project demonstrates that proselytizing and evangelism are distinct though overlapping social phenomena. Interpreting odds ratios from models including both internal and external factors highlights the differing effects of control variables and measures of religious content, conduct, and centrality. Interpreting this evidence prompts a theoretical discussion of how greater religious pluralization may lead to more unsettled lives, which may produce increasing evangelism.

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> "In fact, the man who has a genuine faith feels an irresistible need to spread it. To do so, he comes out of his isolation, he approaches others, he seeks to convince them, and it is the ardor of the convictions he brings about that in turn reinforces his own. That ardor would speedily dissipate if left alone." (Durkheim [1912] 1995:427)

> "Evangelism refers to excursions made by sectarians to the outside world for the purpose of recruiting sympathizers, supporters, and members. Thus, it is well suited the exuberance and impetuosity characteristic of rebellious youth." (Matza 1961: 110)

INTRODUCTION

In his treatise on the social sources of religion, Emile Durkheim argues that nurturing a passionate religious disposition requires spreading one's faith. Encountering those who do not share one's spiritual outlook stokes the fires of religious passion. It is when the true believer "comes out of isolation" that religious experience becomes a social one (Durkheim [1912] 1995: 427). According to Durkheim, it takes an Other to build a faith.

Scholars of religion have made various attempts at naming this encounter with the religious Other. When referring to religious talk across social boundaries, terms such as "proselytizing," "evangelism," and "spreading the faith" are often used interchangeably (e.g., Bibby and Brinkerhoff 1974). In common parlance, "proselytizing" denotes the attempt to make a convert, to persuade another to adopt and integrate an alternative religious belief, practice, or tradition. Definitions of "evangelism," however, usually include a wider semantic range.

Derived from the Greek word *euangelion*, the term "evangel" has been translated into English as "glad tidings," "good news," or simply "gospel." The contemporary Evangelical movement derives both its name and identity from this term from Greek New Testament for the

spreading of "good news." This word's Christian origin goes hand in hand with common perceptions of evangelism as a distinctly Christian activity. As Durkheim understood, however, the potential for sharing what one considers "good news" with the Other is possible wherever religious boundaries exist.

In order to better understand these verbal encounters across religious boundaries, it is important to account for both the external and internal dynamics at work when evangelization occurs. No understanding of how people talk about their faith across social boundaries is complete without grasping both the external and internal forces that shape such encounters.

Internal and External Dynamics

Scholars of church growth have noted that both institutional factors and contextual factors contribute to a congregation's success in attracting adherents and increasing attendance (Dudley and Cummings 1983). The process of evangelism itself has been characterized as a supply-side advantage of congregations seeking to break a pattern of stalled growth (Hadaway 1991). From this perspective, it is the internal dynamic of the congregation's commitment to spreading its message that facilitates numerical growth. For example, a study of conversions to Christianity among Chinese immigrants to the U.S. characterizes church evangelization materials and programs as effective forms of resource mobilization (Zhang 2006). Other researchers have noted the distinctly external dynamics that shape a congregation's efforts at spreading the faith. One study highlights the role of a city's population growth in influencing it's Mennonite community to shift from isolation to evangelism (Wiesel 1977). As the population of Others increased, so did the congregation's attempts at attracting new adherents.

While some scholars of religion debate the relative merits of focusing on either external or internal dynamics, a number of researchers advocate a more holistic, "both/and" approach that incorporates both external and internal factors (Bedell 1989, Sherkat 1998, Trinitapoli and Vaisey 2009). The fullest accounts of evangelism adopt this approach in explaining the sharing of faith across religious boundaries. For example, a historical study of evangelism during the Second Great Awakening found that both supply-side and demand-side factors contributed to the movement's success in 1830s New York (Johnson 1995). While studies of evangelism often focus on congregations as the unit of investigation, it is possible—perhaps preferable—to incorporate this "both/and" approach to the study of individual-level evangelism. If so, it would be important to understand the external context for sharing faith in the modern world.

Modernity and Pluralism

In the wake of the European Enlightenment, early sociologists attempting to understand the shift to Modernity set a trajectory for their academic discipline in forecasting the demise of religious belief and practice (Gorski 2003). Since its heyday in the 1960s, this secularization thesis has been severely contested by the persistence of religion in the contemporary world. Though faith in secularization may be waning, it has become clear that the shift to Modernity has not left religion untouched (Jenkins 2002, Wolfe 2003). Modernity does not necessarily secularize, but it does pluralize:

> "The reasons why modernity pluralizes are readily understandable: Through most of history most human beings lived in communities that were characterized by a very high degree of cognitive and normative consensus—that is, almost everyone shared the same assumptions about what the world is like and how they should behave in it…. [T]here wasn't much conversation between whatever diverse groups may have crossed each other's paths. The walls of social segregation were very high. Modernity, with increasing speed and scope, weakens these walls." (Berger and Zijderveld 2009: 9)

Sociologists employing a rational choice, supply-side approach have argued that greater pluralism necessarily increases levels of religious belief and participation (Stark and Finke 2000). Others have contested this notion, claiming that the "empirical evidence does not support the claim that religious pluralism is positively associated with religious participation in any general sense" (Chaves and Gorski 2001: 261). When it comes to the topic of sharing faith, one may affirm aspects of both perspectives. While pluralism may not increase religious participation in "any general sense," it should not be dismissed as an external factor in shaping the particular case of evangelism (Nelson 1998). Applying Berger and Zijderveld's insight that Modernity weakens the walls of segregation that hinder conversation between social groups, it would be expected that evangelism will persist among religious people in a pluralized context due to increasing contact with Others.

It is one thing to claim that modern pluralization creates an opportunity structure for evangelism. It is another thing to provide a possible mechanism at work in this relationship (Hedström and Swedberg 1998). Toward that end, Ann Swidler's theory of culture in action provides an account that can be fruitfully applied to studies of religion (Swidler 1986, Regnerus and Smith 1998). While culture provides resources for both motivating and justifying action (Vaisey 2009), Swidler argues that people who become unsettled will dip into their cultural toolkits for new strategies of action. Those who move through life with stable repertoires look to cultural resources when confronted with a disruption in their habitual modes of action. The argument being presented here is that Modernity pluralizes, and pluralization unsettles. Venturing beyond the canopy of one's religious subculture (Smith 1998) certainly qualifies as an

unsettling movement, especially when the journey down the rabbit hole is unanticipated (Carroll [1865] 1992).

The reference to British children's literature is not without merit. Swidler herself notes the particular relationship between her theory of culture and the lives of young people:

> "Being swept away by cultural experiences, from religious conversion to rock concerts, seems mainly an activity of the young…. Young people are voracious culture consumers because they are still trying out (and trying on) the possible selves they might become. They are in the process of forming and reforming strategies of action, developing the repertoire of cultured capacities out of which they will construct the patterns of their adult lives" (Swidler 2003: 89, 90).

Researchers wanting to better understand how evangelism becomes a strategy of action for those whose lives have become unsettled by pluralism would certainly benefit by studying religious young people in a socially diverse environment. The study of youth and religion provides an especially helpful field for understanding the cultural dynamics of sharing faith in a pluralized world.

While scholars disagree on the precise extent of religious diversity in the United States, the 1965 Immigration and Naturalization Act has clearly expanded the religious landscape to include more than Protestant, Catholic, and Jew (Herberg 1983, Eck 2001, Chaves 2011). Diana Eck (2006) has concluded that "This generation of young people is what we might call the first 'interfaith generation.'" In response to this expanding religious field, an interfaith youth movement has arisen, attempting to provide young people with new strategies of action to include in their cultural toolkits. This movement attempts to help religious people link their private religious discourse with a public religious discourse, which will prevent conflict and multiply social capital (Patel 2006). Movement leaders distinguish between diversity, which has to do with proximity, and pluralism, which has to do with engagement (Patel 2006). The argument being presented here is that even without the assistance of interfaith repertoires, young people in an increasingly diverse religious landscape will become unsettled and engage in religious talk across social boundaries.

If the argument about the unsettling effects of pluralism is accurate, increased effects among minority populations should become apparent. Because they have more opportunities to become unsettled by encountering majority traditions, religious minority populations should evidence higher levels of religious talk across social boundaries—regardless of their tradition's teaching on the need for attracting converts. Prior research demonstrates that shifting between majority to minority statuses does influence strategies of action for proselytizing among immigrant congregations (Yang and Ebaugh 2001). And even researchers who doubt that pluralism leads to greater religious participation in general conclude that empirical evidence supports the claim that a minority social position does evoke greater religious commitment (Chaves and Gorski 2001).

As argued above, examining the external factors influencing religious patterns provides only half the story. Offering a fuller account requires addressing the internal factors as well. In order to achieve continuity with other studies of youth and religion using the same data, this study adopts the approach presented by Pearce and Denton (2011), which focuses on the three main dimensions of religiosity: the centrality of religion to life, the content of religious belief, and the conduct of religious activity. These three C's provide the organizational structure for exploring the internal factors shaping patterns of faith sharing among U.S. young people.

Centrality, Content, and Conduct

Durkheim's century-old insight concerning the central role played by religious passion in spurring on evangelistic behavior continues to prove persuasive. Robert Putnam and David E. Campbell (2010) argue that those who regard religion as most central to their lives are the most active in sharing their faith. According to these authors, believing that only one religion is true motivates true believers to engage in evangelism. Other researchers suggest that religious experience leads directly to evangelistic effort. In a study of Pentecostals, Margaret Poloma and B.F. Pendleton (1989) found that the most evangelistic congregants reported the highest levels of charismatic activity, such as speaking in tongues. These authors posit a causal argument, suggesting that religious experience directly instigates proselytizing.

While that may be the case, the study design does not include a comparison group. As such, it remains difficult to determine if the effects of religious experience would remain the same for other groups. Because Pentecostals encourage and expect charismatic activities such as speaking in tongues, it might be that the religious experiences serve to confirm preexisting beliefs, providing what is interpreted as evidence for their veracity. It is not difficult to imagine how the coherence between belief and experience could incite such believers to spread their ideas. However, it is unclear whether or not this relationship would hold among other, non-charismatic groups. Though the specific mechanism involved in the causal argument remains unclear, the authors of this study do allow that charismatic activities serve as "indicators of a personal relationship with God" (Poloma and Pendleton 1989). Thus, their study endorses the perspective that as religious centrality rises, so does evangelistic activity.

Another internal factor that may affect such activity concerns the content of one's religious beliefs. While some theorists argue that ideology serves mainly to justify actions that have already been adopted, others suggest that holding particular beliefs can actually motivate behavior (Smith 2003, Vaisey 2009). For example, David W. Stevens (2004) discovered that a commitment to evangelizing nonmembers proved more salient than intergenerational conflict in shaping strategies of action in an immigrant congregation. When it comes to sharing faith, evidence suggests that evangelistic activity simply cannot be sustained without maintaining its motivating ideology (Zald and Denton 1963). Notions of "the judgment day" and "the apocalypse" prove especially significant when discerning the role of belief in the process of evangelism. Religious scenarios concerning the "end of the world" have been shown to animate collective action that centers on spreading faith (McMinn 2001).

Along with centrality and content, religious conduct plays a role in any thorough discussion of evangelism. A persistent theme in the literature involves the distinction between evangelism and social justice action. Several studies claims that religion individuals and congregations in the U.S. sort neatly into those that focus on evangelism and those that prefer service activities, such as feeding hungry neighbors and building affordable housing (Redekop 1974, Kangy 1992). At times,

the split runs within single denominations (Hoge, Perry, and Klever 1978, Hoge, et al. 1982) and faith-based organizations (Ebaugh, Rose, Chafetz, and Pipes 2006). At other times, the distinction between evangelistic groups and service-oriented groups maps neatly onto conservative and liberal religious traditions (Bibby and Brinkerhoff 1974, Wilson and Janoski. 1995). Studies involving the religious lives of young people confirm this trend. Pargament and colleagues (1984) find that highly religious college students desire more evangelistic and less service-oriented activity from their campus ministry organizations, while the unchurched report more concern for social justice.

However, not all empirical evidence reinforces the neat distinction between evangelistic conservatives and service-oriented liberals. Regnerus, Smith, and Sikkink (1998) note that Evangelicals contribute slightly more money directly to assist people living in poverty than either Liberal Protestants or Catholics. While not a competition, this finding challenges the received wisdom that Conservative Protestants necessarily focus on evangelism to the exclusion of social justice. Within Conservative Protestantism, R.L. Young (1992) discover a distinction between more evangelistic and more fundamentalist camps concerning support for the death penalty. Those considered more evangelistic reported greater opposition to the death penalty than did their fundamentalist counterparts, leading the authors to posit a relationship between holding an evangelistic outlook and having concern for the welfare of others. While the studies mentioned above tie evangelism to other-worldly preoccupation, this study links evangelism directly with concern for the world here and now. When it comes to young people, Trinitapoli and Vaisey (2009) find that short-term missions trips for religious adolescents most often focus on service projects rather than proselytizing. As it turns out, attending these mainly service-oriented trips increases both evangelistic activity and the opinion that it is acceptable to proselytize people of other religious groups.

Evangelism and Proselytizing

As pluralization increases encounters among people who differ according to religious centrality, content, and conduct, individuals and organizations must decide how they will engage religious Others. And when that engagement involves proselytizing, the religious Others must

decide how to respond in return. In an increasingly globalized civil society, religious conversion is both protected and contested (Thomas 2001). On the one hand, personal religious decisions fall into the realm of individual liberties, the protection of which signals broad-minded tolerance of competing viewpoints. On the other hand, conversion can be viewed as a threat to minority ethno-cultural groups. Proselytizing, or the attempt to make religious converts, becomes stigmatized because it posits the supremacy of a single cultural narrative that requires other-worldly salvation. The very act of trying to persuade others to adopt a new religious frame transgresses the broader civil frame of tolerance and inclusion (Ingram 1989).

By focusing on the proselytizing behaviors of individual religious groups, one may be tempted to view the problematic nature of proselytizing as deriving from the group itself instead of arising from the inherent tension between the religious group and its context:

> "According to those who say an evangelical had at some time tried to convert them to their faith, only between ten and twenty percent said that that was a positive experience. About one-half said it was a negative experience. The remainder said it was neither positive nor negative. Evangelicals may be 'out there' evangelizing. But when they do so, they are generally not leaving particularly good impressions on those they are proselytizing. *This suggests* that evangelicals have a real problem knowing how to communicate their message in a manner that will be well-received; or perhaps rather that the character of the evangelical message message itself, influenced as it is by important features of the evangelical subculture, tends to be alienating" (Smith 1998: 181-182, emphasis added).

Given the contested nature of proselytizing in a globalized civil society, one wonders whether it is fair to charge any religious group with poor communication or an alienating message without providing a comparison group. Are Evangelicals more alienating than Latter-day Saints or Catholics or Muslims or Buddhists? Perhaps. Or it might be that anyone asserting his or her religious message as "the truth" runs the risk of alienating the Other by transgressing the civil frame of tolerance and inclusion.

Members of religious groups that prioritize the sharing of faith must decide how to navigate the tension between the drive to express their religious convictions and the values of the pluralistic context in which they operate. One strategy of action found among adolescent Evangelicals involves holding exclusivist beliefs while not necessarily expressing those specific beliefs (Trinitapoli 2007). This type of distinction shows up among growing congregations which have discovered ways to

value evangelism while avoiding intolerance (Hadaway 1980). Likewise, positive attitudes towards evangelism can certainly be distinguished from fanaticism, defined as the "degree of missionary zeal to spread particular belief as a panacea for social and personal ills" (Seyfarth 1984: 56). A stated goal of the youth interfaith movement centers on equipping young people to link their private religious discourse with a public religious discourse, preventing conflict and multiplying social capital (Patel 2006). Such innovation serves as a reminder that the unsettledness that results from the intersection of the globalized civil frame and the particularistic religious frame can generate novel strategies of action. Cultural norms certainly shape behavior; but their malleability might exceed that of an iron cage or steel-hard shell (cf. Weber [1905] 2002).

Recognizing that different religious traditions adopt distinctive approaches to sharing their faith further nuances the topic of evangelism. Known for their Reformation roots in the doctrine of *sola scriptura*, Protestants tend toward sharing their faith verbally and cognitively (McCallion 2008). Conversely, evidence of the Catholic focus on a sacramental understanding of the universe plays out in their visual and material approaches to evangelism (*ibid*.). Such distinctive approaches become reinforced through various venues of religious education. For example, rural Evangelical Protestant youth ministries engage in evangelism activities at much higher rates than their Catholic counterparts (Goreham 2004). However, groups from both traditions engage in compassion outreaches such as visitation at similar levels (*ibid*.). As this project focuses on verbal communication, it should be noted that some religious traditions conceive of evangelism in terms that transcend conversation.

While a number of religious bodies focus on making converts among groups whom they consider "outsiders," other groups emphasize efforts to increase faith among those in the same ethnic or racial group. Studies focusing on this second type of outreach often highlight the role that culture plays in shaping the methods of evangelism. For example, members of Chabad-Lubavitch host Sabbath meals as a means of persuading other Jewish people to join their ultra-orthodox community (Berman 2009). This integration of ritual meal and religious conversation aims to increase adherence to a specific way of life among other Jews, not to make converts among Gentile

populations. Similarly, African-American Protestant congregations that utilize gospel rap music in their church services often do so with the intention of attracting younger African-American males toward religious conversion and participation—often with great success (Barnes 2008). These two examples highlight how different religious groups conceptualize in-group outreach.

Given the multiplicity of outreach approaches among religious groups, it becomes theoretically useful to distinguish between evangelism and proselytizing. Such a distinction will grow ever more salient as deeply religious people become unsettled by the global civil frame of tolerance. Evangelism should denote any religious talk across social boundaries. It occurs when a religious person converses about his or her religion with a person of a different or no religious perspective. This talk may or may not have as its goal the conversion of the Other. Instead, such witnessing may consist solely of explanation with no intent to persuade. Proselytism, on the other hand, is a more limited term. This subset of evangelism aims directly at making converts to one's religious point of view. The distinguishing characteristic of proselytizing is the persuasive intent of the interaction. This distinction provides a way of accurately describing the lived experiences of religious people who encounter the Other (cf. Bibby and Brikerhoff 1974). Put simply, evangelism is *sharing* the faith, and proselytizing is *spreading* the faith.

Empirically capturing the distinction between evangelism and proselytizing requires conducting studies that distinguish between religious conversations across social boundaries and specific attempts at making converts. One method of investigating the difference would be to ask participants to provide their opinions concerning the acceptability of proselytizing others. Their opinions could then be compared with their own rates of evangelism. Whether or not they think it is okay to *spread* their faith could be contrasted with whether or not they *share* their faith. Studying this distinction among a population encountering rising unsettledness caused by increasing religious pluralism would further deepen the theoretical import of the study. As it turns out, this approach is now possible.

METHODOLOGY

Data

The following discussion quotes and adapts the "Standard Methods Information Recommended for Use in Journal Articles from the National Study of Youth and Religion Telephone Survey Codebook." The National Study of Youth and Religion (NSYR)'s longitudinal telephone survey began as a nationally representative telephone survey of 3,290 English and Spanish speaking teenagers between the ages of 13 and 17. The baseline survey was conducted, with the teen respondents and one of their parents, between July 2002 and April 2003 by researchers at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. A random-digit dial (RDD) telephone method was employed to generate numbers representative of all household telephones in the 50 United States. Also included were 80 oversampled Jewish households, not nationally representative (described below), bringing the total number of completed cases in the first wave of NSYR to 3,370. The second wave and third waves of the NSYR are re-surveys of the Wave 1 English-speaking teen respondents. All waves of the survey were conducted by telephone using a Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) system.

The Wave 2 survey was conducted from June 2005 through November 2005 when the respondents were between the ages of 16 and 21. Wave 3 of the survey was fielded from September 2007 through April 2008 when the respondents were between 18 and 24 years old. Every effort was made to contact and survey *all* original NSYR respondents, whether they

completed the Wave 2 survey or not, including those out of the country and in the military. Of the original respondents, 2,604 participated in the second wave of the survey resulting in an overall retention rate of 78.6 percent. The predominant source of attrition in the second wave was non-located respondents. The Wave 2 cooperation rate was 89.9 percent. The refusal rate for Wave 2, calculated as the number of eligible respondents (N = 3,312) that refused to take part in the survey, was 4.0 percent. In Wave 3, 2,532 original youth respondents participated in the survey for an overall Wave 1 to Wave 3 retention rate of 77.1 percent. The main source of attrition in the third wave was again non-located respondents (although not necessarily the same as those not located in Wave 2). The Wave 3 refusal rate, calculated as the number of eligible respondents (3,282) who refused, was 6 percent. The percentage of respondents who completed all three waves of the survey was 68.4 percent.

Diagnostic analyses comparing NSYR data with U.S. Census data on comparable households and with comparable adolescent surveys---such as Monitoring the Future, the National Household Education Survey, and the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health---confirm that the NSYR provides a nationally representative sample without identifiable sampling and nonresponse biases of U.S. teenagers ages 13-17 and their parents living in households (for details, see Smith and Denton 2003). For descriptive purposes, a weight was created to adjust for number of teenagers in household, number of household telephone numbers, census region of residence, and household income. A separate weight is used in multivariate analyses that control for census region and household income, which adjusts only for number of teenagers in a household and number of household telephone numbers. The 80 Jewish oversample cases are omitted from this analysis.

Measures

A major strength of utilizing all three waves of NSYR data is the ability to investigate trends in evangelism across time. Rather than providing only a cross-sectional snapshot at a single moment, this analysis offers the benefits of using longitudinal data. It notes the relationships between dependent and independent variables across three different points in time, enhancing the possibility of positing causal arguments. Though utilizing lagged variables can further assist in making causal arguments, it was ruled about for two reasons. First, one dependent and several independent variables measure activity within the last year. Lagging variables that already includes a delayed time component would introduce excessive time distortion into the models. Second, the time periods between the three different waves of the NSYR are not equidistant, making it difficult to assess the relative effect of lagging between waves.

Preparing the panel data set began with dropping all nonreligious young people from each of the three waves. While it may have been interesting to capture the opinions and practices of nonreligious young people concerning evangelism, the NSYR skip sequence precluded them from questions on this topic. Young people who reported having no religious tradition, no belief in God, and/or no attendance at religious services did not answer questions about evangelism and do not appear in this analysis. This resulted in dropping 651 respondents from the first wave, 723 from the second, and 916 from the third. Once the dependent and independent variables from each wave were prepared and respondents with missing or unusable responses were dropped, the three waves were combined into a single panel data set with an N = 5,037. Rather than overwhelming readers with individual figures for each measure from each wave, the following

description of univariate statistics focuses on trends across waves and rounded percentages from the total sample.

Table 1 About Here

This project compares the impact of one set of independent variables on two dichotomous dependent variables, all of which appear in Table 1. The first dependent variable captures young people's opinions about the act of proselyting: "Is is okay for religious people to try to convert other people to their faith, or should everyone leave everyone else alone?" At each wave, slightly more than 60 percent of each wave said yes, while the remainder (40 percent) said no. The second dependent variable measures the extent of evangelism by young people: "In the last year, have you shared your own religious faith with someone else not of your faith?" At each wave, approximately 55 percent indicated they had, while the remainder (45 percent) said they had not. Including both dependent variables in this analysis makes it possible to contrast opinions about proselytizing with activity involving evangelism. The remaining independent variables fall into four categories: controls, content, conduct, and centrality.

The *control* measures for this project include age, sex, race/ethnicity, census region, and religious tradition. As the only continuous variable, age ranges from 13 to 17 in wave one, from 16 to 20 in wave two, and from 17 to 24 in wave three. Age in the total sample has a mean of 17 and a standard deviation of 2.5. As all other variables are either nominal or ordinal, dummies for each measure appear in the final models. Because the NSYR data contains four cases in which respondents changed their gender identification at least once, the measure of gender used for all three waves reflects the response given at the first wave. The total ratio of females to males is fairly even at 52 percent to 48 percent. The report of race/ethnicity at wave one serves as the

sole indication of this measure for all three waves. As expected, Whites constitute the majority of the total sample (67 percent), followed by African Americans (18 percent), Latinos/as (10 percent), and Other races/ethnicities (5 percent).

Though including the Other race/ethnicity category will not reveal substantive information about the effects of specific groups within it, the inclusion allows this project to address the issue of minority status in an age of increasing diversity. For example, it will not be possible to make claims about the effect of being Asian on the dependent variables. But it will be possible to explore how occupying a minority position does. This same principle applies to religious tradition. While Conservative Protestant (41 percent) and Catholics (26 percent) constitute the largest groups, the equally represented Mainline Protestants (13 percent) and African American Protestants (13 percent) accompany Latter-day Saints (3 percent), Jewish (1 percent), and Others (3 percent). Rounding out the control variables, the census region shows concentrations in both the South (47 percent) and Midwest (25 percent) with fewer respondents residing in the West (17 percent) and Northeast (12 percent).

The three *content* measures for this project include belief in a judgment day, views on religion, and views on God. In response to the question, "Do you believe that there will come a judgment day when God will reward some and punish others, or not?" a large majority (81 percent) responded yes, and the rest (19 percent) responded no. When asked to identify which statement comes closest to their own views about religion, over half agreed that many religions may be true (58 percent), a sizable portion indicated that only one religion is true (38 percent), and a minority expressed the view that there is very little truth in any religion (5 percent). When asked to identify the statement that came closest to their view of God, over three quarters opted

for a personal being involved in lives of people (78 percent). Much smaller portions viewed God as an impersonal, cosmic life force (11 percent) or as a creator who is uninvolved in the world (10 percent). Only 1 percent chose none of these options.

The three *conduct* measures for this project include helping people in need, attending church, and praying alone. When asked, "In the last 12 months, how much, if at all, did you help homeless people, needy neighbors, or other people in need, directly, not through an organization?" responses included a lot (12 percent), some (33 percent), a little (32 percent), and none (23 percent). Rates of church attendance consisted of the following categories: more than once a week (17 percent), once a week (25 percent), two or three times a month (16 percent), once a month (10 percent), many times a year (9 percent), and a few times a year (22 percent). When asked how often they pray alone, student reported praying many times a day (18 percent), about once a day (24 percent), a few times a week (17 percent), about once a week (13 percent), one or two times a month (15 percent), less than once a month (7 percent), and never (6 percent). While consolidating the responses to this and other measures into fewer categories makes for simpler models, including all of the responses provided in the original survey design allows for greater analytical detail.

The three *centrality* measures for this project include thinking about the meaning of life, rating the importance of faith for daily life, and feelings of closeness to God. When asked "How often, if at all, do you think about the meaning of life?" respondents chose between the options very often (26 percent), fairly often (19 percent), sometimes (32 percent), rarely (16 percent), and never (8 percent). When asked "How important or unimportant is religious faith in shaping how you live your daily life?" they selected among extremely (26 percent), very (34 percent),

somewhat (31 percent), not very (7 percent), and not at all (2 percent). And when asked "How distant or close do you feel to God most of the time?" the options included extremely close (12 percent), very close (29 percent), somewhat close (37 percent), somewhat distant (17 percent), very distant (4 percent), and extremely distant (1 percent).

Analysis

This project presents two longitudinal regression models prepared using the xtlogit command in the statistical software package STATA. As this package disallows the use of weights with the xtlogit command, these models utilize unweighted data. Because the NSYR panel data set does not contain sufficient variation to adopt a fixed effects approach, this project presents random effects models. While using fixed effects models can assist in making causal arguments, such models drop from the analysis variables that do not exhibit sufficient variation over time. By using a random effects approach, this project retains a fuller set of measures, enabling a discussion of important insights based on more stable variables (e.g., sex, race/ethnicity).

When discussing a single dependent variable, researchers often present several regression models containing different groupings of independent variables. This allows the researcher to contrast partial models with the final model containing all or most of the independent measures. This project, however, highlights the differences between models with two different dependent variables. Rather than contrasting different groupings of independent measures on a single dependent variable, this project contrasts the effects of the same set of independent measures on two different dependent variables. Because the main comparison occurs between models rather than within them, this project omits partial models and presents the two full models side by side.

FINDINGS

Table 2 presents the odds ratios from the random effects three-wave panel models predicting conversion opinions and faith sharing among religious young people. Rather than discussing the models separately, this analysis compares and contrasts the influence on both dependent variables of the four categories of independent variables: controls, content, conduct, and centrality.

Table 2 About Here

Controls

The first control variable, age, has no significant effect on whether religious young people feel that it is okay to convert others. However, each additional year of life year increases by 8 percent the odds that a religious young person has shared his or her faith with a person of another faith. While conversion opinions appear relatively stable over time, aging increases the likelihood that religious young people will share their faith with a person of a different faith. While the odds of believing it is okay to convert others are 73 percent higher for males than for females, the odds of sharing faith are the same for both genders. While males demonstrate a higher level of tolerance for persuading others on religious matters, they do not share their faith at higher rates.

When it comes to race and ethnicity, only one group differs significantly from whites on conversion opinions, and another differs from them on faith sharing. The odds of thinking it is

okay to convert others for Latinas/os are about 40 percent lower than for whites. And the odds of faith sharing for African Americans are about 40 percent lower than for whites. Perhaps Latino/a young people express lower tolerance for proselytizing as a reaction to assimilation pressures placed on people perceived to be immigrants. And the lower rates of faith sharing among African American young people may result from a focus on in-group outreach rather than out-group proselytizing. While census region has no significant effect on conversion opinions, the odds of faith sharing are 50 percent higher among those living in the west than those residing in the south. It may be that religious young people living in less religious areas are more likely to have (and take) opportunities to share their faith with those who see things differently.

The control variable demonstrating the most divergent influence on the two dependent variables is religious tradition. While several religious traditions have similar odds of conversion opinions and faith sharing compared to Conservative Protestants, other groups differ from them in opposite directions on conversion opinions and faith sharing. Compared to Conservative Protestants, the odds of thinking it is okay to convert others for African American Protestants are 50 percent lower, and the odds of faith sharing are 40 percent lower. Among Catholics the same odds are 30 percent lower and 70 percent lower, and among Mainline Protestants they are 40 percent lower and not significantly different. These trends reaffirm the greater emphasis placed on verbal evangelism among Conservative Protestants, with the caveat that Mainline Protestant young people share their faith at rates that are not significantly different than their Conservative Protestant cousins.

The pattern of having a similar or lower rate of believing it is okay to convert others and a similar or higher rate of sharing faith in comparison to Conservative Protestants extends to two

other groups. Among Other religious groups, the odds of thinking it is okay to convert people is not significantly different at the .01 level than for Conservative Protestants, but the odds of sharing faith for Other religious groups is almost 250 percent higher. Among Jewish young people, the same odds are 90 percent lower and 620 percent higher. This massive disparity signals a clear distinction between proselytizing, which aims at converting others, and evangelism, which includes any sharing of religion across social boundaries. Finally, the odds of believing it is okay to convert others for Latter-day Saints are about 400 percent higher than for Conservative Protestants, but this same group joins Mainline young people in sharing their faith at a rate that does not differ significantly from the reference group. New religious movements that pursue the dual goals of proselytizing others while seeking cultural legitimation as a Christian group may find it difficult to engender evangelistic behavior exceeding that of the dominant evangelical strain of Christianity.

Content

The content variable of believing in a judgment day exhibits a positive influence on both conversion opinions and faith sharing. The odds of thinking it is okay to convert others for those who believe in a judgment day are 100 percent higher as for those who do not. And the odds of sharing faith for the same group are 40 percent higher. While it is possible that some young people find themselves sharing their faith and later extrapolate backward to proselytizing opinions and judgment day beliefs, it seems much more likely that such beliefs motivate evangelistic action. It is difficult to imagine a young person sharing faith and later concluding, "There must be a judgment day because I have had a religious conversation across social boundaries." Compared to young people who think that there is little truth in any religion, those

who believe that many religions may be true have odds of thinking that it is okay to convert others that are about 90 percent higher, and those who think that only one religion is true have odds that are 450 percent higher. Such views on religion have no significant influence on evangelistic behavior. Similarly, one's view of God has no significant influence on either conversion opinions or evangelistic activity.

Conduct

While the conduct variable of helping people in need has no significant effect on conversion opinions, it does influence evangelism activity. Compared to young people who never help people in need, the odds of sharing faith for those who help a little are 50 percent higher, for those who help some are 80 percent higher, and for those who help a lot are 110 percent higher. This relationship suggests that religious young people who share their faith may view such conversation primarily as a means of being helpful to others. Compared to young people who attend church only a few times a year, the odds of thinking it is okay to convert others for those who attend many times a year are 60 percent higher for those attending many times a year, 20 percent higher for those attending once a month, 70 percent higher for those attending two or three times a month, 110 percent higher for those attending once a week, and 180 percent higher for those attending more than once a week. A similar pattern holds between church attendance and evangelistic activity. Compared to the same reference group, the odds of sharing faith are 27 percent higher for those who attending once a month, 20 percent higher for those attending once a month, 47 percent higher for those attending two or three times a month, 60 percent higher for those attending once a week, and 160 percent higher for those attending more than once a week. The slight dip in both conversion opinions and faith sharing between the less frequent "many

times a year" and the more frequent "once a month" may result from the higher desirability of selecting an attendance category containing the word "many" vs. a category that contains the word "once."

The act of praying alone demonstrates a much stronger relationship to faith sharing than conversion opinions. Compared to those who never pray alone, the odds of believing it is okay to convert others are 64 percent higher for those who pray a few times a week and 90 percent higher for those who pray many times a day. However, compared to the same reference group, the odds of sharing faith are 61 percent higher for those who pray alone less than once a month, 98 percent higher for those who pray alone one or two times a month, 170 percent higher for those who pray alone about once a week, 223 percent higher for those who pray alone a few times a week, 156 percent higher for those who pray alone about once a day, and 356 percent higher for those who pray many times a day. This pattern clearly demonstrates that the more regularly religious young people talk with God, the more likely they are to have shared their faith with a person of a different religious orientation. More talking to God equals more talking to religious Others. The slight dip in both categories that occurs with the about once a day group. The slight dip in both conversion opinions and faith sharing between the less frequent "a few times a week" and the more frequent "about once a day" may result from the higher desirability of selecting a prayer category containing the word "few" vs. a category that contains the word "once." It might also be that religious young people feel obligated to report praying alone about once a day, regardless of their actual engagement with this practice.

Centrality

The centrality variable of thinking about the meaning of life bears little relationship with conversion opinions among religious young people. Compared to those who never think about the meaning of life, the odds of thinking that it is okay to convert others are not significantly different from any category except those who think about the meaning of life very often—odds which are 34 percent lower. Perhaps religious young people with a deeply contemplative approach to life feel strongly about their conclusions, resisting others' attempts to change their minds. If so, this suggests that such contemplatives spend at least some effort putting themselves in others' shoes, imagining what it would be like to be on the receiving end of unwanted proselytizing attempts.

When it comes to faith sharing, a much different pattern arises. Compared to those who never think about the meaning of life, the odds of faith sharing are 49 percent higher for those do so rarely, 54 percent higher for those who do so sometimes, 91 percent higher for those who do so fairly often, and 78 percent higher for those who do so very often. This pattern suggests that contemplation decreases rhetoric and increases sharing. The more that religious young people think about the meaning of life, the more likely they are to discuss—but not demand agreement with—their religious thoughts.

Of the final two centrality variables—the importance of faith for daily life and feelings of closeness to God—only one significant relationship emerges. Compared to those who rate faith as being not at all important for daily life, the odds of thinking that it is okay to convert others are 270 percent higher for those who rate faith as extremely important for daily life. Except for

this one notable exception, these two subjective measures of religious centrality exert no influence on conversion opinions and faith sharing in these models.

CONCLUSION

The main finding of this project is that evangelism and proselytizing are not synonymous. Regression analysis distinguishes two distinct relationships between the independent variables and the two dependent variables: conversion opinions and evangelistic behavior. Understanding the distinctions between these relationships requires distinguishing between internal and external factors.

Given the single exception of thinking about the meaning of life, increases in the internal measures—content, conduct, and centrality—correlate with increases in one or both of the dependent variables. While belief in a judgment day strengthens both conversion opinions and faith sharing, religious exclusivism increases only conversion opinions, and beliefs about the nature of God exert no influence on either measure. While private prayer and church attendance strengthen both conversion opinions and faith sharing, helping people in need relates positively only with faith sharing. While thinking about the meaning of life strengthens faith sharing, only rating faith as extremely important for life correlates with positive conversion opinions. Though previous studies argue for a positive relationship between spiritual experience and evangelism (Poloma and Pendleton 1989), feelings of closeness to God show no influence on either conversion opinions or faith sharing in these models. The overall pattern provides some evidence that being more religious means being more evangelistic. However, a much richer picture arises

when noting the specific ways in which these internal measures relate differently with conversion opinions and faith sharing.

Young people who espouse exclusivist beliefs and go to church often prove more likely to think it is okay to convert people of other faiths to their own. This suggests that participation rooted in congregational life and religious exclusivism increases competition in the market of ideas. The more one gathers with people of like faith and assents to exclusivist doctrines, the more he or she sees interaction with religious Others in terms of persuasion. It is easy to see how believing that only one religion is true demonstrates religious exclusivism, and believing in a judgment day at least raises the possibility that a distinction will be made between the innocent and the guilty, the saved and the damned. But it is also true that congregational life socially embodies such exclusivism. While religious congregations may make every attempt to be inviting to newcomers, they nonetheless maintain boundaries between insiders and outsiders. Even the most open and welcoming congregations distinguish themselves from those who are not open and welcoming. Both belief and group formation contribute to maintaining the distinction between the sacred and the profane, a distinction that becomes important to impress upon others.

Surprisingly, these exclusivist internal factors are not the most important influences on faith sharing. Young people who increasingly pray alone, help people in need on their own, and ponder the meaning of life are actually more likely to share their faith with others. As faith becomes internalized and generosity becomes intrinsic, religious young people become more likely to evangelize. Importantly, this pattern emerges when controlling for religious tradition. In this case, the old dichotomy between sharing one's faith and working for social justice lacks rationale. It is not simply that there is a positive relationship between evangelism and activism.

Rather the more likely religious young people are to help those in need, the more likely they are to share their faith. The emerging generation simply has not received the memo that they are supposed to choose one or the other. Given that some young people report both believing that it is okay to convert others and sharing their faith in the previous year, clearly some evangelism includes the attempt to convert others. However, exploring control variables demonstrates that this is not necessarily the case for all young evangelists.

Age, sex, and race/ethnicity show uneven influences on conversion opinions and faith sharing. Aging increases the likelihood of sharing faith, but not of thinking that it is okay to convert others. It might be that growing older increases opportunities and/or confidence for conversing about religion across social boundaries. Flipping the pattern, males and females have the same levels of faith sharing, but men are more likely to think that it is okay to convert others. The social construction of masculinity surely encourages and enables more aggressive forms of religion; but it does not incite the actual practice of evangelism. When it comes to race/ethnicity, Whites hold similar conversion opinions and faith sharing with other groups, excepting Latinas/os who are less willing to say that it is okay to convert others and African-Americans who are less likely to share their faith. As argued above, such differences may arise from both the reactions to assimilation pressures placed on people perceived to be immigrants and a focus on in-group outreach rather than out-group proselytizing.

Detecting how increasing pluralism structures conversion opinions and faith sharing among religious young people requires examining the effects of the final two external factors: census region and religious tradition. In the case of census region, living in the west has no effect on conversion opinions but does increase the likelihood of faith sharing compared to living in the

south. Perhaps this occurs because the south is more densely populated with religious young people than is the west. The experience of living in an area with fewer religiously likeminded peers presents more opportunities to have religious conversations across social boundaries. This pattern intensifies when evaluating the effects of religious tradition. As described above, African American Protestants, Catholics, and Mainline Protestants espouse less proselytizing rhetoric and report less or similar evangelistic behavior as Conservative Protestants. These mainstream religious traditions, known for in-group outreach, nonverbal evangelism, social action do not encourage aggressive verbal proselyting. Occupying a minority religious position, however, does not necessarily weaken conversion opinions. While Latter-day Saints are many times more likely to believe it is okay to convert others than Conservative Protestants, but this belief does not translate into more faith sharing. Perhaps many Mormon young people live in close proximity with other Mormon young people, having less opportunity to engage with religious Others.

The most striking findings from this project—and the greatest evidence that proselytizing and evangelism are not synonymous—arise from examining young people who are Jewish or from other religions. These cases demonstrate the greatest effects of occupying minority religious positions in a pluralistic world. While the odds of thinking that it is okay to convert others are the same for Conservative Protestants and Other religions, the odds of sharing faith are considerably higher for the minority group. In an even greater divergence, religiously Jewish young people have much lower odds of believing that it is okay to convert others and much higher odds of sharing their faith. The contrast is 85 percent lower and 620 percent higher as compared to Conservative Protestants. No group in this study reported the converse relationship

of having greater odds of believing that it is okay to convert others but lower odds of sharing their faith as compared to the control group.

While some Christian groups label other Christian groups religious outsiders, others do not. Methodists might talk about their faith with Anglicans without reporting that they have shared their faith with a person of another faith. More conservative Christian groups, however, might view every religious conversation with someone not from their tradition or church as an opportunity to proselytize. In the case of religious minorities, however, the social boundaries become clearer to both parties. It is important to note that the greatest divergence in conversion opinions and faith sharing arises within a non-Christian religious tradition. In occupying a minority religious position, even non-proselytizing religious such as Judaism will have highly evangelistic young people. If this pattern holds, then increasing pluralization will lead to more unsettled lives which will produce more evangelism. Regardless of their conversion opinions, the arrival of non-Christian religious groups will increase the opportunities for and the instances of this behavior. Future research on this topic would do well to distinguish between proselytizing and evangelism—the attempt to convert and the broader category of sharing faith across social boundaries.

APPENDIX 1: TABLES OF DATA FINDINGS

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics for Religious Young People across Three Waves (N = 5,037)

	Wave 1 Freq. (Per.)	Wave 2 Freq. (Per.)	Wave 3 Freq. (Per.)	Total Freq. (Per.)
Dependent Variables				
Okay to convert others				
Yes	1,382 (61.23)	893 (61.63)	836 (62.81)	3,111 (61.76)
No*	875 (38.77)	556 (38.37)	495 (37.19)	1,926 (38.24)
Shared faith in last year				
Yes	1,208 (53.52)	832 (57.42)	759 (57.02)	2,799 (55.57)
No*	1,049 (46.48)	617 (42.58)	572 (42.98)	2,238 (44.43)
Content Variables				
Belief in Judgment Day				
Yes	1,842 (81.61)	1,178 (81.30)	1,063 (79.86)	4,083 (81.06)
No*	415 (18.39)	271 (18.70)	268 (20.14)	954 (18.94)
Views on Religion				
Only one is true.	804 (35.62)	547 (37.75)	550 (41.32)	1,901 (37.74)
Many may be true.	1,340 (59.37)	840 (57.97)	726 (54.55)	2,906 (57.69)
Little truth in any.*	113 (5.01)	62 (4.28)	55 (4.13)	230 (4.57)
Views on God				
Personal, involved being	1,716 (76.03)	1,139 (78.61)	1,080 (81.14)	3,935 (78.12)
Distant, uninvolved creator*	279 (12.36)	138 (9.52)	109 (8.19)	526 (10.44)
Impersonal, cosmic force	244 (10.81)	153 (10.56)	133 (9.99)	530 (10.52)
None of these	18 (0.80)	19 (1.31)	9 (0.68)	46 (0.91)
Conduct Variables				
Helps people in need				
A lot	266 (11.79)	172 (11.87)	154 (11.57)	592 (11.75)
Some	772 (34.20)	472 (32.57)	428 (32.16)	1,672 (33.19)
A little	699 (30.97)	495 (34.16)	428 (32.16)	1,622 (32.20)
None*	520 (23.04)	310 (21.39)	321 (24.12)	1,151 (22.85)
Attends church				
More than once a week	469 (20.78)	241 (16.63)	154 (11.57)	864 (17.15)
Once a week	649 (28.75)	355 (24.50)	278 (20.89)	1,282 (25.45)
Two or three times a month	331 (14.67)	266 (18.36)	221 (16.60)	818 (16.24)
Once a month	186 (8.24)	153 (10.56)	157 (11.80)	496 (9.85)
Many times a year	226 (10.01)	98 (6.76)	139 (10.44)	463 (9.19)
Few times a year*	396 (17.55)	336 (23.19)	382 (28.70)	1,114 (22.12)
Prays alone				
Many times a day	419 (18.56)	226 (15.60)	280 (21.04)	925 (18.36)
About once a day	577 (25.56)	338 (23.33)	276 (20.74)	1,191 (23.65)
A few times a week	371 (16.44)	253 (17.46)	237 (17.81)	861 (17.09)
About once a week	310 (13.74)	195 (13.46)	164 (12.32)	669 (13.28)
One or two times a month	285 (12.63)	253 (17.46)	193 (14.50)	731 (14.51)
Less than once a month	141 (6.25)	116 (8.01)	112 (8.41)	369 (7.33)
Never*	154 (6.82)	68 (4.69)	69 (5.18)	291 (5.78)

Continued.

Table 1. (*Continued*)

	Wave 1 Freq. (Per.)	Wave 2 Freq. (Per.)	Wave 3 Freq. (Per.)	Total Freq. (Per.)
Centrality Variables				
Thinks about the meaning of life				
Very often	519 (23.00)	384 (26.50)	387 (29.08)	1,290 (25.61)
Fairly often	434 (19.23)	286 (19.74)	249 (18.71)	969 (19.24)
Sometimes	723 (32.03)	450 (31.06)	420 (31.56)	1,593 (31.63)
Rarely	406 (17.99)	211 (14.56)	181 (13.60)	798 (15.84)
Never*	175 (7.75)	118 (8.14)	94 (7.06)	387 (7.68)
Importance of faith for daily life				
Extremely	535 (23.70)	383 (26.43)	368 (27.65)	1,286 (25.53)
Very	803 (35.58)	459 (31.68)	444 (33.36)	1,706 (33.87)
Somewhat	710 (31.46)	466 (32.16)	408 (30.65)	1,584 (31.45)
Not very	165 (7.31)	118 (8.14)	92 (6.91)	375 (7.44)
Not at all*	44 (1.95)	23 (1.59)	19 (1.43)	86 (1.71)
Feelings of closeness to God				
Extremely close	311 (13.78)	147 (10.14)	137 (10.29)	595 (11.81)
Very close	676 (29.95)	389 (26.85)	396 (29.75)	1,461 (29.01)
Somewhat close	831 (36.82)	546 (37.68)	508 (38.17)	1,885 (37.42)
Somewhat distant	334 (14.80)	286 (19.74)	220 (16.53)	840 (16.68)
Very distant	72 (3.19)	62 (4.28)	54 (4.06)	188 (3.73)
Extremely distant*	33 (1.46)	19 (1.31)	16 (1.20)	68 (1.35)
Control Variables				
Sex				
Female*	1,150 (50.95)	765 (52.80)	710 (53.34)	2,625 (52.11)
Male	1,107 (49.05)	684 (47.20)	621 (46.66)	2,412 (47.89)
Race/Ethnicity				
African American	418 (18.52)	248 (17.12)	238 (17.88)	904 (17.95)
Latina/o	248 (10.99)	129 (8.90)	130 (9.77)	507 (10.07)
Other	115 (5.10)	76 (5.24)	58 (4.36)	249 (4.94)
White*	1,476 (65.40)	996 (68.74)	905 (67.99)	3,377 (67.04)
Census Region				
Midwest	521 (23.08)	353 (24.36)	362 (27.20)	1,236 (24.54)
Northeast	314 (13.91)	188 (12.97)	104 (7.81)	606 (12.03)
South*	1,020 (45.19)	694 (47.90)	641 (48.16)	2,355 (46.75)
West	402 (17.81)	214 (14.77)	224 (16.83)	840 (16.68)
Religious Tradition				
African American Protestant	330 (14.62)	160 (11.04)	149 (11.19)	639 (12.69)
Catholic	627 (27.78)	380 (26.22)	322 (24.19)	1,329 (26.38)
Evangelical*	870 (38.55)	627 (43.27)	586 (44.03)	2,083 (41.35)
Jewish	34 (1.51)	11 (0.76)	6 (0.45)	51 (1.01)
Latter-day Saints	63 (2.79)	50 (3.45)	48 (3.61)	161 (3.20)
Mainline	274 (12.14)	187 (12.91)	180 (13.52)	641 (12.73)
Other	59 (2.61)	34 (2.35)	40 (3.01)	133 (2.64)
TOTALS	2,257 (100.00)	1,449 (100.00)	1,331 (100.00)	5,037 (100.00)

Source: National Study of Youth and Religion (Wave 1: 2003, Wave 2: 2005, Wave 3: 2007-2008)
* Reference categories in regression equations.

Table 2. Odds Ratios from Random Effects Three-Wave Panel Models Predicting Conversion Opinions and Faith Sharing among Religious Young People (N = 5,037)

	Okay to Convert Others: Yes[a]	Shared Faith in Last Year: Yes[b]
Content Variables		
Belief in Judgment Day[g]		
Yes	2.003***	1.400**
Views on Religion[h]		
Only one is true.	5.354***	1.275
Many may be true.	1.947**	1.019
Views on God[i]		
Personal, involved being	1.279	1.025
Impersonal, cosmic force	.779	1.030
None of these	.847	1.419
Conduct Variables		
Helps people in need[j]		
A lot	1.085	2.145***
Some	.922	1.808***
A little	.999	1.499***
Attends church[k]		
More than once a week	2.799***	2.630***
Once a week	2.168***	1.599***
Two or three times a month	1.695***	1.473**
Once a month	1.209	1.206
Many times a year	1.612**	1.272
Prays alone[l]		
Many times a day	1.911**	4.562***
About once a day	1.408	2.555***
A few times a week	1.637*	3.230***
About once a week	1.329	2.698***
One or two times a month	1.355	1.977***
Less than once a month	1.365	1.607*
Centrality Variables		
Thinks about the meaning of life[m]		
Very often	.663*	1.779***
Fairly often	.743	1.907***
Sometimes	.844	1.539**
Rarely	1.053	1.486**
Importance of faith for daily life[n]		
Extremely	3.702***	1.469
Very	2.026	1.169
Somewhat	1.801	.832
Not very	1.825	.644
Feelings of closeness to God[o]		
Extremely close	.773	.983
Very close	1.089	1.066
Somewhat close	.915	.957
Somewhat distant	.857	.879
Very distant	.528	.873

Continued.

Table 2. *(Continued)*

	Okay to Convert Others: Yes[a]	Shared Faith in Last Year: Yes[b]
Centrality Variables		
Thinks about the meaning of life[m]		
Very often	.663*	1.779***
Fairly often	.743	1.907***
Sometimes	.844	1.539**
Rarely	1.053	1.486**
Importance of faith for daily life[n]		
Extremely	3.702***	1.469
Very	2.026	1.169
Somewhat	1.801	.832
Not very	1.825	.644
Feelings of closeness to God[o]		
Extremely close	.773	.983
Very close	1.089	1.066
Somewhat close	.915	.957
Somewhat distant	.857	.879
Very distant	.528	.873
Control Variables		
Age	1.017	1.076***
Male[c]	1.732***	1.044
Race/Ethnicity[d]		
African American	.790	.586**
Latina/o	.592**	.775
Other	.871	.914
Census Region[e]		
Midwest	.984	1.276*
Northeast	1.157	1.293
West	.867	1.468**
Religious Tradition[f]		
African American Protestant	.488***	.612**
Catholic	.282***	.680***
Jewish	.147***	7.198***
Latter-day Saints	5.096***	1.439
Mainline	.617**	1.091
Other	.538*	2.448**
Wald X^2 (47)	521.620***	439.260***

Source: National Study of Youth and Religion (Wave 1: 2003, Wave 2: 2005, Wave 3: 2007-2008) [a]The reference category is no. [b]The reference category is no. [c]The reference category is female. [d]The reference category is white. [e]The reference category is South. [f]The reference category is Evangelical. [g]The reference category is no. [h]The reference category is little truth in any. [i]The reference category is distant, uninvolved creator. [j]The reference category is none. [k]The reference category is a few times a year. [l]The reference category is never. [m]The reference category is never. [n]The reference category is not at all. [o]The reference category is extremely distant.
* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$ (two-tailed tests).

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