Converts at World Youth Day

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ABSTRACT

A study of participants at the most recent World Youth Day (Sydney, 2008) found that many, reflecting on the event five months later, described it as the stimulus that moved them to a fuller religious commitment. This paper takes a multidisciplinary approach to developing a more comprehensive and adequate framework for understanding conversion. It goes on to explore the spiritual conditions predisposing these World Youth Day participants towards a particular type of conversion experience. Conversion is shown to have maintained its impact on many aspects of their beliefs, attitudes and behaviour five months after the event. The aspects of World Youth Day which most influenced them are identified, and the changes of belief and attitude which preceded or accompanied conversion are explored.

1. Introduction

As we set out to study participants at the 2008 World Youth Day, our initial research question was whether the event produced lasting results by leading many of its participants to become committed Catholics, and if this did occur, what were the factors involved, and what were the consequences. Large-scale evangelistic youth rallies have long been regarded by many academic observers as 'ritual performances' – preaching to the converted – rather than mechanisms for generating new, effective and enduring 'conversions', understood as moments of decision enacting a dramatic change from non-commitment to full religious commitment.[2] Our expectations were that the event would have attracted few who were not already religiously committed, and would be unlikely to have brought about significant or lasting change among this minority, especially because the events of the week, as we observed them, made little attempt to 'convert' participants, being devoted instead to rather formal celebrations of faith.

These expectations were partly verified: it was true that despite strenuous recruiting efforts in the host country, the event had quite limited 'reach' beyond the city where it took place; and a very

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[2] See, for example, the following studies of the Billy Graham Crusades: Donald A. Clelland et al., "In the company of the converted: characteristics of a Billy Graham Crusade audience," *Sociological Analysis* 35 (1974): 45-56. Weldon T. Johnson, "The religious crusade: revival or ritual?," *American Journal of Sociology* 76 (n.d.): 873-90. Ronald C. Wimberley et al., "Conversion in a Billy Graham Crusade: Spontaneous event or ritual performance?," *Sociological Quarterly* 16 (1975): 162-70.

high proportion of the participants were already weekly church attenders;[3] however, a significant proportion of those who were less committed did experience a kind of conversion. It will be argued here that the dominant model of conversion as once-and-for-all, dramatic and total, is problematic in itself, and also tends to obscure significant religious change taking place on these occasions. The study's findings provide evidence of 'conversions' in a more adequately defined sense, revealing the antecedent factors which prepare young people for this type of religious growth, the components of the World Youth Day events which evoked or facilitated the experience, and life-changing outcomes which have endured into the medium term.

This paper explores a particular kind of religious experience which occurred during WYD, or in its aftermath, for a significant proportion of participants. We will argue that the experience can appropriately be called 'conversion', so it is necessary first to clarify the sense in which we use that term here, and what it implies as an interpretation of these young people's experience.

In its most general sense, 'conversion' denotes a change, literally a 'turnaround', a change of perspective and orientation – seeing the world differently in some way and rearranging one's priorities. The change may be moderate or extreme and may occur suddenly or gradually. Although it is sometimes used to refer to a primarily intellectual event, as when a scientist is 'converted' to a new theory purely by reasoning based on experimental evidence, or to accepting the theory of global warming as a consequence of human actions 'conversion' is more often applied to a change of ideology, conviction or personal orientation, involving feeling and decision as well as knowledge – as when a Muslim is converted to the Jihadist view of the world, or someone is converted to Communism. It results in a changed self. We speak of 'moral conversion' when someone realigns their conduct to accord with principles of behaviour. These may flow from a newly adopted worldview which carries with it new prescriptions for action; or the person may be merely putting into practice values to which, until now, they gave only lipservice. Historically, conversion has most often referred to personal change of a religious kind, but even in this sphere, the term is used with many different meanings in common parlance.

Common understandings of religious conversion
Religious conversion is most often understood as a sudden, dramatic, emotional, life-changing decision to embrace a religious faith, with its associated way of life, its practices, its community, with the sense that one is thereby delivered or saved. In Christianity conversion involves entering into a relationship with Jesus Christ, surrendering one's life to him. Conversion can also mean dedicating one's life to the service of others, or to the religious or spiritual transformation of society, or embracing an entirely new religion or spiritual discipline or tradition, or becoming a devotee of a cult or a follower of a new religious leader.

But there are other common usages which refer to less radical change: the movement need not be from unbelief to faith; it may be from a merely nominal membership to a more devoted involvement; or from a less experiential kind of religiousness to a more intensely affective form, as in the case of John Wesley, already a devout Anglican, feeling 'his heart strangely warmed', on entering into Pietism's world of strongly felt religious sentiments. Or conversion may be an even lower-key decision to 'join a church' – begin to attend a particular local congregation – or to switch from one denomination to another without any marked variation in the level of one's religious commitment; or it may refer to a gradual religious transformation with few or no intensely experienced turning-points or moments of decision.

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[3] See Table 2 in Appendix II and also Michael Mason, "World Youth Day 2008: What did we gain? What did we learn?," *Australasian Catholic Record* 87, no. 3 (July 2010).

2. Conversion in theory and previous research

Although prominent in the New Testament and the history of the early church, especially because of the spectacular conversions of St. Paul and Augustine of Hippo, conversion declined in prominence as a topic for reflection during the centuries of Christendom, only to re-emerge with the Reformation, and particularly the Revivalism of the 18th and 19th centuries. The emerging sciences of psychology and sociology began to pay attention to it late in the 19th century through the pioneering work of Edwin Starbuck.[4] But it was especially the brilliant William James who brought conversion to new prominence in his 1902 masterwork.[5] Suspending judgment as to the truth or value of the religious phenomena he studied, James was able to bring to them great human warmth and sympathy as well as penetrating insight, expressed with unique clarity and power.

His point of view was peculiar in some respects. It is clear from his text that James disliked organised religion, especially Christianity, and he excluded 'theologies and ecclesiasticisms' from the definition of religion he developed in his first lecture. He opted instead for a radically individualistic notion: religion is the experience of the individual in his solitude as he relates to what he considers the divine.[6] So his treatment of conversion viewed the individual in isolation and left aside the social and cultural dimensions of conversion. Conversion was the attempt to reintegrate aspects of a divided self.   Further, James was drawn to recounting and exploring especially the more extreme, bizarre, even psychopathological manifestations of dramatic, sudden conversions.

Starbuck, on whose work James relied extensively, had delineated carefully the characteristics of gradual conversions. These occur amongst people 'engaged in an active search for meaning and purpose, looking for 'something more' in life; consciously striving for the solution to a problem'. These seekers are not experiencing 'an emotional crisis or sense of guilt or sin; theirs is a more cognitive, goal-directed effort to find meaning or create a new self. They do not experience a moment of surrender but a continual and progressive deepening of a faith cognitively assented to, an awareness that one is becoming a different person'.[7]

Soon after James's time, as early as 1929, Clark[8] showed that two-thirds of conversions were gradual, often unremarkable processes. And in a large study of over 2000 converts, he distinguished a third type of conversion process intermediate between the 'crisis awakening' and 'gradual awakening' types, which he called 'emotional stimulus awakening', in which 'gradual religious growth is accelerated by an emotional event that results in religious change'.[9]

The early psychological researchers were virtually unanimous in seeing adolescent religious conversions as closely related to the need to locate the changing self within a new and more adequate framework of meaning, and in defining conversion as a 'profound change in self', resulting from a decision to see the self in a new perspective, which gave a new centre to interests and action, and liberated the person from a crisis, or what they saw as a lower level of existence.[10]

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[4] Edwin D. Starbuck, *The Psychology of Religion* (New York: Scribner, 1899).

[5] William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience: A Study in Human Nature* (New York: Collier Macmillan, 1961).

[6] Ibid. p. 42; my paraphrase.

[7] B. Spilka, R. W Hood, and R. L Gorsuch, *The psychology of religion: An empirical approach* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1985). p.205.

[8] E. T. Clark, *The Psychology of Religious Awakening* (New York: Macmillan, 1929).

[9] Spilka et al. p. 204.

[10] ibid, pp. 201-206.

Later research on conversion in psychology and the social sciences
Rambo distinguishes a number of different perspectives governing later psychological studies of conversion, with the Freudian psychoanalytic perspective as dominant.[11] Freud's critique of religion went far beyond James, viewing religion itself as a pathological form of immaturity, and influencing the field towards a sceptical, secularist and often hostile attitude to the phenomena of conversion. 'When we hear of conversions we think immediately of revivals … to us revivalism is another name for hysteria and unwholesome excitement.'[12] 'Those who choose to write on this issue are generally interested in advancing the thesis that religious conversion, brainwashing and/or psychotherapy are fundamentally identical or very similar processes'.[13]

In many studies, attention is still focussed on 'complete' changes, in which a person moved from no commitment to being totally committed to a new perspective. Prior to conversion, subjects were seen as affected by negative valuations of the self, and a deep sense of sin and guilt, which were relieved by passive surrender to an overpowering 'Other'. Later studies further confirmed Clark's early finding that sudden conversions were comparatively uncommon, and attempts to explain conversion generally as release from psychopathological stress were not considered successful.

From the 1970s onwards, sociological studies of conversion became much more common than those relying on psychological explanations.[14] Contemporary researchers have placed a welcome emphasis on the social context of conversion, and especially studied recruitment to new religious movements, which have been the focus of a great deal of public interest. These movements are often highly socially deviant, and attract those who are already alienated and distressed. Lofland and Stark's[15] influential study of Moonie converts highlights their growing tension and conflict with parents and old associates, the restriction of contact with them, the transfer of affective attachments to believers and eventual adoption of the new group's radically alternative worldview. Some of these characteristics belong to seeking membership in a deviant, socially unacceptable group; they are not features of conversion as such. The researchers did not propose their model as applicable to all conversions, and their work encouraged a view of conversion as a complex phenomenon, not explained as simply the reduction of psychological tensions.[16]

We will not review here the many other studies of conversion to NRMs, since they are not clearly relevant to our project.

Recently, Regnerus and Uecker[17] reported on religious 'transformations' among adolescents aged 13-18. Drawing its data from successive annual waves of the US National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health, this study had the benefit of a large national probability sample, but a limited range of religion variables in the dataset. The transformations of interest were fairly steep changes, both positive and negative, ascertained by measurement of church attendance and religious salience at two points a year apart. The study focussed on predictors of such transformations, comparing demographics, personality and behaviour measures, family variables and especially socio-religious context – the religiosity of family, friends, ethnic group, religious community and school.

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[11] Rambo 1992 p. 161.

[12] George Jackson, cited on p. 204 of J. R. Scroggs and W. G. T. Douglas, "Issues in the Psychology of Religious Experience," *Journal of Religion and Health* 6 (July 1967).

[13] Scrogg and Jackson in ibid.

[14] Rambo 1982.

[15] J. Lofland and R. Stark, "Becoming a World Saver: A Theory of Conversion to a Deviant Perspective," *American Sociological Review* 30 (1965): 862-74.

[16] Spilka et al. 1985, pp. 212-213.

[17] Mark Regnerus and Jeremy Uecker, "Finding faith, losing faith: The prevalence and context of religious transformations during adolescence," *Review of Religious Research* 47, no. 3 (2006): 217-237.

Many variables which other studies have shown to influence adolescent religiousness were not significant predictors of these transformations: in the US generally, in this age group, girls are more religious than boys; 'risk-takers' are less religious, while those with 'strategic' personalities (who exhibit 'plan-ful' behaviour) are more so; children of divorced parents, those whose lifestyles include sexual intercourse, use of alcohol or drugs, generally show decreases on religious indices; however none of these variables were significant predictors of positive or negative religious 'transformation' from one year to the next.

The researchers found that positive changes (growth over the period to increased church attendance or salience or both) were significantly and positively influenced by average church attendance of schoolmates, by satisfaction with one's family, parent attendance and religious salience, and (needless to say) by having had a 'born-again' experience in the intervening year. Age was a slightly negative influence (younger adolescents were more likely to experience conversion), also negative were White race (as opposed to Black) and high parental education, which tends to militate against rapid religious change in either direction on the part of their adolescent children. The authors noted that few of the influences on rapid religious change were subject to manipulation or voluntary control. This is true of the influences on which there was data in the survey. Large scale research like this needs to be supplemented by fuller survey data and also qualitative material on the experience of conversion.

Conversion between theology, religious studies and the human sciences
The writings of Starbuck, James and Clark in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century initiated a focus on conversion, especially among adolescents,[18] which continued and intensified throughout the century. A large literature on the topic developed in religion studies, psychology and social science. Lewis Rambo has reviewed the literature across these disciplines and theology in numerous articles over twenty years, as well as contributing several monographs on the topic.[19] His surveys of scholarly studies toward the end of the century show the continued lack of consensus on how conversion is to be defined and explained.[20] He has frequently called for a more comprehensive model which integrates the insights and methods of psychology, sociology, anthropology and religious studies. 'The study of conversion must take into account, in addition to the individual dimension, the social, cultural and religious matrices within which personal life is embedded.'[21] Rambo goes on to put forward a model of conversion embodying these recommendations, comprising seven stages: context, crisis, quest, encounter, interaction, commitment and consequences.[22]   Otherwise, there has not been much serious conversation between these disciplines. Just as within the different churches and schools of theological thought, each discipline has tended to hold to its own preferred theories of conversion, type of conversions studied, and methods of research. Although emphasising social context variables more prominently, sociology has tended, like psychology, to focus on the sudden and dramatic type and neglect the other variants of conversion.

Another example of potentially fruitful collaboration of the kind that Rambo has called for would be to set conversion within the perspective of initiation, a process extensively studied in

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[18] Johnson's 1959 review of previous studies confirmed ages 13-17 as the peak period for conversion.

[19] See L. R Rambo, "Current research on religious conversion," *Religious Studies Review* 8, no. 2 (1982): 146–159. and L. R Rambo, "Anthropology and the study of conversion," in *The anthropology of religious conversion*, ed. Andrew Buckser (Rowman & Littlefield, 2003), 211–221.

[20] We would argue that this is only to be expected, given the decline in theoretical coherence in disciplines studying religion – especially the sociology of religion – a theme to which we shall return.

[21] L. R Rambo, "The psychology of conversion," in *Handbook of religious conversion*, ed. H. Newton Malony and Samuel Southard (Birmingham AL: Religious Education Press, 1992), 159–177. The Malony volume itself is a step towards the goal indicated by Rambo, containing essays across the disciplines of theoretical and applied theology, religion studies, social and behavioural sciences.

[22] Ibid.

anthropology of religion and history of religions. Initiation was insightfully analysed by Roszak as consisting of ordeal, instruction, self-examination and visionary insight.[23] In this setting, conversion is an entirely routine process, designed to create a new *persona* in the initiand appropriate to a new stage of life, with a new worldview and value-system and a firmly entrenched sense of responsibility to carry out the duties of a new role. Comparing preliterate and later cultures, one notices similarities in the function of ordeals in these settings. Their purpose is to achieve intensely focussed concentration and awareness, capacity for maximum physical, moral and intellectual effort and receptivity to teaching. In preliterate societies, the ordeal may take the form of a year or more of living in reduced conditions remote from families, and subjection to ceremonial body-marking such as tooth-knocking, ritual scarring or circumcision. It is not often observed that the arousal of a sense of sinfulness and a need for forgiveness serves a similar purpose in revivals, from the Great Awakenings to the present. In these and many similar cases, some of the trials are artificial – whatever their mythical justification, their purpose is precisely to steepen the path, to impose suffering of various kinds, so as to filter out of the process the unprepared or unserious and provide initiands with difficult tasks whose accomplishment will strengthen them. The light shed on the so-called 'fundamentalist' model of conversion by comparing some of its features with those found in initiation rituals, is a potential aid to a more unbiased scientific understanding of conversion to demanding conservative groups, whose doctrines and practices are often dismissed as based on irrational ideology.

Conversion in theological perspective
The call to conversion has its roots in the Old Testament prophetic literature, and assumes even greater prominence in the New Testament. Hence it has been a prominent feature of both theological reflection and church practice across the intervening centuries. In a recent review, theologian and professor of evangelism Richard Peace discusses three models which stand out in current theology and practice.[24]

Conversion as a decision
Since a number of historical figures highly authoritative within Christianity, notably the apostle Paul and St. Augustine, are well known to have changed, suddenly and dramatically, from rejecting the Christian faith to embracing it, the model of conversion as a decision taken at one point in time is the paradigmatic form, and for many, it defines the whole phenomenon. Evangelical and Pentecostal denominations assign great importance to conversion as a once-and-for-all event at such a turning point, involving an initiative of God, but also, on the side of the believer, a response, a *decision* of faith: of acceptance, surrender and obedience. This is the 'born-again' experience, viewed in these churches as the most important criterion of faith, prerequisite for church membership. So recruitment and church growth depend on this experience.

Conversion as socialisation
Mainline Protestant, Catholic and Orthodox churches, while they affirm that turning-points of conscious, explicit decision can have great significance in the lives of individuals, do not define them as the central, pivotal event in every religious life-story, nor do they define conversion exclusively in terms of such moments. For them, it is still the process of coming to faith, but they see this journey as taking different forms. These churches place more emphasis on the process of

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[23] Theodore Roszak, *Unfinished Animal: The Aquarian Frontier and the Evolution of Consciousness* (New York & London: Harper & Row, 1975).

[24] This discussion of three models of conversion draws on a recent article by Richard Peace, UCC minister and seminary professor of evangelism, who provides a useful short description and critique of the models and of how they function in different groups of Christian denominations. Peace, Richard V., "Conflicting understandings of Christian conversion: a missiological challenge," *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 28, no. 1 (2004): 8-14. The three models, conversion by decision, by socialisation, by liturgical acts; are taken from S. McKnight, *Turning to Jesus: the sociology of conversion in the gospels* (Westminster John Knox Press, 2002).

gradual religious *socialisation,* becoming Christian 'from the outside in'. Belonging comes first; personal believing comes later. One is 'born into' the faith of a religious community; one learns and internalises it gradually, by living as part of the community, more than by explicit instruction. Crises / turning-points / intense moments of decision may occur, but will not be central in everyone's life. In this view, conversion is, in all cases, a life-long movement towards God, and much or all of it may be a gradual, almost imperceptible transformation, consisting entirely of small steps, without any dramatic leaps.

Conversion as a liturgical act

In 'sacramental' churches, especially the Catholic and Orthodox, the life of the believer is punctuated by *liturgical actions* or sacraments (Baptism and Eucharist in Protestant churches of the Reformed tradition; the five additional sacraments of Confirmation / Chrismation, Penance, Matrimony, Holy Orders and Anointing in the Catholic and Orthodox traditions). For churches which practise infant baptism rather than 'believers' baptism', obviously no conscious experience of conversion is involved, yet the event is understood as the decisive action of God by which the infant is delivered from the power of evil and receives the indwelling Holy Spirit. The sacraments, many of them rites of passage (initiation at birth and adolescence, entry into special states of life such as marriage or Holy Orders, encountering illness and death) are especially sacred moments; but in them it is the initiative and action of God that is primary. Nonetheless, except in infant baptism, a response of the believer is also required, and the sacraments are designed to evoke and strengthen this response.

Towards a comprehensive model of conversion

Theologies which place exclusive emphasis on conversion as decision (many evangelical theologies do so) are open to the criticism that they lack a theology of growth, and can only hark back the original experience and seek to keep its sentiments alive. But no matter how deep and intense that experience may be, if it is to give lasting shape to a human life, it must be embodied in habits of behaviour, feeling and thought that will root it in real life and sustain it over the long term. Ordinarily, this kind of deeper, long-term change takes place only in the context of a community whose members share similar convictions. So the view of conversion as a moment of transformation needs to be supplemented by the second and third views discussed above, which see conversion as accomplished by living with the support of a religious community which shares the same ethos, and which celebrates and deepens conversion through powerful symbolic rituals, especially at life-crises.

On the other hand, conversion as socialisation or liturgical action, without an experiential dimension of personal appropriation and response, remains superficial and external, giving rise to merely nominal membership of these churches, lacking conviction, a shallow belonging which has little or no impact on the person's everyday life.

So a more comprehensive understanding of conversion is required, which brings together the partial, but valid understandings just discussed, and which adds a further component needed in the light of the last century of developmental psychology: an understanding of the quite different forms of conversion of which human beings are capable at the different stages of life.

Theologian Walter Conn has developed a model of conversion which puts it into perspective in the lifelong process of moral development, envisaging a type or level of conversion proper to each stage of life.[25] Conscience plays a key role in the process, not as the voice of external authority, but as a call to become the fullness of who we already are – in today's popular phrase: 'to be the best you can be'. As the epigraph to this chapter, Conn quotes Heidegger's statement: '*Conscience*

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[25] Walter E. Conn, *Christian conversion : a developmental interpretation of autonomy and surrender* (New York: Paulist Press, 1986).

manifests itself as a summons of the Self to its ownmost potentiality-for-being-its-Self'. So conscience and conversion are correlative terms: it is our own conscience that calls us to conversion. And here also can be found the criterion of authenticity: authentic conversion calls us to a fuller humanity. And human fulfilment is achieved neither in self-denial nor in narcissistic self-centredness, but only in self-transcendence: going beyond the self to realise the good of others.[26] Conn links these theoretical foundations with the work of developmental theorists Erikson, Piaget, Kohlberg, Fowler and Kegan, and goes on to discuss four sub-processes of conversion: moral, cognitive, affective and Christian. His work provides one of the most comprehensive integrations to date of philosophical, social scientific and theological perspectives.

Conclusions after review of theory and previous research on conversion
Reviews of the extensive literature often devote much attention to debating the merits of various definitions of conversion and religious conversion. This is the case with the valuable review in Gillespie,[27] and with some of the contributions in Malony and Southard.[28] We prefer to take a 'stipulative' approach to definition: there are innumerable definitions that have been used, and it is fruitless to attempt to formulate a definition that is 'correct' or that adequately covers the whole range of usage; instead, we will stipulate what we mean in our own study when we use the term. The cause of many controversies, involving purely verbal wrangles which do not illuminate the topic, is usually an author attempting to assert his or her own definition as the only valid approach.

After reviewing relevant theories, we concluded that a fruitful approach to conversion involves:
   a) combining philosophical, theological, anthropological, sociological and psychological perspectives on conversion -- isolation of different disciplinary perspectives and research from each other has seriously impoverished our understanding of this complex phenomenon;
   b) integrating the understanding of conversion with theories of conscience and moral development, and with theories of religious development across the life-cycle
   c) linking youth religious conversion with the process of initiation,
   d) recognising that like many other processes in species evolution and human development, religious development is a punctuated equilibrium; that it is normal for steady gradual development to be interrupted by 'steps' (or occasionally larger 'leaps') of growth which may be more abrupt but are of limited scope, not completing the process once-and-for-all, but leading towards further conversions.

After reviewing previous research relevant to conversion, we concluded that:
   a) although 'strain' theories of conversion are most prominent in sociology and psychology, they are largely derived from studies of extreme cases of abrupt dramatic change, often involving alienated individuals joining deviant groups. Such cases are neither normal nor normative.
   b) It is important not to read into accounts of conversion, secularist assumptions of immaturity or pathological excess of emotion or manipulated dependence;
   c) an adequate sociological account of conversion requires data on:
      i) "remote antecedents" – the individual's family and religious background and current context – which highlight predisposing factors;
      ii) "proximate antecedents" or occasion: crucial or precipitating events or circumstances, and the individual's response to these;
      iii) "immediate aftermath" or short-term consequences

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[26] In his exposition of self-transcendence, as throughout the book, Conn draws on the work of philosopher and theologian Bernard Lonergan.
[27] V. Bailey Gillespie, *The Dynamics of Religious Conversion* (Birmingham, Al: Religious Education Press, 1991).
[28] H. Newton Malony, *Handbook of Religious Conversion* (Religious Education Press, 1992).

      iv) "remote aftermath" -- long-term consequences and the individual's reflections and evaluations of the experience. Only this element allows the identification of crucial components in the event.

These conclusions from reviewing previous theory and research strongly influenced our research design.

Expectations in the light of previous theory and research
This research was exploratory – we did not propose to test formal hypotheses, but derived a number of expectations from previous theory and research.

First, since WYD has several features of religious revivals described in the literature, and was attended by large numbers of youth, we expected that some participants in WYD would have experienced conversion.

WYD might be expected to facilitate different types of conversion, depending on the age of the participants;
-these were not likely to be extreme, violent or dramatic; nor accompanied by unusually high levels of emotion, nor experienced as relief from psychological strain occasioned by a strong sense of guilt, sinfulness or worthlessness, yet with an element of tension or risk in embracing what is now a social minority status;
-Clark's model of 'gradual religious growth is accelerated by an emotional event that results in religious change'; a step or leap, small or large, between equilibrium states;
-an external stimulus, but harmonising with what those who choose to attend are already hearing from the call of conscience;
-an experience with cognitive, moral, affective and religious (Christian) dimensions;
-with elements of conversion by decision, by socialisation and by liturgical action;
-with a strong component of initiation for some – the life-stage transition of early adolescence accompanied by the usual identity confusion.

For others, WYD may not have occasioned any new experience of conversion, but a revisiting and reinforcing steps of conversion which had taken place earlier.

On the empirical level, our expectations were:
1) Socio-religious context variables, especially mother's and friends' church attendance, would predict conversion.
2) Those less-committed would be likely to be influenced towards conversion by contact with those who were more devoted.
3) Australian young men and women would respond similarly.
4) Younger attenders would be more likely to experience conversion than older ones.
5) The five major public events of WYD, especially the presence of the Pope, would most influence participants toward conversion.

3. Research design, Data, Measures and Method
Research design
Recall our initial research question: whether the event produced lasting results by leading many of its participants to become committed Catholics, and if this did occur, what were the factors involved, and what were the consequences.

We had no doubt that the devoted would be reinforced in their faith. And that this 'preaching to the converted' would not be wasted if it made them better witnesses and more active in sharing their faith.

But, especially in view of the growing secularism of youth in Australia and other Western countries, we could not ignore the question of whether the event, which required such a large expenditure of resources, succeeded in attracting the less religious and drawing them to a deeper faith. It would be a strong test of WYD's value to the church if it were able to influence the less devoted. They are much more typical of young Catholics in the wider Australian population.

So we refined our research problem as follows: is this type of gathering able to reach less religious youth? Does it promote significant religious growth among them that can be regarded as conversion? If there is evidence of growth, can it really be attributed to WYD? Is there more than a temporary superficial piety or a merely verbal commitment? Does their conversion affect their beliefs, moral attitudes, religious and ethical practices, civic engagement?

To explore this problem we developed the following research design. Its function is to operationalise the research problem with WYD data; it consists of the following steps:
-select the less committed, defined as those attending church less than weekly prior to WYD;
-examine evidence of religious commitment in 'commitment statements', and ask if the respondents themselves considered their commitment to be new, different, a change from their previous position, and whether they believed it was due to their WYD experience;
-check to see if they reported a range of consequent changes in their beliefs and behaviour;
-use multivariate analysis (logistic regression) to identify the factors predicting conversion from among the following:
       -the spiritual background of attenders e.g. their family environment and religious context
       -the aspects of the WYD experience they reported as making most impact on them
       -other changes they have experienced which may have facilitated their conversion.

Causality: was conversion *due to WYD experiences?*
As is well known, proving causality is difficult; especially in anything as complex as religion. If a change in someone's religious behaviour is observed, it is likely that a host of influences are involved, interacting in complex ways. As well as the subject's prior religiosity, family, peer and group influences all play their part, not to mention the wider cultural factors at work. The few variables identifiable in survey research usually explain only a small part of the phenomenon. As will be obvious to the reader by now, our survey of WYD attenders was particularly designed to discover whether the event promoted positive religious change among the participants. It sought to at least partly 'finesse' the issue of causality, by asking the respondents themselves whether they attribute their changed religious commitment and behaviour to their WYD experience – '…could you honestly say that your WYD experience has made you …'. Many of the survey questions take a similar form. This has two consequences: we gain the support of the testimony of the subjects themselves in linking their religious development with their WYD experience, but we also lose information about the religious state and development of these young people, not connected with their WYD experiences, because the questions clearly exclude it as irrelevant.[29] People may of course be mistaken about the causes of their behaviour, but in the case of a recent deliberate decision leading to significant life-changes, their own testimony of the occasion when this took place, and of the factors in it that they were aware of, seems preferable to the conclusions of a researcher seeking, without such testimony, to infer causality on the basis of a few survey variables. We will note at times in what follows how this restriction of focus in the research design necessarily leaves other kinds of questions unanswered.

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[29] For the researchers, this was an acceptable cost. We had just concluded a baseline study of the spirituality of young Australians, using a national probability sample, and could afford to devote the World Youth Day research exclusively to studying the effects of that event. See Michael Mason, Andrew Singleton, and Ruth Webber, *The spirit of Generation Y : young people's spirituality in a changing Australia* (Mulgrave Vic.: John Garratt Pub., 2007).

Data

The data are from the Pilgrims' Progress 2008' research project[30] conducted at Australian Catholic University in Melbourne, Australia, to study participants at the 'World Youth Day' event in Sydney in July 2008. An internet survey of English-speaking participants was conducted in November, 2008, five months after the event. There were few WYD participants who were not Catholic; for consistency, the sample was confined to Catholics. There were 326 cases with valid responses on all the variables required for our models.

Measures

Criterion variable

The criterion variable in this exploration is *Made statement of religious commitment* – a dichotomy scored 1 if the respondent selected one or more of five 'statements of religious commitment'. Respondents had the opportunity to select one of these statements expressing a commitment to change one's life so as to follow Christ. The statements were phrased in different ways to allow for varying emphases in the spirituality of the respondent. They are shown here in bold italics in their original context.

Probably most people would like to "be a better person". But could you honestly say that your <u>WYD experience</u> has made you really <u>determined</u> to be different in any of the following ways? *If so, check them.*[31]

> To be more considerate of others
> ***To match my behaviour to my faith***
> To be more forgiving, patient, tolerant
> To actually put others before myself
> ***To be more "Christ-like" in my behaviour***
> ***To be a follower of Christ, and live as he wants me to***
> ***To accept Jesus as Lord in my life***
> ***Now I want to live as a disciple of Jesus, a witness to him***[32]
> I was already committed to these things before I went to WYD
> I'd like to change in some of these ways, but I don't feel ready yet
> No, I don't feel my WYD experience has had this effect

Note that the question challenges the respondent to declare that they feel a real determination to live differently, and that they attribute this to their WYD experience. A variety of alternative options is provided: expressions of intentions to change in less radical ways, or of an attraction to change, without yet feeling real determination to do so; or an indication that one was already committed prior to WYD, or that the respondent's WYD experience did not move them in any of these ways. Table 1[33] shows how the entire group of Catholics aged 15-35 responded on this issue. About 20% did not select any of the statements of commitment; about two-thirds of respondents did select one or more of the statements of commitment, and the final 15% did not, but stated that they were already committed in these ways before they went to WYD.

We had asked a subsidiary question on how frequently the respondents had been attending church before they went to WYD. Table 2 shows the result: a full 83.7% of them said they had been attending every week or more often. Our interest focussed on the 17% who had been attending less often. We considered that it would be a strong test of WYD's value to the church if it were able to influence this group, who are much more typical of young Catholics in the wider Australian population. We found, referring back for a moment to Table 1, that 9.5% of the young Catholic participants – half of the infrequent attenders   -- stated that their WYD experience had made them determined 'to follow Christ, to live in his way' (there were four other expressions of commitment which we judged equivalent in meaning).

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[30] Further details of World Youth Day and the research project are provided in Appendix I.

[31] Underlined phrases are as in original questionnaire.

[32] This option was within another question, but the context was very similar.

[33] See Appendix II.

This group, numbered 1 in Table 1, are those we describe as having experienced conversion at WYD.

Other characteristics of the converts
Tables 3 & 4 show the age and gender of the group of previously infrequent attenders who made (or who did not make) statements of commitment. About half are teenagers, and approximately one quarter each are emerging adults (19-24) or young adults (25-35). The bivariate relationship between age and commitment slightly favours those over 18.

Young women greatly outnumbered young men at WYD and also in the subgroup of interest – almost three-quarters are female. But the bivariate relationship between gender and making a commitment is negligible. Three quarters of the group were resident in Australia, while the balance came for the occasion from various overseas countries. Overseas delegates to WYD were less likely than local participants to come from the ranks of those less involved with the Church, as the trouble and expense of attendance at a distance acted to select the more devoted.

Were they really converted? Was 'commitment' genuine? Did the 'committed' change their lives? Before we proceed further to explore how some previously less-involved young people came to make a commitment at WYD, it would be as well to see if they were genuine converts – in the sense that their conversion was not just a matter of endorsing a few religious statements, but actually resulted in changes in real life. Appendix III contains a set of tables[34] comparing the following groups on a variety of measures of post-WYD attitudes and conduct:
  - the 'committed with prior low church involvement' (our special interest group)
  - those who did not make any statement of commitment
  - the committed whose prior involvement was high, and
  - those who said they were already committed before attending WYD.

The focus of the comparison is to see whether the commitments made by the first group above were 'real' – meaning that there was a positive change in their beliefs, moral attitudes, religious practices, ethical behaviour and civic engagement**.** Accordingly, their responses to the following questions were examined:
  Are you going to do more of the following, or about the same as before WYD?
    Table 1. Go to Mass at weekends
    Table 2. Pray by yourself
    Table 3. Go to reconciliation (Confession)
    Table 4. Contribute to your local parish

  Table 5. Do you think that as a result of WYD your religious faith will have more influence on what you do in daily life?

  Since returning from WYD, do you talk more about spirituality / religion / faith with
    Table 6. others who went to WYD
    Table 7. family members
    Table 8. others who did not go to WYD

  Table 9. Apart from your parish or school, are you involved in any Catholic organisations / movements / groups ?
  Table 10. Did you get involved in any of these groups as a result of attending WYD?

  Do you feel more motivated to do any of the following because of your WYD experience,?
    Table 11. Be tolerant towards someone hard to get along with

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[34] Appendix III is too large to reproduce here. It is contained in the full version of the paper at http://dlibrary.acu.edu.au/research/wyd/ under 'Reports and working papers'.

Table 12. Stand up to a bully
Table 13. Forgive someone you've been angry at
Table 14. Spend time with someone who needs some extra care for some reason

Check any of the following activities that you are more likely to do in the next year, as a result of WYD:

Table 15. Give some time (or more of it than in the past) as a volunteer in a helping organisation
Table 16. Get involved in a group working for social justice
Table 17. Do more to look after the environment
Table 18. Give more money to welfare or charitable organisations

Table 19. Positive change before /after WYD on Moral attitudes scale[35]
Table 20. Positive change before /after WYD on Importance of Catholic identity scale
Table 21. Altruistic behaviour scale (sum of the 4 items in Tables 11-14)
Table 22. Civic engagement scale (sum of the 4 items in Tables 15-18)

The results of the comparison show that the 'Committed with Prior Low Church Involvement' (our special interest group – CPLCI for short) scored higher on every measure[36] than those who did not make any statement, and even achieved a significantly higher mean score on an aggregate measure than those who had stated a commitment and were previously regular church attenders, as shown in Table 23.[37] At the same time, most of the CPLCI could claim only a modest range of changes in their attitudes and behaviour as a result of their new commitment: on average they indicated positive change on only 15 of the 34 items summed in Table 23.

On average, our 'converts' did not make a dramatic 'leap of faith' from a merely nominal commitment to Christianity to a complete and total dedication of their lives to a religious ideal. Although they would scarcely have attracted the attention of William James, and do not conform to the Evangelical pattern of a once-and-for-all 'born-again' experience, their development is an example of gradual, incremental conversion, which is the normal, age-appropriate pattern, and harmonises with Catholic theology of spiritual growth.

In what follows, we focus exclusively on the 'converts': those who were previously less involved and who made statements of commitment, in order to explore the influences moving them towards a deeper level of commitment. So we exclude from consideration both those who made commitment statements but had previously been regular weekly church attenders, and also those who said they were already committed prior to WYD.[38]

Predictors
The predictors are divided into three sets:
Set 1: Demographics, family, friends, pre-WYD prayer
Age
Female
Mother Catholic

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[35] The content of this and the following scale is explained in detail in Appendix III.

[36] Except for involvement in one or more Catholic organisations (Table 9).

[37] In Appendix III. The principal comparison is between the CPLCI group and those who made no statement of commitment. Those who made (or renewed) their commitment, but were already regular attenders at their local church, had less scope to show gains on all these measures – for the simple reason that in many cases they were already at the higher level implied in many of the measures. The same may be true of those who said they were already committed before attending WYD. Those who made no statement of commitment cannot be presumed not to be religiously committed in precisely these ways: recall that the question asks whether the respondent attributes their commitment *to their WYD experience*.

[38] Thus the group explored here are not representative of all attenders at WYD. Recall also that participants over 35, those not Catholic and non-English speakers are also excluded from this stage of the investigation.

Father Catholic
Mother attended
Father attended
Friends attend church fairly regularly
Before WYD respondent used to pray
       occasionally
       weekly
       daily or more often

Age is continuous, but ranges only from 15 to 35 (the present sample was selected to contain only this youthful target group); *gender* is dichotomous, coded 0 Male, 1 Female.
Parental religious identity in the variables *Mother Catholic* and *Father Catholic* (coded Catholic or not) has limited variance -- the respondents themselves are all Catholic (the few in the sample who were not have been excluded), and are attending a lengthy Catholic religious event; so it is not surprising that they come mostly from Catholic families: 85% of mothers and 74% of fathers are Catholic.[39]
Respondents were also asked how frequently each parent attended church, when the respondent was growing up – *Mother attended / Father attended* coded 1 if parent attended monthly or more often. The variable *Friends attend* represents the response 'Most of them do' to the question: 'Nowadays, do your friends go to church pretty regularly?'.
The final variable in this set is the response to the question: *Before you went to WYD, how often did you pray – just by yourself, not with others or at a religious service?* There are 4 categories: 'Never/rarely', 'Occasionally', 'Weekly', 'Daily or more often'. The first is the reference category; the models show the three higher categories.

Set 2: Aspects of WYD which most helped: towards the end of the survey, respondents were asked: *Going back for a moment to the many different happenings at WYD, which one(s) most helped you in your spiritual journey? Choose up to 3 of the most helpful things.* Respondents chose from a list which covered all of the main events of WYD and a range of secondary happenings, as well as aspects of the WYD 'atmosphere', which interviews had shown were more important to respondents than individual events. The list included the following:

Crowd: Being part of a huge crowd of happy young people
Faith: Being with so many my age who share the same faith
Church: pride in being Catholic, part of Church
Holy Spirit: The sense that God was present
Seeing the Pope, listening to him, celebrating Mass with him
The Opening Mass
The Stations of the Cross
The Vigil night at Randwick
The Closing Mass
Morning Catecheses

Set 3: Belief and value changes attributed by respondents to their participation in WYD
Besides the questions on commitment which constitute the dependent variable of the study, respondents were asked about other beliefs, values and attitudes. The following are used in our model:

I understand better how God is Father, Son and Spirit
I feel I have a closer relationship with Jesus
I'm more interested now in learning about my Catholic faith
I'm not embarrassed now to let others see that I'm a believer
Before WYD: Eucharistic adoration or Rosary is important to me
After WYD
Before WYD: I cannot imagine being other than Catholic
After WYD

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[39] The variables are so strongly 'censored high' that they are of little value as predictors, and are included as controls, and to forestall any misunderstandings their omission might generate.

Although these variables record developments that took place concurrently with the respondent's experience of increased religious commitment, it seems appropriate to consider them as predictors in our models because even though they are not prior in time, they can be considered logically or psychologically prior to a respondent's sense of moving to a new level of commitment. The statement of commitment can be seen as summing up these more specific developments. The 'before and after WYD' questions were asked in the post-WYD survey.[40]

Method
Descriptive statistics on the criterion variable are reported: Table 1 in Appendix II shows the CPLCI group in the context of other responses on the commitment variables; then the group are profiled on age and gender in Tables 2 & 3. Next, simple descriptive statistics on the predictor variables are provided in Table 5.

Three logistic regression models were constructed, predicting the conversion experience arising from participation in WYD (Table 6). The first model uses Set 1 of the predictors which describe the pre-WYD personal, family and religious context of the respondent, including a measure of friends' religious practice and an indication of the respondent's prior level of religiosity: their frequency of prayer prior to WYD. The second model adds the Set 2 predictors, which identify the aspects of WYD that respondents who made statements of enhanced religious commitment reported as having had the most impact on them. The third model adds Set 3, showing other detailed belief and attitude changes as strongly predictive of commitment.

4. Results and discussion
The models in Table 6 predict a conversion experience, defined here as meaning that a group of Catholic youth who, prior to World Youth Day were attending Mass less than weekly, reported, five months after WYD, that as a result of their WYD experience, they had adopted one or more strong statements of commitment to their faith. Further, as we have shown, these statements of commitment were put into practice, by the majority of the group, by congruent changes in their beliefs, moral attitudes, religious practices, ethical behaviour and civic engagement. Our analysis asks what predictors of their conversion, expressed in the making of these statements, can be found among variables expressing (1) their pre-WYD personal, family & religious context, (2) among the aspects of WYD which they said 'most helped them in their spiritual journey' and (3) among other changes in religious beliefs and attitudes which they also attributed to their participation in World Youth Day, and which may have acted as precursors to their conversion experience.

Friends' religious practice and own previous frequency of prayer
Model 1 shows that among the variables expressing their pre-WYD situation, friends' religious practice was by far the strongest predictor. A respondent was over three and a half times more likely to experience conversion (adopt a statement of religious commitment) if his/her close friends attended church fairly regularly, than if they did not. A predictor of similar strength is the respondent's previous frequency of prayer: those who prior to WYD, usually prayed each day were far more likely to experience conversion at WYD, in contrast to those who prayed rarely or never. Even praying once a week had considerable positive influence, although the effect was only marginally significant.

Parental religiosity
Equally interesting is the failure of the indicators of parental religiosity in the model to exert significant influence on the response variable, not just in this first model, but across all three models. These were inserted as controls, and to forestall any misunderstanding that their omission might generate, Parental religious identification and practice are so regularly found to have major

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[40] These questions were asked in the format: *indicate below in the boxes on the left your attitude to [the teaching] before you went to WYD . Then indicate in a box on the right your attitude to [the teaching] when you thought further about it after returning from WYD.*

influence on the religiosity of their offspring that the relationship has become an axiom of sociological research on religion. In the study of Australian youth by Mason et al. (2007, p.156), mother's church attendance was found in multivariate analysis to be the strongest predictor of the child's religiously active status, across all denominations. Regnerus and Uecker (2006), studying relatively rapid large increases in attendance found that parent religious service attendance was a robust predictor in a multivariate model.

The anomaly in the present case is due to two factors: first, there is little variability in parents' religious identification: nearly 90% of the mothers of this group were Catholic; and second, the parents of the group are less frequent attenders -- an artefact of our selection of a sample of relatively low attending youth: 56% of these mothers attend each week, compared with 85% of the mothers of the other participants. So when the regression examines whether these parents' attendance is a significant predictor of their children's religious commitment at WYD, compared with other powerful and immediate influences, it 'catches them on the wrong foot' so to speak![41]

Age and gender
What of the lack of age and gender effects? Tables 3 and 4 show that the bivariate relationships between these variables and commitment are very weak, and they remain insignificant in all three models. Their inclusion as control variables is obviously obligatory; however their lack of influence is in accord with our expectations.

The early teens have long been identified in research as the prime age of conversion, closely related to the need to locate the self, changing so profoundly at puberty, within a new and more adequate framework of meaning. And our previous study of the spirituality of Australian youth had found, like studies in other countries, that those in their early teens were somewhat more religious. So in this sample of people aged from 15-35, a somewhat stronger negative effect of increasing age could have been expected than was found. But earlier exploration of the data had revealed that in the case of WYD, older participants were more committed. This can be explained by the way younger attenders were recruited. Most of the Australian teenagers came from Catholic schools, usually with strong encouragement (to the point of pressure to attend), with full organisation of their trip by the school, and frequently with financial help. By contrast, post-school attenders had to miss university or work and arrange and pay for their own travel and accommodation. These dual processes had the effect of selecting less committed teens and more committed young adults, cancelling out the usual higher religiosity of the younger group. The same factors operated among those who made long journeys from other countries to attend.

Gender has gradually ceased to make a difference in religiosity among young Australians.[42] Young women are now no more religious than young men on a wide range of measures, and are beginning to appear less religious on some measures. As one progresses up the age scale, there are still traces of the traditional higher religiosity of women. And in many other countries, there is still a marked difference.

Sharing faith, sense of Church, presence of God
Model 2 introduces a set of variables arising from a concluding summary question in the survey. After reviewing all aspects of WYD in considerable detail, participants were asked to offer a final judgment, by choosing up to three elements of the event which 'most helped you in your spiritual journey'. The significance of so many of these items, and the considerable increase in the various pseudo-Rsq measures on this model, indicate that the chosen aspects of WYD have considerable

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[41] When the whole body of participants (mostly high attenders) is analysed to discover influences on their accounts of positive religious changes in their lives after WYD, parental religiosity resumes its expected role. This analysis is part of work in progress, not reported here.

[42] See Mason et al. 2007. pp. 307-311.

power to predict participants' commitment. Three of these items have repeatedly come to the fore in our previous studies of WYD: those beginning with the words Faith, Church and Holy Spirit. These do not indicate specific events taking place during WYD, but aspects of the atmosphere pervading the whole week. In the final model, they remain equally significant, while the earlier variable expressing the 'buzz' of being part of a huge, happy crowd becomes significant at <.05.

Seeing the Pope
Perhaps surprisingly, 'Seeing the Pope etc' failed to attain significance. Certainly, for other subgroups of attenders we have studied, especially the most devoted, this was a major feature of the week. Three events stood out for them: the Stations of the Cross, the all-night vigil and the morning catecheses.[43] The vigil was an extremely rich and complex event: although it began with a lengthy formal ceremony and a sermon from the Pope, and combined elements of Eucharistic adoration and celebration of the sacrament of reconciliation, there was also a concert featuring popular gospel music and some strongly evangelistic mini-dramas. Then followed many hours of unstructured singing and conversation. Interviews with participants have shown that each of these ingredients had strong appeal to particular groups of participants. Some left after the formal part of the evening. The extraordinarily high odds ratio for this event in Model 3 implies that a participant who selected this event as one of his/her 'most helpful' was six times as likely to state a commitment, as one who did not select it.

Religious instruction sessions
The 'catecheses' were religious instruction sessions which took place on three mornings of the week. They included a talk by a bishop, a period for discussion and questions, and the celebration of the Eucharist. The mornings were 'animated' by teams of youth leaders. The catecheses have consistently come through in our reports as strong in their appeal to the younger participants. It is illuminating to see them feature as a significant predictor of conversion. In interviews, young people saw these events as an attempt by the church to speak to, and listen to, young people. They were impressed that a bishop was taking the time to speak to them, and found the lively style of these sessions appealing.

The grand finale of the week, the closing Mass celebrated by the Pope with its spectacular accompaniments and grand music, did make an impact on this group, although its significance decreased in the third model.

Friends' attendance and daily prayer before WYD, from Set 1, remain significant in Model 2, although they all but succumb to stronger predictors in Model 3. A similar variable, school average religious service attendance, was a very strong predictor of a large increase in attendance among adolescents in Regnerus and Uecker's study. [44]

Changes in 'precursor' beliefs and attitudes
The third set of predictors, introduced in Model 3, are proposed as precursors to statements of commitment: changes of individual beliefs and attitudes which appear to lead towards the comprehensive, unrestricted statements of commitment which we have taken to be indicative of an experience of conversion. Changes in affective attitudes are most important here – so not a better understanding of the Trinity, but a sense of a closer relationship with Jesus. A participant reporting this change is more than twice as likely to also report making a strong religious commitment. Two other attitude changes showed large positive coefficients and robust significance: enhanced confidence in publicly acknowledging one's faith (in circumstances where it was felt to be at least embarrassing), and a re-valuation of two traditional devotional practices: Eucharistic adoration and

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[43] The Stations of the Cross was a dramatisation of the Passion and Death of Jesus lasting several hours, familiar to modern audiences from the Oberammergau Passion Plays.
[44] 2006.

Rosary, which would previously have meant little to most youthful participants, especially irregular attenders such as those in our interest group – perhaps they had never even encountered them. Both practices were featured during the WYD week, and evidently made an impact.

The gain in confidence to 'come out' as a believer, ('I'm not embarrassed now to let others see I'm a believer' -- odds ratio over 3) was one of the consequences of a key experience of WYD: that of finding oneself part of a huge crowd of fellow-believers. In interviews, participants reported that this experience greatly emboldened them to express their faith openly back in their home environment, where, at least in the Australian context, this meant accepting a stigmatised cognitive minority status.

There is a marked turnaround on the last variable. Our respondents indicate that, prior to WYD, they were unlikely to agree that they 'could not imagine being other than Catholic' – the coefficient is strongly negative and significant. After WYD, although the coefficient is not significant, it is weakly positive; clearly even this strong statement of Catholic identity is no longer a problem for those who made a commitment.

5. Conclusion

Catholic youth rallies, besides stimulating a renewal of allegiance among the committed, can still serve to promote increased religious commitment among adherents who were previously less committed. In the longer term, the religious community an individual belongs to plays an equally important role.

Youth most likely to make significant increases in commitment on such occasions are those who have continued to pray frequently, even if their church attendance was less regular, and who have some close friends who attend.

The features of youth gatherings that have most impact in influencing youth towards deeper commitment are, first, certain aspects of atmosphere not tied to any particular event:
a) the sense of the sacred / of the presence of God;
b) the awareness of Church: pride in being Catholic, being part of something greater than ourselves -- worldwide and long-lasting
c) the atmosphere of faith shared by large numbers of others of the same age.
Secondly, non-liturgical events with high dramatic content (such as the Stations of the Cross and the Vigil) made more impact than formal liturgies. Also successful in this regard were the 'animated' religious instruction sessions with large groups, singing and drama and a pronounced youthful style.

Other changes in beliefs and attitudes precede or accompany conversion: especially feeling a closer relationship with Jesus, finding a new value in traditional Catholic devotional practices, and being freed of fear of embarrassment at being known as a believer. Converts also describe a renewed interest in learning more about their faith.

Even quite sudden and strong religious changes are not necessarily evidence of a flight from negative or tension-filled psychological states, such as a sense of sin and guilt. Both interviews with participants and accounts of their experience written by them contained numerous stories of conversions, in some of which participants described themselves as being deeply moved, and seeking to radically change their lives; but none of them mentioned traumatic stress or an antecedent sense of guilt or sinfulness, or a sense of low self-worth from which they sought deliverance. This is not surprising either, since there was no hint of these themes in the theology of the ceremonies and addresses taking place during WYD.

The expectations or informal hypotheses formulated in advance on the basis of previous theory and

research,[45] were generally fulfilled except: mother's church attendance did not significantly predict conversion; and it was not the major public events of WYD as such, nor the presence of the Pope, that emerged as the decisive stimuli for conversion, but rather pervasive elements of the atmosphere of WYD, referred to above under the headings of 'Holy Spirit', 'Faith' and 'Church', together with two events with strong dramatic structure and the informal, 'animated' religious instruction sessions.

Our portrayal of this small part of the WYD event, in which young people could be found still experiencing conversion, in the sense of moving to a deeper and more personal commitment to their faith, might give the impression that here we have a traditional Christian denomination able to continue 'business as usual' in the intergenerational transmission of its faith.

However, when we put these findings in the larger context of the increasingly secular character of Western societies, it becomes clear that these youth celebrations and the conversions to which they give rise are but a small-scale remnant of what was once normal and general: adolescents building an identity founded on a religion shared by their family and their society – an important stage of their religious socialisation.

Nowadays, adolescents in most Western countries[46] who may have been raised in a traditional Christian faith are well aware that it is a minority option in their society, and one that attracts a good deal of criticism, contempt and ridicule.[47] The decision to make it their own is not, as it once was, a routine step hardly requiring reflection, but a conscious choice of an option which will have considerable costs. Their society, and probably their peer group, pulls them one way, and their family another, and no doubt many adolescents simply move with whichever current is strongest. Admittedly, in some families – for example, those in which the children are only second generation immigrants from conservative Catholic countries – the option does not become real for them until towards the end of secondary school. But if they elect to become or remain believers, they then experience themselves as part of a cognitive minority at school, at work and in the surrounding society. What was an entry to the mainstream adult worldview is nowadays identification with the ideology of a deviant group.

In his psychosocial theory of human development,[48] Erik Erikson nominates as the key task of the infant, the development of 'trust in the universe'. In infancy, trust is entirely focussed on the mother; but Erikson sees this universal trust, at maturer levels, remaining fundamental to the healthy personality. He points to religious institutions as playing an important role in symbolising and sustaining this trusting relationship between person and universe. And when he comes to the adolescent developmental task of the achievement of identity, Erikson describes the crucial part played by 'ideology' – understood as a simplified picture of the wider world and one's place in it, drawn from the worldview of the surrounding society.

The theory invites this question: when religion is no longer a significant part of the worldview of the dominant culture, what then takes its place in stabilising human trust in the universe, and grounding the ideology on which identity is built? Obviously, it can only be the fragmented beliefs and values which form the *bricolage* of the late modern[49] worldview. These are tentative, temporary, lightly held and often changing. Yet a strong underlying individualism and relativism

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[45] See p. 10 above, at the end of section 2.

[46] The 'Spirit of Generation Y' study (Mason et al. 2007) established that the majority young Australians in their teens and early 20s are secular in outlook.

[47] This does not seem to be true as yet in the USA.

[48] Erik Erikson, *Childhood and society*, Repr. (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1973). Erik Erikson, *Identity : youth and crisis* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1994).

[49] Some prefer 'postmodern'.

seem enduring characteristics.[50] Is this set of fragments up to the task of replacing religion in the functions described by Erikson? And it not, what are the consequences for human development? We shall see.

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[50] I attempted a sketch of the basic beliefs and values constituting this view of the world in Mason et al. 2007, p. 333.

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Appendix I.

World Youth Day
In recent years, the Catholic church has conducted a number of large-scale international youth festivals called "World Youth Day": a week of religious celebrations culminating in a Mass celebrated by the Pope in person. They have been held at intervals of two or three years since 1987, in Cologne, Toronto, Rome, Paris, Manila, Denver and other cities. Several have drawn crowds of millions. The attendance at the concluding Papal Mass in Manila was estimated at four million. The 10th international World Youth Day (WYD) was held in Sydney, Australia in July 2008. Although it attracted fewer participants than previous events in the series because of Australia's remoteness from countries with large Catholic populations, it was nonetheless the largest gathering ever in Australia: the official attendance figure for the concluding event was 400,000. There were 223,000 registered pilgrims: 113,000 Australians and 110,000 from 193 overseas nations.

The events of the week included religious instruction sessions on most mornings, and a large-scale event in the afternoon or evening such as the opening Mass, the Papal arrival in Sydney, a spectacular enactment of the Stations of the Cross staged as a journey across the Sydney CBD, a pilgrim march across the city and an all-night Vigil culminating in the Papal Mass celebrated by His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI . In between the major events were sessions of Eucharistic adoration, opportunities for devotional visits to churches, an exhibition featuring the lifestyle and work of the many different religious orders in the Church, and innumerable concerts, lectures, and seminars.

The Pilgrims' Progress 2008 Research Project[51]
'Pilgrims' Progress 2008' is a research project conducted at Australian Catholic University and Monash University, focusing on the participants in the Sydney World Youth Day, especially those aged 15-35 for whom the event was primarily intended. The project studied these young participants before, during and after the event, seeking to discover what WYD meant to them, and what effects, if any, their participation had on their lives and their spirituality.

Forty-nine face-to-face interviews with intending participants, lasting about forty minutes each, were conducted between November 2007 and February 2008 prior to the event. These prepared the way for a web-based survey, in May 2008, of those from English-speaking countries who were already registered to attend. A total of 12,275 responses were received. The respondent group profile closely matched the universe of registered participants in gender, nationality, and age.

During the week of WYD08 the research team engaged in participant observation and interviews, and as the attenders returned home, researchers took part in group debriefing sessions and conducted a further 26 individual interviews and two focus groups with Australian participants.

Then five months after WYD, in November-December 2008, another internet survey of English-speaking registered pilgrims was conducted. By this time, participants were hard to contact; many had abandoned the email addresses WYD administration still hoped to use to contact them and invite them to take part in the survey. This second survey obtained 4,776 responses. For 1,449 of these, there were identifiable responses in the pre-WYD survey. The follow-up survey explored the outcomes of WYD for individual participants, especially its impact on denominational identity, personal religiosity, and civic engagement.

The exploration in this paper uses only data from the post-WYD survey. It selects a small group of deviant cases: those who said (in response to a question in the post-survey) that prior to WYD, they

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[51] The research team comprises Michael Mason and Ruth Webber (Australian Catholic University), Andrew Singleton (Monash University). For more detail on the project and its findings, see the reports, questionnaires and background materials at: http://dlibrary.acu.edu.au/research/wyd/ Details of methods, sample characteristics and response rates are given in the paper 'Method of the research project' on the site.

had not been regular church attenders, but who endorsed one or more statements of strong religious commitment. In the case of this small group, there were too few cases with matching data from the pre-survey to make use of that material.

Appendix II   **Tables**

Table 1. Catholics aged 15-35: Responses re statements of commitment

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
0 No statement of commitment	573	16.4	19.5	19.5
1 Committed & prev attended < wkly	280	8.0	9.5	29.0
2 Committed & prev attended wkly+	1649	47.3	56.0	84.9
3 'Already committed before WYD'	444	12.7	15.1	100.0
Total valid responses	2946	84.6	100.0	
Missing	538	15.4		
Total	3484	100.0		

Table 2. Catholics aged 15-35: Mass attendance prior to World Youth Day

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	1 I didn't really go at all	70	2.0	2.3	2.3
	2 Christmas or Easter and a few other times	125	3.6	4.1	6.4
	3 Often but not every month	112	3.2	3.7	10.1
	4 Once or twice a month	221	6.3	7.2	17.3
	5 Usually every weekend	1814	52.1	59.5	76.8
	6 More than once a week	707	20.3	23.2	100.0
	Total	3049	87.5	100.0	
Missing	-99	435	12.5		
Total		3484	100.0		

Table 3. Catholics aged 15-35 who previously attended less than weekly: Made commitment by age-group

| | agegrp3a | | | |
	1 14-18	2 19-24	3 25-35	Total
0 No statemt	65	27	32	124
Row %	52.4%	21.8%	25.8%	100.0%
Column %	41.4%	33.3%	36.4%	38.0%
1 Stated	92	54	56	202
Row %	45.5%	26.7%	27.7%	100.0%
Column %	58.6%	66.7%	63.6%	62.0%
Total	157	81	88	326
Row %	48.2%	24.8%	27.0%	100.0%
Column %	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 4. Catholics aged 15-35 who previously attended less than weekly: Made commitment by Gender

| | GENDER | | |
	1 Male	2 Female	Total
0 No statemt	36	88	124
Row %	29.0%	71.0%	100.0%
Column %	40.0%	37.3%	38.0%
1 Stated	54	148	202
Row %	26.7%	73.3%	100.0%
Column %	60.0%	62.7%	62.0%
Total	90	236	326
Row %	27.6%	72.4%	100.0%
Column %	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 5. Predictor variables: Descriptive statistics.

All variables except 'Before WYD used to pray' are dichotomous (range 0,1) and unstandardised.
N = 326. The percentages shown are percent coded '1' on the variable (with the two obvious exceptions).

Pre WYD personal, family & religious context

Age	Mean: 21.0, SD 5.344

Age – groups:

14-18 yrs	49.7%
19-24	25.0%
25-35	25.3%

	% coded '1'
Female	73.6%
Mother Catholic	85.4%
Father Catholic	73.6%
Mother attended monthly+ (+ = 'or more often')	69.2%
Father attended monthly+	52.2%
Friends attend church fairly regularly	23.6%

Before WYD: used to pray

Never / rarely	12.6%
Occasionally	38.7%
Weekly	17.9%
Daily+	30.8%

Aspects of WYD which most helped in spiritual journey (choose up to 3)

Crowd: Being part of a huge crowd of happy young people	25.8%
Faith: Being with so many my age who share the same faith	33.2%
Church: pride in being Catholic, part of Church	24.2%
Holy Spirit: The sense that God was present	24.2%
Seeing the Pope, listening to him, celebrating Mass with him	23.9%
The Opening Mass	6.9%
The Stations of the Cross	16.2%
The Vigil night at Randwick	21.7%
The Closing Mass	7.7%
Morning Catecheses	12.6%

Belief and value changes attributed by respondents to participation in World Youth Day

I understand better how God is Father, Son and Spirit	15.4%
I feel I have a closer relationship with Jesus	34.3%
I'm more interested now in learning about my Catholic faith	42.0%
I'm not embarrassed now to let others see that I'm a believer	42.6%
Before WYD: Eucharistic adoration or Rosary is important to me	21.2%
After WYD	50.3%
Before WYD: I cannot imagine being other than Catholic	54.1%
After WYD	65.9%

Table 6: Odds ratios from Logistic Regression Models Predicting Religious Commitment					
		Model 1	Model 2	Model 3		
Pre-WYD personal, family & religious context		*Odds ratio*	*Odds ratio*	*b*	*SE*	*Odds ratio*
Age		.982	.976	.009	.032	1.009
Female		1.089	.988	-.002	.346	.998
Mother Catholic		1.766	1.389	.596	.448	1.816
Father Catholic		.937	.894	-.107	.419	.899
Mother attended church monthly or more often		.955	1.167	.110	.405	1.117
Father attended church monthly or more often		1.304	1.165	.004	.392	1.004
Friends attend church fairly regularly		***3.779	***3.760	.955	.415	*2.599
Before WYD: used to pray occasionally		1.414	1.169	.255	.524	1.290
weekly		+2.342	2.244	.911	.601	2.487
daily or more		**3.640	*2.776	.926	.567	+2.525
Aspects of WYD which most helped in spiritual journey (choose up to 3)						
Crowd: Being part of a huge crowd of happy young people			+1.800	.959	.396	*2.608
Faith: Being with so many my age who share the same faith			**2.710	.971	.344	**2.641
Church: pride in being Catholic, part of Church			**2.964	1.172	.405	**3.228
Holy Spirit: The sense that God was present			***3.584	1.547	.425	***4.696
Seeing the Pope, listening to him, celebrating Mass with him			1.614	.500	.368	1.650
The Opening Mass			1.562	.804	.582	2.235
The Stations of the Cross			**3.472	1.292	.458	**3.639
The Vigil night at Randwick			**2.774	1.793	.421	***6.009
The Closing Mass			*3.891	1.129	.677	+3.092
Morning Catecheses			**3.858	1.287	.485	**3.624
Belief and value changes attributed by respondents to participation in World Youth Day						
I understand better how God is Father, Son and Spirit				.703	.518	2.021
I feel I have a closer relationship with Jesus				1.023	.382	**2.782
I'm more interested now in learning about my Catholic faith				.617	.311	*1.853
I'm not embarrassed now to let others see that I'm a believer				1.116	.340	**3.053
Before WYD: Eucharistic adoration or Rosary is important to me				.006	.496	1.006
After WYD				1.206	.398	**3.341
Before WYD: I cannot imagine being other than Catholic				-1.148	.485	*.317
After WYD				.420	.490	1.522
Model fit statistics		*Model 1*	*Model 2*	*Model 3*		
-2 Log Likelihood		394.10	345.42	285.10		
Hosmer-Lemeshow test -- significance of chi-sq		.769	.801	.832		
Pseudo-R-squared measures						
Nagelkerke		.153	.321	.496		
Cox and Snell		.113	.236	.365		
Hosmer and Lemeshow		.090	.202	.342		
Cases correctly classified		66%	72%	79%		
No. of cases		326	326	326		

Decrease in log-likelihood Const. to Model 1: Chisq (10, N = 326) = 38.99, p < .001
Decrease in log-likelihood Model 1 to Model 2: Chisq (10, N = 326) = 48.67, p < .001
Decrease in log-likelihood Model 2 to Model 3: Chisq (8, N = 326) = 60.33, p < .001
Decrease in log-likelihood Const. to Model 3: Chisq (28, N = 326) = 147.99, p <.001

Significance: + p< .10   * p< .05   ** p< .01   *** p< .001
b = unstandardised logistic regression coefficient   SE = standard error of the coefficient

Appendix III

Tables comparing the 4 commitment groups on a range of measures:
- 0 'No statement': the uncommitted, i.e. those who did not make any statement of commitment
- 1 'Comm & prev < weekly att': those who made a statement of commitment which they attributed to their WYD experience but, prior to WYD, used to attend Mass less than weekly (the special interest group in this investigation)
- 2 'Comm & prev wkly+ att': those who made a statement of commitment which they attributed to their WYD experience and, prior to WYD, used to attend Mass every week or more often
- 3 'Prev comm' those who, instead of making a statement of commitment which they attributed to their WYD experience, said they were already committed before attending WYD.

The focus of the comparison is to see whether the commitments made by the group labelled 1 were 'real' – meaning that there was a positive change in their beliefs, moral attitudes, religious practices and ethical behaviour. Accordingly, their responses to the following questions were examined:

Are you going to do more of the following, or about the same as before WYD?
> Table 1. Go to Mass at weekends
> Table 2. Pray by yourself
> Table 3. Go to reconciliation (Confession)
> Table 4. Contribute to your local parish

Table 5. Do you think that as a result of WYD your religious faith will have more influence on what you do in daily life?

Since returning from WYD, do you talk more about spirituality / religion / faith with
> Table 6. others who went to WYD
> Table 7. family members
> Table 8. others who did not go to WYD

Table 9. Apart from your parish or school, are you involved in any Catholic organisations / movements / groups ?
Table 10. Did you get involved in any of these groups as a result of attending WYD?

Do you feel more motivated to do any of the following because of your WYD experience?
> Table 11. Be tolerant towards someone hard to get along with
> Table 12. Stand up to a bully
> Table 13. Forgive someone you've been angry at
> Table 14. Spend time with someone who needs some extra care for some reason

Check any of the following activities that you are more likely to do in the next year, as a result of WYD:

Table 15. Give some time (or more of it than in the past) as a volunteer in a helping organisation
Table 16. Get involved in a group working for social justice
Table 17. Do more to look after the environment
Table 18. Give more money to welfare or charitable organisations

Table 19. Positive change before /after WYD on moral attitudes scale
Table 20. Positive change before /after WYD on importance of Catholic identity scale
Table 21. Altruistic behaviour scale (sum of the 4 items in Tables 11-14)
Table 22. Civic engagement scale (sum of the 4 items in Tables 15-18)
Table 23. Mean scores of commitment groups on sum of change measures.

Explanation of the scales used in Tables 19 and 20.

A moral attitudes scale asked whether respondent agreed with church teaching on the following issues, before and after WYD. The scale ranged from 1 Strongly Disagree to 5 Strongly agree.

The church law that priests must be male and unmarried
Church teaching on not having sex before marriage
Church teaching opposing the death penalty
Church teaching opposing abortion
Church teaching opposing euthanasia
Church teaching opposing same-sex marriage
Church teaching supporting workers' rights to unionise and to take industrial action
The Pope and the bishops have the authority to guide Catholics in what they should believe and do in order to follow the teachings of Jesus.

The results were summarised into a "Positive change before /after WYD on moral attitudes scale" indicator as follows: respondent scored 1 if there was positive change in attitude (e.g. from 3 to 4 or from 1 to 2) on 5 or more of the items on the scale.

A Catholic identity scale asked respondent to rate the following items before and after WYD. Again, the scale ranged from 1 Strongly Disagree to 5 Strongly agree.

Being a Catholic is a very important part of who I am.
The sacraments of the Church are essential to my relationship with God.
Catholic devotions such as Eucharistic adoration or praying the Rosary are important to me.
It is important to me that the younger generations of my family grow up as Catholics.
Catholicism contains a greater share of the truth than other religions
I cannot imagine being any religion other than Catholic.
I'm proud to be a Catholic
I have a strong sense of belonging to the Catholic community

The "Positive change before /after WYD on importance of Catholic identity scale" indicator was constructed as described for the moral change indicator just mentioned.

The results of these comparisons of the various types of commitment on these 22 indicators are summarised in the body of the paper.

Table 1. Frequency of attending Mass at weekends after WYD by Type of commitment

		Type of commitment				
		0 No statement	1 Comm & prev < wkly att	2 Comm & prev wkly+ att	3 Prev comm	Total
W8EFATTMASS More or same: attend Mass	0 same as before	475	112	1195	359	2141
		83.2%	40.0%	72.6%	80.9%	72.8%
	1 Definitely more	96	168	452	85	801
		16.8%	60.0%	27.4%	19.1%	27.2%
Total		571	280	1647	444	2942
		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 2. Frequency of prayer by yourself after WYD by Type of commitment

		0 No statement	1 Comm & prev < wkly att	2 Comm & prev wkly+ att	3 Prev comm	Total
W8EFPRAY More or same: pray	0 same as before	362	83	562	279	1286
		63.7%	29.6%	34.1%	62.8%	43.7%
	1 Definitely more	206	197	1087	165	1655
		36.3%	70.4%	65.9%	37.2%	56.3%
Total		568	280	1649	444	2941
		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 3. Frequency of attending reconciliation after WYD by Type of commitment

		Type of commitment				
		0 No statement	1 Comm & prev < wkly att	2 Comm & prev wkly+ att	3 Prev comm	Total
W8EFRECO More or same: reconciliation	0 same as before	453	160	910	308	1831
		79.8%	57.1%	55.2%	69.4%	62.3%
	1 Definitely more	115	120	738	136	1109
		20.2%	42.9%	44.8%	30.6%	37.7%
Total		568	280	1648	444	2940
		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 4. Contribute to parish by Type of commitment

		Type of commitment				
		0 No statement	1 Comm & prev < wkly att	2 Comm & prev wkly+ att	3 Prev comm	Total
W8EFCONTRIB More or same: contribute to parish	0 same as before	379	133	777	299	1588
		66.7%	47.5%	47.2%	67.3%	54.0%
	1 Definitely more	189	147	870	145	1351
		33.3%	52.5%	52.8%	32.7%	46.0%
Total		568	280	1647	444	2939
		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 5. Influence of faith on daily life by Type of commitment

		Type of commitment				
		0 No statement	1 Comm & prev < wkly att	2 Comm & prev wkly+ att	3 Prev comm	Total
Does you faith have more or less influence on your life as a result of WYD?	0 Less or same	465	125	612	268	1470
		81.6%	44.6%	37.2%	60.4%	50.0%
	1 More	105	155	1035	176	1471
		18.4%	55.4%	62.8%	39.6%	50.0%
Total		570	280	1647	444	2941
		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 6. Talk about faith with: pilgrims by Type of commitment

		Type of commitment				Total
		0 No statement	1 Comm & prev < wkly att	2 Comm & prev wkly+ att	3 Prev comm	
W8EFTALKPIL Talk about faith with: pilgrims	0 Not selected	240	78	391	168	877
		47.2%	29.7%	26.1%	38.2%	32.4%
	1 Yes talking more about these with other people who went to W	269	185	1105	272	1831
		52.8%	70.3%	73.9%	61.8%	67.6%
Total		509	263	1496	440	2708
		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 7. **Talk about faith with: family by Type of commitment**

		Type of commitment				Total
		0 No statement	1 Comm & prev < wkly att	2 Comm & prev wkly+ att	3 Prev comm	
W8EFTALKFAM Talk about faith with: family	0 Not selected	297	126	588	228	1239
		58.3%	47.9%	39.3%	51.8%	45.8%
	1 Also with family members who did not go to WYD	212	137	908	212	1469
		41.7%	52.1%	60.7%	48.2%	54.2%
Total		509	263	1496	440	2708
		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 8. Talk about faith with: non-pilgrims by Type of commitment

			Type of commitment				Total
			0 No statement	1 Comm & prev < wkly att	2 Comm & prev wkly+ att	3 Prev comm	
W8EFTALKNPIL Talk about faith with: non-pilgrims	0 Not selected	Count	283	115	481	177	1056
		% within Type of commitment	55.6%	43.7%	32.2%	40.2%	39.0%
	1 Also with people who did not go to WYD	Count	226	148	1015	263	1652
		% within Type of commitment	44.4%	56.3%	67.8%	59.8%	61.0%
Total		Count	509	263	1496	440	2708
		% within Type of commitment	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 9. Involved in any Catholic organisations by Type of commitment

		Type of commitment				Total
		0 No statement	1 Comm & prev < wkly att	2 Comm & prev wkly+ att	3 Prev comm	
W8EFORG Involved in any Catholic organisations	1 No not involved in any Catholic group	329	176	652	171	1328
		66.2%	69.8%	45.5%	41.3%	51.1%
	2 Yes I am involved in one or more groups please type in the box	168	76	782	243	1269
		33.8%	30.2%	54.5%	58.7%	48.9%
Total		497	252	1434	414	2597
		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 10. Involvement in group is result of attending WYD by Type of commitment

		Type of commitment				
		0 No statement	1 Comm & prev < wkly att	2 Comm & prev wkly+ att	3 Prev comm	Total
W8EFORGRESULT Result of attending WYD	1 No	135	45	573	217	970
		77.6%	51.7%	69.0%	81.9%	71.5%
	2 Yes	39	42	258	48	387
		22.4%	48.3%	31.0%	18.1%	28.5%
Total		174	87	831	265	1357
		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 11. Be tolerant towards someone hard to get along with by Type of commitment

		Type of commitment				
		0 No statement	1 Comm & prev < wkly att	2 Comm & prev wkly+ att	3 Prev comm	Total
W8EFALT1 Be tolerant towards someone hard to get along with	0 Not selected	300	90	532	271	1193
		52.9%	32.1%	32.3%	61.2%	40.6%
	1 Be tolerant towards someone hard to get along with	267	190	1116	172	1745
		47.1%	67.9%	67.7%	38.8%	59.4%
Total		567	280	1648	443	2938
		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 12. Stand up to a bully by Type of commitment

		Type of commitment				
		0 No statement	1 Comm & prev < wkly att	2 Comm & prev wkly+ att	3 Prev comm	Total
W8EFALT2 Stand up to a bully	0 Not selected	448	187	1231	374	2240
		79.0%	66.8%	74.7%	84.2%	76.2%
	1 Stand up to a bully	119	93	417	70	699
		21.0%	33.2%	25.3%	15.8%	23.8%
Total		567	280	1648	444	2939
		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 13. Forgive someone you've been angry at by Type of commitment

		Type of commitment				
		0 No statement	1 Comm & prev < wkly att	2 Comm & prev wkly+ att	3 Prev comm	Total
W8EFALT3 Forgive someone you've been angry at	0 Not selected	312	93	618	289	1312
		55.4%	33.2%	37.5%	65.2%	44.7%
	1 Forgive someone you've been angry at	251	187	1030	154	1622
		44.6%	66.8%	62.5%	34.8%	55.3%
Total		563	280	1648	443	2934
		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 14. **Spend time with someone who needs some extra care for some reason by Type of commitment**

		Type of commitment				Total
		0 No statement	1 Comm & prev < wkly att	2 Comm & prev wkly+ att	3 Prev comm	
W8EFALT4 Spend time with someone who needs some extra care for some reason	0 Not selected	353	102	716	264	1435
		62.1%	36.4%	43.5%	59.5%	48.8%
	1 Spend time with someone who needs some extra care for some reason	215	178	931	180	1504
		37.9%	63.6%	56.5%	40.5%	51.2%
Total		568	280	1647	444	2939
		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 15. Give some time (or more of it than in the past) as a volunteer in a helping organisation by Type of commitment

		Type of commitment				Total
		0 No statement	1 Comm & prev < wkly att	2 Comm & prev wkly+ att	3 Prev comm	
W8EFCVOL Give some time (or more of it than in the past) as a volunteer in a helping organisation	0 Not selected	299	98	617	279	1293
		62.2%	38.1%	42.5%	65.5%	49.4%
	1 Give some time or more of it than in the past as a volunteer	182	159	835	147	1323
		37.8%	61.9%	57.5%	34.5%	50.6%
Total		481	257	1452	426	2616
		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 16. Get involved with a group working for social justice by Type of commitment

	Type of commitment				Total
	0 No statement	1 Comm & prev < wkly att	2 Comm & prev wkly+ att	3 Prev comm	
0 Not selected	376	132	952	329	1789
	78.0%	51.2%	65.7%	77.4%	68.5%
1 Get involved with a group working for social justice	106	126	496	96	824
	22.0%	48.8%	34.3%	22.6%	31.5%
Total	482	258	1448	425	2613
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 17. Do more to look after the environment by Type of commitment

	Type of commitment				Total
	0 No statement	1 Comm & prev < wkly att	2 Comm & prev wkly+ att	3 Prev comm	
0 Not selected	379	152	1028	344	1903
	78.8%	58.9%	70.9%	80.9%	72.8%
1 Do more to look after the environment	102	106	421	81	710
	21.2%	41.1%	29.1%	19.1%	27.2%
Total	481	258	1449	425	2613
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 18. Give more money to welfare or charity organisations by Type of commitment

		Type of commitment				Total
		0 No statement	1 Comm & prev < wkly att	2 Comm & prev wkly+ att	3 Prev comm	
W8EFCDONATE Give more money to welfare or charity organisations	0 Not selected	353	135	910	333	1731
		73.4%	52.5%	62.8%	78.4%	66.2%
	1 Give more money to welfare or charity organisations	128	122	540	92	882
		26.6%	47.5%	37.2%	21.6%	33.8%
Total		481	257	1450	425	2613
		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 19. Positive change before /after WYD Catholic identity scale by Type of commitment

		Type of commitment				Total
		0 No statement	1 Comm & prev < wkly att	2 Comm & prev wkly+ att	3 Prev comm	
CATHIMPSCALX	0	406	125	1028	384	1943
		79.1%	49.0%	69.8%	91.6%	73.0%
	1	107	130	445	35	717
		20.9%	51.0%	30.2%	8.4%	27.0%
Total		513	255	1473	419	2660
		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 20. Positive change before /after WYD on moral attitudes scale by Type of commitment

		Type of commitment				
		0 No statement	1 Comm & prev < wkly att	2 Comm & prev wkly+ att	3 Prev comm	Total
MORIMPSCALX	0	505	232	1383	408	2528
		98.4%	91.0%	93.9%	97.4%	95.0%
	1	8	23	90	11	132
		1.6%	9.0%	6.1%	2.6%	5.0%
Total		513	255	1473	419	2660
		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 21. Altruistic behaviour scale by Type of commitment

		Type of commitment				
		0 No statement	1 Comm & prev < wkly att	2 Comm & prev wkly+ att	3 Prev comm	Total
w8altscal	0	167	29	191	181	568
		29.7%	10.4%	11.6%	40.9%	19.4%
	1	145	49	353	101	648
		25.8%	17.5%	21.4%	22.8%	22.1%
	2	110	69	450	61	690
		19.5%	24.6%	27.3%	13.8%	23.5%
	3	79	71	371	47	568
		14.0%	25.4%	22.5%	10.6%	19.4%

4	62	62	281	53	458
	11.0%	22.1%	17.1%	12.0%	15.6%
Total	563	280	1646	443	2932
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 22. Civic engagement scale by Type of commitment

		Type of commitment				Total
		0 No statement	1 Comm & prev < wkly att	2 Comm & prev wkly+ att	3 Prev comm	
w8engscal	0	35	7	75	36	153
		7.3%	2.7%	5.2%	8.5%	5.9%
	1	205	57	450	203	915
		42.9%	22.3%	31.1%	47.8%	35.1%
	2	139	73	452	102	766
		29.1%	28.5%	31.3%	24.0%	29.4%
	3	66	65	298	49	478
		13.8%	25.4%	20.6%	11.5%	18.3%
	4	24	42	142	29	237
		5.0%	16.4%	9.8%	6.8%	9.1%
	5	9	12	29	6	56
		1.9%	4.7%	2.0%	1.4%	2.1%
Total		478	256	1446	425	2605
		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 23. Mean scores of commitment groups on sum of change measures

In addition to the measures of change shown in the tables above, two more comprehensive scales were calculated for acceptance of Catholic teaching and importance of Catholic identity (in place of those shown in Tables 19 and 20). For each case, a sum of all of the change measures was then calculated, adjusted to take account of missing values. The mean of this summed score is shown for each group in the following table. The possible maximum score is 34.

Table 23. **Mean change scores of commitment groups**

Commitment groups	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
0 No statement	8.30	520	5.469
1 Comm & prev < wkly att	14.66	266	6.016
2 Comm & prev wkly+ att	12.42	1528	5.724
3 Prev comm	7.47	441	5.323
Total	11.06	2755	6.132

The difference between the mean scores of groups 1 and 2 is significant (t = 5.9254 with df 1592) p < .001.