RELIGION AND TELEVISION

A Research Report by
The Annenberg School of Communications,
University of Pennsylvania
and the Gallup Organization, Inc.

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Conducted under a grant from the
Ad Hoc Committee on Electronic Church Research

April 1984

The Annenberg School of Communications
University of Pennsylvania
Philadelphia, PA 19104

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I

SUMMARY

A committee of more than 30 mainline and independent church groups commissioned a research team of The Annenberg School of Communications at the University of Pennsylvania and the Gallup Organization of Princeton, N.J., to conduct a two-year research project on Religion and Television. The research included an analysis of the content of religious programs of television and a national and two regional surveys of viewers of religious and other programs. The Annenberg School research team was responsible for writing this integrated final report.

We have focused on central and dynamic aspects of American life that have received surprisingly little social scientific attention. Even the popular media have treated religious movements - at least until recently - as bizarre and anachronistic.

Nevertheless, the "fundamentalist" upheavals that have shaken large parts of the world seem to have found an echo in the rise of the "electronic church" on American television. With our legacy of puritanism, populism, and evangelicalism, and our distinction as the world's heaviest users of television (7 hours a day in the average television household, and still rising), we may indeed be considered fertile ground for some sort of electronic revival.

This study was conceived against a background of ferment and change in traditional religious involvement coinciding with the rise of commercial television and later of the religious television ministries. There was a general lack of information but abundance

of speculation about the role of religion on television and in the lives of viewers.

Many questions were asked. Is religion on television more religion than television or more television than religion? Is the "electronic church" a central or peripheral current of religion, and society? Does it reach out to new groups or does it preach mostly to the already converted? Who are its viewers and what attracts them? Do the television ministries siphon off members and money from mainline or other local churches (and church programs on television) or do they recruit members and contributions by reaching broader constituencies? What is the world and the world view presented by religious television programs and how do they relate to mainline churches and to general commercial television? What are their social and political as well as strictly religious messages and lessons?

In the report that follows, we have attempted to address these questions. The answers came from a comprehensive and intensive study of religion and television as integral parts and organic expressions of significant currents in American life.

The audience

The audience for religious programs on television is not an essentially new, or young, or varied audience. Viewers of religious programs are by and large also the believers, the churchgoers, the contributors. Their viewing of religious programs correlates with all important measures of religiosity. It appears

to be an expression, confirmation, and cultivation of a set of religious beliefs and not a substitute for them.

The profile of the audience for religious programs tends to be fairly coherent and well-defined. It is what religious audiences have always been: somewhat older, lower in education and income, more conservative, more "fundamentalist," and more likely to live in rural areas and in the South and Midwest than those who do not watch religious programs. The size of the audience is more stable and compact than has often been supposed. Our calculations indicate that the regular viewers of any religious programs of any denomination number about 13.3 million, or 6.2 percent of the estimated total number of persons in television households.

Local religious programs do not extend the viewing audience. Those who watch local programs also watch the syndicated television ministries (defined as programs by denominations existing primarily through broadcasting.) Cable viewing does not seem to extend the viewing audience; on the whole, viewers of religious programs are no more likely than non-viewers to have cable television in their homes.

The television ministries, therefore, serve a stable and coherent national constituency. They appear to reach a broader group mostly on Sundays when the most diverse viewing public is available for all television programs.

Viewers of religious programs are drawn by content they cannot find elsewhere on television. In fact, their dissatisfaction with the "prevailing moral climate" (much of which, of course, comes to them through and from television) may be one of the most

distinctive bonds between religious programs and their viewers. The sermons, the preaching, the music, the experience of "having your spirits lifted" and "feeling close to God" are frequently expressed satisfactions that viewers derive from religious programs.

Those who do not watch religious programs on television -- the majority of the younger and more "upscale" type television viewers -- are more likely to be disinterested than hostile. Only one in four express any objections (mostly to the emphasis on solicitation of funds), but three in four switch channels rather than watch religious programs.

The key distinctions between viewers and non-viewers of religious programs, besides the demographic, are religious and philosophical. Non-viewers are less likely to hold conservative, evangelical or "fundamentalist" beliefs. Only a third (as opposed to half of the viewers of religious programs) express dissatisfaction with the prevailing moral climate. The same relative proportions consider evangelicalism and missionary work the main goal of the church. Conversely, only one-fifth of the viewers of religious programs, but one-third of the non-viewers, believe that the church should be "working for social justice."

Therefore, social, political, and moral (including sexual) as well as strictly religious issues need to be examined to find the role and significance of religion on television and in the lives of viewers. Before we do that, however, we need to deal with the institutional relationships between religious programs on television, particularly the most prominent television ministries,

and the local churches. That examination will also lead us to look at the relationships of religious and general television.

Effects on local churches

The television ministries have been suspected of causing or at least contributing to the erosion of mainline church membership, financial contributions, and general participation. Our study has found no support for that charge. Viewers of religious programs, including the prominent television ministries, are no less likely than non-viewers to attend, contribute to, and participate in local church activities. Frequent churchgoers see little or no conflict between their participation and viewing. A personal "closeness to members" of one's local church is one of the few if not the only reason advanced for local church attendance that television ministries could not serve.

In other words, religious program audiences find no conflict between syndicated religious television programs and more traditional forms of worship. They see them as complementary and mutually reinforcing activities rather than as substitutes for one another. Further, those who contribute more to these programs do not correspondingly contribute less to their local churches.

Patterns of viewing specific "types" of programs confirm these findings. Viewers of religious programs who are less "fundamentalist" or belonged to mainline churches are no more attracted to "local" than to syndicated programs. The most

prominent syndicated weekend television ministries find the broadest audience for religious television.

Two "mainstreams" -- religious and general television

If no basic or perceived institutional conflict exists between religion on television and religion in the local churches, that does not necessarily mean that religious programing with its evangelical and fundamentalist mainstream, is the universal or central current of American life. A conflict with established forces exists. The central expression of those forces, however, is not so much (or no longer) mainline religion and local churches as that newer and pervasive cultural arm of secular society: general television.

Religious programs on television express and cultivate a fairly stable and coherent world view of ideas, images, and conceptions that competes less with mainline religion or the local church than with the equally stable and coherent, but broader and in some important respects divergent, world of commercial television itself.

Our research project of over 15 years on the nature and functions of television, called Cultural Indicators, has demonstrated that its central dynamics can be seen as the cultivation of relative stability and homogeneity of outlooks that tends to absorb otherwise divergent conceptions into its mainstream. We call our theory "mainstreaming" to describe the tendency of viewers of television coming from otherwise divergent

backgrounds to respond and act in relatively similar ways, compared to light viewers from the same groups. In other words, television tends to erode or overcome demographic, geographic, and other differences that traditionally distinguish different groups of people. Successive generations of heavy viewers of television, drawn from groups whose outlooks traditionally differ, tend to be more similar; they "converge" upon television's mainstream.

We have found in this study that there are, in fact, two somewhat overlapping but also fairly distinct television "mainstreams," the religious and the general. We have examined the mechanisms and issues of their divergence and convergence. That examination consists of two parts.

The first part, called message system (or content) analysis, observes the clear-cut and unambiguous features of the world of ideas and people presented in our samples of television ministry and mainline church programs. These features form potential "lessons" for viewers. The second part of the examination consists of what we call cultivation analysis which is the attempt to ascertain which of these lessons, if any, television does in fact cultivate in the attitudes and behaviors of different types of viewers.

First we shall summarize the highlights of our message system analysis and then discuss the various features of religious and general television programing in connection with the conceptions and behaviors that the two "mainstreams" tend to cultivate.

The messages of religious television

In their essential features, the contents of evangelical and mainline religious programs do not present as much of a contrast as has been supposed. Discussion of political issues occurs in over half of both television ministry and mainline programs (but only one-third of general prime-time drama television programs). The television ministries are more likely than mainline church programs to ask for money, with the prominent television ministries making the most numerous requests and asking for greater amounts.

Social and moral issues are discussed on both television ministries and mainline church programs. The most prominent of the television ministries are, however, more likely than the other groups to focus on these issues. Religious and theological issues are not discussed with any great frequency. When mentioned at all, they are most likely to be discussed on the prominent television ministries.

With regard to the participants in these programs, there are several important findings. First, men outnumber women by a considerable margin in all religious programs. In this and several other respects, the people who inhabit religious television are similar to the characters who populate the fictional world of prime-time drama. Women are generally younger than the men. Minorities, especially minority women and all Hispanics, are under-represented in these programs relative to their numbers in the general population.

About half of the women in major roles and one-fifth of all women participants are professionals. However, they are rarely, if ever, in the role of clergy and rarely quote the Bible. They are more likely than men to suffer from personal problems or physical ailments. Overall, women in religious programs have little authority and power, much like women in prime-time drama. On the other hand, as on prime time, men are in charge. They have roles of authority, are the clergy, quote the Bible, and do not suffer from as many ailments and/or personal problems as women.

The conservatism of religious programs is also apparent in the condemnation, much more frequent than on commercial television, of abortion, homosexuality, and other behavior perceived as deviant. "Sinful sexual conduct," for example, was addressed in one out of every four religious programs.

The emphasis on personal problems and ailments (placing an unequal burden on women) focuses on family tensions, financial and health problems, unemployment, and physical handicaps. The most prominent television ministries tend to dwell most on these personal problems and ailments, and prescribe spiritual solutions or (in one out of four programs) financial contributions.

The lessons of television -- religious and general

As we might expect, a higher percentage of heavy viewers of religious than of general programs say that religion is "very important." Furthermore, groups (such as the younger, more educated, etc.) who, when they are light viewers, are the least

likely to attach great importance to religion, show the largest margin of difference between their estimation of religion's importance as given by light versus heavy viewers. In other words, they "come into the religious television mainstream" from the greatest distance.

General commercial television viewing may supply or supplant (or both) some religious satisfactions and thus lessen the importance of religion for its heavy viewers. Demographic groups whose light viewers of television are most likely to find religion important, such as older, lower-income, lower-education, and non-white respondents, distance themselves the most as heavy viewers of general television from that high estimate of religion's importance. When viewers sharing these characteristics do not watch religious programs on television they blend into the heavy viewing general television mainstream which seems to displace, if not replace, religion as an important part of their lives.

Overall, more than one out of four religious programs mentions local churches and 13 percent urge viewers to attend. Television ministries tend to mention local church services even a little more than do mainline local programs.

It is not surprising, therefore, that watching religious programs goes hand-in-hand with both attendance at and financial contributions to the local church. Nor is it unexpected to find that heavy viewers of general television are less likely to attend and contribute to the local church than are light-viewing members of the same groups. The differences are again especially striking for the groups that otherwise attend and contribute (and also watch

religious television) the most; as heavy viewers of general television they are the most distant from their light-viewing counterparts in terms of church attendance and contributions.

Expressions of confidence in leaders of local churches (and to a lesser extent of organized religion) conform to the directions of the two mainstreams. Heavy viewers of religious television programs express greater confidence in both than do light viewers. Those who watch general television express lower confidence levels regardless of the amount of viewing.

The contrast between religious and general television is evident in the likelihood of reading the Bible, an activity noted or shown in nine out of ten religious programs but virtually absent from commercial programs. Predictably, viewing religious programs tends to contribute to the likelihood of Bible reading while general television viewing correlates with non-reading.

Equally apparent is the tug and pull of the two mainstreams in cultivating a "religious experience." Viewers of religious television are of course more likely to report having had such an experience, by margins of about a third of all groups of light versus heavy viewers of religious programs. But heavy viewers of general programs are <u>less</u> likely than light viewers to have had a "religious experience."

Now we come to those features of religion that seem to find some resonance on both religious and general television. Praying "frequently" to God, taking the Bible literally, believing that "Jesus Christ will come again," and agreeing that miracles do occur today are of course sentiments cultivated by viewing religious

programs. However, they are not necessarily countered by commercial television and, for some groups, they become even more likely. For example, college-educated respondents, who are, on the whole, less likely than most other groups to pray frequently and to believe in the literal interpretation of the Bible or in miracles and the Second Coming are significantly more likely as heavy viewers to do so by margins of about 7-9 percentage points difference between college-educated light and heavy viewers. For some groups, these religious beliefs may find supporting lessons in the world of general television. However, for matters of religious importance, experience, participation, and dollars, the churches' principal competition is not the television ministry but general television.

We have seen that the features that set the two mainstreams apart do not necessarily set them on a collision course. In some respects, religious television programs extend tendencies farther than general television can go, and in others general television shares certain features for certain groups with religious programs. A further examination of these two types of relationships made in the summary of our findings on social, political, and sexual attitudes.

Social, political, and sexual attitudes

The religious television mainstream tends to run conservative and restrictive rather than permissive. The general television

mainstream tends to run politically "moderate," also more restrictive than permissive, and populist but not puritanical.

Heavy viewers of religious programs are more likely than non-viewers to describe themselves as conservatives, oppose a nuclear freeze, favor tougher laws against pornography, and report voting in the last general election. Heavy viewers of general television tend to describe themselves as political moderates, are more likely to favor a nuclear freeze, are not as concerned with pornography (or, as we have seen before, with the "moral climate"), and are far less likely to say they voted in a general election. The coherent mobilizing power of religious television, rather than its reach or scope, represents its political clout.

The vigorous cultivation of traditional sexual values is one of the most distinctive features of religious programs, and especially of the television ministries. General television does not appear to cultivate as consistently, if at all, the traditional sexual values associated with religious program viewing. The pattern appears to be more that of mainstreaming, with older and younger groups of heavy viewers positioned closer to the middle (and to each other) than their light-viewing counterparts.

Similar patterns were found for conceptions of the role of women in the family and in society. The viewing of religious programs supports belief in more traditional female roles. The viewing of general television suggests more of a mainstreaming pattern, in that it tends to cultivate a less traditional concept among older and a more traditional concept among younger heavy viewers.

The "electronic church," with its prominent television ministries, expresses a fairly stable, coherent, and conservative world view that serves more to rally believers than to recruit or convert others. Its regular viewers tend to be older, more "fundamentalist," and lower in income and education than non-viewers. They are greatly dissatisfied with what they perceive to be contemporary morality and interested in spreading the Gospel more than social justice. For them, watching religious television is an expression of belief and an experience that is not inconsistent with, and may even complement, local church attendance and contributions.

The world presented and the world view expressed on the television ministries may compete more with commercial television than with mainline religion. Television itself may cater to needs that religion used to satisfy while presenting attractions and gratifications that counter some religious beliefs and absorb others in its broad and popular mainstream.

II

THE PROJECT AND THE RESEARCH BACKGROUND

The decade since the mid-1970s marked the rise of independent religious television programs and ministries in social and political as well as religious significance. The research reported in these pages was designed to study systematically the content, viewers, and functions of these programs and ministries in the context of more traditional religious broadcasting and of general television viewing in the United States.

The project addressed the objectives set forth in a letter of solicitation for proposals that came from an ad hoc committee of religious leaders "representing evangelical, mainline, protestant, ecumenical, Roman Catholic, and 'electronic church' religious groups." (Subsequently it was decided that the term "television ministry" would be used to characterize programs and denominations whose primary existence and functions were in and through television, as distinct from denominations traditionally existing and functioning primarily through local churches.) The solicitation described the objectives of the research in these terms:

> The rapid spread of television in the United States has coincided with great ferment, change, and critical transformations in religious life. Recent studies show that television viewing generally has an inverse correlation with religious beliefs and practice. On the other hand, television can also extend religion into new areas. Does religious television bypass, reinforce, displace, supplement, replace, or can it perhaps incorporate, the church? Does it satisfy or counter religious needs and values? Does it undermine or support church participation?

What religious approaches to and through television achieve what types of results? With what groups or people? In general, what opportunities and risks are involved in relating a system of religious beliefs and practices to the television systems which now pervade the cultural life of our society?

We seek proposals for research that will address these questions in four general areas. These are (1) the nature of the viewing audiences; (2) the content of religious television; (3) the appeals and satisfactions (uses and functions) of religious programs; and (4) behavioral effects of various levels of religious and general television viewing.

1. The Project

The Annenberg School of Communications' Cultural Indicators Project team and The Gallup Organization were commissioned to conduct the investigation. The project began in July 1982 and concluded in March 1984. The Annenberg School team conducted a study of the content of religious programs and two regional surveys assessing the ideas and behaviors viewing tends to cultivate in its audiences. The Annenberg School surveys also included an examination of viewing different types of religious programs and the responses (including financial contributions) to the programs. The Gallup study contributed a similarly detailed national survey of viewing and attitudes. The body of this report includes findings from both studies.

The total project consisted, then, of the analysis of a sample of religious programs, and the surveys and cultivation analysis of viewers' beliefs and behaviors. The sample was made up of 101 national and local religious programs broadcast in Atlanta and Philadelphia over a three-week period in 1982. The analysis

employed a recording instrument that isolated aggregate religious themes and patterns. The analysis focused upon two basic groups of religious programs -- those broadcast by the independent television ministries and those broadcast by the more conventional (mainline and other) churches.

The cultivation analysis survey was designed by researchers at The Annenberg School and administered by Arbitron, Inc. The interview schedule reflected findings from the content analysis and was administered by telephone to 1,263 viewers and 1,339 non-viewers of religious programs in the Northeast and Southeast. (The same number of people (N=1,301) were interviewed in each region, a total of 2,602.) Respondents, both viewers and non-viewers, were selected from Arbitron's archives of television viewing diaries.

The national personal interview survey was administered by The Gallup Organization as part of two successive Omnibus Surveys. Respondents included 954 viewers and 1,049 non-viewers of religious programs.

We first discuss relevant findings from previous studies and then (in Section III) describe the methodology of this project. Following that, in Section IV, findings of the studies are presented in three parts:

(1) "The World of Religious Television" is an account of the content analysis of programs.

(2) "The Viewers of Religious Television" discusses the audience for religious television and the preferences, motivations, responses, and other characteristics of viewers.

(3) "The Lessons of Religious Television" reports the findings of the cultivation analysis and the Gallup survey that pertain to religious, social, political, sexual, and other ideas and behavior that viewing tends to cultivate.

Most of the basic data appear in tabulations included in the Appendix corresponding to the section in which the findings are reported. All references to numbered tables refer to the Appendix.

2. The Background: Previous Studies

The content and effects of religious broadcasting have been the subject of a great deal of controversy and speculation but surprisingly little research. Furthermore, the major research efforts pre-date the rise of the "electronic church," which is the focus of the present study.

The landmark study of religious broadcasting was published in 1955 by Parker, Barry, and Smythe as The Television-Radio Audience and Religion. This study analyzed 3,559 households, selected to be representative of one Northeastern city. Virtually all respondents (98.4 percent) identified themselves as at least nominally religious. Parker et al. found that the specific religious affiliation of households was a weak but statistically significant

determinant of exposure to religious broadcasting. Catholics were slightly more likely to watch religious programs than Protestants, although the authors surmised that this was due to the prominence of one Catholic program, Bishop Fulton Sheen's. This assumption has been supported in a more recent study by Johnstone (1972), who found that Catholics comprise a smaller proportion of the audience for religious radio.

Parker et al. also found that the major demographic factors characteristic of membership in the religious audience were lower social class and more frequent church attendance.

Studies by Casmir (1957), Johnstone (1972), and Gantz and Kowalewski (1979) have supported the basic finding of Parker et al. that the audience for religious programs is both large (nearly 50 percent of the total samples in all these studies reported being at least "occasional" listeners or viewers) and made up of those who already identify with some religious denomination or affiliation.

Johnstone (1972) found that older respondents were more likely than younger ones to listen to religious radio. He also found that more educated people were less likely to listen. Johnstone reported significantly higher rates of listening in rural areas and in geographic areas that have traditionally been more "religious." He concludes:

> Religious radio broadcasts appear to be quite unlikely to reach the non-Christian or minimally committed or involved Christian, the young, the highly-educated, and those of urban residence. (p. 98) An analysis of ratings data by

Hadden and Swann (1981) found similar viewing patterns for current religious television programs.

Gantz and Kowalewski (1979) studied viewers of "The 700 Club" program and potential viewers of programs that would be aired on its satellite network (the Christian Broadcasting Network, or CBN). They found that 49 percent of their sample reported regular viewing of religious programs. While there was no systematic relationship between measures of respondent satisfaction with conventional television and their interest in CBN programming, the authors did find an association between viewers' perception that there is "too much sex and violence on television" and their potential membership in the CBN audience.

Lester and Romjue (1981) conducted a study of members of the United Methodist Church in Alabama and found no evidence to support the contention that religious broadcasting either attracts large numbers of non-believers or adversely affects local churches by drawing away members or financial support.

Martin (1981), Horsfield (1984), and Hadden and Swann (1981) came to the conclusion that the actual audience for religious programming is smaller than had been previously claimed and that it is more homogeneous as well. These studies, however, cautioned against a conclusion that political, social, or religious institutional effects are insignificant merely because the audience may be smaller than had been believed. The mobilization of these viewers as voters, for instance, could have marked political ramifications, at least in some areas (Hadden and Swann 1981:165-166). Hadden and Swann further note that, although no clearly negative effects of the television ministries on the local church have been demonstrated, subtle and pervasive effects may nonetheless exist.

A detailed study of the audience for religious programs in a "Bible Belt" area, conducted by Stacey and Shupe (1982), found it to be older, less educated, lower income, female, and blue-collar. In other words, even in a geographic area where one might expect the natural constituency of the "electronic church" to include a wider range of viewers, this was not the case. Nor did Stacey and Shupe find any evidence to suggest that viewing religious programs had a negative effect on viewers' local church participation or contributions, or that large-scale political effects could be expected. They did find, however, that political conservatives were most likely to relate viewing religious programs to their support for religious activism.

A recent content analysis of religious television programs by Abelman and Neuendorf (1983) found that the characters in these programs do not differ demographically in important ways from the characters in television programs in general. Abelman and Neuendorf also found the themes of religious programs to be less controversial or politically charged than had been claimed.

Our research, reported in Section IV, found little to contradict the findings of previous research, with the possible exception of audience size. We did, however, find much that amplifies and specifies those findings and extends them into new areas.

III

METHODOLOGY

Our analysis of the "world" presented on religious television involved a systematic investigation of the messages embedded in the content of a sample of religious programs. The following description of the message system analysis explains sampling procedures and the method of coding and ascertaining reliable observations. The descriptions of the viewer survey and cultivation analysis include both the national (Gallup) and regional (Annenberg) studies. A test of "frequent viewing" data is discussed below in detail, and the strengths and limitations of the different samples and methods are noted.

III.1. Message System Analysis

The study of the content of religious television programs was the first task of this project. The instrument of analysis was developed in cooperation with the Steering Committee of the project. Subsequent tests of reliability reduced the items to be used in the report to those that could be reliably observed and coded (see Table III.1). Findings of the message system analysis were used in developing and interpreting the subsequent cultivation analysis.

Sample

The sample of programs is made up of two weeks of nationally syndicated and one week of local religious programming broadcast in Philadelphia or Atlanta. Religious programs were those identified by either Arbitron's Syndicated Program Analysis or TV Guide. Programs in the sample were videotaped over a three-week period in September and October of 1982. There were a total of 101 programs (75 hours); 68 (55.5 hours) were broadcast in both Philadelphia and Atlanta, 14 (7.5 hours) were broadcast only in Philadelphia, and 19 (12 hours) were broadcast only in Atlanta.

Coding and training procedures

A staff of 12 coders was hired and then trained over a four-week period to analyze this sample of religious programs. We began with several introductory sessions, devoted to item-by-item discussions of the recording instrument. The coders, paired into six teams, then proceeded to view and code ten training programs that had been previously coded by the supervisory staff. These training programs, selected to illustrate various aspects of the recording instrument, were graded in difficulty; the coder-pairs started with the simplest program and worked their way through those that were more difficult.

During both the training period and the actual coding of the sample, each coder-pair worked independently of all other pairs and returned one joint coding for each program. After each pair

completed coding a training program, they discussed their results with a member of the supervisory staff. When any difficulties encountered in the exercise had been resolved, the coder-pairs proceeded to code the next training program. The data generated by the coder-pairs on the ten training programs were subjected to a preliminary agreement analysis. On the basis of these results, instructions were further discussed and revised.

During both the training and data-collection phases, coder-pairs monitored their assigned videotaped programs as often as necessary, re-screening entire programs or portions of them as needed. All programs in the sample were independently coded by two separate coder-pairs to provide double-coded data for the reliability analysis.

Assessment of reliability

The purpose of reliability measures in content analysis is to ascertain the degree to which the data are consistent -- that is, to ensure that coders have applied the recording instrument in the same way. Inconsistencies in the data may result either from bias on the part of a coder or ambiguity in the coding instrument. Theoretically, both types of contamination can be corrected by refining the instrument, by intensifying coder training, or, as a last resort, by eliminating the unsalvageable variable or dismissing the incorrigible coders. Measures of reliability thus serve both as diagnostic tools in the confirmation of the recording instrument and as arbiters of the replicability of the procedure,

ensuring confidence in the final data. In this project, reliability measures served both of these functions. During the preliminary period of instrument revision and coder training, they were used to identify problem areas in the recording process; after all the data had been collected, the final measures computed on the entire body of double-coded data determined the acceptability of variables for the analysis and provided guidelines for their interpretation.

Simple measures of the percent of agreement between coders are inadequate indicators of reliabilty, since they fail to account for the amount of agreement expected by chance. Agreement due merely to chance gives no indication that the coders are actually using the recording instrument in the same way and can truly isolate a specific aspect of a phenomenon when it occurs. Reliability measures in the form of agreement coefficients, however, indicate the degree to which agreement among independent observers is greater than that which would be expected merely by chance. We use a family of agreement coefficients developed by Krippendorff (1970, 1980) that take the chance factor into account.

Five computational formulas are available for calculating the agreement coefficient. The variations are distinguished by a difference function, the form of which depends upon whether the variable is considered to constitute a nominal, ordinal, interval, bipolar, or ratio scale. Except for their respective scale-appropriate sensitivity to deviations from perfect agreement, the coefficients make the same basic assumptions as the prototype for nominal scales devised by Scott (1955). Thus, in the case of

the binary variable, all formulas yield identical results.

The coefficient of agreement takes the general form:

$$1 - \frac{\text{observed disagreement}}{\text{expected disagreement}}$$

Values for coefficients range from +1.00 when agreement is perfect to .00 when agreement is purely accidental (or perfectly random) to negative values when agreement is less than that expected due to chance. A coefficient of .50 indicates that performance is 50 percent above the level expected by chance. Because chance is taken into consideration, these coefficients generally give more conservative measures of reliability than simple percent-agreement measures. Items whose agreement coefficients were greater than .75 were accepted unconditionally; items with agreement coefficients between .50 and .74 were accepted conditionally. Data from content items with conditionally acceptable agreement coefficients should be interpreted cautiously.

Agreement coefficients for each item in the message system analysis are presented in Table III.1. Our desire to include as many topics and items as possible in the recording instrument led in many cases to rather detailed coding schemes. Consequently, a number of these items were so complex that coders could not agree on whether a topic had appeared or how it should be coded. We included all reasonable recodings of category schemes in the reliability analysis, but any content items that did not meet our reliability analysis standards were eliminated from all subsequent analyses. Overly complex recording schemes were not the sole reason for poor reliability, however. The distributions of

programs on revised category schemes indicated that many of them simply appeared very rarely in our sample of programs.

As a last check against deviant coding, reliability measures were computed for each coder-pair. There were no problems with any of the six coding teams, and the data from all coder-pairs were used to select the final sample.

Data selection and presentation of findings

The final data set for subsequent analysis was compiled from the full double-coded data base by randomly selecting one of the two codings for each program. The analysis uses a typology that divides the sample of 101 programs into three categories: independent television ministries, mainline church, and miscellaneous programs. The television ministries are further divided into the most prominent of these programs, as designated (using audience ratings) by Hadden and Swann (1981), and other programs.

Comparisons with prime-time dramatic programs

Data from our sample of religious programs are compared in this report with data on prime-time network dramatic programs and the characters who populate them. The data used in these analyses have been collected as part of Cultural Indicators, an ongoing project that has been examining trends in the content of dramatic television programs and viewer conceptions of social reality since

1969 (see Gerbner et al. 1980). These data were generated using methods similar to those described above, for 15 week-long annual samples of prime-time network dramatic programs. Comparative analyses focus upon 943 prime-time programs, over 4,000 major characters and over 10,000 minor characters. Here we present data on the 15-year sample of prime-time dramatic programming; previous analyses have revealed that there are no major differences from year to year in the distributions of the programs' themes and the demographics of their characters (Signorielli, Gross, and Morgan 1982; Signorielli 1982).

III.2. Viewer Surveys and Cultivation Analysis

The national survey

The interview schedule was designed by the Gallup staff in cooperation with the study's Steering Committee and administered to a representative sample of the adult population, age 18 and over, in May 1983. Two weeks later, data were collected from a supplementary nationally representative sample of viewers of religious television. Both studies were conducted in person by professional interviewers in accordance with standard Gallup Omnibus Survey sampling procedures and quality controls. A total of 954 viewers and 1,049 non-viewers were interviewed. Viewers, defined as those who had watched a religious program on television during the past 30 days, were oversampled at a ratio of two to one relative to their actual population incidence (see Appendix V).

The regional surveys

The cultivation analysis involved two regional surveys and extensive comparisons between different types of religious and general television viewing. The surveys were designed by researchers at The Annenberg School and conducted by telephone by Arbitron, Inc. Arbitron was selected to conduct the surveys because their archives of week-long television viewing diaries could be used to select known viewers of religious television programs.

Ten markets from the Northeast and Southeast defined by Arbitron as Areas of Dominant Influence (ADI) were surveyed. The five markets in the Northeast were Baltimore, Md., Hartford-New Haven, Ct., New York, N.Y., Philadelphia, Pa., and Pittsburgh, Pa.; the five markets in the Southeast were Atlanta, Ga., Birmingham, Al., Charlotte, N.C., Richmond, Va., and Nashville, Tn. The sample frame consisted of households in these two regions that returned a mail diary during either the November 1982 or July 1982 television survey periods.

Sample

A quota sample, with approximately half the respondents identified as viewers of religious programs, was drawn using the Arbitron television-viewing diary as the basis for selection. Religious programs were defined using the Arbitron Ratings' Syndicated Program Analysis and issues of TV Guide published during

the diary periods. Overall, 2,602 respondents (1,301 from the Northeast and 1,301 from the Southeast) completed interviews. (The refusal rate was 24 percent.) Viewers of religious programs (N=1,263) were defined as diary keepers who had indicated watching at least one quarter-hour of religious television during the diary period. Some diaries indicated more than one viewer of religious programs per household; interviews were conducted with a maximum of two viewers per household. Non-viewers of religious programs (N=1,339) were defined as the remaining diary keepers from the November 1982 period. A single individual was randomly selected from each household of non-viewers. All respondents were 18 years of age or older. Interviews were conducted, by telephone, between April 20 and May 10, 1983.

Interview schedule and measures of viewing

The interview schedule, designed in cooperation with the study's Steering Committee, took about 20 minutes to administer. It was made up of a diverse battery of 40 questions, including some relating to religion (beliefs, behaviors, monetary giving, experiences), social, moral, and political issues, and television viewing.

Television viewing questions included self-report measures of the viewing of both religious and general television programs. Respondents were asked whether they watched religious programs and, if so, how frequently and which specific programs. The general television viewing question asked respondents about how many hours

they watched television on an average day. Thus, there were two measures of both religious and general television viewing: the amount of viewing reported by respondents at the time of the interview and the amount of viewing respondents noted in the week-long diary kept in either July or November of 1982.

The distribution of the entire sample of respondents on these two measures of viewing religious television is presented in Table III.2. The sample was drawn to equalize the numbers of viewers and non-viewers of religious programs based on diary reports: 48.7 percent of the respondents were viewers and 51.3 percent were non-viewers. According to the survey, however, 60.8 percent of the respondents were viewers of religious television programs and 39.2 percent were non-viewers. About two-thirds (64.9 percent) of the sample gave consistent responses: 37.2 percent both recorded viewing religious programs in their diaries and indicated that they watched religious programs at the time of the interview, while 27.7 percent were non-viewers of religious programs on both measures. The largest discrepant group (almost one-quarter of the sample) told the interviewer that they currently watched religious television programs, although their earlier diaries placed them in the non-viewer group.

This discrepancy should not be seen as particularly problematic, for a number of reasons. First, many viewers of religious programs might not watch every week. Second, diary keeping is itself subject to various sources of error. Finally, some of the programs categorized by respondents as religious during the interview were not religious television programs as defined in

this research; for example, there is reason to believe that some respondents considered movies such as The Robe or The Ten Commandments as religious television programs.

Only about one out of ten respondents told the interviewer that they did not watch religious television programs, even though their diary indicated that they did. The relative infrequency of this type of inconsistency suggests that the reliability of the measures is not greatly threatened. Moreover, some of the inconsistency may reflect genuine change, inasmuch as six to nine months elapsed between the two measures. In sum, our decision to sample on the basis of diary reports served well its purpose of providing a sufficiently broad base from which to interview a large number of viewers of religious television programs.

Confirming "frequent viewers"

Most of the analyses in this report are based upon respondents' interview reports of viewing religious and general television, because this is the more recent of the viewing measures and it parallels measures used in previous research. For this analysis we further divided respondents into light (those who watch less) and heavy (those who watch more) viewers. In regard to religious program viewing, light viewers were those who reported that they did not watch or rarely watched these programs, and heavy viewers were those who said they sometimes or frequently watch religious television programs. Light viewers (N=1,273) made up 50.6 percent of the sample and heavy viewers (N=1,245) made up 49.4

percent of the sample. In regard to general television viewing, light viewers (N=1,660; 63.8 percent) were those who viewed three hours or less per day, while heavy viewers (N=942; 36.2 percent) were those who viewed four hours or more.

We used the diary quarter-hour viewing reports to determine how much time respondents actually spent watching religious programming. Including only those respondents selected as viewers of religious television on the basis of their diaries, we found that light viewers of religious programs (based on the interview) watch about 50 minutes of religious programming each week, while heavy viewers average about 90 minutes per week.

Potential differences between the diaries and interviews were further explored. Of those who said in the interview that they watch religious programs "frequently," 22 percent (N=131) in fact recorded no viewing of religious programs in their diaries. By eliminating those 22 percent, we can isolate a group of "confirmed frequent" viewers (N=454). As can be seen in Tables III.3 and III.4, these "confirmed frequent" viewers differ in only a few respects from all respondents who said they viewed religious television. The "confirmed frequent" viewers group includes more Charismatic Christians and slightly fewer Catholics than the viewer group as a whole (Table III.3). The "confirmed frequent" viewer group also has more than its share of less educated, non-white, over 50, and lower-income respondents (Table III.4). In these and other respects, "confirmed frequent" viewers merely extend the differences between all viewers and non-viewers of religious programs.

The sample was also almost evenly split between the two regions. Table III.6 indicates that, based on the interview, there were more viewers of religious programs in the Southeast and more non-viewers of religious programs in the Northeast. Respondents in the Southeast were a little more evenly divided between the five cities, with Charlotte providing more respondents than the others. The distribution of respondents in the Northeast was less even: almost 20 percent of the sample came from Pittsburgh and only 4 percent from the Hartford-New Haven area. Within all cities except Hartford, however, the distribution of viewers and non-viewers of religious programs was quite similar.

Comparison of surveys

As both the national and regional surveys used quota samples, some limitations must be taken into consideration when interpreting the results. The findings based on the regional sample apply to people living in the Northeast and Southeast sections of the United States. The oversampling of viewers of religious programs restricts the kinds of generalizations and projections that can be made from these data.

The differences between the national and regional samples can be seen by referring to the overall categories of viewing and non-viewing in Tables III.3 and III.4. Although there are some differences in terms of denominations (e.g., the proportion of Catholic viewers and non-viewers), the two samples provide remarkably similar profiles of viewers and non-viewers along

demographic dimensions. Where comparable measures of background factors are available for both samples, the resulting relationships reveal virtually no differences, although some patterns are somewhat more marked within the regional samples.

IV

THE WORLD, THE VIEWERS, AND THE LESSONS OF RELIGIOUS TELEVISION

We present in this section the results of the analysis of the content, the audiences, and the lessons that religious television programs cultivate in those who view them. Whenever possible, these findings are presented in the comparative context of general television content and viewing. The focus is on the role of the television ministries within religious television and on the functions of religious television, compared to those of general television, in the lives of viewers.

IV. 1. The World of Religious Television

The messages of religious (and all) television are conveyed by the types and formats of programs, the issues presented in the programs, the responses suggested by the programs, the characteristics of participants in the programs, and the themes and problems addressed on the programs. We will now examine each of these elements of program content.

Types and formats of programs

The sample of religious television programs included those identified as "religious" by Arbitron's Syndicated Program Analysis or TV Guide. The world of religious television programs is divided into those produced by the ministries that exist mainly in and

through television, and those produced by more traditional church groups. In this sample, all programs of the latter group were produced by "mainline" churches as identified by membership in the "INET" organization -- Southern Baptist Convention, Roman Catholic, and National Council of Churches groups. Before we consider the issues, actions, and characterizations of the two "worlds," let us look at the numbers, types, and formats of programs in these catagories.

In the table that follows, the television ministry programs were further divided into those that Hadden and Swann (1981: 17-45) consider the most prominent, based upon audience ratings (labeled "prominent"), and the others. Together, these represent the bulk (77.2 percent) of the programs in our sample, as only 15 mainline programs were broadcast during the period of the study. Eight programs (labeled "miscellaneous") did not fit any of these categories.

Types of Programs

	N	%
All Programs	101	100.0
Television Ministries	78	77.2
Prominent	38	37.6
Other	40	39.6
Mainline Church	15	14.9
Miscellaneous	8	7.9

Table IV.1.1 examines various categories of programs according to whether they were broadcast only in Philadelphia, only in

Atlanta, or in both cities. Most of the syndicated and television ministry programs were broadcast in both regions. Atlanta has somewhat more local and mainline church programs than Philadelphia. None of the "miscellaneous" programs appeared in both areas.

In the table below we see that two-thirds of the programs were broadcast on weekends. The television ministries comprise 66 percent of the weekend programs and all of the programs broadcast during the week; furthermore, 82 percent of these latter programs are "prominent" ones. The "other" television ministries are concentrated on weekends, along with mainline church and miscellaneous programs.

Time of Broadcast

	Weekend			Daily		
	N	Col%	(Row%)	N	Col%	(Row%)
All Programs	67	100.0	(66.3)	34	100.0	(33.7)
TV Ministries	44	65.7	(56.4)	34	100.0	(43.6)
Prominent	10	14.9	(26.3)	28	82.4	(73.7)
Other	34	50.7	(85.0)	6	17.6	(15.0)
Mainline Church	15	22.4	(100.0)	0	0.0	(0.0)
Miscellaneous	8	11.9	(100.0)	0	0.0	(0.0)

We also examined the distribution of programs by whether they were syndicated (specified in Arbitron's Syndicated Program Analysis) or local (specified in TV Guide as "religious" and not a syndicated program). As seen in the table below, 86 programs (85.1 percent) were syndicated and 15 programs (14.9 percent) were local. All of the "electronic church" programs were syndicated and about

half of the local programs were provided by mainline church groups.

	Syndicated		Local	
	N	%	N	%
All Programs	86	85.1	15	14.9
Television Ministries	78	100.0	0	0.0
Prominent	38	100.0	0	0.0
Other	40	100.0	0	0.0
Mainline Church	8	53.3	7	46.7
Miscellaneous	0	0.0	8	100.0

Finally, 11 programs (10.9 percent) in the sample were dramatic. While all of them were syndicated, half were produced by mainline church groups and half were produced by the television ministries. Syndicated dramas make up one-third of mainline church programs and 15 percent of the other television ministries.

Table IV.1.2 examines elements of program style -- format, setting, and audience. The two primary formats of religious programs are church services/revivals and talk/interviews. The most prominent television ministries are more likely to be talk shows (53 percent) than church services (29 percent), while the mainline religious television programs are more likely to be church services/revivals (53 percent) than talk shows (7 percent). None of the mainline church programs, as compared to 14 percent of the television ministries, was in the form of a Bible lesson.

Overall, 70 percent of the programs were broadcast from a studio, 16 percent were broadcast on location, and 12 percent were broadcast from a church. The television ministries were less

likely to be broadcast from a church (8 percent) and more likely to be broadcast from a studio (72 percent). By comparison, a third of all mainline church programs were broadcast from a church.

Table IV.1.2 also shows that an audience, usually actively taking part in the program, was seen in about half of all programs. The most prominent television ministries are by far the most likely to feature an audience. In terms of the time of day the programs in our sample were broadcast, three-quarters were seen in the morning and a quarter in the evening. Only mainline church programs were broadcast between noon and six p.m.

Table IV.1.3 examines the role of music and prayers in religious television programs. Music was part of most of these programs: about seven out of ten had some type of music (hymn singing, a soloist, organ playing, choir, etc.). The less prominent television ministries and the miscellaneous programs were relatively less likely to feature music. Soloists were more prevalent in the prominent television ministries, while organ music and especially hymn singing/playing appeared more frequently on mainline church programs. Overall, at least one prayer was said in more than half of all programs. Prayers were less common in miscellaneous programs. Those mainline church programs that included prayers said about five per program, while the television ministries that included prayers said about two per program.

Religious issues

Table IV.1.4 examines the appearance and nature of some critical religious and theological issues in these programs. Some reference to the Bible was made in nine out of ten programs. Mainline church programs were a little less likely than the television ministries to make biblical references, even though such references were found in three-quarters of these programs. Somewhat surprisingly, other religious and theological issues were only infrequently raised. The devil was mentioned as "real" in about one-third of all programs and, as with the Bible, less frequently in mainline church programs. Hell and the Second Coming were each mentioned in one-quarter of all programs, with the television ministries a little more likely to mention Hell than mainline church programs. Israel received some mention in about three out of ten programs in the entire sample but in half of the most prominent television ministries. Overall, few mentions of Israel referred to either current conflicts or interpretations of biblical prophecies. Similar distributions were found for controversy between Christians, an issue raised most often in the most prominent television ministries. Secular humanism, liberation theology, the charismatic movement, and healing were mentioned in relatively few programs in any category.

As seen below, a little more than one-quarter of all programs mentioned local churches; only 13 percent urged viewers to attend services at their local churches. Surprisingly, television

ministries were more likely than mainline churches to mention local churches and almost as likely to urge viewers to attend.

References to Local Churches

	Mentioned %	Urged to Go %
All Programs	27.7	12.9
Television Ministries	26.9	11.5
Prominent	26.3	10.5
Other	27.5	12.5
Mainline Church	20.0	13.3
Miscellaneous	50.0	25.0

Solicitations and offerings

One of the major areas of interest in our analysis was the types of solicitations for financial support made during these programs. Overall, as seen in Table IV.1.5, half of the sample of programs made some explicit request for money. The television ministries were considerably more likely than mainline church programs to make such requests: 55 percent of the former, compared to 20 percent of the latter, requested funds. The most prominent television ministries were the most likely group of programs to make requests for money (63 percent), and these requests were likely to be numerous -- four out of ten of these programs made three or more requests during the course of the program. Generally, when programs requested money, viewers were told why the money was needed. Funds were usually solicited, especially on the

most prominent television ministries, to spread the Gospel or to purchase airtime.

Table IV.1.5 also reveals that specific amounts of money were not usually requested -- only 12 percent of the programs gave explicit guidelines for donations. Among programs making specific requests, the average request was $83 for the most prominent television ministries and $42 for the other television ministries. The most prominent television ministries generally requested more money than the other types of programs; their average minimum request was $31 and their average maximum request was about $600. No mainline church program asked for a specific amount of money.

Table IV.1.6 presents the types of items offered for sale or as gifts by religious television programs. Magazines/newsletters and display items were offered very infrequently, while tapes, records, and books were offered somewhat more frequently. The television ministries and miscellaneous programs were somewhat more likely than the mainline church programs to offer these types of items as premiums for donations.

Table IV.1.7 examines mechanisms of, and the reasons suggested for, viewers' responses to the religious television programs. The most frequently provided means of response were phone numbers mentioned and/or shown on-screen. Phone numbers for viewers to call appeared in three-quarters of the most prominent television ministries but in only a fifth of the mainline church programs. When phone numbers were given, they usually were for either long-distance calls or for both long distance and local numbers. Toll-free "800" numbers appeared rather infrequently -- in only 10

percent of the television ministries and in only one of the 15 mainline church programs. Some reason for viewers to contact the program was given about three-quarters of the time. Incentives to respond most often involved requests for prayers, free gifts, and donations, and were most often found in the television ministries, especially the most prominent. Auxiliary activities such as revivals, crusades, and seminars were rarely promoted. About one-quarter of the television ministries made such promotions; no mainline church program promoted these types of activities.

Personal problems

We were also concerned with whether or not personal problems and ailments were discussed on these programs and the kinds of solutions (if any) that were offered for them. Overall, as seen in Table IV.1.8, personal problems and ailments were mentioned in three-quarters of the programs; they were especially prevalent in the most prominent television ministries, over 60 percent of which mentioned three or more ailments/problems. The most frequently mentioned problems were family tensions (41 percent of the sample), financial problems (38 percent), life-threatening health problems (30 percent), unemployment (27 percent), and physical handicaps (24 percent). Alcoholism and drug addiction were each mentioned in fewer than two programs out of ten; "thoughts of suicide," mentioned in the least number of programs, still appeared in one out of ten. While all these problems were more likely to be mentioned on the most prominent television ministries, they were

also mentioned somewhat frequently in the mainline church programs. The solutions offered for the viewers' problems were usually spiritual in nature. Only one specific cure for ailments could be reliably coded -- making a financial contribution to the program. This was suggested in one-quarter of the most prominent television ministries but never in mainline church programs.

Social, moral, and political issues

The analysis also focused upon social, moral, and political issues, as seen in Table IV.1.9. A number of sexually related topics were found, especially in the most prominent television ministries. Abortion, the new morality, sexual deviancy, pornography, and homosexuality were mentioned (always negatively) in about 10 to 20 percent of these programs. They rarely, if ever, were mentioned on mainline church programs. Drug use was also discussed, always negatively and somewhat frequently; it was mentioned in about a third of the most prominent television ministries.

About one-fifth of the most prominent television ministries, compared to one of the 15 mainline church programs, discussed prayer in public schools, always in a tolerant or approving way. War was mentioned in less than 20 percent of all programs and in a third of the mainline church programs. Violence in family life was mentioned in about 10 percent and sinful sexual behavior in about 25 percent of the programs in all categories. War, violence in family life, welfare, and the environmental movement were mentioned

more often in mainline church programs than in television ministry programs; all other issues (again, especially those relating to sex) appeared in many more of the television ministry programs.

A related area of investigation was social institutions. The government and politicians were mentioned by over a third of all religious television programs, usually in a neutral way. Business interests were mentioned by a quarter and the military by about 15 percent of the programs. Church-related schools and education were mentioned in about 13 percent of the programs; non-parochial education was mentioned in about 5 percent of the programs and was usually criticized. In general, these issues appeared with equal frequency in both mainline church programs and the television ministries.

Themes and aspects of life

The monitoring of prime-time television since 1967 as part of the Cultural Indicators project (see Gerbner et al. 1980 and Section III) has involved the recording of a number of themes and aspects of life. These themes and aspects of life were therefore included in the analysis of the religious program sample, and those that occurred frequently enough to be observed reliably are presented in Table IV.1.10. The table reveals both similarities and differences between religious and general (prime-time dramatic) programs. Home and family themes appear in about eight out of ten of both religious and prime-time programs. Politics was discussed in about half of the prominent television ministry and mainline

church programs but in only one-third of prime-time programs. Crime was featured in six out of ten prime-time dramatic programs and mentioned in only one-third of mainline and less than half of television ministry programs.

The themes of mass communications and schools each appear somewhat more frequently in our sample of religious programs than in the sample of prime-time dramatic programs. The supernatural, including miracles, the action of supernatural forces, superstition, and mystical matters, appears much more frequently in the sample of religious programs (60 percent) than in the sample of dramatic programs (17 percent).

Gender, age, and race of participants in the programs

An important part of the message system analysis is the examination of the types of people shown as participants in religious television programs. Two types of participants were isolated -- those in major roles and those in minor roles. In both the religious and prime-time dramatic program samples, those in major roles are central to the program; in essence, the program (whether a religious program or prime-time program) would be substantially changed if these people (or characters) were eliminated. Those in minor roles, on the other hand, were incidental to these programs; the programs would be the same whether these people were there or not.

Table IV.1.11 presents the distribution by status and sex of the participants in religious and in prime-time dramatic programs,

using data from the Cultural Indicators Project (Gerbner et al. 1980). We find that, as is the case in prime-time dramatic programs, men outnumber women in all types of religious programs. The imbalance is most pronounced on the prominent television ministries. Although somewhat more women appeared as minor participants than as major participants in these programs, women were nevertheless outnumbered by men almost two to one as minor participants and about five to one as major participants. In prime-time drama, men outnumbered women three to one as both major and minor characters.

There was one group of religious programs in which women appeared somewhat more frequently and another in which they appeared less frequently than these divisions suggest. As the following table shows, women were best (though still infrequently) represented in syndicated dramatic programs and least represented in local weekend programs, about half of which were mainline church programs.

Men and Women in Syndicated and Local Religious Programs

	Local Weekend	Syndicated Weekend	Syndicated Daily	Syndicated Drama
N =	60	184	403	105
	%	%	%	%
Men	73.3	66.3	67.2	58.1
Women	26.7	33.7	32.8	41.9

Table IV.1.12 compares the mean chronological ages, "social ages," racial groups, and ethnic group (Hispanic) of participants in religious programs and the major characters in prime-time drama. There are many basic similarities. Overall, prime-time characters are somewhat younger than the people on religious programs; and women, in both genres, are younger than men. An examination of the social age reveals that, although the majority of characters and participants fall into the "settled adults" category, proportionately more women than men are categorized as young adults. In this age-role, the male-female distribution, especially in religious programs, is a little less one-sided: women are 46 percent of the young adults in religious programs and 39 percent of the young adults in dramatic programs.

Those at either end of the life cycle are strikingly under-represented in both religious and prime-time television. Children and adolescents, who comprise about a third of the U.S. population, account for only 4 percent of the people in the religious television world and 6 percent of the characters in prime-time drama. The elderly, who comprise 12 percent of the U.S. population, make up little more than 3 percent of either sample. In religious programs the number of elderly men and women is about equal (12 women and 11 men), while in prime-time drama elderly men outnumber elderly women by a ratio of three to one.

The racial distribution reveals that, in both genres, non-whites are somewhat under-represented in relation to their numbers in the U.S. population; they make up about 11 percent of participants in religious programs and about 10 percent of

characters in prime-time drama. There are also fewer non-white women than non-white men; in religious programs about 12 percent of the men and 10 percent of the women are non-whites, and in dramatic programs, 9 percent of the men and 7 percent of the women are non-whites. Most of the non-whites in both religious television and prime-time drama are blacks; Orientals make up only 1 percent of both samples and people of other races (e.g., Native Americans) are non-existent. Hispanics also appear rarely in both types of programs; they make up only 1.5 percent of those in religious programs and 2 percent of characters in dramatic programs.

Table IV.1.13 examines the social ages, racial groups, and ethnic groups of all participants, and participants in major roles only, in the four groups of religious programs. Very few differences are revealed. Most of the participants are settled adults and there are proportionately more young and old women than young and old men. Children are found primarily in the most prominent television ministries; none are found in a major role. The proportion of elderly participants is somewhat greater in mainline church and the miscellaneous group of programs, but accounts for only 5 percent of the participants in either group. Racial minorities rarely appear, especially in the mainline church programs, and Hispanics are practically invisible. The patterns for participants in major roles were similar: settled adults predominate, black men are somewhat under-represented, compared to their numbers in the U.S. population, and other racial minorities, black women, and Hispanics are totally absent.

Occupations

Table IV. 1. 14 examines the occupations of participants in religious programs and characters in prime-time drama. Because the occupation of participants in major roles in religious programs could be determined more precisely than the occupation of those in minor roles, this information is presented separately. In both religious programs and in prime-time drama, occupation-related information was codable less frequently for women than for men. Among major participants in religious programs, information on occupations could not be determined for 25 percent of the women but only 2 percent of the men.

One basic and expected difference between religious and prime-time programming is the greater proportion of clergy among the participants in religious programs. The clergy are, however, practically all men -- one out of five men in all religious programs and almost six out of ten men in major religious program roles are categorized as clergy. By comparison, only 3 percent of all women in religious programs and 4 percent of those in its major roles are members of the clergy. In prime-time drama, the clergy are rarely portrayed, comprising less than one percent of the major characters analyzed over a nine-year period. By contrast, other professionals are generally over-represented on prime-time drama compared to their actual numbers.

One of the largest occupational categories in prime-time drama is police-related work (19 percent of the men and 5 percent of the women); on religious programs, only 1 percent of the men and no

women are so employed. Similarly, criminals appear often in prime-time drama but rarely in religious programs. Finally, in both prime-time drama and religious programs, blue-collar workers, the unemployed, the retired, and housewives are practically invisible.

As can be seen in Table IV.1.15, the participants in the four groups of religious programs do not differ considerably in regard to their occupations; professionals and other white-collar workers predominate. Again, while there are a large number of clergy, very few are women -- only 2 percent of the women in the television ministries and none of the women in mainline church programs are members of the clergy.

Marriage and family life

Table IV.1.16 focuses upon marriage and family life in religious programming and prime-time drama; here there are greater differences between the two than in the demographic areas just discussed. The marital status of more than half of the men and almost half of the women on religious programs could not be determined; by comparison, this information was not codable for only a third of the men and a tenth of the women in prime-time drama. Of those for whom this information was available, proportionately more people on religious programs than those in prime-time drama are married (31 percent of the men and 41 percent of the women on religious programs compared to 17 percent of the men and 25 percent of the women in prime time) and fewer of those

on religious programs (11 percent) than on prime-time programs (44 percent) are explicitly said to be not married. Family life is presented as important for proportionately more prime-time characters than participants on religious programs. Finally, proportionately more characters in prime-time programs than people on religious programs have children, although the differences are rather small.

Table IV.1.17 examines marital and family status for participants (overall and those in major roles) in the four groups of religious programs, revealing very few differences. Although participants in the most prominent television ministries and in mainline church programs are somewhat less likely to be married than participants in the other television ministries and in the miscellaneous group of programs, about the same proportion of participants in these four groups of programs have children and explicitly express the importance of family life. Participants in major roles are somewhat more likely to be married, have children, and express the importance of family life.

Role and religious experiences

Table IV.1.18 presents the status of participants (all and those in major roles) in religious programs. Among all participants the largest category is people in documentaries; they make up 39 percent of all participants in the entire sample, although all play minor roles. They comprise over half of the participants in the most prominent television ministries and about

a quarter of the participants in mainline church programs. Although there are more men than women within this group, a greater proportion of all the women than all the men are people in documentaries. The rest of the participants are somewhat evenly dispersed among the other categories: about one in ten are preachers/clergy, guests, audience members, or hosts/co-hosts. The group of "other" television ministries and the group of miscellaneous programs have the greatest proportion of participants in the role of audience member. The distributions are somewhat different among participants who play major roles. Preachers/clergy form a large proportion of the men in all four groups of programs. There are very few women preachers on any of these programs (in either major or minor roles). Hosts/co-hosts predominate among major participants in the most prominent television ministries, while dramatic characters make up a large proportion of the participants in mainline church programs.

Table IV.1.19 examines the participants' religious affiliations and whether they quote the Bible, have been saved, make a public testimony, or have had a conversion experience. In each of the four groups of programs, religious affiliation is more likely to be stated among participants in major roles than among all participants. Participants are most likely to call themselves Christians in all of the programs and particularly in the television ministries and the group of miscellaneous programs. On mainline church programs, while almost 30 percent of participants call themselves Christians, 15 percent of the participants call themselves Protestants. Catholics rarely appear (only 2 percent of

all participants and 6 percent of the participants in major roles); they are much more likely to appear in the group of eight miscellaneous programs and they rarely appear on the television ministries.

Most participants do not make a public testimony of their faith, nor do they discuss whether they have had a conversion experience. Such information was a little more likely to be given by participants in the group of miscellaneous programs. While very few participants mention that they have been saved (none in mainline programs), those who have state they have been saved for ten or more years. Participants in major roles did not differ from all participants in these items.

In regard to quoting the Bible, Table IV.1.19 shows some very interesting differences between all participants and those in major roles, especially between men and women. Among all participants, about two out of ten quote the Bible; among participants in major roles, more than seven out of ten quote the Bible. In all cases, men are much more likely than women to quote the Bible. The sex difference is especially noteworthy: almost eight out of ten men in major roles but only one-third of women in major roles quote the Bible. Among all participants, almost a quarter of the men but less than one out of ten women quote the Bible.

Ailments

Our investigation was also concerned with the notion of healing (Table IV.1.20) and with whether or not the participants

revealed that they suffered from any particular ailment or problem (Table IV.1.21). In this sample, these issues rarely were addressed by the participants, especially those in major roles. Only 1 percent of the participants either claimed to be healers or were actually shown healing, and only 5 percent of the participants either claimed to have been healed or actually were healed on these programs. All healers were in major roles, while all recipients of the healing were in minor roles and most were women. Healing was discussed or took place primarily in the "other" television ministries and in the group of miscellaneous programs. Healing was never mentioned in mainline church programs.

Despite the large number of programs mentioning physical ailments (see Table IV.1.8), only about 14 percent of all participants noted that they personally suffered from specific ailments or had specific problems. Women (about 20 percent) were more likely to suffer from ailments than men (10 percent). Sufferers were equally likely to appear in all four groups of programs. The most frequently mentioned ailment was family tension; physical illnesses and physical handicaps were much less likely to be mentioned than stress-related ailments. Although the most prominent television ministries were seen above to be more likely to mention physical ailments, participants in these programs are by far the least likely to be shown to have such problems.

Summary

In general, we found that the television ministries were a little more likely than mainline church programs to ask their viewers for money; these results must be interpreted cautiously, however, because of the small number (15) of mainline church programs. The most prominent television ministries were also more likely than the other programs to make numerous requests for money and they also asked for greater amounts.

Although social, moral, and political issues were discussed by both the television ministries and the mainline church programs, the most prominent of the television ministries were a more likely than the other groups to focus on these issues. Religious and theological issues, discussed with no great frequency, were a little more likely to be discussed on the most prominent television ministries.

There are several important findings concerning the participants in these programs. First, men outnumbered women by a considerable margin in all religious programs. In this and several other respects, the people who inhabit the world of religious television are very similar to the characters who populate the world of prime-time drama. Women were generally younger than the men and often found in a young adult rather than a settled adult role. Minorities, especially minority women and all Hispanics, were under-represented in these programs.

Women in these programs, however, were not usually housewives. About half of those in major roles and one-fifth of all women

participants were professionals. Women rarely, if ever, appeared in the role of clergy and almost never quoted the Bible. They were, however, a little more likely to have some type of physical contact with other participants and were a little more likely to suffer from personal problems or physical ailments. Overall, the women in religious programs, much like those in prime-time drama, have very little authority and power. The men constituted the clergy, quoted the Bible, and did not suffer from as many ailments and/or personal problems as the women.

In conclusion, religious programming, whether broadcast by the mainline churches or by religious groups whose chief concern is broadcasting, falls into a number of discernible patterns. The most prominent television ministries ask for more money and are somewhat more likely to discuss social issues. Men are in charge on all religious programs, while women are seen less often and are usually presented in stereotyped and traditional ways.

IV. 2. Viewers of Religious Television

How many and who are the viewers of religious programs? Where are they located in the spectrum of religious "fundamentalism" and what types of programs do they watch? How does their pattern of religious activity relate to their viewing of religious programs? Does such viewing add to or detract from church attendance and contributions? Does cable television have an impact on religious viewing? These and related questions are addressed in this part of the findings.

The size of the audience

Much has been said and written about the size of the audience for religious programs. Some statements reported in the press have claimed audiences of 130 million or more. Armstrong (1979), extrapolating from Johnstone's (1972) study, suggested that the audience for both religious television and religious radio programs was over 47 percent of the American adult television audience, which would be nearly 100 million viewers. Other voices have been more conservative. Nielsen and Arbitron, the leading audience ratings services, have reported smaller audiences, though their figures refer only to syndicated religious television programs. For instance, ratings data reported in the Philadelphia Inquirer (February 5, 1984, p. 3-G) suggest that the total audience for religious television programs nationwide is no more than 23 million.

There are a number of reasons that all estimates of total religious viewing must be extrapolations. As noted above, ratings data, which are presumably the most reliable source of information, are available only for syndicated programs. Moreover, ratings are calculated for specific programs, not for non-duplicated audiences of religious programs in general, about whom estimates must come from survey research. In addition, as we discussed in Section III, unconfirmed responses about viewing or not viewing religious programs are subject to a number of distortions.

The national survey (see Appendix V) found that 32 percent of respondents had watched a religious television program in the "past month" and 18 percent had watched in the "past week." Both of these figures are lower than those suggested by several earlier studies (see Appendix V, p. 7). The differences may be due to seasonal fluctuations.

Hadden and Swann (1981) discuss the audience for religion based upon Arbitron ratings. Estimates based on ratings reveal a lower incidence of viewing than survey measures, even though ratings are not adjusted for duplicated audiences. There is also a good deal of variation in ratings estimates. It has been claimed (with some justification, based on data from the regional survey) that diary measures underestimate viewing of UHF stations, where most religious programs are carried.

Hadden and Swann note that the total audience for syndicated religious programs in 1980 was 20.5 million, much smaller than has often been claimed. They conclude that the emergence of the "television ministries" of the "electronic church" has not

substantially changed the composition of the audience for religious programs.

We have found, using data available from these and earlier studies, that the total audience may indeed be smaller than usually claimed. Our assumptions about audience size are based in part on the difficulties we encountered in sampling the religious television audience from the Arbitron pool of diary-reported viewers. We had to sample a total of ten markets before the Arbitron archives yielded enough viewers of religious programs to reach our quota. Even accepting the fact that diary keepers might not accurately report their viewing of UHF-carried programs, it seemed unlikely to us that actual viewing of religious programs is as widespread as it would seem based on results of survey responses.

We have chosen to base our audience estimates on Arbitron ratings data, recognizing that these may, to an extent, under-represent actual viewing levels and then compensating for that possibility. We should underscore that we are thus using the same data base upon which commercial broadcast industry audience ratings and advertising rates are calculated.

For the factors we take into account in estimating non-duplicated audience from ratings figures, we turn to regional survey results. These data give us a uniquely large sample of viewers of religious television for whom we have obtained reliable information on viewing context and multiple viewing behavior.

In order to estimate non-duplicated audience size from ratings data, we need to take two additional factors into account: (1) the

amount of local program viewing and (2) audience duplication. We have found that only 19.2 percent of viewers of religious programs view local shows and none report viewing only local programs. Therefore, an audience estimate based on syndicated viewing alone is a reasonable estimate of all viewers.

Audience duplication can be examined by referring to respondents' reports of the number of different programs they watch. Of those who said they were viewers of religious programs, the percentage who reported viewing one, two, etc., programs are given below.

Number of Different Religious Programs Named
by Viewers of Religious Programs

	N	%
None Named	206	13.6
One	576	37.3
Two	409	26.7
Three	203	13.2
Four	97	6.3
Five	29	1.9
Six	11	.7
Seven	2	.1
Eight	2	.1
Total (100%=)	1534	100%

If each of these respondents was counted as a member of the audience for each program he or she claimed to view (as is done in compiling audience ratings), the total distribution of viewers according to these classes among this sample would appear as below.

Duplicate Audience in the Regional Survey Data

Number of Programs Viewed:	Number	%	Total %
None or One	782*		27.4
Two	818	28.8	
Three	609	21.4	
Four	388	13.7	
Five	145	5.1	
Six	66	2.0	
Seven	14	0.4	
Eight	16	0.6	
			72.6
Total	2,837		100.0

*Because these respondents reported viewing some religious television, we assume that they watch at least one program for the purposes of this analysis.

This table indicates that approximately 73 percent of the total audience for religious television is duplicated audience. To calculate a weighting factor to estimate non-duplicated audience size, we divided the portion of total viewing of religion accounted for by each level of duplication by the level of duplication (i.e., the portion of the audience accounted for by viewers who watch four programs is divided by four). Using this factor, we can arrive at an extrapolated estimate.

The regional sample was made up of Arbitron diary keepers from two sweep periods in 1982. Arbitron data from that year were used to calculate the total national audience for religious television. The 80 syndicated religious programs on the air at that time had a

total aggregate audience of 9,526,887 households.

In 1982, there were 83,462,000 television households in the continental United States, according to Arbitron. The national mean number of viewers per household was 2.6. This is a somewhat higher figure than would seem likely in religious television viewing households, where (as will be seen later) older viewers predominate. However, using this higher figure (to compensate for possible under-representation in the diaries) as our estimate of the number of persons in each religious television household, we get an extrapolated aggregate duplicated religious television audience of 24.7 million.

Correcting for duplication, as described earlier, this figure is reduced by nearly half, to 13.3 million, or about 6 percent of the national television audience.

Cable television

The national survey reports on another factor that might influence the total size of the audience for religious television. It has been suggested that ratings measures underestimate the audience total size because they do not account for viewing of religious programs on cable television. Many broadcasters of religious programs have taken advantage of cable and links to cable systems via satellites in order to expand their audience reach.

The national survey findings regarding cable household viewing of religious television do not support the suggestion that cable has had a major effect on total religious television viewing. Cable penetration is nearly identical in households that view

religious television and those that do not (see Appendix V, p. 55). If cable television were to account for a significant increase in total audience size over what is evident from ratings data, we would expect to see significantly higher levels of cable subscription in religious television viewing households than in others. As this is not the case, it appears that cable cannot account for a much larger audience than that estimated from ratings data.

Taken together, these calculations lead us to the conclusion that the total non-duplicated religious television audience is probably not significantly larger than the 13.3 million figure we arrived at based on aggregate ratings for syndicated programs.

Why do they watch? Highlights of the national survey

Among those who had viewed some religious programming during the "past week," the median amount of viewing was nearly two hours. The demography of the heavy viewer of general television is extended in the audience for religious programs. These programs offer satisfactions not found in the mainstream of general television, especially for many older, less-educated, and rural viewers and those living in the South and the Midwest. The national survey also shows, as we shall note in greater detail later, that viewers of religious programs tend to hold evangelical views, consider religion very important, and tend to select religious programs specifically for their religious content.

The national survey noted some of these satisfactions. Although only 14 percent claimed that the viewing of religious programs was a substitute for going to church (a point to which we shall return), more than half (52 percent) expressed special liking for the preaching or sermons, and more than a third each expressed special liking for "feeling close to God," "having your spirits lifted," and the music heard on these programs.

About four out of ten respondents to the national survey watched on Sunday morning, but only about two in ten did so during "church hours" (Sunday 10 a.m. to 12 noon). Also, about one-third received letters or literature from and gave financial contributions to religious programs, activities we shall discuss later in connection with more detailed information from the regional surveys.

The national survey found, as did previous studies, that dissatisfaction with prevailing moral standards and practices, with half of the viewers of religious programs but less than one-third (31 percent) of non-viewers "very dissatisfied," is one of the most distinctive bonds between religious programs and their viewers. The other principal difference between viewers and non-viewers of religious programs is the relative priority of evangelism versus social justice. Nearly half (46 percent) of viewers but less than a third (30 percent) of non-viewers consider evangelism and missionary work "the main goal" of the church. Conversely, only 22 percent of viewers but 34 percent of non-viewers say that the main goal should be "working for social justice." We shall examine the social, political, and sexual messages and lessons of religious

television in greater detail in the message analysis and cultivation analysis sections of this report. Other findings of the national survey are also integrated into the appropriate sections of the report.

Demographic and denominational affiliation

Among the most frequent statements made about religious programs is that their recent prominence is due to conscious efforts to appeal to people who are not part of the "traditional" or "typical" religious television audience (Armstrong 1978, Robertson 1972, Hadden and Swann 1981, Horsfield 1984, and Martin 1981). This "new approach" is said to have taken several forms, including formats that resemble general television in style and content, programs scheduled outside the "Sunday morning religious ghetto," and different types of program delivery, including satellite networking and cable distribution.

We have found that the effort to "reach out" to new and different audiences has met with little success, except perhaps in the case of the syndicated weekend programs. Both national and regional surveys show the profiles of viewers of religious programs to be similar to those found in previous studies. The analysis (described earlier) of the "confirmed frequent" viewers found that such viewers exhibit demographic and other characteristics which are extensions, not contradictions, of the characteristics of all viewers of religious programs. A more specific account of denominational and other religious differences amplifies this conclusion.

To simplify our analysis of denominational differences, Protestant affiliation was classified either as "Mainline" (American Baptist, American Lutheran, Lutheran Church in America, United Methodist, Presbyterian U.S., United Presbyterian, Episcopal, United Church of Christ, and Disciples of Christ) or "Evangelical" (Southern Baptist, Missouri Synod Lutheran, "Charismatic Christian," "Independent," "Other Methodist," "Baptist," "Other Lutheran," and "Other Presbyterian").

A factor scale was composed out of responses to questions on biblical literalism, being "born again," belief in the Second Coming, and favoring speaking in tongues. An individual scoring high on this scale would take the literalist position regarding the Bible, report having been "born again," believe in the Second Coming, and favor speaking in tongues in modern times. This scale, labeled "literalist/charismatic," could be calculated for 1,912 respondents and has a fairly high reliability (Armor's Theta=.64). Initial analyses revealed that this scale is conceptually independent of measures such as the importance ascribed to religion by respondents and their church attendance (where the modal attendance category for both the medium-scoring and low-scoring literalist/charismatic respondents is "once a week"). When this scale is trichotomized, respondents in all three categories report high levels of belief that religion is important, with 99 percent of high scorers, 96 percent of medium scorers, and 83 percent of low scorers saying it is at least "important" (see table below).

Importance of Religion Among High, Medium, and Low Scorers on the Literalist/Charismatic Scale

Importance of Religion:	High Lit Char	Medium Lit Char	Low Lit Char	Total
Very Important	(537) 83.8	(288) 62.2	(283) 37.9	(1108) 59.9
Important	(99) 15.4	(158) 34.1	(337) 45.2	(594) 32.1
Not Very Important or Not at All	(5) .8	(17) 3.6	(126) 16.9	(148) 8.0
	(641)	(463)	(746)	(1850)

Because the literalist/charismatic scale seems to tap beliefs that are commonly referred to as "fundamentalist" in orientation, we will refer to respondents who score high on this scale as "fundamentalists."

Types of programs viewed

Respondents in the regional survey named a greater number of programs than those in the national survey. Respondents who identified themselves as viewers of religious programs were asked, "What religious shows do you usually watch?" Respondents were probed for up to eight different responses.

The total list of religious programs named as viewed by the regional survey respondents is included in Table IV.2.1. Table IV.2.2 examines the viewing of various types of programs for religious and demographic groups. Programs are classified as local (all of which are aired on weekends) or syndicated (as designated

by the Arbitron Syndicated Program Analysis). Syndicated programs, in turn, are classified as weekend, daily, and syndicated drama. Respondents may appear in more than one category.

The characteristics of the religious television audience identified in the national survey would lead us to expect that members of evangelical churches, persons who score high on the literalist/charismatic scale, and less-educated, older, lower-income, female, and non-white viewers would predominate in the audience for all religious programming. Table IV.2.2 reveals few deviations from this pattern. Respondents who are more "fundamentalist," less educated, female, older, Evangelical Protestants, residents of the Southeast, and non-whites are more likely to view even the infrequently seen local programs. Even though the majority of mainline-related programming is local programming, mainline church members view local programs less than might have been expected. In fact, more watch syndicated programs aired on weekends (a category dominated by the prominent television ministries), which attract a somewhat different sort of audience--better-educated, younger, white, and Northeastern--than local programs.

This pattern is reversed somewhat for weekday programming. Here, as with viewing local programs, the audience is more representative of those who are more "fundamentalist" and overall is more like those who view religious television in general.

Table IV.2.3 presents audience profiles for viewers of four classes of programs: the "most prominent" and "other" television ministries, "mainline," and "all others." Audiences for the

different program types differ only in terms of denominational affiliation. The most prominent television ministries were the most frequently named by most respondents in most categories. This audience includes the largest percentage of non-Evangelical Protestants who view religious programs. Moreover, a slightly higher percentage of Evangelicals than non-Evangelicals watch even mainline programs.

Profiles of types of viewing

For viewers of each schedule-classified type of religious programming, the percentages who also watch each of the other type are given in the table below.

	Percentage of Viewers of:			
	Local Weekend	Syndicated Weekend	Syndicated Daily	Syndicated Drama
Who Also Watch: (N)				
Local Weekend		(183) 15.9	(95) 17.2	(2) 13.3
Synd. Weekend	(183) 51.8		(336) 60.8	(11) 73.3
Synd. Daily	(95) 26.9	(336) 29.2		(8) 53.3
Synd. Drama	(2) 0.6	(11) 1.0	(8) 1.4	
Total N	(353)	(1151)	(487)	(14)

Those who watch syndicated weekend programs are the least likely to also watch the other types: only 16 percent of them watch local shows, and 30 percent watch daily shows. By comparison, half of the viewers of local shows and 60 percent of the viewers of daily programs also watch the syndicated weekend programming.

This finding is interesting in light of the demographic and religious composition of these audiences. The local audience most closely resembles the audience for all religious programs, and it includes a larger percentage of respondents who watch other types of religious shows. The audience for syndicated weekend programs, by comparison, contains more demographically "atypical" viewers, who are less likely to "cross over" into local or weekday viewing.

Religious television and conventional religiosity

Table IV.2.4 reveals that the viewing of religious programs is positively associated with nearly all measures of religiosity. As we noted above, viewers of religious programs tend to be less educated, lower income, female, older, and non-white.

Correlations between making financial contributions to religious programs and the other measures are less frequently significant than the other correlations, due in part to the relatively small number of contributors. However, although the viewing of religious programs is negatively associated with income (higher-income people are less likely to report frequent viewing), there is a positive correlation between contributing to these

programs and income (those who report contributing more to religious programs are more likely than those who give less to be in higher-income brackets). There is also a weak relationship between contributing to religious programs and stating that religion is very important. The association between giving to religious programs and the score on the literalist/charismatic scale indicates that "fundamentalist" viewers give more, although the association is not as strong as the one between that scale and religious viewing itself. The correlation between making contributions to a local church and to religious programs is fairly strong and positive--people who contribute to one contribute to the other.

These data reinforce the national survey's findings about the relationship between viewing religious television and more "conventional" religious expression. The findings suggest that the viewing of religious programs is a fairly stable component of religious expression, not a substitute for other dimensions of religiosity. The national survey found, for instance, that religious television is most frequently viewed on Sunday morning, but at a time not likely to conflict directly with church attendance, which is itself positively associated with viewing religious television across nearly all sub-categories.

The national survey found that viewers usually gave conventional reasons for their viewing (sermons, music, etc.). Viewers were no more likely to register specific complaints about their local churches than were non-viewers, and they reported that their viewing of religious programs had enhanced their church

participation rather than detracted from it (see Appendix V, p. 31).

The national survey also found that viewing is associated with intra- as well as inter-denominational differences among respondents, consistent with what Marty (1969) calls the "two party" system of American Protestantism (the tendency for all Protestant denominations to number among their members both "evangelical" and "modernist" beliefs). Using an index of evangelical belief (as opposed to membership in an evangelical denomination), the national survey revealed that holding such beliefs was the factor most strongly associated with viewing religious programs. In the regional survey, we found that the same is true for the literalist/charismatic scale.

In order to look deeper into the relationship between "fundamentalism" and viewing, we compared scores on the literalist/charismatic scale and responses on the importance of religion. The table below shows, not surprisingly, that 83 percent of those in the regional sample who find religion "very important" and score high on the literalist/charismatic scale view religious television. In addition, 74 percent of the low and 56 percent of medium scorers who consider religion "very important" also are religious television viewers.

Percentage of Religious Television Viewers
Among Categories of Literalist/Charismatic Scale and
Importance of Religion

Lit/Char Scale:	Importance of Religion: Very Import.	Not Very	Not Imp.	Total N
High	83.3 (610)	68.8 (139)	30.8 (4)	66.7 (2)	(950)
Med	56.0 (205)	38.7 (144)	15.4 (10)	17.2 (5)	(832)
Low	74.3 (260)	47.2 (93)	20.3 (12)	10.2 (5)	(655)

Since Catholics are less likely to be fundamentalist in orientation, it was thought that those viewers of religious television scoring low on the literalist/charismatic scale might be predominantly Catholic. The table below shows that is not the case; the majority of the "non-fundamentalist" viewers who consider religion "very important" are Protestant.

Percentage of Religious Television
Viewers Among Categories of the Literalist/Charismatic Scale
and Denomination for Those Who Consider
Religion "Very Important"

Percent Who Watch RelTV:	All Protestants	Catholics	Other Faiths	Total N
High Lit/Char Scale	86.1 (539)	64.9 (50)	3.3 (17)	(726)
Medium	63.5 (146)	46.0 (52)	31.6 (6)	(362)
Low Lit/Char Scale	80.1 (213)	54.0 (34)	56.3 (9)	(345)

While there is considerable variation in these data, eight out of ten Protestants who consider religion "very important" are viewers of religious programs. The table below presents the preferences for <u>types</u> of programming by subgroups of the literalist/charismatic scale for those respondents who consider religion "very important."

Percentage of
Viewers of Types of Religious Programming
Among Categories of Literalist/Charismatic Scale
for Those Who Consider Religion "Very Important"

% Viewing Each Type Of Program:	Local Weekend.	Synd. Non-Wkday	Synd. Weekday Only	Synd. Drama
	%	%	%	%
High Lit/Char Scale	20.7 (52)	62.9 (463)	39.3 (289)	0.7 (5)
Medium	15.6 (57)	41.0 (150)	13.4 (49)	0.5 (2)
Low Lit/Char Scale	18.7 (66)	55.5 (196)	27.8 (98)	0.8 (3)
	(275)	(809)	(436)	(10)

Fifty-five percent of the low scoring literalist/charismatic respondents view syndicated weekend programming (which contains primarily fundamentalist content) but only 19 percent view local programs, and 28 percent view weekday programming. This is consistent with the phenomenon noted earlier: the demographic and

religious groups we might expect to be attracted to the non-syndicated, local, or "mainline" programming do not watch them as much as they view the syndicated programs.

Motivations for viewing

The national survey included extensive investigations of possible motivations for viewing religious programs. This analysis revealed that viewers of religious programs watched slightly more general television than non-viewers. They also preferred different types of general programs than non-viewers. For example, viewers of religious programs were much less likely to watch motion pictures on television (see Appendix V, p. 51).

The national survey also revealed that respondents' "gratifications" from viewing religious programs were similar to those given for attendance at conventional church services: "the sermon," "music," "inspiration," and "feeling close to God." What, then, are the special needs of these viewers that could best be met by the local church?

The correlation in our sample between viewing of religious programs and attending church is fairly strong and significant ($r=.284$, $p<.001$). A "substitution" hypothesis would suggest that, while viewers of religious programs attend church, they are less integrated into their churches than are others, and religious television viewing substitutes for this integration. As one measure of such integration, one question asked: "Do you feel close to other members of your church or synagogue?" When the

relationship between attendance and religious viewing is controlled by this measure, the strength of the association between religious television viewing and church attendance is reduced ($r=.178$, $p<.001$). This suggests that this measure of identification with local church explains some but not all of the relationship between religious viewing and church attendance.

Context of viewing

Table IV.2.5 examines the context in which religious programs are viewed, by denominational and religious subgroups. The majority of viewers report watching with their family rather than alone. It appears that, for those groups who are most likely to watch religious programs (members of evangelical denominations, fundamentalists), viewing with family is the rule; other groups (such as Catholics) are more likely to view alone. Also, a relatively high percentage of those who watch alone are women, older people, and live in the Northeast.

Viewer involvement with religious programs was examined by asking respondents whether and how frequently they wrote or called these programs. Two hundred and twenty respondents (14.5 percent) reported they had written or called. Table IV.2.6 shows that the pattern of calling does not follow the usual pattern of religiosity, in that more-educated viewers are more likely to call. The more frequent callers, however (those who called three or more times), generally have less education; 73 percent of these callers are women, 53 percent are Evangelicals, and 83 percent are

"fundamentalists," according to the literalist/charismatic scale. The only deviation from the "typical" profile is that the majority of more frequent callers live in the Northeast.

Respondents most often write or call to obtain written information (31 percent), to request a prayer or blessing (25 percent), to pledge contributions (11 percent), to discuss God (10 percent), to compliment the program (7 percent), and to solicit advice (6 percent).

Contributions to religious television

About 25 percent of the viewers of religious programs in the regional sample reported giving money to these programs. The table below shows that a significant percentage of respondents in lower-income groups give money.

Percent Giving to Religious Broadcasting by Income

Income:	
<$ 15,000	23.2
$ 15-25,000	24.4
$ 25-35,000	21.5
>$ 35,000	29.6
(N=)	(330)

Respondents were also asked about the number of programs to which they normally contribute, and whether they contribute "regularly," "only for special appeals," or "only once in awhile."

Number of Programs to Which Respondents Contribute

Number of Programs:	Giving: Regular	Special Only	Infrequent
	%	%	%
0	4.5	8.0	5.1
1	31.8	46.6	50.5
2	23.9	31.8	25.5
3	22.7	9.1	11.2
4	8.0	3.4	5.1
5	4.5	0.0	1.5
6	3.4	0.0	0.5
9	1.1	0.0	0.0
12	0.0	1.1	0.5
Total (100%=)	(90)	(90)	(196)

As seen in the table above, 40 percent of regular contributors give to three or more programs as compared to only 13.6 percent of those who contribute in special cases and 19 percent of those who contribute infrequently. Regular givers seem to be the most wide-ranging in their contributions.

Table IV.2.7 reports the percentage of respondents in each giving category by income, "fundamentalism," church attendance, and education level. Regular contributors are more likely to score high on the literalist/charismatic scale and to attend church more than once a week. Those who give more frequently are more likely to have higher incomes (and more education), although almost a third of regular contributors earn less than $15,000 a year.

Respondents who give were also asked how much money they "usually" send to religious television programs. The table below shows that regular contributors average $35.17 per contribution, while "special" givers average $15.22 and the "infrequent" givers $19.38 per contribution. The highest level of contribution is among those regular contributors who earn over $35,000 annually. Even among those who give infrequently, those with high incomes give the largest amounts of money. Interestingly, although less than 10 percent of the "special" givers have medium-high incomes ($25,000 to $35,000), this group gives much larger amounts than the other groups of special givers. In general, these figures do not differ substantially from those found in the national survey.

"Average" Contribution (in $)

	Giving:		
	Regular	Special	Infrequent
Overall	$35.17	$15.22	$19.38
Income:			
< $15,000	32.77	14.73	18.26
$15-25,000	34.11	13.28	16.98
$25-35,000	34.38	33.25	21.82
> $35,000	48.27	15.60	23.80
Denomination:			
Protestants	36.05	15.32	19.86
Catholics	32.42	14.61	16.55
Others	18.00	16.50	17.14
Education:			
Less Than HS	35.72	13.73	20.72
HS Graduate	35.14	17.19	15.81
More Than HS	34.80	13.66	21.93

Figure A demonstrates that the average contribution to religious programs differs markedly among income groups. Those with an annual household income of between $25,000 and $35,000 report an average contribution of $28, while those who earn more than $35,000 give slightly less. The average contribution of those earning under $15,000 is $20, while those who earn between $15,000 and $25,000 report that they give the least.

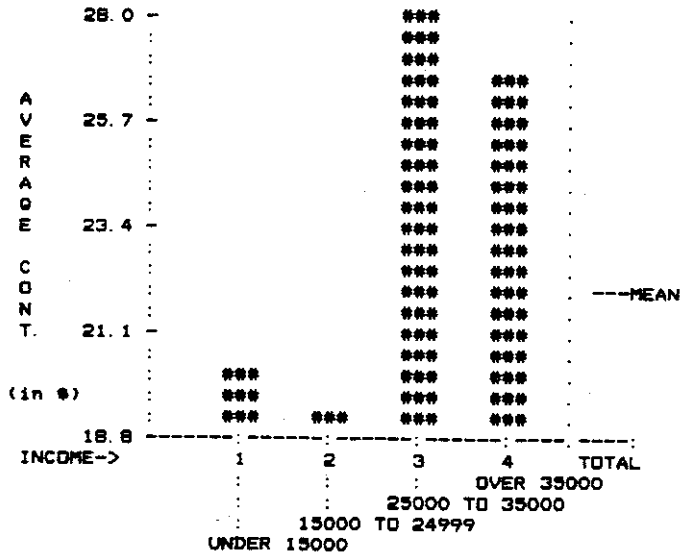

Figure A:
Mean "Average" Contribution to Religious Television by All Types of Giving Among Income Groups

Contributions to various program types

The content analysis found that the television ministries were more likely than mainline church programs to make frequent requests for contributions (cf. Table IV.1.5). We also found variation in the amount of contribution made by audiences for the different types of programs. The average contribution for viewers of the "most prominent" programs is $22.41; for viewers of mainline programs, $18.13; for viewers of "other ministries," $26.49; and for viewers of "other programs," $21.72.

Viewing as predictor of behavior

The national survey examined the factors that seem to predict viewing of religious television and found that the evangelism index was the best overall predictor, with other demographic, belief, and behavior variables held constant. Other statistically significant predictors were hours of conventional television viewed, age, race, and marital status (with older people, non-whites, and divorced and widowed persons watching more) (see Appendix V, p. 72).

The national survey also examined religious television as a predictor of church attendance and giving, finding that its contribution to these behaviors was small but positive.

Two indices that were used as dependent variables in multiple regression analyses were constructed. "Personal religiosity," a factor-based scale, combines respondent scores on Bible reading, prayer, the frequency of each behavior, and the measure of

"importance of religion" (theta = .74). "Local religiosity," also a factor scale, is composed of items on church attendance, involvement and frequency of involvement in non-worship social activities, amount of contribution to local church, and closeness to other church members (theta = .781).

Personal religiosity

A multiple regression analysis was performed on the personal religiosity scale. The demographic characteristics of income, sex, age, and education were entered together on the first step, followed by church attendance, the literalist/charismatic scale, denomination (Mainline and Catholic as "dummy" variables entered on the same step), religious television viewing, and general television viewing. The table below presents the results of this analysis.

Results of Multiple Regression of Personal Religiosity Scale

Variable	Beta(sig)	R sq	R sq Change(sig)
Income	-.020		
Sex	.121***		
Age	.101***		
Education	-.007	.115	.118***
Attendance	.418*	.452	.336***
Fundamentalism	.316*	.559	.106***
Mainline Denom.	.030		
Catholic Denom.	-.026	.561	.003**
Religious TV	.128	.571	.010***
General TV	.001	.571	.000

Significance key: *<.05 **<.01 ***<.001

The four demographic items (but mostly sex and age) account for nearly 12 percent of the explained variance in personal religiosity. Church attendance accounts for an additional 34 percent of the variance; respondents' scores on the literalist/charismatic scale explain another 10 percent. The denomination items add relatively little (less than 0.3 percent, but that change is still significant). Religious television viewing adds more than denomination but only explains 1 percent of the variance. General television viewing adds nothing to variance explained in this model. While it is important to remember that the order in which items were entered affects, to a degree, their relative importance in the equation, the fact that religious television viewing explained more variance than denomination (Mainline-Catholic) suggests that actual denominational affiliation relates less to this scale of personal religiosity than does the viewing of religious programs.

Income and education show a small negative relationship to personal religiosity. The Catholicism item is also negative, meaning that, when other things are controlled for, Catholics score lower on this personal religiosity scale than do non-Catholics. None of these negative betas is statistically significant, however. As is the case for the overall variance, attendance accounts for the largest shift in the value of the personal religiosity scale, followed by "fundamentalism," religious television viewing, and sex.

Local church religiosity

A multiple regression analysis was performed on local church participation, using a similar set of independent variables, entered in the same order (but with each denomination entered separately). This model explains less variance overall than does the regression on personal religiosity (39 percent compared to 57 percent). Since church attendance is part of this dependent variable, respondents' scores on the "importance of religion" were used as the independent variable.

Results of Multiple Regression of Local Church Religiosity Scale

Variable	Beta(sig)	R sq	R sq Change (sig)
Income	.114***		
Sex	.028		
Age	.077***		
Education	.152***	.041	.411***
Imp. of Rel.	.397***	.319	.279***
Lit/Char Scale	.271***	.379	.060***
Mainline Denom.	.046*	.381	.002*
Catholic Denom.	-.012	.381	.000
Religious TV	.045	.382	.001
General TV	-.033	.383	.001

Significance key: *<.05 **<.01 ***<.001

The amount of variance explained by Catholic denomination, religious television viewing, and general television viewing was not statistically significant. The four demographic items explain only 4 percent of the total variance, but importance of religion accounts for nearly 28 percent and fundamentalism 6 percent.

mainline denomination explains only 0.2 percent of the variance, but its contribution is statistically significant.

The betas suggest a pattern similar to that shown in the regression for personal religiosity, except that income and education show a much larger contribution to local church religiosity than personal religiosity. Again, it is the importance of religion and fundamentalism that relate most strongly to local church involvement; watching religious programs plays only a marginal role.

Who are the non-viewers?

The national survey found that most respondents who did not view religious programs either were disinterested or disliked them. In all, 36 percent of those who did not watch religious programs expressed disinterest and 23 percent expressed dislike, mostly because of a perceived emphasis on solicitations (Appendix V, p. 97).

Respondents in the regional survey who said they did not watch religious programs were asked how they would respond if they found themselves watching a religious television program ("change the channel" or "watch the program"). Overall, most non-viewers (71 percent) indicated they would "change the channel." Not surprisingly, those respondents who say they would "change the channel" diverge the most radically in demographic terms from viewers of religious programs (see Table IV.2.8). They are more likely to be college-educated, male, under 49, higher-income, and

non-fundamentalist. Those who say they would watch are more likely to be Evangelicals; those who would change the channel are (just barely) more likely to be Catholics or Mainline Protestants.

Summary

Religious television viewers, as well as particular subsets of them, including frequent viewers, viewers of various types of programming, viewers who contribute to the programs, and viewers who write or call the programs, are quite similar by demographic and other measures. Women, non-whites, older people, the less well educated, and those who make less money predominate among the viewers of religious programs.

It has been previously suggested that religious broadcasters rarely speak to audiences outside their "natural" constituency, that they attract only an audience that is already convinced or already highly religious (Casmir 1957, Gantz and Kowalewski 1979, Parker 1980, Stacey and Shupe 1982). We have found little here that contradicts this claim.

There is also little evidence here to support the idea that the total national audience for religious broadcasting is much larger than the figure of 13.3 million we have estimated. Cable television distribution by some broadcasters also seems not to have greatly increased the total audience for religious programs.

Religious television viewing is not a substitute for "conventional" religious behavior. The association of viewing of religious programs with support of local churches is generally

strong and positive. Increased viewing goes with increased attendance at church, more for Evangelical Protestants than other denominations. The association between viewing religious television and contributing to local churches is also strong and positive, but not for Catholics.

Our data on viewing specific types of religious programming defies the traditional wisdom about these programs. We might have expected, for instance, that viewers of religious programs who were less "fundamentalist" or belonged to mainline churches would be more attracted to "local" than to syndicated programming. In fact, the opposite is the case, though the differences are slight. It is the syndicated weekend and "most prominent" television ministry programs that find the broadest audience for religious television.

Multivariate analyses revealed that viewing religious television is related to personal piety; this relationship is small but statistically significant. Controlling for demography and belief, viewing religious television was significantly related to religious belief and behavior.

These results support the conclusion that religious programs on television, including and perhaps most significantly the television ministries, serve primarily to express and cultivate, rather than extend or broaden, existing religious beliefs in the lives of viewers who turn to them. The question of what more specific lessons they cultivate is one to which we now turn.

IV. 3. Lessons of Religious Television

The findings of cultivation analysis rest on the differences ("cultivation differentials") in the response patterns of light and heavy viewers, controlling for other factors. A wide variety of associations of religious, social, and political measures are compared for religious and general television viewing in this section. The cultivation differential tables in which these data are reported (Appendix IV, part 3) present, overall and in important subgroups, the relationship between each type of viewing and these measures.

Theory of cultivation

Cultivation analysis is the investigation of the consequences of living with television. Our previous research (Gerbner et al. 1980) has revealed that the amount of exposure to television is an important indicator of the strength of its contributions to ways of thinking and acting. For heavy viewers, television virtually monopolizes and subsumes other sources of information, ideas, and consciousness. Thus, we have suggested that the more time one spends "living" in the world of television, the more likely one is to report perceptions of social reality which can be traced to (or are congruent with) television's most persistent representations of life and society. Accordingly, we examine the difference the amount of viewing makes in people's images, expectations, assumptions, and behaviors.

We refer to this difference as the "cultivation differential" (CD) -- the spread between the percentages of light and heavy viewers who give a "television answer" to questions about social reality. For this study, light viewers of religious programs were those who reported they were non-viewers or rarely watched religious programs; heavy viewers were those who said they sometimes or frequently watched religious television programs. Light viewers of general television were those who viewed three hours or less per day, while heavy viewers were those who viewed four hours or more.

In our research we have found across-the-board consequences of television viewing, where heavy viewers are more likely than light viewers to give "television answers" to a series of informational and opinion questions. We have also isolated a process we call "mainstreaming" that takes into account differences across demographic subgroups.

The "mainstream" can be thought of as a relative commonality of outlooks that television tends to cultivate. By "mainstreaming" we mean the sharing of that commonality among heavy viewers in those demographic groups whose light viewers hold divergent views. In other words, differences deriving from other factors and social forces may be diminished or even absent among heavy viewers. Thus, in some cases we should find evidence for cultivation only within those groups who are "out" of the mainstream. In other cases, we may find that viewing "moderates" attitudes in groups whose light viewers tend to hold extreme views. But in all cases, more viewing appears to signal a convergence of outlooks rather than absolute,

Bible reading

More than half of those who "sometimes" or "frequently" watch religious programs say that they read the Bible "frequently," compared to 10 percent of those who seldom or never watch religious television. Members of those groups who generally read the Bible most often (women, the less educated, older viewers) report still higher levels of Bible reading when they are heavy viewers of religious programs (Table IV.3.1). The positive relationship between exposure to religious programs and Bible reading is strong and statistically significant in every subgroup, with no observable fluctuations or deviations.

By contrast, watching general television is not related to Bible reading. We do find that, for those groups whose members are otherwise the most frequent Bible readers (the less-educated, older, non-white, lower-income, and evangelical subgroups), there is a negative relationship between Bible reading and watching general television. That is, heavy viewers of general television in these groups are less likely than light viewers to read the Bible frequently.

Figure 1 illustrates some of these relationships. The graphs on the left side show relatively similar patterns of difference in Bible reading between heavy and light viewers of religious programs. Older respondents are the most likely group to read the Bible "frequently." Moreover, when older people are heavy viewers of religious programs, they are even more likely than younger heavy viewers to read the Bible. The lower lefthand graph shows a slight

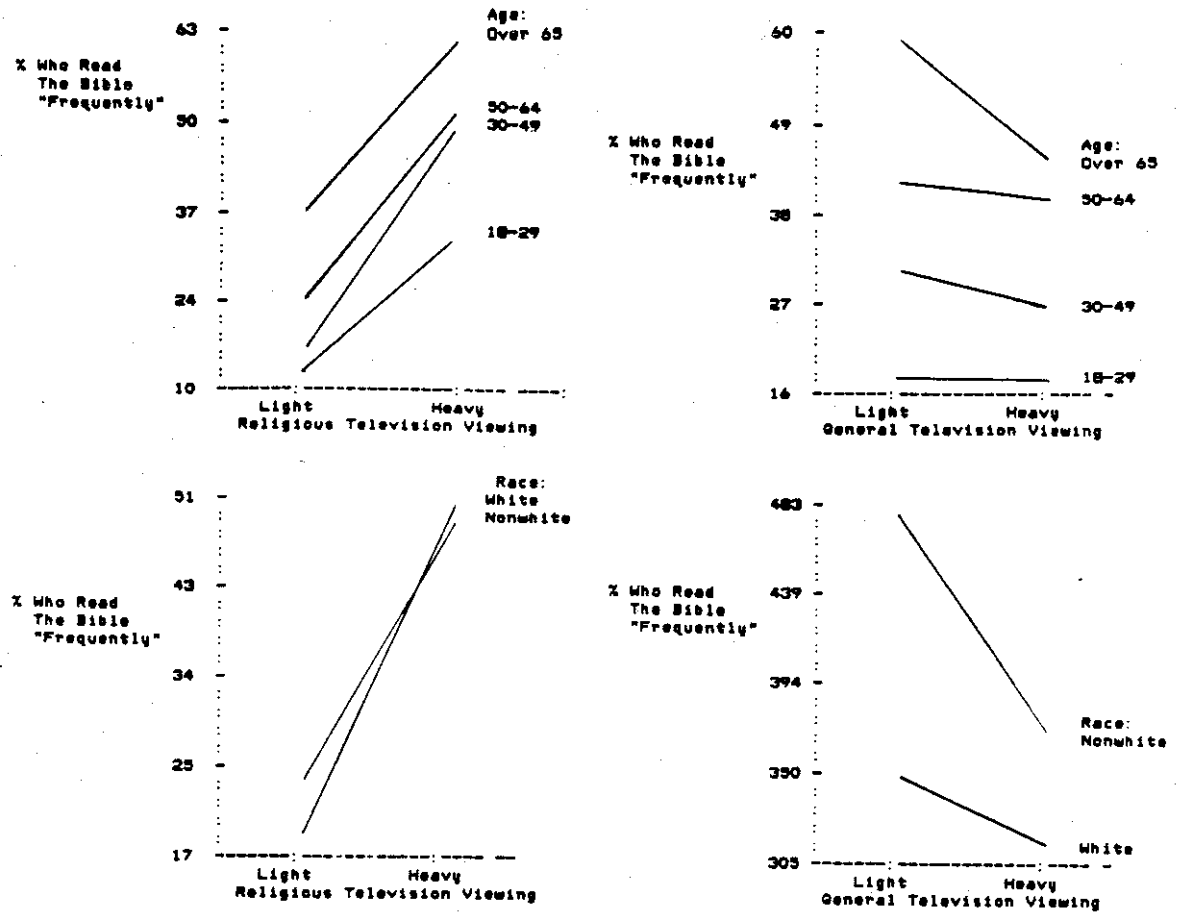

Figure 1:
Relationship of Religious and General Television Viewing to "Frequent" Reading of Bible, Controlling for Age and Race

convergence, or mainstreaming effect, among whites and non-whites -- i.e., they are "closer together" in their Bible-reading habits as heavy than as light viewers of religious programs.

The graphs on the right side of Figure 1, for general television viewing, show the mainstreaming pattern more sharply. As we have noted, general television viewing is negatively related to Bible reading: heavy viewers read less than light viewers. But that association is especially pronounced in groups whose light

viewers are most likely to read the Bible, e.g., older and non-white respondents. In fact, for the youngest group there is a tiny positive relationship, furthering the convergence among heavy viewers. Thus, heavy general television viewing is associated with less Bible reading within those groups whose light viewers are most likely to read the Bible; the few groups for whom there are slight positive relationships are those who are by far the least likely to read the Bible.

Prayer

Respondents were asked if they ever pray to God, and, if so, how frequently. Not surprisingly, in every subgroup significantly more heavy viewers of religious television pray frequently than do those who view little or no religious television (Table IV.3.2). Furthermore, the groups whose light viewers pray the least show the largest difference in frequency of prayer between light and heavy viewers. The lefthand graph in Figure 2 shows that, among light viewers of religious programs, the younger group are the least likely and the older group are the most likely to report that they pray. Among the heavy viewers, however, even though all age groups report more frequent prayer, there is less difference between older and younger viewers.

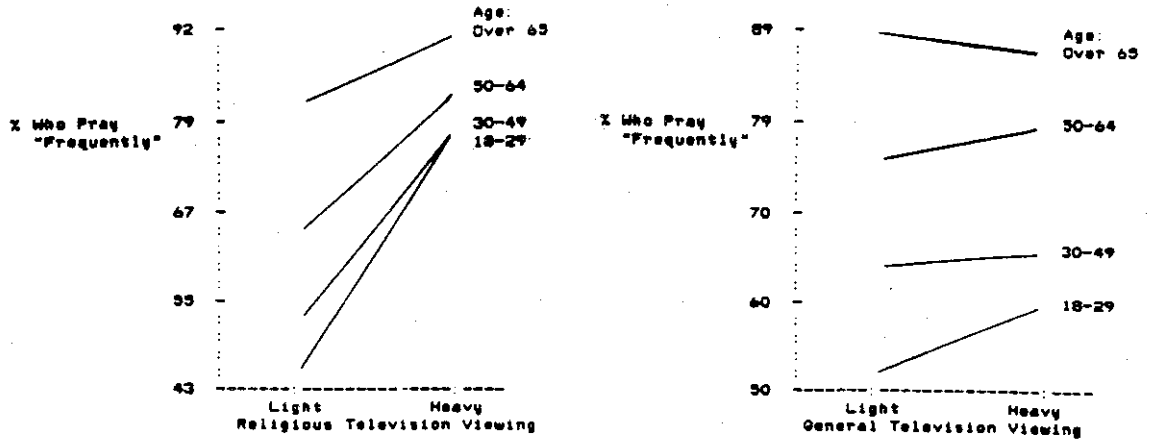

Figure 2:
Relationship of Religious and General Television Viewing to "Frequent" Prayer, Controlling for Age

On the right-hand side of Figure 2, we see that the relationship of general television viewing to prayer shows a convergence, although it is less pronounced. Table IV.3.2 shows that the associations between general television viewing and praying are positive and significant within the college-educated, young, male, higher-income, and liberal groups -- the groups whose light viewers are least likely to pray.

In four of the seven subgroups analyzed, those who are most likely (as light viewers) to pray show slight negative associations with viewing. It is worth noting that general television viewing seems to be associated with prayer more than it is with Bible reading. Bible reading may be more specific and demanding than praying and, according to our results, less a part of the general television mainstream.

Biblical literalism

An even more specific issue is literal interpretation of the Bible. Interestingly, more respondents say it is the actual word of God and should be taken literally (see Table IV.3.3) than claim to read the Bible. As expected, viewing religious programs is associated with increased likelihood of taking the literalist position. The pattern is significant in every subgroup: the lower the percent of light viewers of religious programs who take the literalist position, the greater the difference between light and heavy religious program viewers, with all groups of heavy viewers of religious programs more likely to endorse the literalist view.

Classified according to general television viewing, members of those groups who score high as literalists (the less-educated, older, non-white, lower-income groups) when they are light viewers do not score significantly higher when they are heavier viewers (see Figure 3). They can be said to be already in the general television "mainstream" on this item. However, most of those who score relatively low on biblical literalism (especially college-educated, younger, white, middle-income, and politically liberal or moderate viewers), do score higher as heavy viewers than as light viewers. The general television mainstream thus seems to be hospitable to a fairly literalist interpretation of the Bible, even if not to its frequent reading.

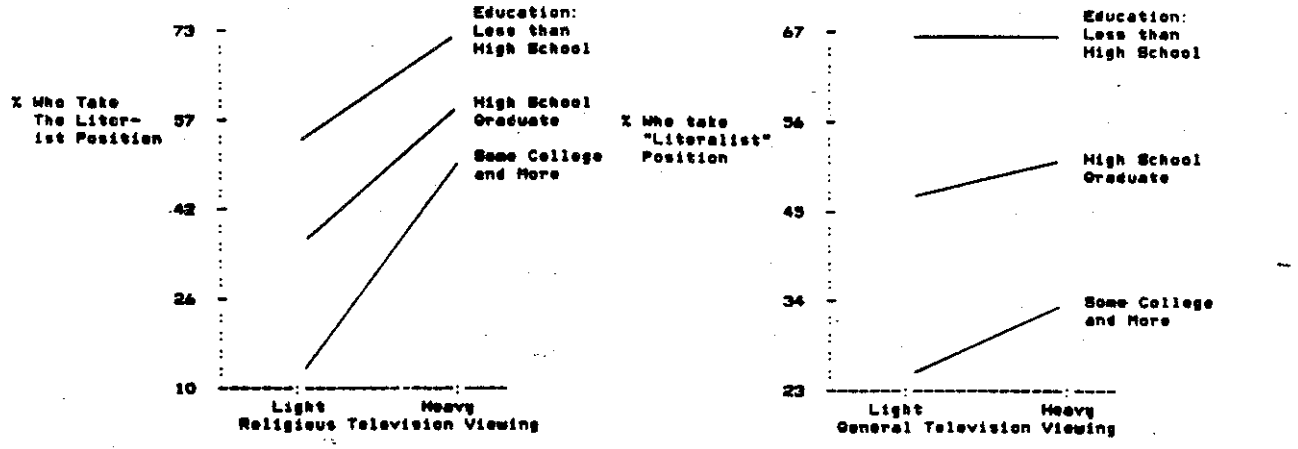

Figure 3:
Relationship of Religious and General Television Viewing to Biblical Literalism, Controlling for Education

The Second Coming

Respondents were asked if they believed that "Jesus Christ will return to earth someday." In all groups, a very high proportion of respondents believe in the Second Coming. Even so, our comparison of those who watch little or no religious television with those who watch it frequently (see Table IV.3.4) shows that the viewing of religious programs is strongly associated with belief in the Second Coming. "Mainstreaming" is evident in that those groups whose light viewers are least likely to believe in the Second Coming show the greatest change when they are heavy viewers (see Figure 4).

General television viewing reveals a very different pattern (see the righthand side of Figure 4). Members of those groups who, as light viewers, seem to be most likely to believe in the Second

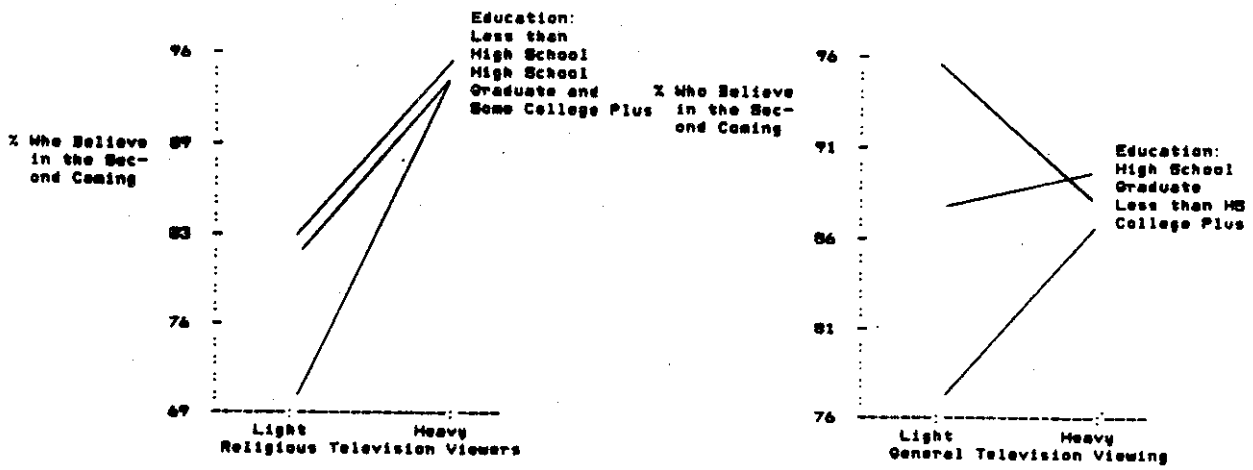

Figure 4:
Relationship of Religious and General Television Viewing to Belief in the Second Coming, Controlling for Education

Coming (such as those with less than a high school education) are much less likely to do so when they are heavy viewers. The groups least likely to believe in the Second Coming as light viewers (such as the college-educated) tend to be more likely to do so as heavy viewers. In general, the differences within belief among various groups of light viewers are sharply reduced (or virtually eliminated) among the counterpart groups of heavy viewers. These otherwise divergent groups converge upon a "mainstream" that seems less likely to cultivate belief in the Second Coming than does religious television.

Importance of religion

Respondents' reports of the importance of religion show a consistent positive association with religious television viewing. When asked "How important would you say religion is in your life?" a higher percentage of heavy viewers of religious programs than light viewers say religion is "very important" (see Table IV.3.5). As before, those groups who are least likely to respond this way as light viewers show the largest differences between their estimation of the importance of religion as light and as heavy viewers (see the lefthand side of Figure 5).

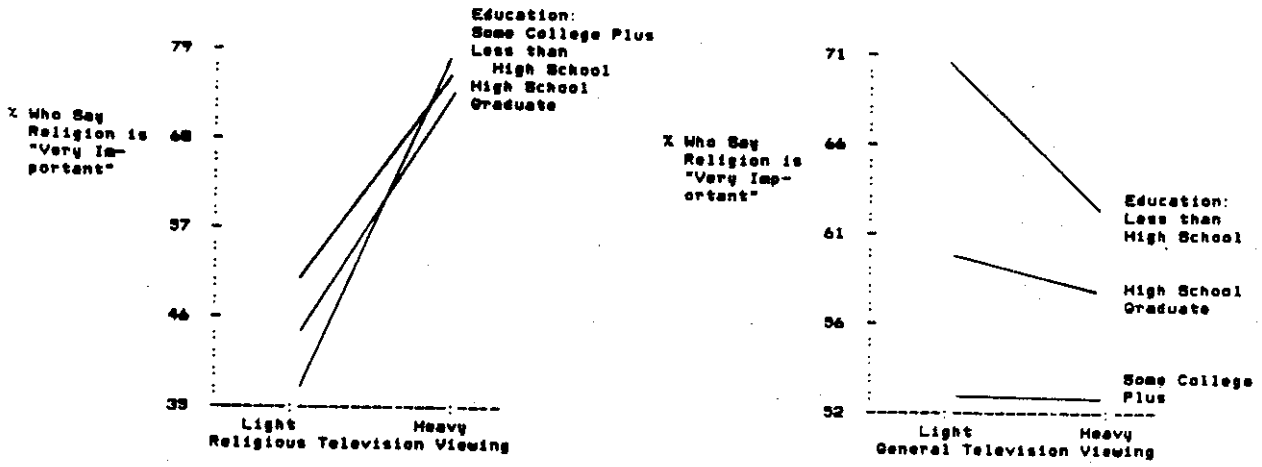

Figure 5:
Relationship of Religious and General Television Viewing to Importance of Religion in Life, Controlling for Education

General television viewing seems to cultivate a rather different view. Heavy viewers in most groups attach less importance to religion than light viewers. This pattern is

especially noticeable (see the righthand side of Figure 5) in those groups whose light viewers are most likely to say they find religion important, such as lower-income, low-education, and non-white respondents. For these groups, we might suspect that television is displacing, if not replacing, religion as an important part of life.

Religious experience

A similar pattern is found in the relationship between television viewing and having had a "religious experience." Respondents were asked two questions: "Have you ever had a religious experience, that is a particularly powerful insight or awakening?", and then, if they responded "yes" to this, a more specific question, "Would you say you are 'born again,' or that you have had a 'born again' experience?" (see Tables IV.3.6 and IV.3.7.)

Only about one-fifth of the respondents who watch little or no religious television said that they had had a religious experience (see Figure 6), while nearly half of the heavier viewers responded this way.

Similarly strong positive associations between viewing religious

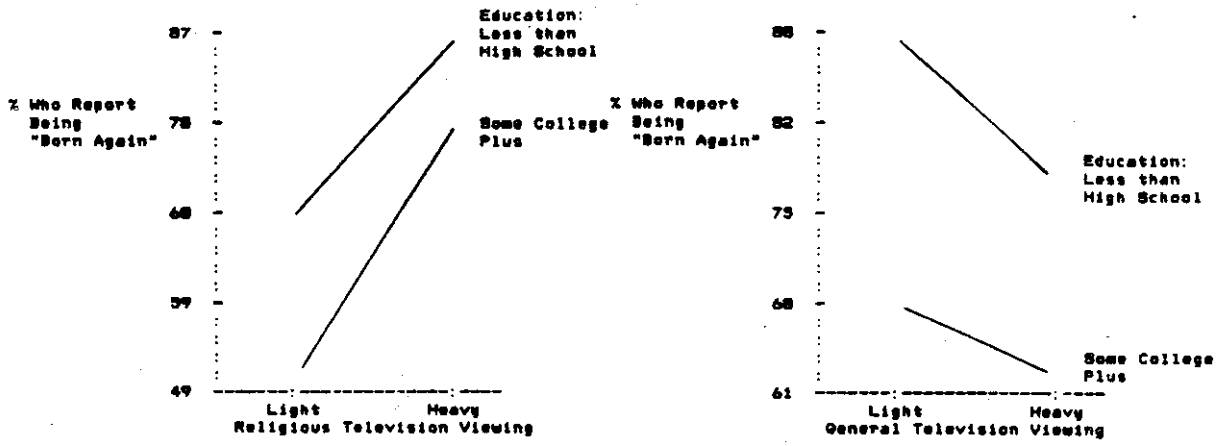

Figure 6:
Relationship of Religious and General Television Viewing to Reports of Being "Born Again," Controlling for Education

programs and the likelihood of having had such an experience are found for all subgroups. The opposite pattern, however, holds for the association with general television viewing. Though the differences are smaller between light and heavy viewers, heavy viewers are less likely than light viewers to report a religious experience overall, and in most subgroups. The few subgroup exceptions are found among those who are least likely to claim that they have had a religious experience, which provides still another example of the "religious mainstreaming" potential of general television viewing.

About a third (36 percent) of the sample reported having had such a "religious experience," and (not surprisingly) the vast majority of them (76 percent) reported having been "born again."

As shown in Figure 7, being a heavy viewer of religious television is significantly associated with claiming to be born again, but being a heavy viewer of general television is not. The significant exception is the youngest (18-29) age group, in which only 6 out of 10 light viewers report a "born again" experience, while 8 out of 10 heavy viewers do so.

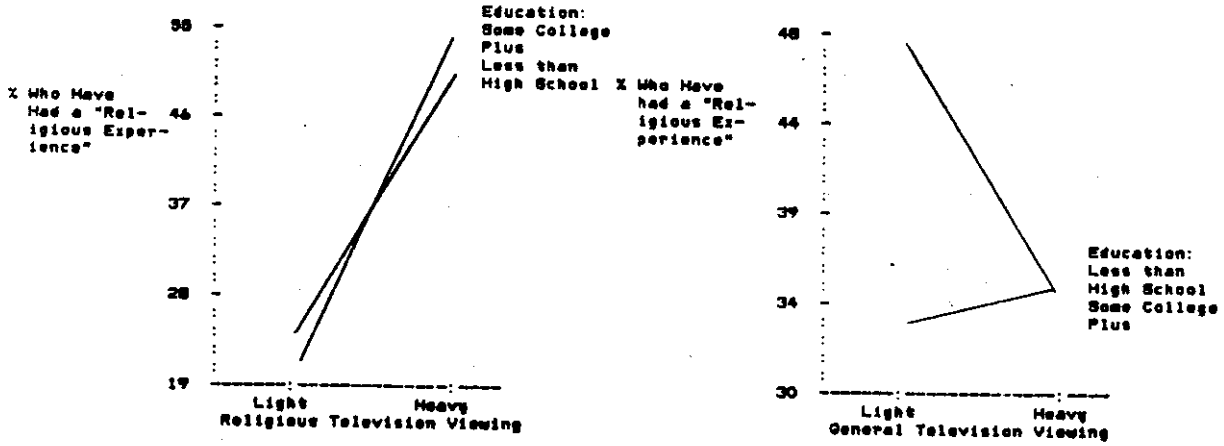

Figure 7:
Relationship of Religious and General Television Viewing to Having "religious Experience," Controlling for Education

Miracles

Respondents were asked "Do you believe in miracles?" Figure 8 shows that viewing religious television is positively associated with belief in miracles; this holds, strongly and significantly, in all subgroups (see Table IV.3.8). General television viewing shows a slight positive association with this belief, but only for a few groups. Interestingly, a relatively strong positive relationship is found among self-designated political liberals. In general, the small variations on this table reveal mainstreaming; general television viewing is strongly associated with a belief in miracles among those groups whose light viewers are least likely to hold this belief.

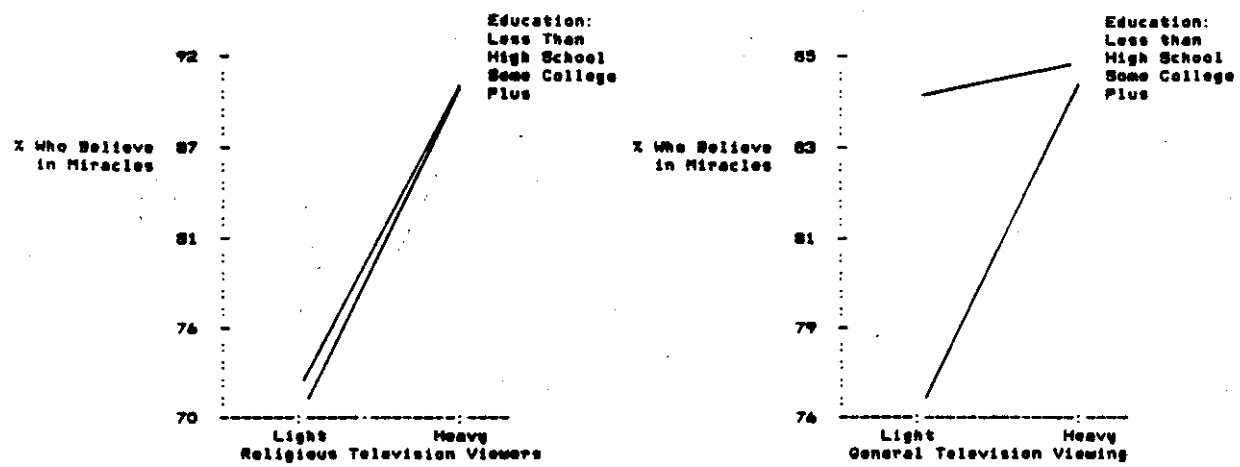

Figure 8:
Relationship of Religious and General Television Viewing to Belief In Miracles, Controlling for Education

Charismatic movement

Responses to the question of whether individuals favor "speaking in tongues" present a pattern similar to that shown for belief in miracles, (see Table IV.3.9), but with one significant difference. All subgroups of viewers of religious television said they "favored speaking in tongues in modern times" more than those who watched few or no religious programs (see Figure 9). The association is significant for all groups except non-whites. General television viewing also tended to cultivate acceptance of "speaking in tongues." Light-viewing groups with the highest acceptance of this practice (less-educated, evangelical, male, and older respondents) had among the largest cultivation differentials.

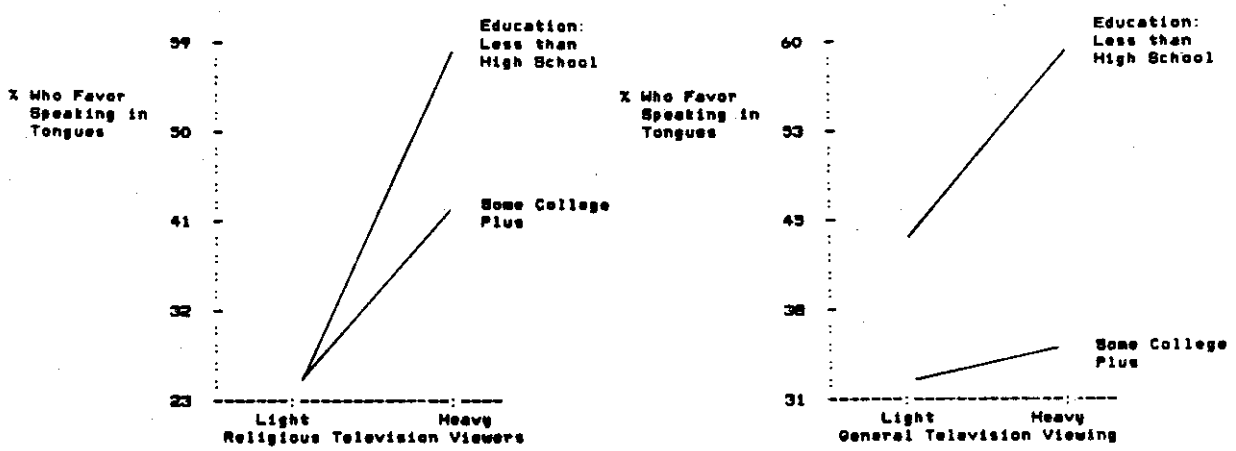

Figure 9:
Relationship of Religious and General Television Viewing to Favoring Speaking In Tongues, Controlling for Education

Church attendance and contributions

While the viewing of religious television programs is positively associated with church attendance (in spite of the fact that few programs mention or urge such attendance) and other measures of conventional religiosity, the opposite holds for general television viewing (see Table IV.3.10). For example, as can be seen in the lefthand side of Figure 10, both the youngest and oldest heavy viewers of religious television report greater church attendance (at least once a week) than those who watch little or no religious television (middle-aged respondents also exhibit similar patterns).

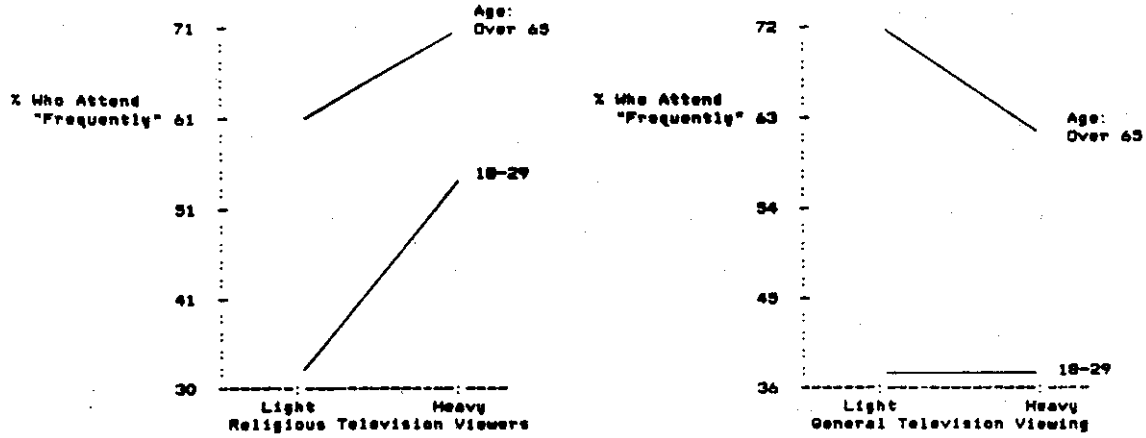

Figure 10:
Relationship of Religious and General Television Viewing to Frequent Church Attendance, Controlling for Age

Heavy general television viewing, however, is not positively associated with the tendency to attend church frequently, and among older viewers, who otherwise attend most often, it is in fact negatively associated. Interestingly, heavy general television viewing goes with significantly lower church attendance among those who are heavy viewers of religious programs -- i.e., the group whose light viewers are more likely than any others to be frequent attenders.

The responses of those who reported an increase in church attendance in the past year extend these findings (see Table IV.3.11). Overall, about one out of five respondents report that their church attendance has increased. Religious program viewing seems to stimulate increased attendance especially among those otherwise least likely to attend: males, high-income respondents, and political liberals. General television viewing has no significant relationship to increased attendance. In fact, among the group most likely to attend church frequently -- those over 65 -- heavy viewers of general television are less frequent attenders than light viewers.

Television viewing relates to the likelihood of making significant contributions to the local church (over $180 a year) in a manner similar to that in which it relates to attendance (see Table IV.3.12). Viewing religious television is positively associated with making large local church contributions, especially among the wealthier respondents. Only older respondents (over half of whose light viewers give over $180 annually) show a notably weaker relationship. General television viewing, however, shows

consistent (and mostly significant) negative relationships to local church contributions. The data suggest that viewing religious programs is suppressing this pattern; with exposure to religious television controlled, the negative relationship for general television viewing increases.

It has been suggested that viewers who contribute to religious programs might give less to their local places of worship. As a measure of this, respondents were asked whether their contributions to religious programs and local churches had increased, stayed the same, or decreased in the past three years. As was noted above, a relatively small number of regional survey respondents reported giving to religious programs at all, but comparing their reported change in giving to these ministries to their reported change in giving to their local churches, revealed a strong positive relationship ($r=.350$; $p<.001$, controlling for religious program and general television viewing, church attendance, age, sex, education, and income). This suggests that giving more to religious programs goes with increased giving to local churches. The table below presents the relationship between these two measures.

Change in Contributions to Local Church Among Categories of Change in Giving to Religious Television (Past Three Years)

	Giving to Religious Television:			
	De-creased	Stayed the Same	In-creased	Total
% Whose Giving to Local Church:				
Decreased	39.2	9.7	1.1	11.7
Stayed the Same	27.5	38.8	24.2	33.0
Increased	33.3	51.5	74.7	55.3
Total (100%=)	95	196	51	342

As can be seen, the majority of respondents reported no change in their giving to religious programs. The majority of this group (55 percent) also reported that their giving to their local churches had increased. Among those who reported an increase in contributions to religious television, however, 75 percent also increased their giving to their church. Among those who reported decreased contribution to religious television, the numbers who increased and decreased giving to local churches were nearly equal. There is thus no evidence here to suggest that contributing to religious television programs has a negative effect on giving to local churches.

Participation in local church activities

Participation in non-worship activities at church is also positively associated with religious but not with general television viewing (see Table IV.3.13). Heavy viewers of religious programs are significantly more likely than light viewers to participate "frequently" in such activities, as was also demonstrated in the national survey. The relationship is fairly stable across most subgroups; the variations also tend to show mainstreaming. Heavy viewers of general television, by contrast, are less likely to participate, though the relationships are weaker and reach statistical significance less often.

As an unobtrusive measure of the effect of viewing religious television on these "conventional" behaviors, respondents were asked, at different points in the questionnaire, whether their local church participation and viewing of religious programs had increased, decreased, or stayed the same in the past year. These issues were addressed in the national survey and revealed that local church participation and viewing religious programs tend to increase together ($r=.133, p<.001$). (There is no significant diminution of this relationship when controls for age, sex, income, and education are applied.) As might be expected, this relationship differs among denominational subgroups in the regional sample. It is strongest among Evangelicals ($r=.112, p<.01$) and weaker and not significant among non-Evangelical Protestants ($r=.069$). Within categories of fundamentalism, the associational pattern between viewing religious programs and attendance is

different. Among the "most fundamentalist" viewers, it is stronger than it is overall ($r=.140, p<.001$). For the "least fundamentalist" group, it is also stronger ($r=.130, p<.01$)). But for those in the middle, it is slightly weaker ($r=.086$).

Table IV.3.14 presents percentages of those attending church once a week or more, classified by denomination (Evangelical, mainline Protestant, Catholic, Other). Watching religious programs is associated with greater church attendance for all denominations, and the relationship is monotonic for all but Catholics. There is a strong tendency for those groups with lower percentages of frequent attendance among light viewers to show greater positive differentials in reported attendance.

Table IV.3.14 also presents the same dependent variable (those who attend once a week or more) among subgroups on our literalist/charismatic scale. The pattern here is different. There are clear, positive associations only for those who score at the low or high extremes on "fundamentalism." For those of "medium" fundamentalism, however, the relationship is curvilinear; those who watch rarely are more likely to attend church frequently than those who do not watch at all, but those who watch the most attend less frequently.

Table IV.3.15 presents the same subgroup breakdowns, this time for the proportion of respondents who annually contribute $180 or more to their place of worship. Percentages for light viewers are all quite similar, but the Mainline Protestants and "Other Faiths" categories show the largest positive difference in reported giving when they are more frequent viewers. Only Catholics are less

likely to report this level of giving when they are more frequent viewers. Classifications by the literalist/charismatic scale are even more interesting. Only non-fundamentalists report a significantly higher level of giving associated with viewing, while both other groups report less (though not significantly less) giving with increasing levels of viewing.

Social, political, and sexual attitudes

Several questions on our survey focus on social and political attitudes. It has been generally assumed that religious programs reflect politically conservative views and consequently attract generally conservative audiences. The results of the national survey underscored this tendency, and it is borne out by the results of the regional surveys. Heavy viewers of religious programs are most likely to describe themselves as conservative; heavy viewers of general television are most likely to describe themselves as moderate, as seen in the table below (cf. Gerbner et al. 1984).

Political Self-Designations by Light and Heavy Viewers of Religious and General Television

	Religious TV Viewing		General TV Viewing	
	Light %	Heavy %	Light %	Heavy %
Liberal	17	12	15	14
Moderate	47	42	43	47
Conservative	36	45	42	39
Total (100%=)	(1153)	(1110)	(1496)	(823)

Three-fifths of respondents in the regional sample favor a freeze on nuclear weapons (cf. Table IV.3.16); but among those who watch religious programs more often, the percent opposed reaches 47 percent (contrasted with 37 percent among those who watch few or no religious programs). Among those who attend church once a week or more, heavy viewers of religious programs are 10 percent more likely to oppose a nuclear freeze than are light viewers (45 percent vs. 35 percent). Heavy viewers of religious programs are more likely to oppose a nuclear freeze in all subgroups, except among those over 65 years old, an exception that suggests mainstreaming.

Conversely, viewing general television programs is associated, in this sample, with being more likely to favor a nuclear freeze; the overall difference is comparable to the opposite difference between heavy and light viewers of religious programs. Mainstreaming can be seen in the relationship of political attitude to television viewing among conservatives: heavy-viewing

conservatives are 12 percent more likely than light-viewing conservatives to favor a nuclear freeze.

In response to another question, nearly 80 percent of respondents said they favor tougher laws against pornography (Table IV.3.17). Given the high overall level of support for such laws, we find few significant relationships with the viewing of either general or religious television programs. Heavy viewing of general television is consistently (but not significantly) associated with less support for tougher laws against pornography; viewing religious programs is consistently (and frequently significantly) associated with more support. Over 85 percent of regular churchgoers favor tougher laws, regardless of whether they view religious programs; but among infrequent churchgoers, viewing of religious programs is associated with a difference of 7 percentage points (69 percent of light viewers as compared to 76 percent of heavy viewers favor these laws).

Another question asked about attitudes toward the death penalty. Overall, nearly three quarters of respondents favor the death penalty for persons convicted of murder. However, those who view either more religious programs or more general television programs report lower levels of support (Table IV.3.18). The relationship for viewing religious programs is sharply moderated by education, but in inconsistent ways.

Finally, respondents were asked whether they voted in the 1980 presidential election; three-quarters of the sample said that they had. Viewing of general television is consistently and significantly associated with not voting, but viewing of religious

programs is associated with voting (Table IV.3.19). The finding that viewing religious programs is more strongly associated with voting in 1980 than is viewing of general programs is of special significance, given the speculations in press about the the role of the "electronic church" in that election.

Attitudes toward sex and sexuality

The presentation of sex and sexual information on general television is a highly charged issue. Few topics are as controversial in their implications for values, morals, and behavior. Indeed, a commonly held belief is that dissatisfaction and disapproval of the sexual portrayals of general television may lead some viewers to prefer "safer" religious programs. The national survey found a significant tendency for viewers of religious programs to be "very dissatisfied" with today's moral climate.

Our own content studies (as well as those conducted by others) provide a fairly clear picture of the nature of general television's sexual representations. In brief, there is virtually no "explicit" sex, but a great deal of innuendo. Premarital sex in particular is presented, frequently, in a consistently positive manner. On the other hand, extramarital sexual relations and homosexuality tend to be portrayed in a more critical, negative light. These patterns are reflected in cultivation analyses which show that heavy viewers tend to be more likely than light viewers to approve of premarital sex but less likely to approve of

extramarital sex or homosexuality (Gerbner et al. 1982).

As noted above, discussions or presentations of sexuality do not appear very often in our sample of religious programs. When sexuality does appear, though, it is most often treated negatively. In addition, the issue of "sinful sexual behavior" appeared with somewhat comparable frequency in all types of religious programs (cf. Table IV.1.9). Therefore, we might expect somewhat different associations with religious and general television viewing and attitudes regarding sexuality, especially in terms of premarital sex.

The sample does show a marked difference in attitudes toward premarital sex, as opposed to extramarital sex and homosexuality. While less than half of the sample (44.6 percent) believe that premarital sex is "always wrong," proportionately twice as many feel the same about extramarital and homosexual behavior (84.1 percent and 79.8 percent, respectively). These baseline differences may help explain the finding that exposure to religious television programs relates somewhat differently to these three sexual attitudes.

Those who who are heavy viewers of religious television programs are consistently and substantially more likely to say that premarital sex is "always wrong." The relationships are quite large and highly statistically significant across all subgroups, with no exceptions. Regardless of demographic subgroups or controls, there is roughly a 20 to 35 percentage point margin between those with lesser and greater exposure to religious television programs, with those who watch more being more likely to

disapprove (Table IV.3.20).

Those who watch religious programs are also more likely to disapprove of extramarital sex and homosexuality, but the relationships are not as dramatic as those for premarital sex. This may represent a "ceiling effect," inasmuch as these two forms of sexual behavior evoke a much higher level of general disapproval.

About 8 out of 10 light viewers of religious programs, compared to 9 out of 10 heavy viewers, say extramarital sex is "always wrong." This relationship is most pronounced within those groups whose light viewers are somewhat less likely to be opposed: those with at least some college education, those with higher incomes, those between 30 and 49 years old, and those who designate themselves as politically "liberal." A clear majority of respondents are opposed to extramarital sex regardless of viewing levels or demographic background, but heavier viewers of religion are even more likely to be opposed, particularly in those subgroups whose light viewers are somewhat less likely to be opposed (Table IV.3.21).

For example, among those with less than a high school diploma, 9 out of 10 respondents say that extramarital sex is "always wrong," regardless of their exposure to religious television programs. But among higher education levels, those who watch fewer religious programs express lower levels of disapproval; 83 percent of light viewers of religious programs with high school diplomas and 72 percent of light viewers of religious programs with at least some college education are opposed. Among heavier viewers of

religious programs, however, the proportion who are against extramarital sex remains relatively stable at all educational levels; 90 percent of heavy viewers of religious programs with high school diplomas and 86 percent of heavy viewers with some college education are opposed. The overall patterns reveal mainstreaming, whereby the differences associated with other factors are less evident among those who watch more religious programs.

The size of the relationships between the viewing of religious programs and attitudes toward homosexuality falls between the other two. Levels of disapproval among light viewers of religious programs are not quite as high as for extramarital sex, but the differences between light and heavy viewers of religious programs are more marked. Overall, about 7 out of 10 light viewers and 9 out of 10 heavy viewers believe homosexuality is "always wrong" (Table IV.3.22).

The associations are most pronounced within those subgroups whose light viewers of religious programs are less opposed to homosexuality -- those with more education, those with higher incomes, those between 30 and 49 years old, and self-proclaimed liberals. In addition, the mainstreaming pattern for attitudes toward homosexuality appears for respondents with a non-evangelical religious background. The disapproval rate among heavy viewers of religious programs remains at about 90 percent in all subgroups, even though the light-viewing counterparts of some groups are far less likely to express disapproval. (Among those who watch few or no religious programs, fewer than 6 out of 10 of those with more

education, or those with higher incomes, or liberals, believe homosexuality is "always wrong.")

Once again, the differences between groups of light viewers that are associated with other factors are greatly diminished among the heavy viewers of religious programs. Among those with less exposure to religious programs, those in the lowest and highest educational groups differ by about 27 percentage points (with less-educated respondents more opposed to homosexuality). But among those with more exposure to religious programs, this difference is reduced to a mere 3 points.

Attitudes toward abortion follow a similar pattern (Table IV.3.23). Overall, our sample is fairly evenly split on the issue, with 48 percent feeling that abortion should be legal and 52 percent opposed to legalized abortion. Not surprisingly, heavy viewers of religious programs are more opposed to legalized abortions than are light viewers of religious programs. The mainstreaming we have noted for the other sex-related attitudes shows up here as well: among those groups most likely to favor legal abortions (the young, the more educated, those with higher incomes, liberals), those who watch more religious programs differ more from their light-viewing counterparts than is the case for the groups more generally opposed to legal abortions. In other words, the differences between light viewers of religious programs in these groups are much greater than the differences between heavy viewers.

Breaking the sample by age, for example, we find, among light viewers of religious programs, that 18- to 29-year-olds express

much greater approval of abortion than do the older groups (36 percent opposed vs. 55 percent for those over 65), but among the heavy viewers, the difference between the youngest and the oldest groups has dropped from 19 to 8 percentage points. Similarly, the differences between those with more and less education vary from 32 percent among light viewers to 21 percent among heavy viewers of religious programs; the differences between the more and less wealthy range from 26 percent for light to 15 percent for heavy viewers; and for liberals vs. conservatives the range is from 23 percent to 20 percent. In all cases the gap is narrower among the heavy viewers.

General television viewing does not appear to cultivate as consistently (if at all) the traditional sexual values associated with religious program viewing. This may be a function of the particular profile of our sample; as noted above, in previous analyses we have found general television viewing more strongly associated with at least some of these views, such as condemnation of homosexuality and abortion (Gerbner et al. 1982). The relationship of general viewing with opposition to premarital sex is negative (Table IV.3.20), especially among Evangelicals and heavy viewers of religious programs. This resembles the mainstreaming patterns we have found elsewhere, suggesting that exposure to general television programs moderates the influences of other forces (such as religious television programs) that uphold traditional sexual values. A similar, although weaker, association among heavy viewers of religious programs can be found in attitudes toward extramarital sex, which show, overall, a mixed pattern of

slight associations (Table IV.3.21). Arguably, premarital sex and extramarital sex are the categories of "immoral" sexual behavior most "promoted" by general television programs.

Attitudes toward abortion are generally more negative among heavier viewers of general programs, as are attitudes toward homosexuality, although the latter relationships are weaker and more mixed, possibly due to the "ceiling effect" of heavily negative attitudes among light viewers (Table IV.3.22 and IV.3.23).

For purposes of analysis and presentation, we combined the responses to the four questions discussed above into an index of traditional sexual values (alpha=.69). Figures 11 through 13 show the relationship between scores on this index and viewing of religious as well as general television programs, controlling for political self-designation, education, and age, respectively. The patterns of greater adherence to traditional sexual values associated with viewing religious television programs and, to a lesser extent, with viewing general television programs, which we have already noted for the individual variables, can be seen in this index as well. The figures also illustrate the convergence among heavy viewers of religious programs in contrast to the light viewers in the same demographic categories (see also Tables IV.3.24 and IV.3.25).

In addition to examining the relationships between attitudes and exposure to religious and general television programs, we also wanted to know whether frequency of church attendance would influence our respondents' views on sexual morality. We reasoned that religious television programs might function as an alternative

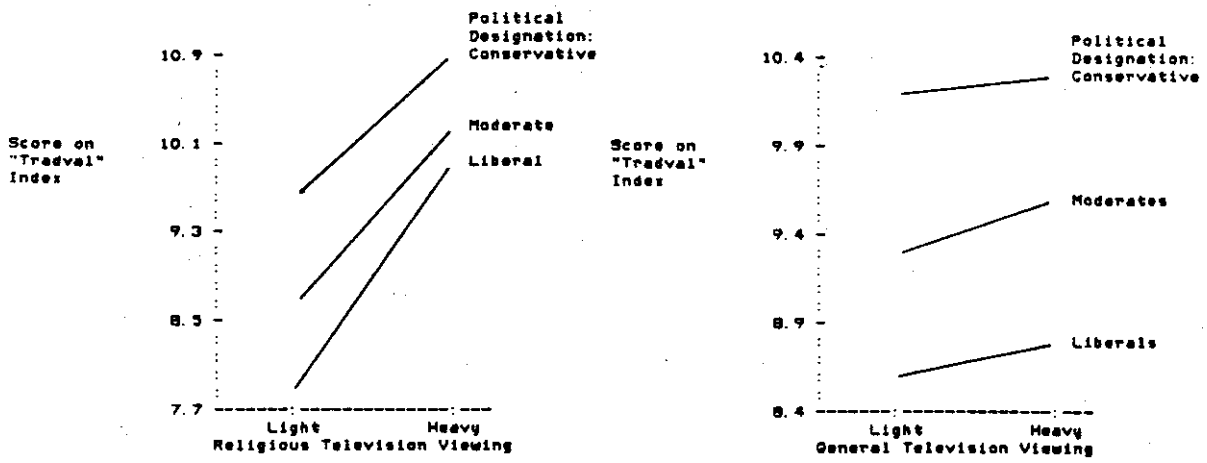

Figure 11
Relationship of "Traditional Sexual Values" (tradval) Index to Frequency of Viewing of Religious and General Television Programs, Controlling for Political Self-designation

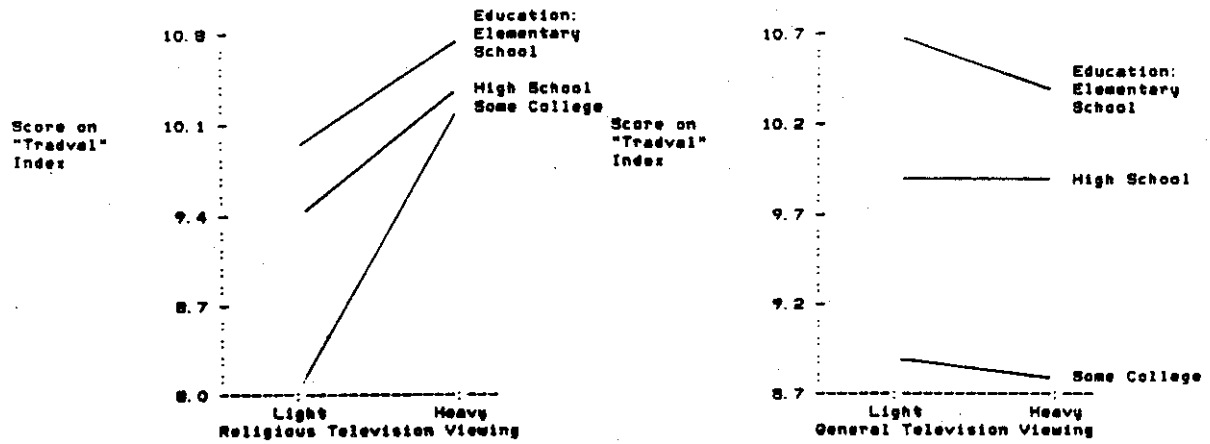

Figure 12:
Relationship of "Traditional Sexual Values" (tradval) Index to Frequency of Viewing of Religious and General Television Programs, Controlling for Education

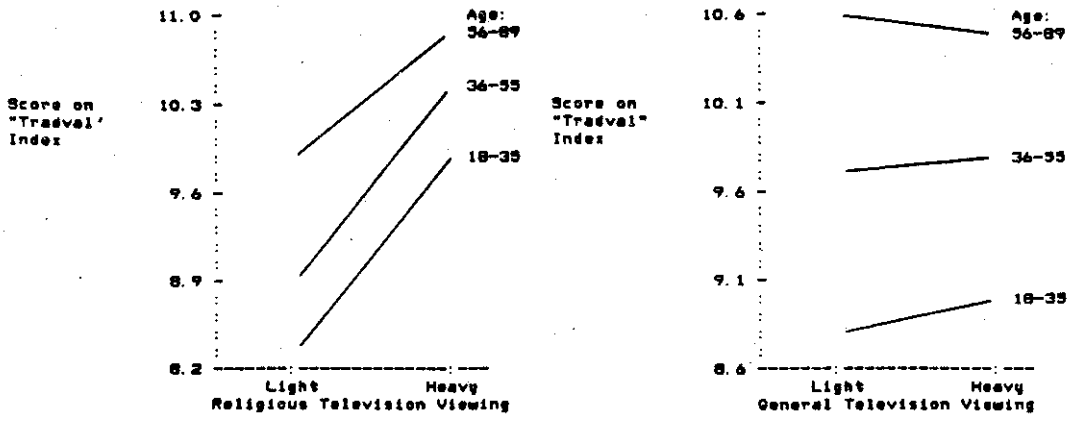

Figure 13:
Relationship of "Traditional Sexual Values" (tradval) Index to Frequency of Viewing of Religious and General Television Programs, Controlling for Age

source of traditional value promotion for those who do not attend church regularly and as a supplemental source for those who do. Figure 14 shows the relationships between scores on the traditional sexual values index and viewing of religious and general television, controlling for frequency of church attendance. There is a similarity in the responses of those who attend regularly but do not watch religious programs and those who are frequent viewers of religious programs but do not attend church services. At opposite ends of the spectrum, the non-attender/light viewers score lowest, and the frequent attender/heavy viewers score highest on the traditional sexual values index. By contrast, viewing of general television is barely related to any differences in response among the frequent churchgoers, who score uniformly high, but it is more associated with higher index scores among the non-church-attenders who are heavy viewers.

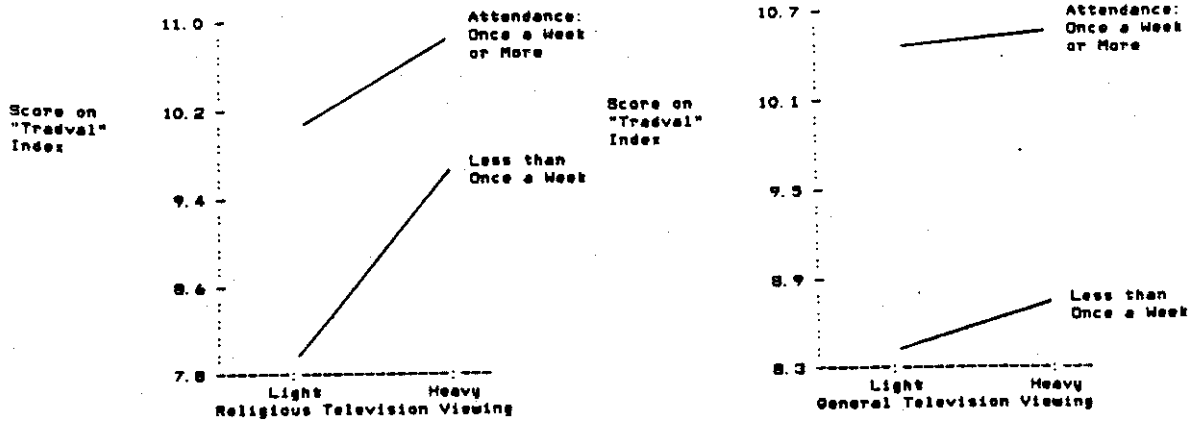

Figure 14:
Relationship of "Traditional Sexual Values" (tradval) Index to Frequency of Viewing of Religious and General Television Programs, Controlling for Church Attendance

The relationship between scores on the traditional sexual values index and viewing of religious and general programs can also be seen in their respective correlations of .39 ($p<.001$) for religious program viewing and .02 (not significant) for general television viewing. The correlation between index scores and religious television viewing remains significant, at .19, under simultaneous controls for age, sex, race, education, income, political views, church attendance, denomination, region, and television viewing.

As we have noted above in the analysis of program content, it is the television ministry programs that feature discussion -- negative in tone -- of non-traditional sexual behavior. Consequently, it would seem reasonable that the viewers of these programs would show the strongest association between viewing and

agreement with the four items comprising the traditional sexual values index. Figures 15 through 18 show the relationships between viewing television ministry programs and scores on the index, controlling for political views, education, age, and church attendance, respectively (see also Table IV.3.26). As these figures clearly indicate, the relationships previously described between index scores and overall viewing of religious television are even stronger and more consistent in terms of exposure to the television ministry programs.

Traditional female role

Two questions on the regional survey assessed respondents' views on what might be considered the traditional role of women in our society: mothers and homemakers supported by their husbands. The questions asked to what extent respondents agreed or disagreed with the following statements: "Most women are happiest when they are making a home and caring for children" and "A woman should not work outside the home if her husband can support the family."

The general pattern of responses to these two questions is not surprising. Heavy viewers of religious television programs are much more likely to endorse the traditional view of women's role than are those who watch few or no religious programs. Among those who do not watch religious television programs, heavy viewers of general television are significantly more likely than are light viewers to endorse traditional roles for women. Among those who are frequent viewers of religious programs, heavy viewers of

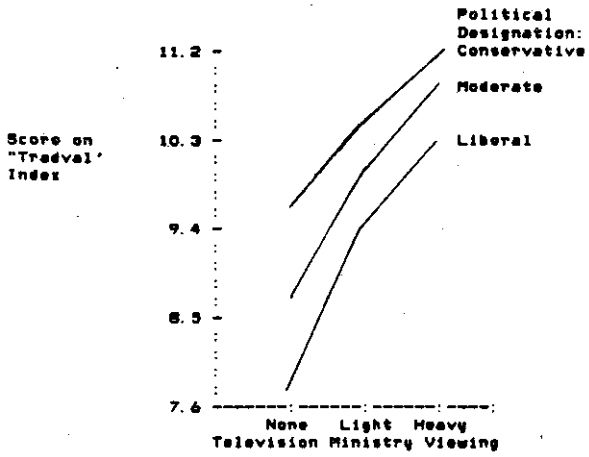

Figure 15:
Relationship of "Traditional Sexual Values" (tradval) Index to Frequency of Viewing of Television Ministry Programs, Controlling for Political Self-designation

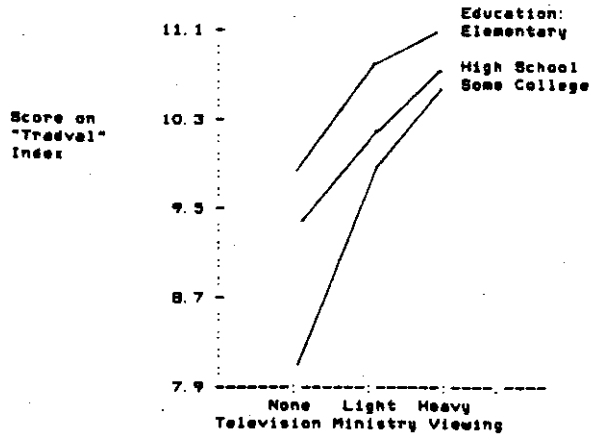

Figure 16:
Relationship of "Traditional Sexual Values" (tradval) Index to Frequency of Viewing of Television Ministry Programs, Controlling for Education

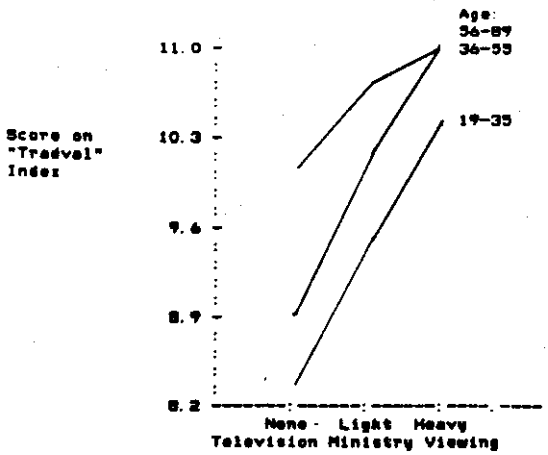

Figure 17:
Relationship of "Traditional Sexual Values" (tradval) Index to Frequency of Viewing of Television Ministry Programs, Controlling for Age

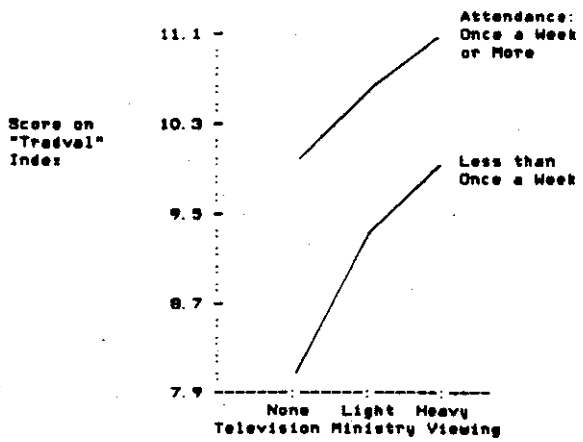

Figure 18:
Relationship of "Traditional Sexual Values" (tradval) Index to Frequency of Viewing of Television Ministry Programs, Controlling for Church Attendance

general television, in contrast, differ little from light viewers or, in the case of the question about working outside the home, are less likely to endorse the traditional role of women. In other words, we see once again the familiar patterns of mainstreaming (Tables IV.3.27 and IV.3.28).

Mainstreaming also can be seen when we examine the relationships between the responses of heavy and light viewers of religious programs, controlling for such demographic variables as age, education, income, and political views. For example, among those who watch few or no religious programs, half of the 18- to 29-year-olds feel that women are happiest as mothers and homemakers, as contrasted with 92 percent of those over 65. Among those who watch more religious programs, 68 percent of the youngest group and 88 percent of the over-65 group express the traditional view. The difference of 42 percentage points between the oldest and youngest light viewers of religious programs contrasts sharply with the difference of only 20 percentage points between heavy viewers of these age groups.

Comparing the responses of those at various educational levels to both questions shows similar mainstreaming. For the first question, the difference between less- and more-educated light viewers is 35 percentage points; among the heavy viewers it is only 16 percentage points. For the second question the respective response differences are 34 and 20 percentage points.

The two questions were combined into an index of traditional female role attitudes (alpha=.50). Figures 19 through 22 show the relationships of scores on this index to those of religious and

general television viewing, controlling for political views, education, age, and church attendance (see also Tables IV.3.29 and IV.3.30). In many instances the characteristic mainstreaming pattern of "convergence" can easily be seen. These figures demonstrate that viewing general television is also associated with more traditional views of women's role, particularly for those groups (liberals, the college-educated, the younger, non-church-attenders) whose light viewers are least likely to express such views.

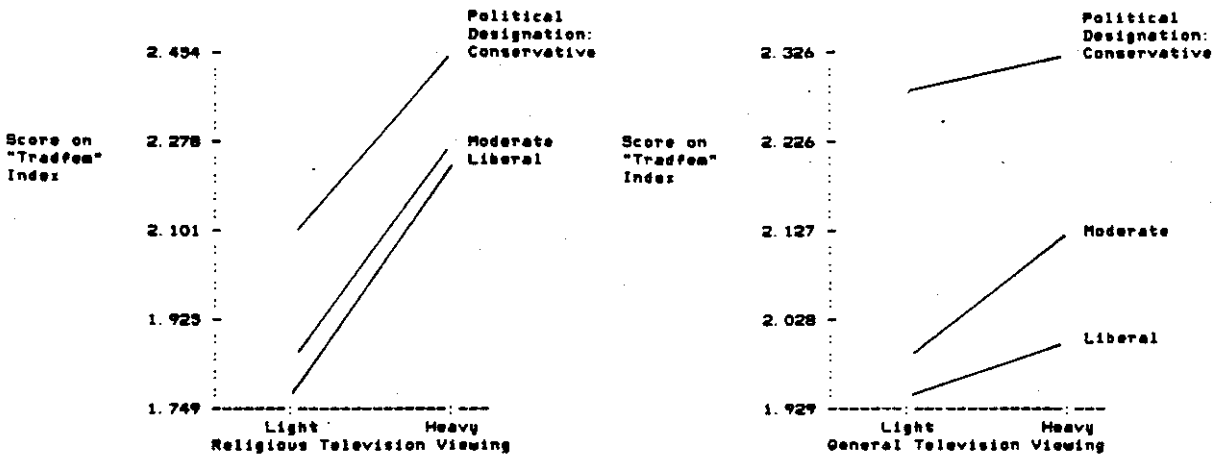

Figure 19:
Relationship of "Traditional Female Role" (tradfem) Index to Frequency of Viewing of Religious and General Television Programs, Controlling for Political Self-designation

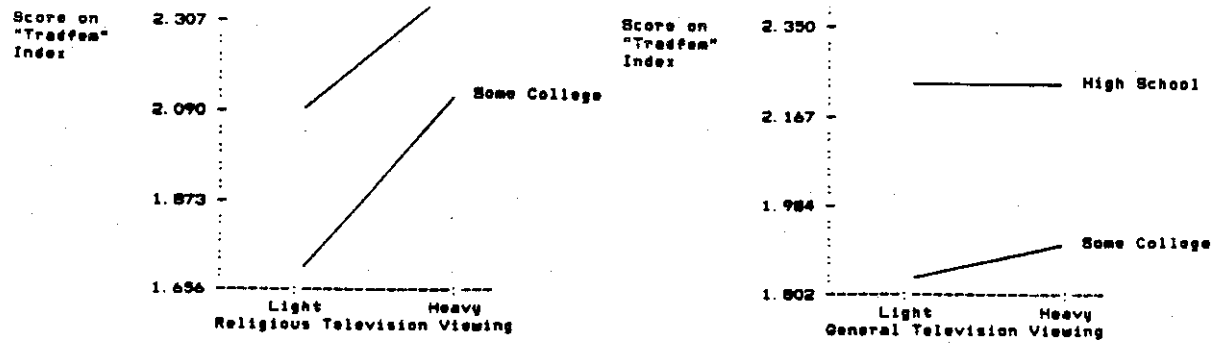

Figure 20:
Relationship of "Traditional Female Role" (tradfem) Index to Frequency of Viewing of Religious and General Television Programs, Controlling for Education

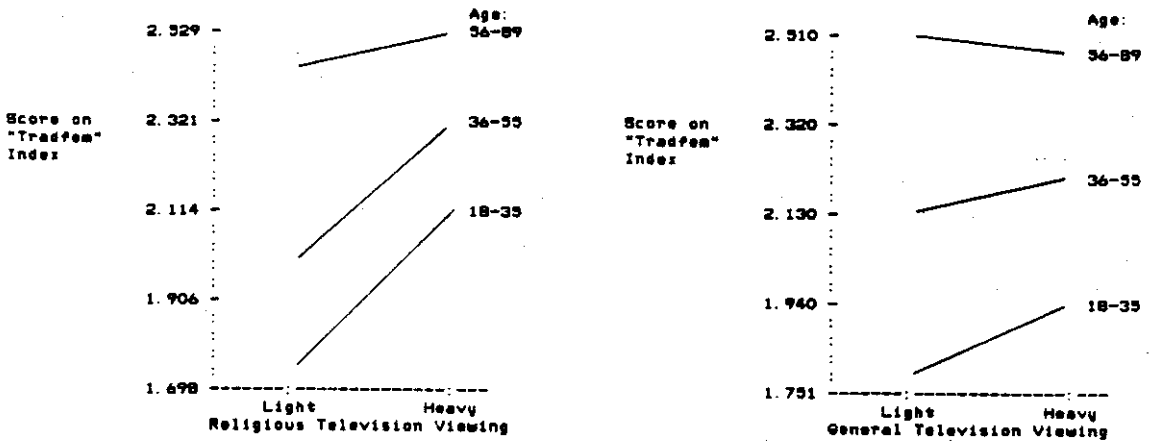

Figure 21:
Relationship of "Traditonal Female Role" (tradfem) Index to Frequency of Viewing of Religious and General Television Programs, Controlling for Age

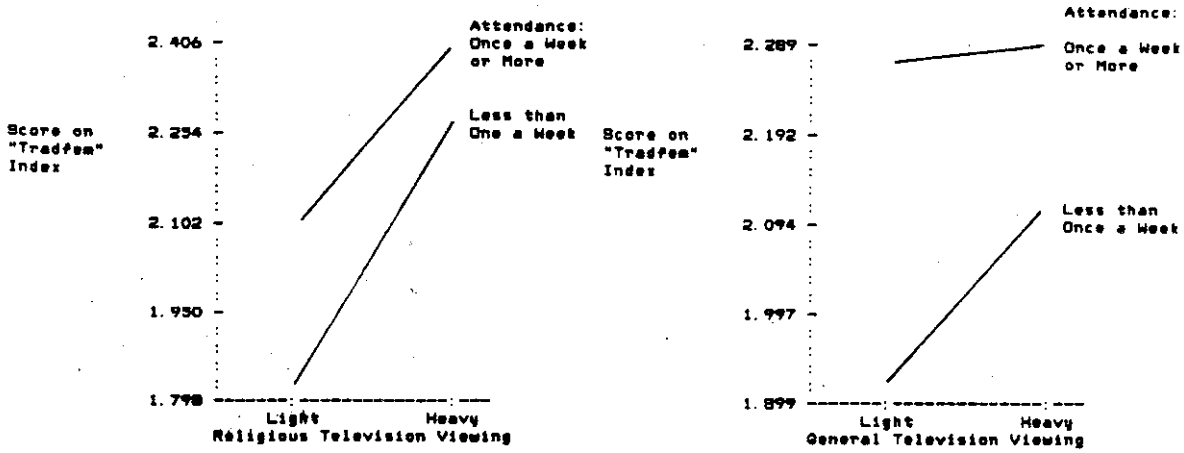

Figure 22:
Relationship of "Traditional Female Role" (tradfem) Index to Frequency of Viewing of Religious and General Television Programs, Controlling for Church Attendance

We also examined the relationships between scores on this index with viewing of television ministry programs, independent of other religious programs. Figures 23 through 26 show that, as with the index of traditional sexual values, traditional female role scores show stronger and more consistent positive relationships with viewing of television ministry programs, controlling for political views, education, age, and church attendance (see also Table IV.3.31).

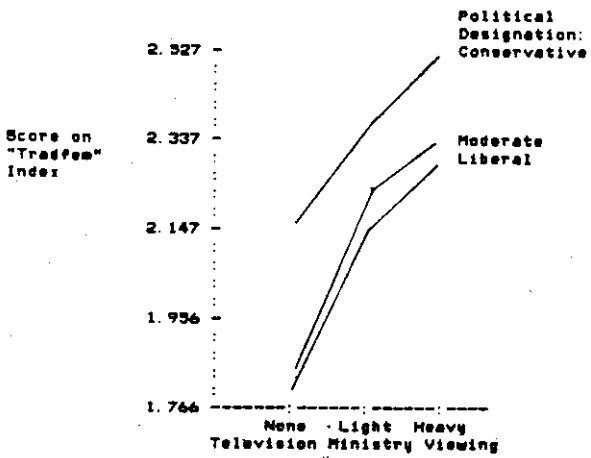

Figure 23:
Relationship of "Traditional Female Role" (tradfem) Index to Frequency of Viewing of Television Ministry Programs, Controlling for Political Self-designation

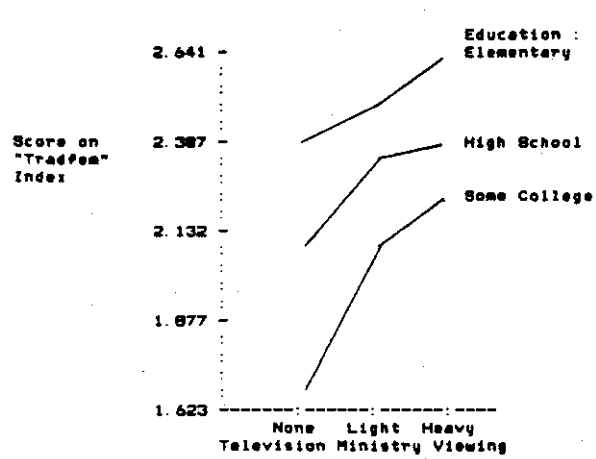

Figure 24:
Relationship of "Traditional Female Role" (tradfem) Index to Frequency of Viewing of Television Ministry Programs, Controlling for Education

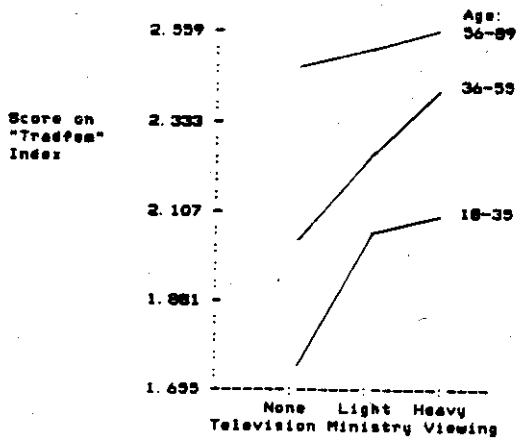

Figure 25:
Relationship of "Traditional Female Role" (tradfem) Index to Frequency of Viewing of Television Ministry Programs, Controlling for Age

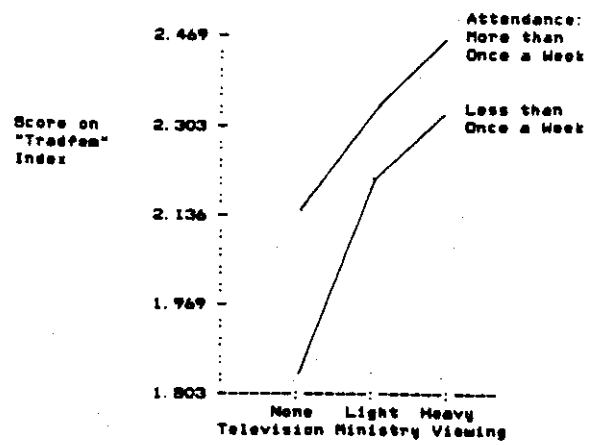

Figure 26:
Relationship of "Traditional Female Role" (tradfem) Index to Frequency of Viewing of Television Ministry Programs, Controlling for Church Attendance

Confidence in people running institutions

Previous cultivation analyses have focused upon respondents' level of confidence in a number of institutions, using data from the National Opinion Research Center's (NORC) General Social Surveys. These analyses have revealed that greater amounts of general television viewing tend to be related to greater confidence in the people running most social institutions (Gerbner et al. 1981). Heavy viewers are more likely than light viewers to have a great deal of confidence in the people running medicine, the military, education, organized religion, the press, television, and organized labor. Two institutions, however, show significant

overall negative associations: major companies and the scientific community.

Seven "confidence" items were included in the current survey. Two of these items related specifically to religion: confidence in those running local churches (Table IV.3.32) and confidence in those running organized religion (Table IV.3.33). There is a positive relationship between viewing religious programs and expressing a great deal of confidence in both those running organized religion and the people running local churches. In every subgroup, those who watch more religious television programs are more likely to say that they have a great deal of confidence in the people running organized religion and local churches, and most relationships are statistically significant. Overall, more respondents have a great deal of confidence in those running local churches (67 percent of the total sample) than have confidence in the people running organized religion (35 percent of the total sample).

Comparisons reveal that 58 percent of those who are light viewers of religious programs, compared to 78 percent of the heavy viewers of religious programs, say that they have a great deal of confidence in the people running local churches. Examination of Table IV.3.32 further reveals that in every demographic group, except among respondents over 65 and non-whites, the heavy viewers of religious programming are more likely to say they have a great deal of confidence in those running their local church.

Watching general television, however, is not associated with greater confidence in those running local churches. In practically

every subgroup, the proportion of light viewers and the proportion of heavy viewers who say they have a great deal of confidence in those running local churches is about the same.

In regard to confidence in those running organized religion, overall, proportionately fewer respondents (only 35 percent of the entire sample) replied that they had a great deal of confidence in these people. Those who watch more religious television, however, are significantly more likely to say they have a great deal of confidence in the people running organized religion (28 percent of the light viewers of religious programs compared to more than half of the heavy viewers of these programs). Moreover, in every demographic group, except among men and those over 65, significantly more heavy viewers than light viewers of religious programs express greater confidence in those running organized religion.

As was the case for the previous question, there is no relationship between general television viewing and expressing confidence in organized religion. About the same proportion of heavy and light viewers in all subgroups express a great deal of confidence in those running organized religion.

This battery of questions included five additional items: the respondents' confidence in people running science, television, the press, medicine, and the government. In regard to respondents' confidence in the people running science, there is a small negative relationship between expressing a great deal of confidence in these people and watching both religious television and general television. Within most subgroups (see Table IV.3.34), we find

that respondents who are heavy viewers of religious television and those who are heavy viewers of general television are less likely to say they have a great deal of confidence in those running science; this is especially true for those under 29, for men, and for the more affluent.

There is no relationship between viewing either religious or general television and expressing a great deal of confidence in the people running medicine (Table IV.3.35). Relationships between expressing confidence in the people running the government and watching either religious or general television are also, for the most part, not statistically significant.

Overall, only one out of five respondents had a great deal of confidence in the people running television (Table IV.3.38). We did find, however, that confidence in the people running television is related very strongly to general television viewing -- respondents who are heavy viewers of general television, in every subgroup, are significantly more likely than the light viewers in these subgroups to say that they have a great deal of confidence in the people running television. There are only a few positive relationships between viewing religious television and expressing a great deal of confidence in those running television; there is a positive and statistically significant cultivation differential for the following subgroups: the college-educated, those between 30 and 49, non-whites, liberals, men, women, and those who belong to "other" religious groups.

Mistrust and chances of violence

The interview included two additional questions similar to those we have examined in data sets such as the NORC General Social Surveys. These analyses have revealed that there is a positive relationship between television viewing and expressing the idea that you cannot be too careful in dealing with people. We asked respondents in this survey, "In your opinion, do you think that most people can be trusted or that you can't be too careful in dealing with people?" Overall, 45 percent of the respondents said that people could be trusted, while 55 percent replied that you can't be too careful in dealing with people (Table IV.3.39).

Examining these data by both religious and general television viewing reveals that there is some relationship between viewing and expressing concern about dealing with people; in practically every subgroup, heavy viewers (whether of religious or general television) were significantly more likely than light viewers to say that you can't be too careful in dealing with people. These results are consistent with findings reported in other studies (Gerbner et al. 1980).

Figure 27 illustrates the general nature of these relationships for young, middle-aged, and older respondents. The lefthand side of this figure reveals that for all age groups, those who watch more religious television programs are more likely to say that you can't be too careful in dealing with people; except for the 50- to 64-year-olds the cultivation differentials are almost the same. The relationship between age and general television

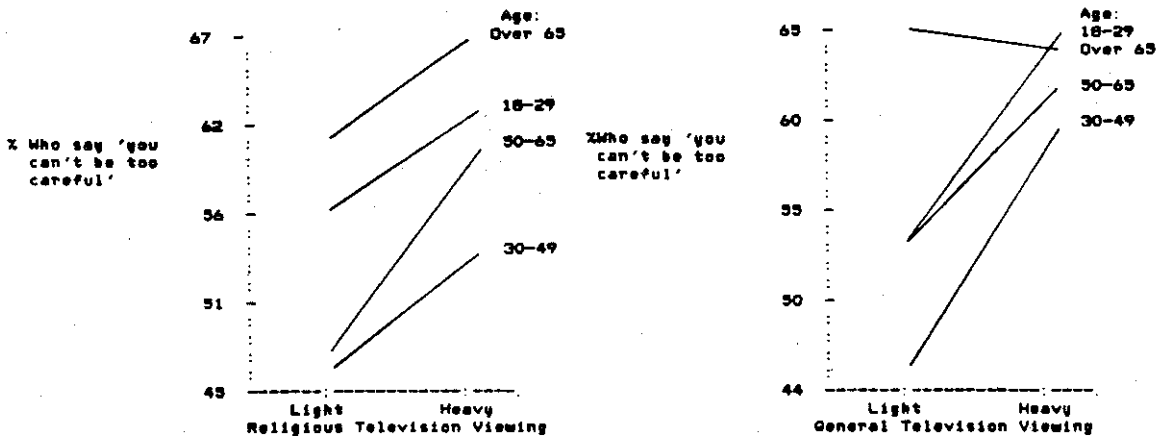

Figure 27:
Relationship of Religious and General Television Viewing to Saying "You Can't Be Too Careful With People" Controlling for Age

viewing shows a typical "mainstreaming" pattern in that about the same proportion of heavy viewers in all four groups give this response.

The last question examined respondents' perceptions of their chances of encountering violence. Repondents were asked, "During any given week, what would you say are your chances of being involved in some kind of violence -- do you think the chances are 1 in 10, or 1 in 100 that you'd be involved in violence?" The "television answer" in this analysis is one in ten; that is, on television characters are much more likely to be involved in violence than people in real life. Again, this question has previously shown significant and positive relationships with viewing.

Overall, only 15 percent of the respondents said that they had a one in ten chance of being involved in violence (Table IV.3.40). The likelihood of giving this response was not related to viewing religious television programs but was somewhat related to viewing general television programs. In regard to viewing religious programs, there are almost no groups in which heavy viewers of religious programs were significantly more likely than light viewers to give this response. The findings for general television viewing resembled those that have been found in other studies. In many subgroups, the heavy viewers of general television were significantly more likely than the light viewers in these groups to say that they had a one in ten chance of being involved in violence. The differences between light and heavy viewers were usually in the same direction, with heavy viewers more likely to give this response.

Summary

The overall relationship between measures of religious belief and behavior and the viewing of religious and general television suggests some interesting patterns. In nearly all cases, higher levels of religious behavior are reported by those who watch more religious television. In the area of belief, moreover, viewing religious programs goes rather markedly with more "literalist" or evangelical perspectives.

Correlates of general viewing show some similarities and some contrasts with those of viewing religious programs. General

television viewing seems to cultivate some of the same beliefs as religious television, such as biblical literalism, belief in miracles, and acceptance of speaking in tongues.

Bible reading and prayer, while engaged in with great frequency by all respondents, are engaged in with differing frequencies by heavy viewers of each kind of television. While heavy viewers of religious television read the Bible and pray more than light viewers, heavy general television viewers pray more than light viewers but read the Bible less. This may, in part, reflect the tendency for heavy viewers to read less in general. Finally, those who watch more general television are less likely to have had a religious experience, to attend church often, to engage in non-worship activities, or to make contributions to their local church.

While many patterns observed for exposure to religious television show "mainstreaming" in the sense that heavy viewers from counterpart subgroups tend to cluster together more closely than do light viewers, the associations are virtually always in the same direction (see, e.g., Figure 4). General television, on the other hand, shows more dramatic evidence of "mainstreaming," not just as a funneling effect but as a marked homogenization of otherwise sharply divergent groups.

For instance, belief in the Second Coming decreases with heavy viewing for those subgroups who are highest in acceptance of it as light viewers, while the opposite occurs for those who are lowest in acceptance as light viewers. The mainstream of general television is thus more wide-reaching in what it absorbs, but the

patterns of these beliefs and behaviors for religious television are strikingly uniform, consistent, and strong.

Heavy viewers of religious programs are more likely than non-viewers to describe themselves as conservatives, oppose a nuclear freeze, favor tougher laws against pornography, and report voting in the last general election. Heavy viewers of general television tend to describe themselves as political moderates, are more likely to favor a nuclear freeze, are not as concerned with pornography (or, as we have seen before, with the "moral climate"), and are far less likely to say they voted in a general election. The coherent mobilizing power of religious television, rather than its reach or scope, represents its political clout.

The vigorous cultivation of traditional sexual values is one of the most distinctive features of religious programs, and especially of the television ministries. General television does not appear to cultivate as consistently, if at all, the traditional sexual values associated with religious program viewing. The pattern appears to be more that of mainstreaming, with older and younger groups of heavy viewers positioned closer to the middle (and to each other) than their light-viewing counterparts.

Similar patterns were found for conceptions of the role of women in the family and in society. The viewing of religious programs supports belief in more traditional female roles. The viewing of general television suggests more of a mainstreaming pattern, in that it tends to cultivate a less traditional concept among older and a more traditional concept among younger heavy viewers.

Finally, expressions of confidence in leaders of local churches (and to a lesser extent of organized religion) conform to the directions of the two mainstreams. Heavy viewers of religious television programs express greater confidence in both than do light viewers. Those who watch general television express lower confidence levels regardless of the amount of viewing.

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