

The Church of the Nazarene A Religious Organization in Conflict and Change

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I. Sect-church Literature

A. Use of Typologies (see attached pages)

B. "Tension" as a measure - degree of deviance from norms, beliefs, values, and attitudes characteristic of the dominant culture.

C. Secularization - Religious groups tend to move from sectarian to denomination. Group tends to accommodate itself to cultural standards. The tendency is toward tension reduction.

D. Project Thesis - The same variables that contribute to the secularization of a whole group will contribute to the secularization of sub-groups within the organization. Different sub-groups will have different characteristics and will undergo tension reduction at different rates. Result - intra-organizational conflict.

E. Secularization Variables (Hypotheses)

1. Pluralism - The more pluralistic the environment, the more rapid the secularization.
2. SES - The higher the SES, the less sectarian the membership.
(Operational measures - income, education and ministerial training)
3. Evangelism - The greater the emphasis on evangelism, the more rapid the secularization.

F. Organizational Resistance to Secularization (Hypotheses)

1. Age (Aging, Period and Cohort effects)
The older the individual, the more sectarian.
2. Organizational size (local church membership)
The larger the church, the less sectarian the membership.

II. Methodology

A. Three Samples

1. Nazarene College Students
2. Nazarene Pastors
3. Nazarene Lay Leaders

B. Scale Items

1. College Scale - Church attendance, tithing, saved, feelings about tobacco use, alcohol use.
2. Clergy/Laity Scale - Feelings about movie attendance, feelings about alcohol use, feelings about women wearing earrings, importance of rules, feelings about whether the church is too conservative or too liberal, importance of church standards, is the church too worldlike?, feelings about tobacco use.

3. Common Scale - Feelings about movie attendance, feelings about alcohol use, feelings about tobacco use, importance of rules, alcohol use.

III. Results

A. Hypotheses are basically confirmed ([see Table VI](#))

Age, education, region are most important

B. By region, clergy and laity are different ([see Table VII](#))

1. Clergy are sectarian regardless except for evangelism ([Table VI](#)).
2. Laity may secularize first followed by clergy ([see Table VIII](#)).

C. External Variable Thesis

1. High sectness provides insulation from environmental secularization
2. As internal variables produce secularization, insulation erodes and the rate of secularization increases.
3. Pluralistic setting produces more rapid secularization. Regional with income, education, church size ([Tables IX, XI](#)).
4. Does not hold up for age ([Table VI](#)).

D. Socialization variables are relatively weak ([Table VI](#)).

1. Non-existent for clergy
2. Influence of secularization variable is stronger than influence of socialization.

E. The organization will continue to secularize

1. External variable process
2. Weak socialization variables - may become weaker
3. Projection of Influential variable
 - a. Age
 - b. Education
 - c. Income

Characteristics of Sectarian Religious Organizations

- Membership is by voluntary association.
- Membership is by proof to sect authorities of some claim to personal merit (e.g. knowledge of doctrine, affirmation of conversion, etc.).
- Exclusiveness is emphasized with expulsion being exercised against those who violate doctrinal, moral or organizational precepts.
- Self-conception is that of an elect, gathered remnant possessing special enlightenment.
- Personal perfection is the expected standard of aspiration.
- The ideal of the priesthood of all believers is accepted.
- There is a high level of lay participation.

- There is the opportunity for members to express their commitment spontaneously.
- Hostility or indifference is expressed toward the secular society and the state.

Characteristics of Denominational Religious Organizations

- Formally, membership is by voluntary association.
- Procedures of admission are merely a formality with few or no admission requirements.
- Breadth and tolerance are emphasized.
- Expulsion is uncommon.
- Self-conception is unclear and doctrinal position unstressed.
- Is content to be one movement among many, all of which are seen as "acceptable to God."
- Accepts standards and values of the prevailing culture.
- Has a trained professional clergy.
- Lay participation is restricted to certain laity and certain activities.
- Services are formalized and spontaneity is absent.
- Education of young is of greater concern than evangelism of "outsiders."
- Additional activities are largely non-religious.
- There is a low intensity of individual commitment.
- Members are drawn from any section of the community but within one church (or one region) membership will tend to be limited to those who are socially compatible.
- (1967:23-25)

Wilson further adds the 1) the commitment of the sectarian is more total and more defined than that of members of other religious organizations; 2) the ideology of the sect is more clearly crystallized than that of the denomination; and 3) sects have a totalitarian rather than a segmental hold over members (1967:25).

Parsons (1965), Kelley (1972), Knudsen (1978), McGraw (1979), and McGuire (1981), in addition to Wilson, give special emphasis to the total pervasiveness of the sectarian orientation.