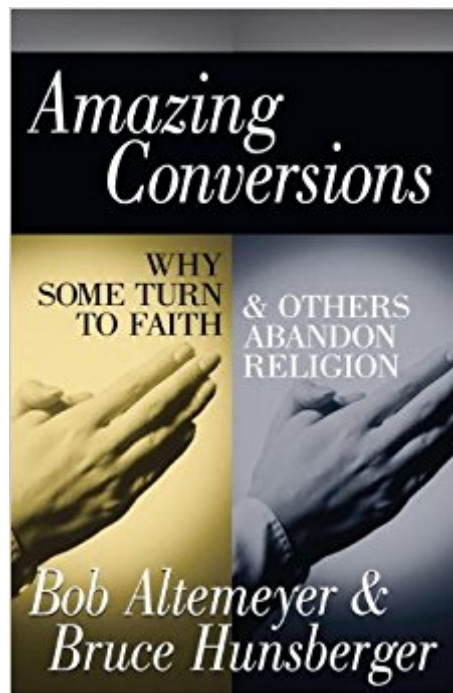


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Amazing Conversions: Why Some Turn To Faith & Others Abandon Religion



Synopsis

This groundbreaking study uncovers fascinating new data on sudden shifts in religious and nonreligious belief. *Amazing Conversions* explores, for the first time ever, the reasons why converts join, and apostates go. The focus of this absorbing study is on some amazing people, with unique stories to tell those who join a religious group in spite of being raised in nonreligious (or even antireligious) families, and those who, at great personal cost, choose to leave religion in spite of having a deeply religious background. Why would an atheist's son become a Christian fundamentalist? Why would a "good Catholic girl" decide that she really is an atheist? The authors of *Amazing Conversions*, both social psychologists, surveyed thousands of young adults to find that small number who were "amazing believers" or "amazing apostates." These rare individuals tell their stories, which are supplemented by their responses to a detailed questionnaire. The resulting picture shows that amazing believers and amazing apostates are dramatically different groups of people, in spite of the fact that their lives now stand in opposition to previous (non)religious training. You, too, can complete the same questionnaire to learn more about yourself and your beliefs. Have you experienced an amazing conversion?

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Christians looking for astounding stories of towering faith, or Atheists looking for the exact moment when all the illusions faded, will be deeply disappointed. That's not the sort of "Amazing" that's involved here. The sort of amazing involved is the degree of transition; those who are raised in one

extreme quartile of religiosity, yet who end up in the opposite quartile. The more common case in society is when, as Proverbs 22:6 puts it, parents "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it." The 1% or so discussed are the exception to that rule - and thus, interesting, in that they may indicate a more general principle. The degree of religiosity or irreligiosity that results is not always that amazing relative to the norm for society; some of the AA "Amazing Atheists" identified are more theist than atheist, and some of the AB "Amazing Believers" are merely non-denominational Christians who seldom pray or attend services. It is where they end relative to the norm for their upbringings that makes the conversions amazing. The methodology is outlined: the surveys used to identify their targets, and the general interview style used. A summary is given of the interview with each of the students (although some personal details are changed for privacy reasons), followed by observing some patterns and some absences. The two groups are also compared, with commonalities and differences highlighted. The book does not and cannot give a final answer. To study a representative sample for a phenomenon that is only happens one percent of the time requires an enormous sample to turn up any candidates at all; and would require even larger samples (well beyond that obtained) to reach statistically high-confidence conclusions.

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