

What happens next? Towards a narrative paradigm of faith progression in adults and an empirical study of religious outcomes.

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This paper examines faith movement or progress in adults, via a performative view of language: The subject achieves or creates something in speaking of faith, rather than using language to refer or sign beyond itself to another object, such as the state of organisation of the psyche, or an acquired skill, belief or value set. The approach assumes that in talk, an individual constructs a narrative plot, where events from their experience are interpreted into narrative events, that either fit into or are rejected from a personal faith narrative. This is not completed in isolation but with others in interactive talk and within the context of and access to, the meta-narratives of each individual's time and culture. Progress in faith therefore, is interpreted as both the continuing construction of story plots and the closed or open, complex or simple faith narratives that result. This paper presents the ethnomethodological analysis of faith conversations, conducted by the author, revealing the narrative construction process. Specific notions presented are: The use of intonation of voice to create and nuance meaning; the ability to construct multiple stories (*behavioural aporia*); narrative as a social skill; and the narrative itself as a behavioural '*leitmotif*'. Empirical examples of speech acts are also offered. The discussion focuses on issues of measurement or analysis of faith language, as described and its potential to provide data for the development of a narrative model for faith progress.