

## ABSTRACT

Religious Identities: Self-Identification and Denominational Affiliation

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Although a substantial body of theory addresses identity as both a social and individual phenomenon, this literature has largely neglected religious identity. The studies that do explore religious identity often operationalize religious identity as denominational affiliation rather than as a religious label chosen by the individual as a self-descriptor. This study will examine data from the 2005 and 2007 waves of the Baylor Religion Survey, as well as multi-level data from the 2001 U.S. Congregational Life Survey, to explore religious identity as a subjective religious label chosen by survey respondents. Religious identity will be analyzed as both a shaper of religious and non-religious facets of our lives, and as the result of demographic and congregational forces. Findings indicate that religious identity is not merely a reflection of denominational affiliation, but is deserving of greater exploration as a type of self-identification.

Religious Identities: Self-Identification and Denominational Affiliation

by

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A Dissertation

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To my daughter, for her burgeoning brilliance and her authentic kindness

To my son, for his remarkable smile and his excited eyes

## CHAPTER ONE

### Introduction

The concept of identity has received thorough scrutiny from both sociologists and psychologists for decades. Some understand identity to be a collective and group-based phenomenon, while others conceive of identity as a set of intra-personal processes, labels, and meanings. Identity has proliferated not only in extensive and interdisciplinary academic research endeavors, but also in the common popular discourse, and whether it is thought of as a purely modern phenomenon (Bauman 1996), or as an essential part of the human condition (Hewitt 1989), identity is now a ubiquitous concept in the social sciences.

However, much of this literature neglects religious identity, which remains an understudied component of our understanding of the self. This dissertation adds to the body of work on identity by focusing on religious identities not as denominational affiliation, but as a set of religious labels which we adopt or reject and the social forces that shape and are expressed by this religious identity. In this introductory chapter I present a review of the literature on identity generally and religious identity specifically. This literature will serve as the foundation on which the subsequent empirical chapters rest.

#### *Identity and Classical Sociology*

Psychologists have commonly understood identity and identity formation as a set of intrapersonal dynamics. For example, Erikson (1968), in his famous theory outlining

developmental stages, understands identity to be formed as individuals pass from one developmental stage to the next, adjusting to challenges that typify that particular stage of development. For sociologists and social psychologists, however, their interest in identity places a greater emphasis on identity as a collective and social phenomenon, rather than as an intrapersonal one. Although the founding fathers of sociology were not fluent in their usage of the term *identity*, their theories were replete with references to collective identity: Marx's *class consciousness* spells out the self-awareness that individuals have resulting from their social class and the ways that the awareness binds them together or pits them against one another; Durkheim's *collective conscience* refers to moral attitudes and shared beliefs that unite the members of a society; Weber's *Verstehen* describes an interpretive process by which an observer understands his or her position in relation to another collective; and Tonnies' *gemeinschaft* captures a collective in which members are more oriented to the community than to self-interest (Durkheim [1933] 1984; Marx [1867] 1981; Tonnies [1887] 1957; Weber [1922] 1978). Identity as a collective phenomenon is built into the very DNA of sociology.

Later works continued to focus on identity not only as a collective attribute, but as one that is continually socially constructed rather than reflecting attributes that are immutable, innate, or core features of a collective. This social constructionism is reflected in the works of WI Thomas (1966), Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann (1966), and Howard Becker (1963), and is most commonly associated with the symbolic interactionist theoretical paradigm within sociology. According to the symbolic interactionist perspective (Cooley [1902] 1964; Mead 1934; Goffman 1959; Garfinkel 1967; Berger and Luckmann 1966), self and society interact with one another in order to

create and sustain systems of meaning that orient individuals to others and to the world. Identity, however defined, is understood by symbolic interactionists as the product of this interaction between self and society.

### *What is Identity?*

Unfortunately, *identity* is rarely systematically defined (Stryker 2000). Its usage can be conceptually unclear, at times referring to many different concepts; identity as a collective phenomenon, as a basis of political or social action, as a core and intrapersonal aspect of “selfhood,” or as merely equivalent to culture or ethnicity (Brubaker and Cooper 2000; Stryker and Burke 2000). This conceptual lack of clarity makes it difficult to define *identity* in a way that satisfies its diverse current usage.

Because of this, it is the opinion of this author that the best definition of identity is a simple one, one that encompasses its many and diverse applications while still grounding the concept and orienting it within common sociological theory. For example, the definition of *identity* according to Peter Burke (2004): “Identities are the sets of meanings people hold for themselves that define ‘what it means’ to be who they are as persons, as role occupants, and as group members.” This definition encapsulates several facets of modern identity theories, including an emphasis on meaning, intrapersonal dynamics, roles, and relations to groups. Gecas and Burke (1995) explain in more detail:

In sociology, the concept of identity refers both to self-characterizations individuals make in terms of the structural features of group memberships, such as various social roles, memberships, and categories ..., and to the various character traits an individual displays and others attribute to an actor on the basis of his/her conduct .... In a sense, identity is the most public aspect of self... identity locates a person in social space by virtue of the relationships and memberships that it implies.

This explanation focuses on at least two important interpretations of the term *identity*: identity as a social construct, and identity as an individual construct. These two are not mutually exclusive, but instead have a dynamic reciprocal relationship with one another. As symbolic interactionists have told us for decades, we come to understand who we are in social context: in the context of our interactions, our structural positions in society, the statuses we hold, and the groups with which we affiliate. This internal understanding of who we are then manifests itself by guiding future decisions regarding the people with whom we will interact, the roles we will embrace, and the groups with which we will affiliate. As Callero (2003) argues, “the self is both a social product and a social force.”

### *Multiple Views of Identity*

There are over a dozen distinct theories of identity that originate from the disciplines of sociology and psychology, and from the overlapping field of social psychology. Theorists have come up with helpful ways of classifying many of these theories and making apparent their similarities and differences. For example, Owens et al. (2010) distinguish between identity theories that focus on the self-image and intrapersonal processes and theories that focus on the cultural and situational contexts that guide identity formation and implementation. Thoits and Virshup (1995) distinguish between “me” identities (which are based on individual roles and identify someone as a certain kind of person, such as mother, middle-class, or progressive) and “we” identities (which are based on affiliation with groups and categories, such as Republican or Latino). Rosenberg (1981) differentiates between two types of identities: those which are ascribed (such as Arab or male) and those which are chosen voluntarily (such as environmentalist or conservative).

Stryker and Burke (2000), two important figures in the field of identity research, compare and contrast their own unique yet similar contributions to the field of identity research. From their perspective, identity theory has evolved in two different yet related strands, represented by the work of Stryker and colleagues (Stryker 1980, 2000; Stryker and Serpe 1982), and Burke and colleagues (Burke 1991; Burke and Reitzes 1991; Burke and Stets 1999). Although both lines of theory explore the ways that social structure affects the self and the ways that the self affects social behaviors, there is an important distinction between the two. The work of Stryker et al. focuses on structural elements and the ways they shape the self, while the work of Burke et al. emphasizes internal dynamics and self-processing and the ways that these affect social behavior.

One helpful way of organizing our thinking about identity is to isolate the different sources of identity formation. Owens et al. (2010) identify four key sources of identity: personal identities, role-based identities, category-based identities, and membership-based identities. Personal identities are those that classify the individual into a category of one (Rosenberg 1979). They allow people to present themselves as unique individuals with unique biographies and experiences. Examples may include: I am certified in CPR; Eleanor Roosevelt is my grandfather's second cousin; I was born in St. Louis in 1973. Stryker's Identity Theory (2000) is an example of a theory that incorporates personal identities; he claims that identities are ordered hierarchically, and that those identities to which we are more committed will be more salient and will have stronger influence on our behavior.

Role-based identities originate from one's position within the larger social structure, and they require interaction with other people on the bases of certain role

expectations. One's identity as a parent, for example, is based on certain societal expectations that a parent be loving, available, and responsible. The role-identity theory of McCall and Simmons (1966) is an example of a theory that addresses this source of identity formation, using a Goffmanian dramaturgical perspective to understand roles as characters that individuals create for themselves as they inhabit various social positions.

Category- and membership-based identities come from perceived similarities that we see between ourselves and others. They can be based on a self-classification in any socially meaningful category (such as Asian, woman, or hip hop fan) or on formal membership in a social group (such as the rotary club or a collegiate alumni association). Like role-based identities, these identities are also reinforced through interaction with others. Tajfel's Social Identity Theory (Tajfel and Turner 1979) explains identity in this manner, focusing on the extent to which individuals identify themselves in terms of their group memberships and categorizations. Those who identify within a specific group or category tend to evaluate others on the basis of their group memberships and categorizations; often, those who are part of the in-group are evaluated positively, and those who are a part of the out-group are evaluated negatively.

### *What about Religion?*

Many of the theories and research on identity, however, often do not incorporate religious identity into the discussion.<sup>1</sup> No doubt, these theorists would not deny religious identity as a viable manifestation and type of identity. They merely seem to discount the

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<sup>1</sup> Although distinct from religious identity, recent work by Stets and Carter (2011), among others, has explored the related field of moral identity, finding that one's moral identity guides their behavior in ways similar to the predictions of Stryker's (2000) identity theory.

importance of religious identity, especially when compared to other bases of identity. For example, Howard's (2000) *Annual Review of Sociology* piece reviewing the social psychological approaches to identity contains sections on several different social bases of identity, including identities based on race and ethnicity, gender, sexuality, social class, age, and (dis)ability. Noticeably lacking is any treatment of religion as a social base of identity. Other recent *ARS* reviews also give little or no attention to religious identity (Callero 2003; Cerulo 1997; Owens et al. 2010). Similarly, after 10 years and 40 issues, the journal *Self and Identity* has only published 2 articles which mention *religion* in their titles, while several have mentioned race-, class-, and gender-based identities.

Why might this be? Why is it that, although social science has displayed a renewed interest in religion over the last few decades, the major theoretical work on identity construction and maintenance has largely overlooked religious identity as an important factor? I offer three possible explanations of this omission.

First, religious identity does not fit nicely into any of the four sources of identity discussed above. Religious identity is simultaneously a personal identity, a role-based identity, a category-based identity, and a membership-based identity. Because many of the dominant identity theories focus on only one or two of these sources of identity, it is difficult to systematically include religion. For example, one's identity as an Evangelical can be understood as a personal identity (I believe certain things about personal morality), a role-based identity (I support Republican candidates, or I publically advocate for certain conservative religious views), a category-based identity (I am an Evangelical), and a membership-based identity (I am a member of First Baptist Church). Due to so

much conceptual overlap, it can be difficult to locate religious identity neatly into any particular theoretical perspective.

Second, much of the research on identity has traditionally understood identity in terms of the statuses that stratify us into a hierarchy of various classes and groups, such as social class, gender, and race/ethnicity. The “holy trinity” of race/class/gender (Appiah and Cates 1995) makes up a large portion of identity research (for reviews, see Frable 1997; Howard and Alamilla 2001; Phinney 1990), and as such, identity is often treated as little more than the sum of stratifying statuses. Although religion is a significant stratifying force in American society (Emerson and Smith 2000; McCloud 2007; Niebuhr [1929] 1954; Park and Reimer 2002; Smith and Faris 2005), it is rarely understood to be as powerful a stratifying force as race-, class-, and gender-based positions in the social structure. The tendency of identity research to focus on stratification coupled with an understanding of religion as a weak stratifying force leads to the omission of religious identity as an important base of identity.

Finally, unlike identities of race, social class, gender, and sexuality, which are seen as ubiquitous elements of our lives, religion is often seen as an identity that is completely unimportant to some, relegated to a narrow sphere for many, and central for only a few. Secularization theorists have forecasted and chronicled a decline of religious authority from importance (Bruce 2002; Casanova 1994; Chaves 1994), and its move from the core to the periphery of Western society. Though the claims of secularization theorists are quite diverse and hotly contested, there remains the sense that religion matters less, and that religion is a less powerful shaper of most peoples’ identities than central role-based identities like race, class, and gender. This relegation of religion to

second-tier status keeps it on the periphery in discussions and theories of the ways that our identities are formed, understood, and enacted in society.

### *Religious Identities*

The omission of religious identity from much of the substantive theoretical work on identity does not mean, however, that religious identity receives no attention from scholars. Although the sociologists, psychologists, and social psychologists who are important figures in identity research (Alexander and Wiley 1981; Burke 2004; Stryker 2000; Thoits 1983) largely disregard religion, social scientists who study religion have given attention to the ways that religion shapes our identities, and the role that religion plays in our understanding of ourselves and the world. This work is quite broad, focusing on such concepts as the cleavages that define our religious allegiances, the ascribed and/or achieved natures of religious identity, the ways that cultural narratives shape religious identities, and the measurement strategies employed in studies that explore correlates of these identities.

### *Religious Cleavages*

A significant source of religious identities lies in our understanding of who we are *with*, and who we are *not with*. As explained earlier, symbolic interactionism holds that our understanding of ourselves, including our various identities, is not something that is merely possessed by us; it is developed, enacted, reproduced, reinforced, and occasionally counter-acted in social contexts. As an identity that is in part *group-based*, religious identity is especially dependent on the groups and categories with which we

identify, and just as dependent on the groups and categories with which we do not identify. What are the groups and labels that define these religious divisions?

The religious classifier most utilized in social science research has been denominational affiliation. Since Herberg's (1955) classic study, *Protestant, Catholic, Jew*, scholars have come to believe that our sense of who we are as it relates to religious belief and practice is rooted in the religious communities to which we belong. Lenski (1961) and Greeley (1972) later reinforced this view, and one's placement within a denomination has come to be seen as the quintessential shaper of one's religious identity, regardless of the specific manner one employs of classifying religious groups (the many strategies of operationalizing denominational affiliation will be addressed below). Recent research, however, suggests that denominational differences may no longer be the most significant religious divisions to one's religious identity.

Perhaps the best-known work about the recession of denominationalism as the most significant division within American religion is the restructuring hypothesis by Wuthnow (1988) and later, Hunter (1991). According to the restructuring hypothesis, denominationalism is receding, and the most significant religious divisions are no longer thought of in terms of denominations. One's placement along a religious conservative/liberal spectrum is seen as a more important component of one's religious identity. Under this new arrangement, for example, a conservative Baptist will be more likely to identify with a conservative Methodist or a conservative Catholic than they would a liberal Baptist. One's religious identity, then, is based more on ideological placement than denominational allegiances.

Other scholars see different ways of conceiving the various cleavages that serve to define religious divisions in modern religion. The group of political scientists known sometimes as the “gang of four” believes that Americans can be meaningfully classified into categories that reflect the intensity of one’s religious beliefs and practices – traditionalists, centrists, and modernists (Green et al. 1996), and that this intensity of religious devotion is a strong reflection of religious identity. Others have found important religious distinctions to be manifested by one’s view of what God is like (Froese and Bader 2007), or by how one considers the relative exclusivity or inclusivity of the claims of their religion (Wuthnow 2005).

Some research suggests that most of these divisions mean very little to people as they construct and understand their religious identities. In one of the few studies to ask respondents about these divisions through in-depth interviews, Sikkink (1998) finds that most church-going Protestants do not define or understand their religious identities in terms of the liberal/conservative divide, nor in terms of denominational affiliation. Rather, most discussed their religious identities in terms of what they *were not*, decrying, for example, the moral relativism of this group or the annoying pushiness of another group. Sikkink finds that most church-going Protestants are not strongly tied to any type of religious label, whether it is based on denominational affiliation, theological ideology, or identification with a religious social movement such as fundamentalism or evangelicalism. Their religious identities, he finds, are based much more on individual choice, on making decisions for oneself rather than accepting the teachings of a church or denomination. This brings us to another important discussion that many scholars of religious identity deem important: is religious identity achieved or ascribed?

### *Religion: Choice or Ascription?*

The issue of ascription vs. choice is a common theme in the literature on religious identity (Alwin et al. 2006; Ammerman 2003; Cadge and Davidman 2006; Hammond 1988). On the one hand, religious identity is clearly ascribed. Like many identities that develop in early childhood, religious identity exhibits great stability over the life course (Alwin 1994; Wells and Stryker 1988). For example, Sherkat's (2001) study about religious switching indicates that, consistent with "strict church" and "human capital" hypotheses (Iannaccone 1990, 1994), individuals rarely change their denominational affiliations once they have been established. Similarly, Roof's (1989) study reveals that less than one-third of the 1988 GSS respondents had switched religions at any point in their lives, and the majority of those switches occurred at a young age.

On the other hand, however, religious identity is also a chosen identity. Several important works have been produced over the last few decades emphasizing the "chosen" nature of religious identity (Berger 1969; Bellah et al. 1985; Warner 1993; Roof 1993; Wuthnow 1998), underscoring America's increasing individualism, its decreasing denominationalism, and secularizing forces that move religion from the core of one's identity to the periphery. As Hammond (1988) describes, "very much a voluntary association, the religious organization represents for such people not an inherited relationship but a relationship that can be entered and left with little or no impact on their other relationships."

The ascriptive or chosen natures of religious identity should not be thought of, however, as mutually exclusive. These bodies of literature indicate that religious identity is both achieved and ascribed. Cadge and Davidman (2006), for example, interviewed

first-generation immigrant Thai Buddhists and third-generation Jews to discover the ways they understand and discuss their religious identities, finding that “members of both groups blend the concepts of ascription and achievement in similar and different ways, particularly around practice, regardless of their participation in religious organizations.” Any treatment of religious identity that emphasizes either the ascriptive or chosen natures of religious identity while denying the other fails to understand religion as it is lived and experienced in our everyday lives.

### *Religious Identity as Narrative Construction*

Margaret Sommers (1994) believes that identities are constructed and understood in the context of cultural narratives. These narratives are stories that we create and tell about how the world works and where we have come from. They are created by us, but they also in turn shape our interpretation of the world, as we are prone to understand our identities and the world around us in the context of these narratives. According to Sommers,

... it is through narrativity that we come to know, understand, and make sense of the social world, and it is through narratives and narrativity that we constitute our social identities... all of us come to be who we are (however ephemeral, multiple, and changing) by being located or locating ourselves (usually unconsciously) in social narratives rarely of our own making (Sommers 1994:606).

Research on religious identity has embraced the notion of personal identity in the context of cultural narratives (Emerson 1996; Shepherd 2007; Smith 2003). We tell stories about what God is like, how he interacts (or doesn't interact) with the world, and whether and how we can best serve him. A Christian metanarrative, for example, is a story containing the elements of orthodox Christian belief, including a loving and

personal creator God, a sacrificial death and victorious resurrection of his son Jesus, and a relationship with God in which his followers are called upon to love and serve him and the world. A more specific Christian religious narrative would add elements to the Christian metanarrative deemed of special importance. For example, a religious narrative consistent with a *charismatic* strain of Christianity would include an emphasis on the arrival of the Holy Spirit after the ascension of Christ and the gifts of the spirit (such as healing and speaking in tongues) that subsequently become a part of the lives of believers.

According to Ammerman (2003), religious organizations are profoundly important elements in the construction of a religious identity, in part because churches and denominations supply many of the religious narratives that structure our religious experiences. In churches, we hear stories about sinners saved by grace, servants of God who sacrificed greatly for him, faithful saints who persevered great turmoil so that they could remain obedient to God, and evildoers who are punished for their misdeeds. These religious narratives frame our religious experiences, and provide the symbols and language necessary for understanding and describing our religious identities.

### *Measuring Religious Identities*

In the absence of in-depth interview data, there are two central ways in which religious identities are measured in surveys – they can be termed *denominational* and *subjective*. The most popular method of measuring religious identity is through denominational affiliation, sometimes referred to as “religious tradition.” This method is the most popular, in part, because most surveys that contain religious items ask about denominational affiliation, but do not ask questions about subjective religious

identification. The denominational method for exploring religious identity has been used in various forms dating back to Herberg's (1955) classification of *Protestant, Catholic, Jew*.

Attempts to present denominational affiliation as a meaningful and useful set of categories now rely mostly on religious tradition, which "comprises religious denominations, movements, and congregations with similar beliefs and behaviors, all interrelated in some historical and organizational fashion" (Green et al. 1996). One prominent classification method is that of Tom Smith (1990). Smith assigns denominations under a continuum that includes 3 categories: fundamentalist, moderate, and liberal. This method of classification has received strong criticism (Steensland et al. 2000), including (but not limited to) its inability to isolate black protestants, its placement of all Catholics into the "moderate" category, its assignment of many nondenominational Protestants to the "fundamentalist" category, and its complete lack of historical rationale. Despite these criticisms, this method of classification is still used in each wave of the General Social Survey.

The best method of measuring religious identity by religious tradition has come to be referred to as "RELTRAD." Originally designed by Kellstedt, Green, Guth, and Smidt, (Kellstedt and Green 1993; Kellstedt et al. 1996) and refined and formalized by Steensland et al. (2000), this method of denominational classification has become the standard in the discipline. It improves on Smith's (1990) FUND classification in many ways: it isolates black Protestants, it creates a separate category for Catholics, and perhaps most importantly, it treats denominational classification as a categorical variable rather than an ordinal variable. The use of RELTRAD as a measure of religious identity

is ubiquitous in the social sciences, but it is not the only way to measure religious identities.

The second central way of measuring religious identity is to use subjective self-identification with a religious movement or label. By this strategy, if you would like to know whether someone is an Evangelical, for example, you do not ask them which church they attend, nor do you ask them about their beliefs regarding the Bible, abortion, or proselytizing. You simply ask them if they are an Evangelical. Respondents are commonly asked about whether they identify as an Evangelical, a fundamentalist, a charismatic, born-again, Bible-believer, or any of a number of other religious identity labels. Although it is a less popular method than denominational affiliation, there are a few studies that have relied on this type of religious identity measurement (Beatty and Walter 1988; Denton 2004; Gallagher 2004; Kellstedt and Smidt 1991; Park and Smith 2000; Schwadel 2005; Smith 1998; Smith and Sikkink 2003; Woodberry and Smith 1998).

This method is not without its own problems. Any time you ask a respondent about their identification with a certain label or movement, you are assuming that their definition of the label is similar to your own. This is a tenuous assumption to make at best. Like all survey questions, the issue of social desirability comes into play. Political scientist Alan Miller (1992) has shown that the proportion of people choosing the *conservative* label increased from 1974 to 1986 even as their actual views remained constant. There was no growth in the conservative views themselves. Miller believes that this phenomenon has everything to do with the increasing social desirability of the *conservative* label, and possibly, the increasing stigmatization of the *liberal* label.

Whereas in the 1960's the term *liberal* meant someone who supported civil rights and opposed the war in Vietnam, in the 1980's its definition morphed into being soft on crime and pornography or favoring high taxes and slow economic growth. The *conservative* label saw a similar transformation as it saw its meaning change from being against civil rights to being tough on crime and supporting economic growth and traditional family values. Miller and Hoffmann (1999) found similar results in their study, and pointed out that the perceived polarization of Hunter's (1991) "culture wars" thesis has much more to do with the changing meanings of labels than with actual movement along a spectrum of beliefs.

#### *The Goal of this Manuscript*

This research indicates that although most of the substantive theoretical work on identity minimizes or neglects the issue of religious identity, the topic is not completely absent from scholarly literature. It is, however, understudied. In the same way that identity theory often equates identity merely with culture and stratifying statuses, research exploring religious identity often employs it as little more than a denominational affiliation. Although denominational affiliation is an important expression of religious identity, it can also be thought of as a shaper of religious identity. In other words, my affiliation with an Evangelical Protestant denomination, for example, is not just an *expression* of my religious identity; it is also a social context that *forms* and *reinforces* my religious identity. The subjective method of self-labeling, by contrast, is perhaps better at measuring an *expression* of religious identity, capturing my beliefs, practices, and allegiances in ways that denominational preferences may not. After all, there are no doubt many people who sit in the pews of an Evangelical Protestant congregation whose

beliefs do not line up well with those of Evangelicalism; there are considerably fewer people who choose the label *evangelical* whose beliefs do not line up with Evangelicalism. The subjective method of self-identification is no doubt a better way of tapping into religious identity as a chosen identity rather than an ascribed identity.

This manuscript will fill two voids: the absence of *religious* identity from most of the work on general identity; and the neglect of studies that measure religious identity as a subjective expression of self-labeling rather than a denominational affiliation. These religious identities should not be relegated to the periphery of academic discussions, nor should they be treated as little more than denominational affiliations. Because religious identities and religious narratives are not relegated only to religious institutions (Ammerman 2003), this study will explore that manner in which our religious self-identifications influence and are influenced by other facets of our lives, both religious and non-religious.

Chapters 2 and 3 will both examine the effects of religious identities, with attention being paid to both religious and non-religion variables. Chapter 2 will use hierarchical linear modeling to explore the effects of one's religious identity selection on their role within their respective congregation. Using a theoretical perspective from organizational sociology, resource-dependence theory, religious identity will be conceived of as a reflection of one's internalization of important church teachings. Chapter 3 will also examine religious identity as an independent variable, but will explore its effects on a non-religious dependent variable, political tolerance. Using a social capital framework, I will compare the effects of religious identity as measured by denominational affiliation to religious identity as measured by subjective self-labeling.

Chapters 4 and 5 will place religious identity on the other side of the equation, employing it as a dependent variable. Similar to chapters 2 and 3, chapters 4 and 5 will differ from one another as explorations of both religious and non-religious shapers of religious identity. Chapter 4 will explore the effects of social class on religious identity, relying on literature that examines the relationship between social class and taste. Finally, chapter 5 will also employ multi-level modeling to examine the manners in which congregations succeed or do not succeed in inculcating various religious identities into their congregants.

These empirical studies of religious identity will not only advance the sociology of religion by linking religious identity to other important concepts in sociology, but will also expand the treatment of religious identity as an important expression and shaper of identity generally. These advances will bring light to the ways in which religion informs our understanding of ourselves and our relationship to the world, and will further the objectives of social scientists of religion whose desire is to continually emphasize and reveal the ways that religion matters in society.

## CHAPTER TWO

### Influence within Congregations: Toward a Conditional Resource-Dependence Theory

The idea that big donors are the most influential voices in congregations is a popular assumption. A great deal of research has explored the dynamics of religious giving, finding strong relationships between religious giving and commitment to one's faith in general and one's congregation specifically. The claim that these committed individuals are among the most influential voices in the congregation is not only a popular assumption; it also seems to be a logical and intuitive one. However, few studies have empirically tested this assumption, and none have tested it using a random national sample of American church goers. Additionally, if these assumptions about the causes of influence within the congregation are found to be true, how can we explain this relationship? What are the mechanisms at play? And more importantly, what other factors contribute to the influence held by certain individuals over decision-making in a congregational setting?

Resource dependence theory posits that the central component to any understanding of power relations is an analysis of the resource exchange among the parties. Those individuals who are able to supply the resources that are necessary for the survival or success of particular congregations are more likely to be in positions of influence within those congregations. However, this paper intends to extend resource dependence theory by asserting that in order to appropriately apply the theory to the distribution of power within congregations, one must account for the fact that congregations possess differential levels of dependence on certain resources.

### *Resource Dependence Theory*

Resource dependence theory stems from an open systems approach to organizational sociology which asserts that organizations never operate in a vacuum; they must enter into relationships with their environment and respond to the changes and challenges generated by that environment (Bertalanffy 1950; Dill 1958; Parsons 1956). These relationships are not merely advisable in order for an organization to meet its goals; they are an indispensable component for the survival of any group, regardless of the group's function, size, or level of bureaucracy.

Resource dependence theory proposes that the power and influence held by an individual or an organization is contingent on the desired resources or access to desired resources held by that individual or organization (Aiken and Hage 1968; Emerson 1962; Jacobs 1974; Levine and White 1960; Pfeffer 1972, 1977; Salancik 1979, 1986; White 1974). This is in stark contrast to conceptualizations of power that treat it as a characteristic of an actor based on his or her position, charisma, or some other individual trait. Rather, power is understood in terms of social interaction, and as a product of the possession of and desire for certain resources. This is well summarized by Emerson, who says that "power resides implicitly in the other's dependency" (Emerson 1962:32). If actor A has access to or possession of certain resources that are desired by actor B, then actor A is said to be in a position of power over actor B. Because power is conceptualized as an attribute of a social interaction rather than as an attribute of an actor, the question of who holds the power within an organization always comes back to the issue of resources. What are the specific resources in question? Who holds these resources? Who desires these resources?

Different types of groups require different types of resources. A profit-seeking firm may be much more dependent on suppliers that specialize in manufacturing goods than would be a voluntary organization, while the voluntary organization may be more dependent on the transmission of certain normative values or goals than would be the profit-seeking firm. Even within the same organizational field, differences in the needed resources are evident. While all corporations remain in a subordinate position to those actors and agencies which control their needed resources, the specific actors to whom they are subordinate will differ according to the resources they need. For example, a startup advertising agency may be in a position of heavy dependence on banks for initial operational costs, or on various certification and inspection agencies for immediate legitimacy. A successful and well-established advertising agency, on the other hand, may depend primarily on their larger or wealthier clients, while banks and certification agencies play a smaller role.

Because organizations depend on these external resources for their very survival, the relative power of an individual within an organization can partly be determined based on the roles they play in the acquisition of these resources. Individuals who are able, for whatever reason, to aid in the acquisition of the necessary resources or to provide these resources will therefore be in positions of power within that particular organization (Hickson et al. 1971). According to Clark and Wilson (1961:152), “the most powerful man in the voluntary utilitarian association ... will probably be the biggest contributor of money; but in the social club the most powerful person may be the most popular. In certain other solidary groups, the most powerful may be the most prestigious.” While the

resource dependence model has been applied in various contexts, we now turn to its application within the realm of religious organizations.

### *Religious Organizations and Resource Dependence*

Sociologists of religion have focused very little on power relations within religious organizations, and those studies that have been undertaken largely avoid the resource exchange that occurs within congregations (Gabriel 1988). Though there are some exceptions (Bowman 1987; Jun and Armstrong 1997), most discussions of power and influence as they relate to religion focus on the power of religious organizations over peoples and societies rather than power dynamics *within* specific congregations. Weber (1963) and Foucault (1980), for example, both conceive of the power of religious organizations as their ability to inspire devotion and inculcate discipline in the lives of their adherents. Secularization theorists also conceive of power as an attribute of religious organizations over their adherents and societies, claiming that the amount of power possessed by these organizations is in decline (Chaves 1994). Not only do these perspectives ignore a possible resource exchange, many of them utterly neglect the intra-congregational dynamics that are essential to understanding concepts of power as they relate to religious organizations.

Like all organizations, religious organizations are dependent on their environments for acquiring the resources they need in order to survive, and it has been claimed that they are in fact more dependent on external provision of resources than formal work organizations: “the inability of churches to provide material incentives and the limited number of potential resource providers place churches in a position of heavy dependency on member generosity” (Jun & Armstrong 1997, p. 108). All congregations

have certain needed resources in common with one another: they all rely on both material and human resources in order to survive. Specifically, this study will examine three resources on which most congregations rely heavily: financial generosity, volunteer labor, and ideological agreement (Hoge et al. 1998).

### *Financial Donations*

A great deal of research within the sociology of religion addresses the correlates and characteristics of religious giving (Davidson and Pyle 1994; Hoge, McNamara, and Zech 1997; Iannaccone, Olson, and Stark 1995; Smith and Emerson 2008). For instance, it is widely accepted that levels of giving are highest among Evangelical Protestants, lowest among Catholics, with Mainline Protestants falling somewhere in the middle (Hoge and Yang 1994). Socioeconomically, raw financial contributions increase as an individual's personal income increases, but wealthier people tend to donate a lower proportion of their income (Zaleski et al. 1994) than those from the lower and middle classes. Personal devotion and commitment to one's church and faith are also large predictors of financial giving (Hoge 1997), and researchers find that church attendance and levels of involvement routinely prove to be among the strongest correlates of religious giving.

Other studies note the persistent "skewness" problem that surrounds financial giving within almost every church in America (Hoge and Yang 1994; Iannaccone 1997b). The common adage that only 20% of congregants provide 80% of the donations to any church is found to be true, and ensures that those who contribute a substantial proportion of their income maintain a special position of power within congregations. Few studies, however, have actually attempted to quantify the relationship between giving and power,

leaving us with a poor understanding of the resource exchange that occurs between the congregant and the congregation. Resource dependence theory can serve as a framework within which to explore this relationship.

### *Volunteering*

Financial donations are not the only valuable resource that has received considerable attention in the literature. Volunteer labor is also a vital component to a church's survival, especially in those churches that see themselves as called to be active in the world, whether as evangelistic forces, as sources of provision for surrounding communities, or some combination thereof. Wuthnow (1991) finds that participation in organized religion has a limited effect on charitable behavior, and that those who are highly involved in religious organizations are more likely to channel their labor toward church related activities than secular ones. Studies show that about half of all church members volunteer in some capacity for their church (Hoge et al. 1998). Evangelical Protestant churches elicit more volunteerism in support of church programs, while members of Mainline Protestant churches are more likely to volunteer for programs to assist the non-church community (Park and Smith 2000; Wuthnow 1991, 2004). Though churches clearly vary in the types and amounts of programs and services they offer, and as such, the amount of volunteer labor they require, it is no doubt that all congregations depend on this labor at least to some degree.

### *Ideological Agreement*

Finally, religious organizations, like all voluntary organizations, depend on commitment to their ideology and internalization of their belief system in order to be

strong. Regardless of the specific goals of the congregation, whether they be numerical growth, community outreach, global missions, or simply an enjoyable worship experience, congregations are in need of people who believe in those goals and who are committed to seeing them come to pass. Even a very large congregation is relatively weak unless those attenders have a sense of agreement with the mission and endeavors of the church. According to Kelley (1972), the primary function of religion is to impart meaning, and strong churches are those whose members exhibit “total identification with group goals.”

This identification and agreement with the goals and ideology of the congregation can be demonstrated in many ways<sup>1</sup>, such as agreement with many of the most important beliefs of the church. For example, every congregation is composed of individuals who have varying levels of agreement with certain theological or social stances taken by the church or denomination (Ammerman 1997; Becker 1999; Dougherty et al. 2009; Warner 1988). People are not robots, and many have disagreements with at least some of the teachings of the church. Those who agree with most or all of the most important beliefs of the church demonstrate commitment to the congregation. Another demonstration of ideological agreement is through identification with a religious label that is consistent with or reflective of the congregation’s belief system (Alwin et al. 2006; Kellstedt and Smidt 1991). Those members of Evangelical churches, for example, who personally identify as Evangelicals are expressing a certain embrace of the beliefs, attitudes, and practices common to Evangelical Protestantism, an embrace reflecting the valuable

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<sup>1</sup> Financial donations and volunteer labor are also certainly demonstrations of ideological agreement. However, this section is specifically dealing with commitment as expressed by agreement with the beliefs and goals of the church, rather than commitment expressed through actions such as giving and volunteering.

resource of ideological commitment. This understanding of one's religious identity can therefore be seen as an important reflection of their commitment to the goals and beliefs of the religious organization.

### *Applications*

Resource dependence theory has been applied to religious organizations in the past. Jun and Armstrong (1997) analyze data from four Protestant churches in Minnesota to determine whether or not the base of power in these congregations is linked to the one's ability to provide necessary resources. Specifically, they explore the linkage between the power and influence of an individual and his or her provision of money and volunteer labor, in addition to his or her family and friendship ties within the congregation. Results were mixed. While an individual's donations of time and money were found to be linked to their influence within the congregations, three other hypotheses generated by resource dependency theory were not supported.

In addition to a small and restricted data set, a shortcoming of this conceptualization is the absence of any contextual understanding of the reality that different congregations rely on certain resources in different degrees. Because of the variation in desired resources that appears in different congregations, any attempt to apply resource dependence theory to religious organizations must take into account this differential level of need. This is precisely the aim of the present study. By taking into account the differential amounts of dependence on certain resources within various congregations, I hope to gain a better understanding of the extent to which resource dependence theory can be applied to religious organizations.

## *Hypotheses*

Given that different congregations depend on resources from their members to different degrees, it is believed that the basis of power for individuals will not only depend on the resources they provide, but will also vary by congregation. The first hypothesis is a test of the basic resource-dependence claim: individuals who provide financial and labor-related resources that are necessary for the survival of the congregation will be in positions of greater influence within that congregation. Stated more specifically,

H<sub>1</sub>: An individual's level of influence within a congregation will be positively associated with their financial contributions and the volunteer labor they provide to the congregation.

The second hypothesis concerns the contextual nature of one's provision of money to their congregation. Specifically, this analysis will explore the extent to which the effect of one's financial donations on their relative influence is conditioned by the congregation's level of dependence on the financial donations of its members. All congregations which accept financial donations from their members depend on these donations to some extent. However, some congregations are in positions of greater financial stability than others: while some congregations have a growing financial base, others may be on the brink of closing its doors due to lack of funds. Because there is variation in levels of congregational financial stability, there is also variation in the intensity of a congregation's dependence on members who will donate large sums of money. Congregations that are in a greater relative state of financial need will depend on members who give large sums of money to a greater extent than do those congregations that are in a lesser state of financial need.

H<sub>2</sub>: Financial donations will be a greater predictor of individual influence within those congregations that are less financially stable.

A third and final hypothesis explores the effect of ideological agreement with one's church on their level of influence in the congregation. Because churches vary widely by their specific beliefs, it is difficult to tap into a single belief measure or composite measure that captures Christian orthodoxy across all Christian subgroups. In other words, the beliefs that make someone a committed Catholic are not necessarily the beliefs that make someone a committed Southern Baptist. In order to test the effect of ideological agreement on congregational influence, this study will specifically examine its effect within an Evangelical context, looking at two specific measures: orthodoxy of Evangelical belief and identification with the Evangelical label.

H<sub>3</sub>: Ideological agreement, as measured by an assent to orthodox Evangelical religious beliefs and personal identification as an Evangelical, will be a predictor of individual influence within Evangelical Protestant congregations.

### *Data and Measures*

Data for this study are drawn from the U.S. Congregational Life Survey (USCLS), a 2001 survey that collected data from over 300,000 worshippers and over 2,000 congregations in America. The USCLS is the only nationally representative congregational dataset in existence that is also multilevel, allowing for heretofore impossible examinations of the relationship between congregational context and individual belief and practice. Data were collected at three levels: 1) an attendant survey completed by all attendants age 15 and over who were present on the morning of April 29, 2001; 2) a leader survey completed by a pastor, priest, rabbi, or other congregational leader; and 3) a congregational profile completed by a leader or key member of the

congregation that describes the programs, facilities, staff, and worship services of the congregation.

The sampling procedure of the USCLS began with the 2000 General Social Survey (GSS) of the National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago. The 2000 GSS asked all respondents who had attended church in the last year to list the name of their congregation. Because the GSS is a national random sample, the list of congregations that was produced by its respondents is also a national random sample. All congregations were invited to participate in the survey. In addition, oversamples were conducted of congregations in eight major U.S. Christian denominations, with the samples of those congregations drawn from the denominational bodies themselves.

#### *Dependent Variable*

The dependent variable for this study measures the amount of influence an individual reports to possess within his or her congregation. An item on the attendants' questionnaire asks the respondent, "Which best describes your involvement in the making of important decisions in this congregation?" Respondents are offered 5 possible responses: 1= I have been given the opportunity and often participate in decision-making; 2= I have been given the opportunity and occasionally get involved in decision-making; 3= I have been given the opportunity but don't usually get involved in decision-making; 4= I have not been given an opportunity to be involved and this is fine with me; and 5= I have not been given an opportunity to be involved and I am not happy about this. Because choices 4 and 5 both reflect individuals who have not been given the chance to participate in decision making, they are dropped from the analysis, as we have no way of knowing how involved in decision-making these individuals would be if they

were given the chance. These two response options together make up 45,693 respondents, or 39.9% of the sample. We are left with a 3-point index measuring the respondent's level of power or influence within the congregation.

An analysis of missing cases reveals some differences (significant at the 0.05 level) between those who are dropped from the analysis and those who remain (as would be expected from such a large sample). Those who have been given the chance to participate in the decision making of the congregation are generally more religious than those who claim to have not been given the opportunity. This is not surprising. We should expect those who have been given a chance to participate in congregational decision making to exhibit stronger commitment to the church, as they have greater agency and personal control. They are more likely to volunteer, attend church more often, have a longer tenure at the church, and donate more money to the congregation. They are also more likely to belong to an Evangelical Protestant denomination, and less likely to belong to a Mainline Protestant or Catholic denomination. They attend larger congregations. Socio-demographically, those who remain in the analysis are slightly older (by 2 years) and have a bit more education. There is no difference in the gender of the two groups.

The coding of this dependent variable selects on a group of respondents that are more religious (based on the measures in this survey) than the others. Therefore, these hypotheses are examining the predictors of congregational influence specifically among those respondents who already have a slightly higher level of influence within their congregations. Those who participate in the decision making of their congregations are already a more committed group; therefore, the amount of variance in religious

commitment items and in the dependent variable will be lower for this subsample than it would be for the entire sample, as the entire sample would include those who have not been given the opportunity to participate in the decision making of the congregation. Less variation in the dependent variable reduces the chances that significant coefficients will be observed, and makes any observed significant relationships more noteworthy due to their decreased likelihood.

Clearly, the dependent variable is not a perfect measure of influence within a congregation. One's amount of involvement in the decision-making processes of the congregation does not directly measure the amount of influence they possess, as it is possible for those who frequently participate in decision-making to also rarely get their way. However, I contend that this measure is a justifiable proxy for influence within the congregation, and that most people would not participate heavily in the making of important congregational decisions if they were consistently failing to see their perspective winning out. Those who claim to participate often in the making of important congregational decisions can be safely assumed to exert more influence over the decision making of the congregation than those who participate rarely.

#### *Individual-Level Independent Variables*

All individual-level variables come from the attender questionnaire that was administered to all adults in attendance in the selected congregations on the morning of April 29, 2001. The sample size is 122,404.

The USCLS does not directly measure the total yearly dollar amount donated to one's congregation. Therefore, this variable is created by multiplying together an income variable and a "percent of income given" variable. The first component asks respondents

their yearly income. Respondents are able to choose from 6 categories, ranging from “less than \$10K” to “\$100K plus.” The second component asks respondents, “How much do you give financially to this congregation?” Individuals may choose from 5 categories representing percentages, ranging from “none” to “10%.” In order to multiply these variables together to calculate total yearly donations, midpoints are used for each category. The midpoint for the open-ended income category is calculated using a Pareto estimate (Parker and Fenwick 1983). The final computed variable is skewed, so the natural log of the variable is used in these analyses.

Two dichotomous variables are included that capture whether the respondent volunteers their time in service to the congregation. For both of the variables, the respondent is asked, “Do you regularly take part in any activities of this congregation that reach out to the wider community?” The first variable captures their response (*yes* or *no*) as to whether or not they have specifically participated in “community service, social justice, or advocacy activities of this congregation.” The second variable captures their response as to whether or not they have specifically participated in “evangelism or outreach activities.”

Orthodox Evangelical belief is a dichotomous variable; those who qualify as Evangelicals based on their beliefs must meet Evangelical standards regarding four different variables (Marsden 1991) - views of the Bible, religious exclusivism, eagerness to evangelize, and conversion experience.

First, they must have a conservative view of the Bible. The question asks, “Which statement comes closest to your view of the Bible?” Respondents can choose between six response options. Those who choose “The Bible is the word of God, to be

taken literally word for word” or “The Bible is the word of God, to be interpreted in the light of its historical and cultural context” are considered to have a view of the Bible that is consistent with Evangelicalism.<sup>2</sup>

The second variable measures whether the respondent is a religious exclusivist, believing that their religion is the only true religion. It asks the respondent to respond to a 5-point Likert scale ranging from “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree” regarding the following statement: "all the different religions are equally good ways of helping a person find ultimate truth." Religious exclusivists are those who disagree or strongly disagree.

Thirdly, a variable measures the respondent’s eagerness to evangelize, or spread their faith to others. It asks, “Which of the following best describes your readiness to talk to others about your faith?” Respondents who choose the response, “I feel at ease talking about my faith and seek opportunities to do so,” are coded as a 1; all others are coded as a 0.<sup>3</sup>

The final question measuring orthodox Evangelical belief determines whether the respondent has experienced some type of conversion experience, as Evangelicals believe is necessary. The question asks, “Some people feel they came to faith gradually. For others, it began at a definite moment of commitment. Have you ever experienced such a moment of decisive faith commitment or conversion?” All respondents who claim to

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<sup>2</sup> The other 4 response options are “The Bible is the word of God, to be interpreted in the light of its historical context and the Church's teachings;” “The Bible is not the word of God, but contains God's word to us;” “The Bible is not the word of God but is a valuable book;” and “The Bible is an ancient book with little value today.”

<sup>3</sup> The four other responses that respondents can select from are: “I mostly feel at ease talking about my faith and do so if it comes up;” “I find it hard to talk about my faith in ordinary language;” “I do not talk about my faith; my life and actions are sufficient;” and “I do not have faith, so the question is not applicable.”

have experienced some type of conversion, however or whenever they experienced it, are included as following the Evangelical desire for conversion. This means that four of the five response options are considered to coincide with Evangelical beliefs. They are “Yes, a number of specific moments of commitment or re-commitment;” “Yes, at one specific moment more than 5 years ago;” “Yes, at one specific moment in the last 5 years;” and “No, I came to faith through a gradual process.” All four of these response options indicate some type of conversion experience. The only response option that does not qualify is: “No, I’ve had faith for as long as I can remember,” which 47% of the sample selected.

Therefore, Evangelical orthodox belief is a dichotomous variable consisting of those who measure up to each of these four cornerstones of Evangelical belief: conservative views of the Bible, religious exclusivism, eagerness to evangelize, and having experienced some type of religious conversion.

As a measure of whether the respondent self-identifies as an Evangelical, the question asks, “Do you identify with any of the following approaches to faith?” Respondents can choose up to 2 of 10 religious identity labels provided. Those who select the label *Evangelical* are coded as 1; all others are coded as 0.

Church attendance is included as a control variable. Respondents are asked, “How often do you go to worship services at this congregation?” This variable includes 6 options, ranging from “hardly ever” to “more than once per week.” Those who are attending for the first time are dropped from the analysis. This variable is not a measure of how often the respondent attends church in general, but how often they attend this

particular church, as this is the more important information for determining the amount of influence an individual might have within that particular congregation.

The length of time that the respondent has been involved at the particular congregation is also included. Respondents are asked, “How long have you been going to worship services or activities at this congregation?” and are allowed to choose between 6 response options ranging from “less than a year” to “20+ years.” Those who claim to be visitors on the day that the survey is administered are coded as missing.

Other control variables are also included in the models; gender is a dichotomous control variable, coded so that male=1. Age is coded in years. Education is measured in 8 levels that range from “no formal education” to “graduate degree.”

#### *Congregation-Level Independent Variables*

All congregation-level variables come from the congregational profile that was filled out by a key-informant, which was in most cases the pastor or priest of the congregation. The sample size for the second level is 434 congregations, 373 of which are used in this analysis due to list-wise deletion of missing data.

In the congregational profile, a question asks, “Which one of the following best describes your congregation's financial situation?” Four possible responses are offered: 1= we have an increasing financial base; 2= we have an essentially stable financial base; 3= we have a declining financial base; and 4= our financial situation is a serious threat to our ability to continue as a viable congregation. This will be used as a continuous variable, with higher scores indicating congregations that are in a relatively higher state of urgent dependence on the financial donations of its members.

In order to control for the fact that denominations have different cultures, histories, and leadership structures, a set of dummy variables is employed that closely resemble the common RELTRAD typology developed by Kellstedt et al. (1996) and Steensland et al. (2000). Because Catholic churches are known for their hierarchical nature, it is possible that their lay leadership may play a lesser role in the decision making of the congregation than the lay leadership of other congregations. Therefore, dummy variables will control for an individual's presence in Evangelical Protestant congregations, Mainline Protestant congregations, Catholic churches, Black Protestant churches, and those placed in an "other" category containing a diverse group of Mormons, Unitarians, Buddhists, Eastern Orthodox Christians and others<sup>4</sup>. Catholics will be the omitted reference category in the regressions.

The likelihood that an individual may be able to actively participate in the making of important decisions within their congregation may be reduced in especially large congregations. To account for this possibility, church size is also included as a control variable. The key informants are asked, "So far this year (2001), what is your best estimate of average weekly attendance at worship services for this congregation? If you have more than one worship service, record the average attendance for all services combined." The key informant provides the value. Due to its skewness, the natural log of the variable is included in the regression analysis.

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<sup>4</sup> There are only five Jewish synagogues, and they are placed in the "other religion" category.

### *Analytic Strategy*

Because the individual-level data are nested within larger groups (congregations), this analysis is well suited for multi-level modeling (Hoffman 1997). When nested data are analyzed using conventional OLS techniques, biased parameter estimates and standard errors result. Hierarchical models correct these biases (Guo and Zhao 2000). In the models, all individual-level variables are allowed to vary across congregations. The software utilized for the analysis is *HLM 6.08*. Due to the limited nature of the dependent variable, ordinal logit regressions will be performed for all models. The proportional odds assumption has not been violated ( $\chi^2=306.28$ ;  $p<0.0001$ ), confirming that ordinal logit models are appropriate for this dependent variable. Within the models, each of the non-dichotomous variables is centered at the congregational grand mean while all dichotomous variables are not centered.

### *Results*

Descriptive statistics for all the variables included in the analysis are in table 2.1. Table 2.2 displays the variance components regarding influence over congregational decision-making. Sometimes referred to as the null model or “one-way ANOVA” model, the data presented in this table are always the first step toward deciding whether one’s analysis warrants a multi-level approach<sup>5</sup>. The very-high chi-square statistic (15580.32)

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<sup>5</sup> Though all of the subsequent regression models are ordinal logit models, the null model as reported was run as a linear multi-level regression model. This is done so that both variance components may be provided. In an ordinal logit null model, the variance between congregations is provided, but the variance within congregations is not. Both of these variance components are required to calculate the intraclass correlation. When the null model is run as an ordinal logit model (not reported), the significance level remains 0.000 (chi-square=12059.45), also indicating that a multi-level analysis is warranted.

Table 2.1  
*Descriptive Statistics*

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	Range
<i>Level 1 (Individual)</i>			
Male	0.39	0.49	0 – 1
Age	50.09	18.32	3 – 100
Education	5.36	1.83	1 – 8
Church Attendance	5.82	0.97	1 – 6
Tenure at Church	4.06	1.69	1 – 6
Volunteer for Community Service	0.18	0.38	0 – 1
Volunteer for Evangelism / Outreach	0.12	0.33	0 – 1
Financial Contributions (in dollars)	3280.57	4256.65	0 – 20331
Financial Contributions (ln)	7.45	1.36	3.91 – 9.92
Evangelical Belief	0.11	0.32	0 – 1
Evangelical Identification	0.20	0.40	0 – 1
Influence in Decision Making	1.64	0.77	1 – 3
<i>Level 2 (Congregation)</i>			
Church Size	608.30	888.78	10 – 5400
Church Size (ln)	5.65	1.23	2.30 – 8.59
Evangelical Protestant	0.31	0.46	0 – 1
Mainline Protestant	0.37	0.48	0 – 1
Catholic	0.23	0.42	0 – 1
Black Protestant	0.04	0.19	0 – 1
Other Religion	0.04	0.20	0 – 1
Financial Need	1.72	0.71	1 – 4

indicates that there is enough variance in individual-level influence over decision making across and within congregations to justify performing the analysis using a multi-level framework. The data on this table also enable us to calculate the intraclass correlation, informing us that 13% of the variability in congregational influence (.078/.598) is due to differences across congregations, and can only be accounted for using a multi-level approach (Raudenbush and Bryk 2002). This model also reports a reliability estimate (not shown) that demonstrates how reliable the sample mean of the dependent variable

Table 2.2  
*Variance Components of Influence Within Congregations*

	Standard Deviation	Variance Component	df	Chi- Square	P-value
Between Congregations	0.279	0.078	379	15410.96	0.000
Within Congregations	0.721	0.520			
Total		0.598			

is as an indicator of the true population mean. For this dependent variable, the reliability estimate is a high 0.90.

Table 2.3 presents the results from the ordinal logit regressions analyzing the effects of the individual co-variates on one’s reported level of participation in the making of important congregational decisions. Model 1 finds support for hypothesis 1, the claim that those who provide necessary resources to the congregation will be in greater positions of influence within the congregation. While being male, frequent church attendance, higher education, and longer tenure at the church all increase an individual’s expected level of influence within their congregation, age decreases expected levels of influence. The three variables that measure the individual’s provision of certain necessary resources are also all significant. Those who volunteer to participate in church activities and ministries, whether of the community service type or the evangelistic type, are more likely play a frequent role in the decision making, as are those who contribute larger sums of money to the congregation.

Model 2 retains all individual-level variables from model 1, but in addition, tests the effects of some important second-level variables on reported levels of influence within the congregation. This model is sometimes referred to as the “intercepts-as-

Table 2.3  
*Hierarchical Linear Models of Influence within Congregations*  
*(Ordinal Logit Models, Odds Ratios Reported)*

Variable	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
<i>Level 1 (Individual)</i>				
Intercept	0.15**	0.09**	0.09**	0.09**
Male	1.21**	1.20**	1.20**	1.21**
Age	0.996**	0.997**	0.997**	0.998
Education	1.03**	1.06**	1.06**	1.09**
Church Attendance	1.65**	1.76**	1.76**	1.78**
Tenure at Church	1.20**	1.24**	1.24**	1.27**
Financial Donations (ln)	1.19**	1.24**	1.24**	1.28**
Volunteer for Community Service Activities	2.57**	2.45**	2.45**	2.24**
Volunteer for Outreach Activities	3.11**	3.01**	3.01**	2.81**
Evangelical Belief Identification as Evangelical				1.22**
				1.09
<i>Level 2 (Congregation)</i>				
Church Size (ln)		0.71**	0.71**	0.68**
Evangelical Protestant <sup>a</sup>		2.35**	2.36**	1.35*
Mainline Protestant <sup>a</sup>		1.82**	1.82**	1.32*
Black Protestant <sup>a</sup>		2.37**	2.38**	1.69**
Other Religion <sup>a</sup>		2.16**	2.17**	1.91**
<i>Cross-Level Interaction Effect</i>				
Financial Need x Financial Donations (ln)			1.03*	
Evangelical RELTRAD x Evangelical Belief				1.10
Evangelical RELTRAD x Evangelical ID				0.97
Variance Component	0.490**	0.195**	0.194**	0.205**

<sup>a</sup> Catholics are the omitted reference category

\* p<.05; \*\* p<.01

outcomes” model, wherein the first- and second-level variables all predict the same dependent variable. As one might expect, belonging to a larger church decreases the likelihood that an individual will participate regularly in the decision-making of their congregation. Controls for religious tradition reveal that members of all four denominational groupings present in the regression are more likely to participate in the decision making of their congregations than Catholics<sup>6</sup>.

Model 3 explores hypotheses 2, which states that the relationship between one’s influence within their congregation and their financial donations is contingent upon the congregation’s relative level of dependence on that resource. This model is tested using what has come to be known as the slopes-as-outcomes model (Raudenbush and Bryk 2002), in which the coefficients from individual-level equations are treated as dependent variables in a regression that includes congregation-level characteristics as independent variables. This model explores how the congregation’s level of financial need influences the effect of one’s financial donations on their relative amount of influence. The other six second-level variables (religious tradition and church size) remain in these models, but are not modeling level-1 slopes. Their effect on the central dependent variable, congregational influence, continues to be modeled.

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<sup>6</sup> Alternative models were explored that employ denominational affiliation in a different way. Rather than inserting variables that measure RELTRAD categories, dummy variables were created that capture denominational families. The following denominational categories were inserted instead of RELTRAD categories: Baptist, Episcopal, Lutheran, Methodist, Presbyterian, Pentecostal, and non-denominational “free church” congregations (a Catholic category was created and omitted from the model as the reference category). The results were the same as the RELTRAD method presented here. None of the key variables of interest were changed in their directionality or in their levels of statistical significance.

Model 3 demonstrates support for hypotheses 2. All variables that were included in the previous 2 models remain significant, and the coefficients indicate the same direction as they did previously. It is the cross-level interaction effect, however, that is of most interest in this model. The effect is significant and in the hypothesized direction. The positive coefficient for the financial donation interaction effect indicates that individual religious giving is more strongly associated with congregational influence within those congregations that are in greater financial need.

Finally, model 4 tests hypothesis 3, the expectation that agreement and identification with Evangelicalism will predict influence over congregational decision making specifically within Evangelical Protestant congregations. The positive and significant coefficient for Evangelical belief indicates that those who hold religious beliefs consistent with Evangelical orthodoxy are more likely to participate in the decision making of the congregation than those who do not, while identifying as an Evangelical has no effect on the decision making. However, it is the cross-level interaction effects that deserve the most attention. A significant coefficient would indicate that Evangelical belief and identity have a different (and potentially stronger) effect on congregational influence within Evangelical Protestant congregations. However, this is not the case. Both are non-significant; ideological agreement, at least in the context of Evangelical beliefs, identities, and churches, is unrelated to one's participation in the decision-making of congregations.

Hypotheses 1 and 2 receive support, while hypothesis 3 does not. Those who provide for their congregations the necessary resources of money and labor are found to participate more frequently in the decision-making of the congregation (hypothesis 1),

and the provision of money has a stronger effect on congregational influence within those congregations that are in positions of greater financial need (hypothesis 2). Those who provide ideological agreement to the beliefs of the church, however, are not found to exert more influence over the decision making, at least not within the Evangelical context (hypothesis 3)<sup>7</sup>.

### *Summary and Conclusions*

The research presented here contributes to the literature both empirically and theoretically. At the empirical level, several characteristics that are expected to be associated with congregational influence are found to have significant relationships. Males, those who have a higher education, and those who are younger participate more frequently in congregational decision making. Catholics participate in decision making less often than all other religious traditions, as are those who attend larger churches. As expected, those who provide necessary resources of money and volunteer labor are also more likely to hold influence within a congregation.

At the level of theory, I have demonstrated not only that resource dependence theory can and should be usefully applied to religious organizations, but that an organizational, and more specifically, a congregational context can matter regarding the effect that one's provision of desired resources can have on their level of influence within that organization. Thus, resource dependence theory has been extended to incorporate

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<sup>7</sup> The level-1 coefficient for Evangelical belief is found to be significant and positive. However, this is not the claim of hypothesis 3. The resource dependence model does not predict that adherence to Evangelical beliefs should lead to higher levels of congregational influence in *all* churches; it should merely lead to higher levels of congregational influence within congregations that ask for agreement with such beliefs. Therefore, the non-significant coefficients for the cross-level interaction effects in model 4 are the important effects, revealing no support for hypothesis 3.

the conditional nature of differential levels of organizational need and to apply this extension to religious organizations. Even though those who provide the resources that are necessary for a church to survive are shown to be more likely to actively participate in the making of important congregational decisions, this relationship can vary depending on the congregation's relative need for that particular resource.

One of the hypotheses that sought to test these conditioning effects received empirical support (hypothesis 2). The effect of an individual's financial donations on one's level of influence within their congregation is stronger within congregations that are in greater financial need, or have a greater dependence on financial resources. The provision of financial resources to a congregation not only results in higher levels of participation in congregational decision making, but this relationship is shown to vary by congregation. However, the other hypothesis testing conditional effects did not receive support (hypothesis 3). The effect of evangelical belief and evangelical religious identity on congregational decision making does not seem to vary by denomination.

One weakness of this analysis is the limited nature of the dependent variable. As mentioned above, self-reported levels of participation in important congregational decisions are indirect measures of relative levels of influence. Future surveys could seek to more fully conceptualize influence within congregations by measuring influence in a few different ways. Reputational power could be measured by asking individuals to record a list of the most influential people in the congregation, and decisional power could be measured by asking about the roles that individuals played in specific decisions or conflicts experienced by the congregation in the past. Both of these measures could be quite difficult and costly to attain in a large national survey like the USCLS, but they

could more effectively tap into relative levels of influence possessed by individuals within their congregations and enable researchers to explore predictors of such influence.

In addition, participation in decision making could also be considered an incomplete proxy for influence due to the fact that many churches frequently employ congregation-wide voting as a means of making decisions. The individuals in those congregations could rightly claim that they regularly participate in the decision making of the congregation even though their influence may be small. This would depend on the frequency with which the congregation employs voting as a method of decision-making. The inclusion of variables measuring religious tradition (or denominational families; see footnote 6) in the models is an attempt to control for this tendency, as Evangelical Protestant congregations are more likely to be democratically led than Catholic and Mainline Protestant traditions.

Future studies could help to extend applications of resource dependence theory to religious organizations not only by improving measures of individual-level influence, but also by improving measures of congregational dependence on various resources. For example, congregational dependence on financial donations of members could also be a function of the percentage of income that comes from members rather than other sources of funding such as denominations or para-church support. These improvements in measurement could continue the progress that has been made in applying theories from the sociology of organizations to religious organizations, and could enable researchers to increase their understandings of varying congregational dynamics.

Finally, this study demonstrates not only the ways in which resource dependence theory can be applied to religious organizations, but also ways that it could be applied to

voluntary organizations in general. As alluded to in the literature review, voluntary organizations are in the unique position of needing not only finances and volunteer labor, but also must transmit certain normative values or goals persuading people of the importance of their causes. For example, in order for a non-profit group like the Muscular Dystrophy Association or the Center against Domestic Violence to thrive and see intended results, they need not only money and labor; they need people to believe in them. Future studies could seek to operationalize the ways in which volunteers contribute to the transmission of these values, and measure the resource exchange that occurs in return.

## CHAPTER THREE

### The Ties that Divide: Bonding Social Capital, Religious Friendship Networks, and Political Tolerance

The Great American Experiment has thrust into full view the question of how we can live in a thoroughly and increasingly pluralistic society, while simultaneously defending the rights of all groups, regardless of their beliefs, to fully participate in the creation and maintenance of that society. It is often difficult to determine how civil rights should be fairly extended to all peoples and groups, as we sometimes disagree about who does and does not deserve such rights. These debates have coalesced around a central buzzword: tolerance. Tolerance has become an important, and some might say sacred, virtue in American public life. Although Americans constantly debate and redefine the meaning of tolerance, the inclusion of tolerance as a central component of American identity remains.

In most of the literature examining the dynamics and causes of political tolerance, it is often defined as one's willingness to extend basic civil liberties to political out-groups. In America, examples of such out-groups include communists, atheists, and homosexuals. Since Stouffer's (1955) landmark study of the predictors of political tolerance among the American public (which he found to be related to church attendance and denominational affiliation), the relationship between religion and political tolerance has received special attention. Although scholars have been relatively consistent in their findings regarding the predictors of political tolerance and their conclusions about lower

levels of political tolerance among Evangelical Protestants, this relationship has not been explored using social capital as a theoretical framework.

This study will examine the role that bonding social capital may play in affecting one's level of political tolerance. Although the potentially negative side of bonding social capital has been explored in detail, it has not been used as a framework within which to analyze the relationship between religion and political tolerance. Specifically, this study will explore the possibility that a denser friendship network within one's congregation may contribute to lower levels of political tolerance especially among Evangelical Protestants, whose levels of political tolerance are lower than most other Americans.

The theoretical foundation of this study rests on two bodies of research. The first involves the general relationship between religion and political tolerance, while the second explores the literature on social capital generally, and bonding social capital specifically.

### *Religion and Tolerance*

Political tolerance is commonly interpreted as the willingness to extend civil liberties to political out-groups such as racists, atheists, or homosexuals. Among the first and most important studies on the causes of political intolerance is the work of Stouffer (1955), who found that those living in rural areas, those who are older, and those with lower levels of education tend to be less willing to extend civil liberties to political out-groups. Concluding that higher levels of tolerance can be caused by greater levels of exposure to different people and divergent viewpoints, much of his initial research has been supported by subsequent studies. Education has frequently been explored as a

correlate of political tolerance (Bobo and Licari 1989; Duch and Gibson 1992; Golebiowska 1995; Karpov 1999a; Stouffer 1955; Nunn, Crockett and Williams 1978; Wilson 1994), as has socioeconomic status (Filsinger 1976; Karpov 1999a, 1999b; Katnik 2002), age (Karpov 1999a, 1999b; Sotelo 2000; Wilson 1994), and region of the country (Ellison and Musick 1993; Fletcher and Sergeyev 2002).

The 1955 Stouffer study also examined the role of religion in determining levels of tolerance, finding that measures of religious behavior (church attendance) and measures of religious belonging (placement in a “Southern Protestant denomination”) led to lower levels of political tolerance. Several subsequent studies have reinforced this relationship between religion and tolerance (Beatty & Walter, 1984; Corbett, 1982; Filsinger, 1976; Jelen and Wilcox, 1990; Nunn et al., 1978; Smidt & Penning, 1982; Sullivan et al., 1982; Wilcox & Jelen, 1990).

Additional studies have paid special attention to the effect of denominational affiliation on tolerance, with a large number of studies showing that members of Evangelical Protestant denominations hold consistently lower levels of political tolerance for out-groups (Burdette et al. 2005; Daniels and von der Ruhr 2005; Finlay and Walther 2003; Hunter 1984; Hoffmann and Miller 1997; Reimer and Park 2001; Tamney and Johnson 1997; Wilcox and Jelen 1990). Studies by Beatty and Walter (1984) and Wilcox and Jelen (1990) found Evangelical Protestants to be less tolerant than other Americans, even after multivariate controls for variables such as church attendance, education and income.

Certain Evangelical beliefs have been shown to relate to political intolerance. Froese, Bader, and Smith (2008) explore how one’s image of God may affect tolerance

levels, and conclude that belief in a wrathful God is a significant predictor of intolerant political attitudes. They propose that when people believe that God is actively involved in punishing sinners (a belief commonly held by many Evangelicals), they will be less likely to extend civil liberties to political out-groups. Burdette et al. (2005) explore the causes of intolerant attitudes toward homosexuals among Evangelicals, and find that levels of intolerance among Evangelicals are partially explained by higher levels of church attendance, Biblical literalism, beliefs that immoral actions can corrupt society in general, and attitudes concerning the immorality of homosexuality.

Other aspects of Evangelical belief may also contribute to the low levels of tolerance exhibited. For example, Evangelical Protestants are more likely than most others to believe in religious exclusivism, or the belief that only one religion is true and that all others are mistaken on some level regarding their claims about God and religious salvation (Smith 2007, 2010; Trinitapoli 2007). This sense that Evangelicals have special access to God and a unique revelation of his truth serves to reinforce group boundaries that are enacted and demonstrated by various moral and behavioral prohibitions. This belief (which some would no doubt label “religious intolerance”) could have an effect on the demonstrated lower levels of political tolerance among Evangelical Protestants. If certain out-groups are believed to be denied religious salvation, it is a much smaller matter to deny them basic civil rights while here on Earth. The denial of basic civil liberties to political out-groups may even be considered a responsibility of God’s servants on Earth, trying to preserve America’s perceived Christian identity by refusing to accommodate those who do not serve their understanding of God.

Though the tolerance levels of Evangelical Protestants have been found to be consistently lower than that of other religious traditions, less research has attempted to explain why this is so. What mechanisms could be causing Evangelical Protestants to be less tolerant of political out-groups? Of course, it could simply be that Evangelical Protestants are simply more likely to possess many of the social and demographic traits associated with intolerance, traits like low education and income, rural residence, and being a native Southerner (Wald 1996). However, numerous multivariate analyses indicate that these differences persist even after these variables are held constant. Other research has explored the possibility that Biblical literalism is the driving force behind the lower levels of tolerance among Evangelical Protestants, as Evangelicals are more likely to believe in a literal interpretation of the Bible (Ellison and Musick 1993; Wilcox and Jelen 1990) than members of other religious traditions.

Much of the current attempts to explain the lower levels of political tolerance among Evangelical Protestants concern various socio-demographic traits and religious beliefs, but do not address the possibility that social relationships can serve to facilitate these views. An important perspective on the nature of relationships among Evangelical Protestants (and non-Evangelicals as well) can be found in the literature on bonding social capital.

### *Evangelicals and Social Capital*

The first comprehensive analysis of social capital was written by Pierre Bourdieu, who defined the concept as "the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance or recognition" (Bourdieu 1985, p. 248). The concept has also been

explored by Coleman (1988, 1990) and Granovetter (1973, 1985), and Putnam's work (1993, 1995, 2000) catapulted the term to a place of importance in modern sociological research. Although there has been some imprecision and confusion in the definition and application of the concept of social capital (Portes 1998), the term has generally come to be understood as networks that link individuals together and the potential benefits and resources that can result from those linkages (Beyerlein and Hipp 2005). In other words, according to Portes (1998), social capital consists of two aspects: the resources gained from relationships, and the relationships themselves.

As scholars explored the nuances and applications of social capital, they came to classify social capital into one of two types. The first type, termed *bridging social capital*, refers to relationships between individuals from different groups. These relationships cross socio-demographic and organizational lines, uniting people who represent different segments of a community or society. The second type, *bonding social capital*, refers to relationships between individuals from the same group and relationships that exist for the purpose of strengthening the group itself. These social ties are often understood to be deeper and stronger than those of the *bridging* nature, and they are more likely to inspire greater group commitment and strength.

Although strong social ties are generally seen as good for society and as positive resources for individuals (Putnam 2000), of late, greater attention has been given to what could be considered a dark side of bonding social capital (Fiorina 1999; Paxton 1999, 2002; Portes 1998; Putnam 2000). When individuals remain in groups that are insulated from the outside world, potential negative consequences can result. Portes (1998) identifies four potential negative consequences of bonding social capital: the exclusion of

outsiders from the group; excessive demands made on group members; the urge for conformity resulting in restrictions on individual freedoms; and downward leveling norms that keep members of downtrodden groups in place. Numerous empirical works have confirmed the occurrence of these negative effects of bonding social capital. For example, Olson (1989) finds that churches with dense friendship networks are unappealing to potential new members who feel they may not be accepted into the group. Additionally, Beyerlein and Hipp (2005) find that communities characterized by high levels of bonding social capital have higher rates of certain types of crime than those characterized by bridging social capital.

Evangelical Protestants are more likely than other religious groups to be characterized by bonding social capital rather than bridging social capital, choosing to focus on spreading the Gospel to non-believers with the intent of growing their own organizations rather than building coalitions or relationships with other churches or non-religious organizations. Studies have shown that although Evangelical Protestants are likely to volunteer for their congregations, the focus of the volunteer labor is often limited to the religious life of the church itself (Park and Smith 2000; Schwadel 2005, Smidt 1999, Wilson and Janoski 1995, Wuthnow 1999). Using data from the General Social Survey, Iannaccone (1994) finds that members of the most conservative Evangelical Protestant traditions belong to half as many non-religious organizations as members of liberal Protestant traditions, but are 31% more likely than liberal Protestants to belong to church affiliated groups. Putnam (2000) concludes that although Evangelical Protestants are more likely to be active within their religious communities

than Mainline Protestants or Catholics, they are less likely to be involved in activities that serve the community-at-large.

Perhaps one of the most comprehensive studies of the tendency among Evangelical Protestants to maintain strong in-group ties has been undertaken by Christian Smith and his colleagues (1998). Characterizing those within the Evangelical Protestant tradition as “embattled,” Smith administered over 300 interviews to self-identified Evangelicals to explore this sense of embattlement.

In this study, Smith (1998) proposed his subcultural identity theory, claiming that the Evangelical church’s tension with the larger society strengthens the commitment that members have to the group. Evangelicals maintain a clear moral separation from the larger culture, and create boundaries through their adherence to stricter moral codes that focus on issues such as homosexuality, abortion, pornography, pre-marital sex, and traditional gender roles (Burdette, Ellison, and Hill 2005; Cook, Jelen, and Wilcox 1992; Davis and Robinson 1996; Ellison and Bartkowski 2002; Leege, Wald, and Kellstedt 1993; Petersen and Donnenwerth 1997; Wilcox and Jelen 1990). These boundaries serve to unify Evangelical Protestants and give them a sense of solidarity in the face of the perceived encroachment of liberal morality. As Putnam (2000:23) notes, “bonding social capital, by creating strong in-group loyalty, may also create strong out-group antagonism.”

### *Hypotheses*

Evangelicals maintain an inward focus characterized by bonding social capital, creating boundaries with an outside world thought to be threatening the foundations of their religious identity. This symbolic distance from the outside world is evidenced by a

strict moral code leading Evangelicals to be less tolerant than those of other religious traditions.

H<sub>1</sub>: Evangelical Protestants will have lower levels of political tolerance for out-groups than persons from other religious traditions or no religion, net of other factors.

This first hypothesis has been supported in dozens of quantitative studies, and is only a prerequisite before turning to my second hypothesis. The bonding social capital that is typical of Evangelical Protestantism coupled with the statistically lower levels of political tolerance exhibited by Evangelicals should lead to unique effects of denser congregational friendship networks on political tolerance among Evangelicals. Evangelical churches are considered “strict” in the sense that they place greater restrictions on their members than most other religious organizations (Iannaccone 1988, 1994). These churches also reduce “free-riders,” or those who are less committed and less willing to invest in the church, creating and encouraging a more encompassing social environment for their committed members, and one that is characterized by *bonding* social capital. Those whose friendship networks are more densely comprised of fellow Evangelicals will be more likely to internalize and reflect the generally politically intolerant perspective of the Evangelical religious tradition.

H<sub>2</sub>: For those belonging to an Evangelical Protestant denomination, there will be a negative relationship between the density of their friendship network within their congregation and political tolerance.

The density of one’s congregational friendship network is expected to have an effect on political tolerance among Evangelical Protestants for 2 reasons; 1) As has been described by the literature regarding the negative side of bonding social capital, narrow friendship networks can serve to close individuals off to outsiders and reinforce

potentially negative views, “bolster[ing] our narrower selves” (Putnam 2000:23); and 2) These friendship networks serve to tie one strongly to the congregation itself. If the congregation to which an individual is closely tied belongs to a denomination which typically holds intolerant views of outsiders, as Evangelicals have been shown to do, these social ties will increase the likelihood of the individual adopting intolerant attitudes themselves.

A final hypothesis explores the possibility that the effect of bonding social capital on political tolerance will be more powerful for Evangelicals when Evangelicalism is measured as membership in an Evangelical denomination rather than self-identification with Evangelicalism as a religious identity. Those who identify themselves as “evangelical” could theoretically come from any of the religious traditions, and therefore do not represent a group of people who necessarily attend church with other self-identified “evangelicals.” In fact, in this dataset, over 30% of those who self-identify as an Evangelical do not affiliate with an Evangelical Protestant denomination (data not shown). Therefore, the effects of bonding social capital should be stronger when those with whom one is bonded are similar to one another and interact with one another in a religious social context. Those who identify as “evangelical” certainly have many important beliefs in common with one another, but they come from different religious traditions. As such, a variable measuring social capital should be less powerful for the self-identified Evangelicals.

H<sub>3</sub>: The effect of congregational social embeddedness on political tolerance should be stronger for those who affiliate with an Evangelical Protestant denomination than for those who merely self-identify as an “Evangelical.”

### *Data and Measures*

This analysis relies on the first (2005) wave of the Baylor Religion Survey (BRS). The Baylor Survey contains questions on a variety of social, moral, and political views, but the majority of the fixed content of the BRS is devoted to religion items, including batteries of questions devoted to religious affiliation, belief, and practices. Consisting of a random national sample of 1,721 U.S. citizens, the Baylor Religion Survey was administered and collected by the Gallup Organization. For further detail about the methodology behind the survey and how it compares to other national surveys, see Bader, Mencken and Froese (2007).

Further, the BRS extends and refines the RELTRAD typology based on the religious tradition typology developed by Kellstedt et al. (1996) and Steensland et al. (2000) by capturing not only the reported religious tradition of the respondent, but also the name and address of the specific place of worship (Dougherty, Johnson and Polson, 2007). Therefore, the BRS is able to place those respondents into a RELTRAD category who may not be aware of their specific denomination. Because the Baylor data take into account the place of worship attended by the respondent and the detailed denomination of the place of worship, they are able to code many respondents as Evangelical Protestants who, in previous versions of RELTRAD, would have been placed in the category of “none” or “other” due to uncertainty about the specific orientation of the congregation.

### *Dependent Variable*

As a measure of political tolerance, I utilize a battery of questions that is similar to the extensive battery of political tolerance variables found in the General Social Survey that measures the respondent’s willingness to extend civil rights to racists,

homosexuals, communists, militarists, and atheists. The Baylor Religion Survey asks one's level of agreement with the following statement: "A \_\_\_\_\_ should be allowed to teach at a high school," filling in the blank with several different groups that are often considered to be political out-groups. I create an index that measures the respondent's willingness to extend this right to four groups: racists, atheists, homosexuals, and Muslims. Each item has a five-point response scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The items are summed to create an index that has a Cronbach's reliability coefficient of 0.73. Higher scores indicate higher levels of political tolerance.

### *Independent Variables*

In order to explore the effects of religion on levels of political tolerance, I will utilize a number of religious measures. Respondents are placed into religious traditions using the RELTRAD typology developed by Kellstedt et al. (1996) and Steensland et al. (2000) and refined by Dougherty et al. (2007). Frequency of church attendance is measured in a nine-point ordinal scale ranging from 1="never" to 9="several times a week."

Two items measuring conservative or liberal theological orientations are also included. The first measures Biblical literalism, asking respondents about their view of the Bible by selecting from four categories: 1="The Bible is an ancient book of history and legends," 2="the Bible contains some human error," 3="The Bible is perfectly true, but it should not be taken literally, word-for-word. We must interpret its meaning," and 4="The Bible means exactly what it says. It should be taken literally, word-for-word, on

all subjects."<sup>1</sup> The second item measures religious exclusivism. It asks, "Which statement comes closest to your personal view of religious salvation?" It is included as a dichotomous variable. Those who select the response "My religion is the one, true faith that leads to salvation" are coded as 1. Those who select any of the three remaining options ("Many roads lead to salvation;" "I do not believe in religious salvation;" or "I don't know") are coded as 0.

Evangelical self-identification is measured on the BRS as a question that asks, "Do any of the following terms describe your religious identity?" Respondents are allowed to choose "yes" or "no" to a series of religious identity terms, and "evangelical" is one of the terms listed. It is employed as a dummy variable. Taken together, these five religion variables capture three very important aspects of one's religiosity – belief (Biblical literalism and religious exclusivism), belonging (religious tradition and Evangelical self-identification), and behavior (frequency of church attendance).

Standard demographic controls are also included in the analysis. For education, respondents choose the highest education level completed, and are given six choices ranging from 1="8th grade or less" to 6="postgraduate work/degree."<sup>2</sup> Income is an ordinal variable with 7 levels: \$10,000 or less, \$10,001-\$20,000, \$20,001-\$35,000,

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<sup>1</sup> Although Biblical literalism is included as an ordinal variable in these analyses, the models were also run employing Biblical literalism as a series of dummy variables. This affected the results minimally, and had absolutely no effect on the variables of interest. I choose to employ the item as an ordinal variable here, as that is the custom in the sociology of religion literature.

<sup>2</sup> In the BRS, the education variable is originally included as a 7-response item. I recoded the variable so that response 5, "trade/technical/vocational training" is now combined with response 4, "some college," creating a 6-response education item. This was done due to the fact that response 5 does not necessarily measure a terminal degree or certification and shouldn't be assumed to be a higher level than "some college."

\$35,001-\$50,000, \$50,001-\$100,000, \$100,001-\$150,000 and \$150,000 or more. Other control variables include: age (in years), gender (male=1), a marital status dummy variable (married=1), a race dummy variable (white (non-Hispanic) = 1), the number of children the respondent has living in their home, and region of the country (south=1).

Liberal political and social ideology has been found in multiple studies to predict political tolerance, and should be included in the model. Unfortunately, the first wave of the Baylor Religion Survey lacks a traditional political ideology question that would allow for respondents to choose between conservative, moderate, and liberal. As a proxy for this, I employ an item that measures partisan political orientation. Respondents are asked “How would you describe yourself politically?” They are given a seven point scale including strong republican, moderate republican, leaning republican, independent, leaning democrat, moderate democrat, and strong democrat. The 3 republican variables are combined together, as are the three democrat variables, resulting in three dummy variables – republican, independent, and democrat. The variable is included in the models as a series of dummy variables, and the democrat variables is the omitted reference category in each regression.

Finally, in order to tap into the extent to which the respondent’s religious friendship networks are of a more bonding sort than bridging sort, I employ a measure of social embeddedness within one’s congregation, seeking to capture the extent to which an individual’s social life is tied to his or her congregation. The measure asks, “How many of your friends go to your church?”<sup>3</sup> Respondents may choose between five response

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<sup>3</sup> This variable is not a good measure of the “religious” friendship networks of some unaffiliated Americans such as atheists or agnostics. For example, an atheist could potentially have a dense friendship network of fellow atheists (a “religious” friendship

options: all, most, about half, a few, and none. Higher scores indicate a higher concentration of one's friends attending their church. It should be noted that the question does not measure how many friends one has at their church, but rather what proportion of one's friends attend their church. The variable taps into the density of one's friendship network, and is a reliable measure of the extent to which an individual is wholly, partially, or not at all socially attached to a network consisting of fellow church-members, a network more characteristic by the bonding sort of social capital than the bridging sort.

### *Analytic Strategy*

The analysis will proceed in two sets of OLS regression models that all contain political tolerance as their dependent variable. After presenting descriptive statistics of key variables, the first set of regressions will examine the relationship between the independent variables and political tolerance for the entire sample, with special attention given to the differences that may exist between Evangelical Protestants and other religious traditions and the relationship between friendship density within one's congregation and their political tolerance. The final two models of the first set will include multiplicative interaction terms testing whether membership in an Evangelical Protestant denomination or identification with the Evangelical label conditions the relationship between social embeddedness and political tolerance. Interaction terms, however, are not the only way that one can isolate effects for a sub-sample; regressions

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network of sorts), but may answer this question by choosing "none" or by not answering at all. If the religiosity of the friendship networks of the unaffiliated were of primary importance, this variable may be unfit. However, this study is not focused on the relationship between bonding social capital and the political tolerance of the unaffiliated. It is instead focused on Evangelicals.

may also be run separately for each subsample of interest. The second set of OLS regressions will utilize this method, separately examining five of the seven religious traditions, as well as those who do and do not self-identify with the “Evangelical” label to gain further insight into the possibility that the density of one’s friendship networks in their congregation is more strongly related to political tolerance among Evangelical Protestants than among those of other religious traditions.

### *Results*

Table 3.1 presents descriptive statistics for all of the variables included in the following regression analyses. The first three columns contain statistics for the entire sample, while the following seven columns contain means for the seven separate religious traditions. Two-tailed t-tests were conducted to determine whether significant differences exist between Evangelical Protestants and other religious traditions. Evangelicals are more likely to reside in the South than most of the religious traditions shown here, and they are more likely to be married than Black Protestants and those with no religious affiliation. They are younger than the other two large religious traditions, Mainline Protestants and Catholics, but are older than the unaffiliated. As many would expect, Evangelical Protestants are generally less educated and make lower incomes than the other religious groups mentioned except the Black Protestants, who are poorer than Evangelicals but equal in education. Evangelicals are more likely to affiliate with the Republican Party than all other religious traditions.

The bivariate analyses of religious items are unsurprising. Evangelical Protestants attend church more often and hold more conservative views of the Bible than all groups except Black Protestants. They are more likely to self- identify as

“Evangelical” than all other religious traditions, and they are also more likely to hold exclusivist religious beliefs than all groups except Black Protestants.<sup>4</sup>

Regarding our two variables of most interest, political tolerance and social embeddedness within a congregation, Evangelicals differ once again from many religious traditions. Consistent with much of the research addressed above, Evangelicals have lower levels of political tolerance for perceived out-groups. However, this difference is not drastic. Evangelicals hold levels of political tolerance that are about 17% lower than Catholics and Mainline Protestants, and are 14% lower than the sample mean of 11.79. They are also more likely than all other religious traditions except Black Protestants to have a high concentration of their friendship networks come from within their churches, indicating the higher presence of bonding social capital among Evangelicals than among most of the other religious traditions.

Table 3.2 presents a series of OLS regressions that explore predictors of political tolerance for the entire sample. Evangelical Protestants are the omitted reference category in models 1-5. Model 1 indicates, as expected, that Evangelical Protestants are less politically tolerant than all religious traditions other than Black Protestants. Some may claim, however, that this disparity may be caused by certain social and demographic variables, as Evangelicals have been shown to have lower education and income, and be more likely to align with the Republican Party. Model 2 explores this possibility, and demonstrates that the differences in political tolerance among religious traditions persist after the socio-economic and political controls are added. Greater income, higher

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<sup>4</sup> Evangelical Protestants have levels of religious exclusivism that are also no different from those in the “other religion” category. However, because this is a catch-all category, the comparison is not meaningful. As I proceed through the analyses, I will not point out effects of the “other religion” group.

Table 3.1  
*Descriptive Statistics for All Variables, by Select Religious Traditions*

Variable	Entire Sample N=1721			Evangelical Protestant N=512	Mainline Protestant N=439	Black Protestant N=39	Catholic N=380	Jewish N=47	Other Religio n N=86	No Religion N=184
	Mean	SD	Range	Mean	Mean	Mean	Mean	Mean	Mean	Mean
Male	0.47	0.50	0-1	0.42	0.47	0.27 <sup>a</sup>	0.53 <sup>a</sup>	0.48	0.57 <sup>a</sup>	0.56 <sup>a</sup>
White	0.89	0.32	0-1	0.94	0.96	0.07 <sup>a</sup>	0.94	0.93	0.82 <sup>a</sup>	0.92
South	0.30	0.46	0-1	0.45	0.26 <sup>a</sup>	0.44	0.16 <sup>a</sup>	0.23 <sup>a</sup>	0.16 <sup>a</sup>	0.20 <sup>a</sup>
Married	0.56	0.50	0-1	0.62	0.59	0.24 <sup>a</sup>	0.59	0.65	0.53	0.45 <sup>a</sup>
Children in Home	0.52	0.96	0-8	0.68	0.42 <sup>a</sup>	1.12	0.87 <sup>a</sup>	0.56	0.66	0.31 <sup>a</sup>
Age	49.84	16.55	18-93	48.66	52.79 <sup>a</sup>	50.60	51.72 <sup>a</sup>	50.87	46.87	44.93 <sup>a</sup>
Income	4.16	1.60	1-7	3.92	4.29 <sup>a</sup>	3.05 <sup>a</sup>	4.50 <sup>a</sup>	4.98 <sup>a</sup>	4.76 <sup>a</sup>	4.20 <sup>a</sup>
Education	4.14	1.20	1-6	4.18	4.96 <sup>a</sup>	4.28	4.61 <sup>a</sup>	5.17 <sup>a</sup>	5.14 <sup>a</sup>	4.98 <sup>a</sup>
Political Democrat	0.35	0.48	0-1	0.23	0.33 <sup>a</sup>	0.75 <sup>a</sup>	0.37 <sup>a</sup>	0.08	0.55 <sup>a</sup>	0.40 <sup>a</sup>
Political Republican	0.46	0.50	0-1	0.60	0.46 <sup>a</sup>	0.11 <sup>a</sup>	0.48 <sup>a</sup>	0.24 <sup>a</sup>	0.26 <sup>a</sup>	0.27 <sup>a</sup>
Political Independent	0.19	0.40	0-1	0.17	0.21	0.15	0.16	0.68 <sup>a</sup>	0.19	0.33 <sup>a</sup>
Frequency Church Attendance	4.85	2.88	1-9	5.92	4.88 <sup>a</sup>	5.83	5.20 <sup>a</sup>	3.46 <sup>a</sup>	4.80 <sup>a</sup>	1.17 <sup>a</sup>
Biblical Literalism	2.64	1.08	1-4	3.29	2.52 <sup>a</sup>	3.36	2.51 <sup>a</sup>	1.92 <sup>a</sup>	2.15 <sup>a</sup>	1.23 <sup>a</sup>
Religious Exclusivism	0.20	0.40	0-1	0.37	0.11 <sup>a</sup>	0.26	0.12 <sup>a</sup>	0.09 <sup>a</sup>	0.28	0.00 <sup>a</sup>
Evangelical Identification	0.27	0.44	0-1	0.58	0.25 <sup>a</sup>	0.31 <sup>a</sup>	0.05 <sup>a</sup>	0.00 <sup>a</sup>	0.06 <sup>a</sup>	0.00 <sup>a</sup>
Friends in Congregation	2.51	1.01	1-5	2.74	2.38 <sup>a</sup>	2.90	2.56 <sup>a</sup>	2.16 <sup>a</sup>	2.50	1.75 <sup>a</sup>
Political Tolerance	11.79	3.87	4-20	10.12	12.21 <sup>a</sup>	9.79	12.18 <sup>a</sup>	13.66 <sup>a</sup>	13.13 <sup>a</sup>	14.82 <sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup> significant difference between noted group and Evangelical Protestants, 2-tailed t-test, p<0.05

education, and Democratic political alignment are positively related to political tolerance, while age, children, being married, and Southern residence diminish political tolerance.

Model 3 includes the first of the independent variables capturing religious beliefs and practices. As described above, some have posited that these lower levels of political tolerance among Evangelicals are related to certain religious factors. Frequent church attendance is added in model 3. Consistent with previous literature, it is negatively related to political tolerance. However, it becomes non-significant when Biblical literalism and religious exclusivism are added in model 4<sup>1</sup>. As measures of theological conservatism, the significant effects of Biblical literalism and religious exclusivism demonstrate that the frequency with which one attends church is unimportant when controlling for the theological orientation of the believer. Southern residence becomes non-significant, but the other control variables remain significant and in the expected directions. The differences between Evangelicals and other religious traditions remain for each of the three largest religious traditions – Mainline Protestants, Catholics, and the unaffiliated. Model 4 demonstrates that the lower levels of political tolerance exhibited by Evangelical Protestants are not exclusively due to the higher levels of church attendance, Biblical literalism, and religious exclusivism that are characteristic of Evangelicals. Taken together, these models lend support to hypothesis 1.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The regression models were all examined for multicollinearity issues. None of the variance inflation factors were higher than 2.05, indicating that the independent variables are not strongly correlated with one another.

<sup>2</sup> Cumulative logit regressions were also conducted separately for each of the constituent items of the political tolerance index (racists, atheists, homosexuals, and Muslims) to determine if one of these four groups were driving the significant difference that exists for the entire index. Although these models are not a major part of this present study, they are included in appendix A. They indicate that the tendency for Evangelicals

Model 5 introduces the independent variable of greatest interest for this analysis. The proportion of one's friends that attend their own church is negatively related to levels of political tolerance for the general population. Every other variable remains significant, including the religious tradition dummy variables. For the sample as a whole, bonding social capital is negatively related to political tolerance.

Hypothesis 2 proposes that the negative relationship between one's proportion of friends in their congregation and their levels of political tolerance will be stronger for Evangelical Protestants than those of other religious traditions. Model 6 tests this hypothesis by including a multiplicative interaction term measuring the conditioning effect that membership in an Evangelical Protestant church has on the coefficient for friends in one's congregation.<sup>3</sup> Results support hypothesis 2. The negative coefficient for the interaction term indicates that affiliation with an Evangelical Protestant congregation intensifies the negative relationship between congregational social embeddedness and political tolerance. Higher levels of bonding social capital are predictive of intolerance within the Evangelical Protestant tradition.

Hypothesis 3 predicts that although presence in an Evangelical Protestant denomination will condition the effect of social embeddedness on political tolerance, the selection of "Evangelical" as religious identity should have a weaker conditioning effect.

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to hold lower levels of political tolerance remains for three of the four groups (Evangelicals are generally no different from other religious traditions in their tolerance of racists only). These models indicate that the significant differences that are evident in table 2 are not due to only one or two of the groups included in the index.

<sup>3</sup> When employing a multiplicative interaction term, it is customary to include the two lower-order coefficients in the model. For this reason, model 6 omits the unaffiliated as the comparison category rather than the Evangelical Protestant tradition so that Evangelicals can be included in the model.

Table 3.2  
*OLS Regression of Political Tolerance on Selected Demographic and Religious Variables (standardized betas reported)*

Variable	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7
<b>Religious Traditions</b>							
Evangelical Protestants	-	-	-	-	-	-0.228***	-
Mainline Protestants	0.224***	0.161***	0.158***	0.104***	0.109***	-0.098*	0.099*
Black Protestants	-0.019	-0.018	-0.017	-0.025	-0.041	-0.153***	-0.162***
Catholics	0.217***	0.162***	0.161***	0.115***	0.110***	-0.093*	0.063
Jewish	0.142***	0.097***	0.091***	0.045	0.045	-0.023	0.042
Other Religion	0.169***	0.092***	0.092***	0.048*	0.054*	-0.056	0.051
No Religion	0.378***	0.273***	0.244***	0.156***	0.127***	-	0.107*
<b>Control Variables</b>							
White		0.040	0.035	-0.004	-0.030	-0.029	-0.091*
Male		-0.015	-0.024	-0.024	-0.022	-0.022	-0.013
Married		-0.053*	-0.042	-0.036	-0.031	-0.030	-0.017
Children in Home		-0.060*	-0.053*	-0.042	-0.028	-0.029	-0.028
Income		0.159***	0.152***	0.122***	0.099***	0.096**	0.094*
Education		0.170***	0.177***	0.152***	0.163**	0.162***	0.178***
South		-0.062**	-0.054*	-0.049*	-0.036	-0.036	0.029
Age		-0.179***	-0.175***	-0.178***	-0.165***	-0.166***	-0.131***
Independent <sup>a</sup>		-0.076**	-0.073**	-0.043	-0.058*	-0.059*	-0.071
Republican <sup>a</sup>		-0.176***	-0.166***	-0.121***	-0.095**	-0.094**	-0.064
<b>Religious Variables</b>							
Church attendance			-0.071**	0.024	-0.008	-0.006	0.025
Biblical literalism				-0.247***	-0.212***	-0.214***	-0.198***
Religious Exclusivism				-0.057*	-0.052*	-0.053*	-0.076*
Friends in Congregation					-0.078*	-0.038	-0.072
Friends X Evangelical						-0.066*	-
Evangelical ID							-0.099*
Friends X Evangelical ID							0.001
r <sup>2</sup>	0.155	0.301	0.304	0.342	0.329	0.331	.0328
N	1662	1537	1523	1418	1266	1266	730

<sup>a</sup> Democrats are the omitted reference category

\* p<0.05; \*\* p<0.01; \*\*\* p<0.001; 2-tailed t-tests

Model 7 employs another multiplicative interaction term, this time estimating the conditioning effect of Evangelical ID selection rather than affiliation with an Evangelical Protestant denomination. Although the Evangelical ID lower-order coefficient is significant and negative ( $b=-0.099$ ,  $p<.05$ ), indicating that those who select the “Evangelical” label are less tolerant than those who do not, the interaction term itself is non-significant. The selection of “Evangelical” as a religious identification label has no effect on the relationship between bonding social capital and political tolerance. Hypothesis 3 is confirmed.

Another way to test for the possibility that this relationship is especially strong among Evangelical Protestants is to run regressions separately for each religious tradition and for those who do and do not select “Evangelical” as a descriptive religious identity. Table 3.3 presents eight separate OLS regressions, each containing the same variables included in the preceding table. The first model is a reproduction of model 5 from table 2 which estimates predictors of political tolerance for the entire sample, controlling for religious tradition. Models 2 through 6 predict political tolerance for five of the seven religious traditions. Regressions are not performed on the Jewish and Black Protestant traditions because the sample sizes of these two groups are too low to obtain reliable parameter estimates. After standard list-wise deletion of cases that are missing one or more of the variables included in the analysis, both of these religious traditions were left with less than 30 cases to test, and were omitted from the table.

These models reveal that across different religious traditions, the variables that predict political tolerance function differently. Although education, for example, is related to tolerance among Evangelicals, Mainline Protestants and Catholics, it is not

Table 3.3  
*OLS Regression of Political Tolerance by Religious Tradition and by Evangelical Identification*  
*(standardized betas reported)<sup>a</sup>*

Variable	Model 1 <sup>b</sup> Entire Sample	Model 2 Evangelical Protestants	Model 3 Mainline Protestants	Model 4 Catholics	Model 5 Other Religion	Model 6 No Religion	Model 7 <sup>b</sup> Evangelical ID	Model 8 <sup>b</sup> No Evangelical ID
<b>Control Variables</b>								
White	-0.030	-0.064	-0.101*	0.052	0.305**	0.011	-0.130	-0.074
Male	-0.022	-0.066	0.011	-0.076	-0.044	-0.013	-0.007	-0.022
Married	-0.031	-0.051	-0.091	-0.018	0.023	0.079	-0.128	0.044
Children in Home	-0.025	-0.113*	0.104	0.064	-0.167	-0.042	0.009	-0.011
Income	0.099***	0.083	0.105	0.132	-0.030	0.098	0.204**	0.051
Education	0.163**	0.213***	0.158*	0.134*	0.168	0.104	0.280***	0.122**
South	-0.036	-0.044	-0.083***	-0.010	-0.171	-0.182	0.013	0.038
Age	-0.165***	-0.129**	-0.339	-0.291***	-0.372**	-0.135	-0.115	-0.128**
Independent <sup>c</sup>	-0.058*	-0.015	0.006	-0.141*	-0.128	-0.062	-0.123	-0.073
Republican <sup>c</sup>	-0.095**	-0.025	-0.130*	-0.132*	-0.284*	0.061	-0.098	-0.100*
<b>Religious Variables</b>								
Church attendance	-0.008	0.001	0.030	0.087	-0.048	0.202	-0.053	0.031
Biblical literalism	-0.212***	-0.225***	-0.226***	-0.109	-0.051	-0.367***	-0.061	-0.228***
Religious Exclusivism	-0.052*	-0.055	-0.053	0.022	-0.375**	0.000	0.013	-0.145***
Friends in Congregation	-0.078*	-0.133**	-0.060	-0.081	0.073	0.008	-0.041	-0.069
r <sup>2</sup>	0.329	0.253	0.325	0.178	0.561	0.286	0.257	0.297
N	1266	397	349	285	68	107	223	507

<sup>a</sup> Separate analyses for Black Protestants and Jews are not reported due to small sample sizes (less than 30 for each)

<sup>b</sup> Models 1, 7 and 8 also control for religious tradition (not shown)

<sup>c</sup> Democrats are the omitted reference category

\* p<0.05; \*\* p<0.01; \*\*\* p<0.001; 2-tailed t-tests

related to tolerance among the unaffiliated or the “other religion” category. Older people are less likely to be tolerant within all religious traditions except Mainline Protestants and the unaffiliated (possibly due to less variation in age among the unaffiliated). Political party affiliation, known to be a consistent predictor of political tolerance and demonstrated to function accordingly in the entire sample, has no effect on levels of political tolerance among Evangelicals and those who claim no religion. Biblical literalism, also shown to predict lower levels of political tolerance for the entire sample, has no effect for Catholics.

However, the most important function of models 2 through 6 in table 3.3 is to demonstrate further support for hypothesis 2, the expectation that social embeddedness will be a stronger predictor of intolerance among Evangelical Protestants than among those belonging to other religious groups. Results support the hypothesis. As model 2 shows, higher levels of social embeddedness in one’s congregation is a predictor of political intolerance among Evangelicals. The other models show that this variable is unrelated to levels of political tolerance among the other religious traditions.

Models 7 and 8 divide the sample into those who select “Evangelical” as a religious identity and those who do not as a further test of hypothesis 3. Once again, the hypothesis is confirmed. Exclusively among those who select the “Evangelical” label, the proportion of friends in one’s congregation has no effect on one’s level of political tolerance ( $b=-0.041$ ,  $p>.05$ ).

### *Summary and Conclusions*

These results provide support for all of the hypotheses proposed above. Regarding the first hypothesis, Evangelical Protestants were found to be significantly less

tolerant of political out-groups than members of each of the three largest remaining religious traditions (Mainline Protestants, Catholics, and the unaffiliated), even after controlling for the standard demographic and religious effects.

The second hypothesis also received support. A denser friendship network within a congregation that is more characteristic of the bonding type of social capital is a significant predictor of intolerance only among members of Evangelical Protestant churches, which have been shown to emphasize bonding social capital and hold low levels of political tolerance. It seems that a greater social attachment to these stricter churches and a friendship network comprised of fellow church members, rather than a mere time commitment or claim of salience, encourages a perspective that views certain out-groups as unworthy of basic civil liberties, and that the effect of these network ties remains significant even after all of the relevant controls are added.

Finally, the third hypothesis received support as well. Although the negative effect of bonding social capital on political tolerance is especially apparent for Evangelicals, this is only true when Evangelicals are members of Evangelical Protestant denominations, rather than individuals who self-identify as Evangelicals. As expected, the effect of bonding social capital is only significant when the group is one that socially and physically interacts with one another, rather than one that identifies with the same religious identity label.

A few weaknesses of the study should be noted. First, my dependent variable is more limited than measures of political tolerance that appear in many other studies. Most studies of political tolerance rely on a battery of questions that is usually similar to those appearing in the GSS. Those questions ask about whether the political out-group in

question should be able to give a public speech, teach at a school, and have their books available at the public library. In contrast, my variable only captures the respondent's view on limiting civil liberties toward individuals in the influential role of educator. This variable is a less comprehensive measure of political tolerance than most studies, and remains a weakness of the analysis.

Also, causation cannot be absolutely concluded without longitudinal data. For example, these analyses frame the results as if an Evangelical environment and a denser friendship network within that environment lead to lower levels of political tolerance. It could be, however, that the opposite directionality is occurring: perhaps those with lower levels of political tolerance are drawn to Evangelical Protestantism and make more friends within that network. This would leave open the question of how the Evangelical was originally socialized to hold intolerant views in the first place. This is a possible reading of the results, and cannot be excluded from consideration. I contend, however, that the present causal direction (religion  $\rightarrow$  political tolerance) is more likely than the alternative causal direction (political tolerance  $\rightarrow$  religion), simply because volumes of literature exist in support of the former causality, while there is no literature that I am aware of indicating the latter causal direction.

These results enforce what is a quintessentially sociological claim: social ties matter. Although belonging to a religious group that is less likely to extend civil liberties to political out-groups affects one's own level of political tolerance, this dynamic is strengthened through maintaining a friendship network that is densely comprised of fellow church members. This analysis provides additional empirical support for the claim that although social capital is generally understood as a positive good, there can be

negative consequences when the social capital possessed and maintained by members of a religious group remains a capital of the bonding type rather than the bridging type (Putnam 2000; Wuthnow 1999).

This analysis empirically demonstrates relationships that seem logical but have not been statistically verified in the context of religious organizations. We expect that stronger social ties to fellow members of any voluntary organization should result in stronger commitment to the goals and beliefs of the organization, and that those individual beliefs that are strengthened by those social ties should be reflective of the overall views of the group. This study has empirically demonstrated these relationships, and has shown that this bonding social capital results in greater conformity even to views that are seen as negative to most in our society, such as the refusal to extend basic civil liberties to political out-groups like Muslims and homosexuals.

This is indeed an important paradox of Evangelicalism. How can a religious group that is actively engaged in reaching non-believers also be unwilling to extend basic freedoms to these non-believers? The combination of engagement and conflict has been a part of the “cultural DNA of American Evangelicalism” (Smith 1998:121) for over 100 years: Evangelicals believe that the world is full of people who need God and who should be helped, but also that these people are threatening to God’s will for our society. A major part of the mission of Evangelicalism is not only to convert individual souls who are far from God, but also to defend an image of America as a nation founded on Christian principles and constituted by God’s people. Regnerus and Smith’s (1998) work on the privatization of religion finds that Evangelicals are the least likely religious group to favor the retreat of religion from the public sphere, and Evangelicals feel it is their

duty to fight for God's will in all facets of life, both public and private. Although the conflict that results from Evangelical engagement with the world may seem inconsistent with the belief of Evangelicals that they are responsible for reaching the world with the love of Jesus, these two are completely compatible from the Evangelical point of view. Supporting the right of an atheist, for example, to teach in a public high school may be the kind or civil thing to do, but it would undermine the effort of American Evangelicals to see America become a nation of men and women that honor and obey God, and that is the most important mission of all.

Finally, this study raises questions about the effects of religious belonging on civil society. For decades, scholars have extolled the community-building virtues of religious involvement. From Tocqueville (2001) to Putnam (2000), many have understood the role of religion as a promoter of greater social interdependence and civic engagement, an institution bonding society together under a common "sacred canopy" and functioning as a barrier against anomie (Berger, 1967). However, this study indicates that among the largest religious tradition in America, Evangelical Protestantism, the deepening of social ties within the religious community serves a dysfunction to society by intensifying levels of intolerance. As Smith claims, religion can rather serve as a *sacred umbrella*: "in the pluralistic, modern world, people don't need macro-encompassing sacred cosmoses to maintain their religious beliefs. They only need 'sacred umbrellas,' small, portable, accessible relational worlds – religious reference groups – 'under' which their beliefs can make total sense" (1998:106). These findings suggest another way that religion can be said to function as a *sacred umbrella* rather than as a *sacred canopy*, demonstrating that the power of religion in the modern world is not in its ability to unite a society, but rather

its ability to unite multiple smaller groups of people, such as those represented by different denominational and congregational affiliations, together under common identities.

Bonding social capital is related to political intolerance among Evangelical Protestants. The mechanisms of this phenomenon deserve greater attention. One possible avenue for future exploration of these trends would be to examine the content of network ties within different religious traditions. Is there something qualitatively different about the relationships of Evangelical Protestants with one another that serves to enforce such intolerant attitudes? How do these intolerant attitudes form among these Evangelical Protestants, and what role do social networks play in encouraging such views? More broadly speaking, what are the implications for civil society if those religious groups with stronger social ties maintain an intolerant view of political out-groups? A deeper exploration of these questions will enable us to better understand the dynamics of religious friendship networks and the dysfunctions of bonding social capital and certain types of religious involvement.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### Social Class and Religious Identity

The link between social class and religion has been an essential and ubiquitous element of the scientific study of religion since the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century. Almost all of the most important and founding sociological theorists wrote of this link. Marx ([1844] 1978), for example, viewed religion as a tool of the elite used to pacify the poor, deluding them into acquiescing to an unjust economic and political system. For Weber ([1922] 1993), religion enables individuals to meet their instrumental needs, providing a place of escape for lower classes who seek to avoid their worldly misfortunes. Troeltsch's (1932) church-sect typology described the appeal of sects to the lower classes, and Niebuhr ([1929] 1954) described the relationship between low social class and denominational affiliation with sectarian groups such as Pentecostals and Fundamentalists . These works, and the decades of scholars that followed them, created an established body of literature linking social class to such elements of religion as switching and membership, worship styles, beliefs in supernatural guidance and intervention, the development of lower class religious subcultures and communities, and many others.

However, although the founders gave attention to the link between social class and religion, it has been an understudied component of the sociology of religion over the last 50 years (Smith and Faris 2005). Many of the established relationships between religion and social class not been tracked by scholars of American religion for several years, and the empirical studies that verify these observed relationships are now decades old.

This chapter seeks to address this paucity in recent sociology in a unique manner. Drawing on theories of status and religion, as well as theories of social class and cultural preferences, I employ religious label selection as a measure of religious identity and analyze the relationship between social class and this expression of religious identity. Two theoretical paradigms are employed to analyze the relationship between class and religion. The first paradigm, represented by Bourdieu's (1984) analysis of class and cultural taste, illuminates the functions of taste and preference as markers of social status. The second paradigm, represented by literature on "lower-class" religions such as Evangelicalism and its many expressions, explores the links between social class and religious beliefs and practices. The resulting analysis extends Bourdieu's ideas of culture and status to the field of religion, and demonstrates the social class-religion relationship in a way not yet explored.

### *Social Class and Cultural Taste*

Sociologists who study cultural tastes have long contended that preferences for various cultural expressions must be understood in the context of economic inequality and the larger social structure that patterns class relationships. Both classical theorists (Veblen [1889] 1953; Weber [1922] 1978) and modern scholars (Bourdieu 1984; Bourdieu and Passeron 1977; Lamont and Lareau 1988) have claimed that higher status individuals prefer forms of cultural consumption that serve to distinguish themselves from lower classes, and this taste creates boundaries between the higher classes and the masses.

Bourdieu's *Distinctions* (1984) is among the most important of these works. In it, Bourdieu claims that the knowledge of fine arts, music, and literature, for example,

functions as a type of marker that delineates those who have a high social status from those who do not. The cultural preferences of those who occupy high-status positions in society become accepted as the most distinguished types of cultural expression, reinforcing not only the high status of those who occupy the position, but also the exclusiveness of the club. Knowledge of this high culture (which Bourdieu terms *cultural capital*) becomes a sort of pass-key, a requisite for entrance into high society. In *Distinctions* (1984), Bourdieu empirically demonstrates this relationship: “The higher the level of education, the greater is the proportion of respondents who, when asked whether a series of objects would make beautiful photographs, refuse the ordinary objects of popular admiration ... as 'vulgar' or 'ugly'" (Bourdieu 1984:35). Bourdieu summarizes the functions of cultural taste thusly:

“The denial of lower, coarse, vulgar, venal, servile – in a word, natural – enjoyment, which constitutes the sacred sphere of culture, implies an affirmation of the superiority of those who can be satisfied with the sublimated, refined, disinterested, gratuitous, distinguished pleasures forever closed to the profane. This is why art and cultural consumption are predisposed, consciously and deliberately or not, to fulfill a social function of legitimating social differences (Bourdieu 1984:7).”

#### *Elite Culture: Exclusive Status Marker or Omnivorous Marker?*

For Bourdieu, cultural exclusiveness is key. Popular appreciation of a cultural expression makes it common and hence, less valuable to the elite. This desire for exclusivity is amusingly exemplified by Yogi Berra’s famous claim about a St. Louis restaurant that “Nobody goes there anymore; it’s too crowded” or a t-shirt that smirks, “I listen to bands that don’t even exist yet.” Bourdieu describes the cultural preferences of the elite as exclusive, reproducing the class structure through knowledge and appreciation of solely “highbrow” cultural expressions to which lower classes have little access.

Recently, however, the exclusivity of the cultural tastes of elites has been called into question. Peterson (1992, 1997; Peterson and Kern 1996), and others following his lead (Bryson 1996; Lopez-Sintas and Katz-Gerro 2005; Sullivan and Katz-Gerro 2007) contend that the cultural tastes of the elite are no longer limited exclusively to high culture expressions such as operas, symphonies, or avant-garde paintings. Rather, these scholars demonstrate that high status is now linked to taste in a wide variety of cultural expressions, and it is breadth that is now prized instead of familiarity with only the highest art. This is often referred to as the *cultural omnivore thesis*.

For example, Bryson (1996), using data from the General Social Survey, finds that measures of high social class (in this case, high education), are linked to broad taste in and familiarity with many different musical genres, concluding that “cultural breadth has become a high-status signal that excludes low-status cultural cues and is unevenly distributed by education in the United States.” Familiarity with a broad array of cultural expressions is believed by those who further the *cultural omnivore thesis* to be an important resource, enabling one to appear competent in a wide variety of situations (Erickson 1996). The power that comes from this broad competence is believed to have more cache in today’s society than knowledge of merely the “high arts,” and this familiarity serves to distance the high-status omnivores from those whose cultural knowledge is limited to only one or two genres.

Although the *cultural univore* perspective proposed by Bourdieu and the *cultural omnivore* perspective presented by Peterson et al. disagree about the cultural expressions that constitute the tastes of the elite, these two bodies of research agree on a key precept: the cultural tastes of high-status individuals distance them from lower status, creating

symbolic boundaries that exclude those from lower classes. Whether the tastes employed by high-status individuals are broad or exclusive, they remain as markers of status and boundaries against those who are not allowed entrance<sup>1</sup>.

### *Bourdieu, Culture, and Religious Preference*

Although Bourdieu did not write very much about religion directly, his writings on the relationship between class and culture can easily be applied to the relationship between class and religion. After all, Bourdieu claimed, "the sociology of culture is the sociology of the religion of our day" (Bourdieu 1993:132). Like Weber, Bourdieu understands the sociology of religion to be a dimension of the sociology of power (Dianteill 2003), discussing the Catholic Church, for example, as an instrument of control and exploitation. Though he never explicitly develops his theories about the distinction-maintaining function of cultural tastes with religion in mind, Bourdieu makes it clear that all types of preferences, be they regarding art, fashion, politics, or religion, serve to enhance social distinctions (Swartz 1996).

Similarly, there is a dense body of literature that understands religion to be a type of preference. The rational actor approach focuses in part on the ways in which religious

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<sup>1</sup> The proposed reasons for the shift from cultural exclusivity to cultural omnivorism are many. Peterson (1996) discusses five potential explanations: one, increasing education levels and living standards of the general population have made elite cultural expressions more available to the masses, and geographic mobility has resulted in more class mixing; two, cultural values have come to embrace tolerance, especially in our increasingly globalized and multicultural world; three, the art-world's increasing focus on the importance of new and different forms of avant-garde artistic expressions means that more forms are considered worthy of appreciation; four, highbrow cultural exclusion has been discredited by the emergence of youth culture as a viable alternative to established elite culture rather than merely a stage in one's evolution of taste; and five, the ways that elites disempower the lower ranks has changed from defining their cultural tastes as vulgar and brutish to incorporating those tastes into their own.

preferences are structured by previous religious socialization, which guide decisions about subsequent religious involvement (Elster 1983; Sherkat 1997, 1998; Sherkat & Wilson 1995), and by the prospects of religious costs and benefits afforded by such involvement, benefits such as social support, friendship networks, leadership opportunities, and other-worldly compensatory goods (Ellison and Sherkat 1995; Sherkat and Ellison 1999; Stark 1997; Stark and Bainbridge 1987). The basic idea of this view is that individuals will choose to commit themselves to those religious bodies and beliefs which give them the greatest return; those with which they are familiar and in which they have built up the most capital (Iannaccone 1990, 1997a; Iannaccone, Olson, and Stark 1995).

Verter (2003) applies insights from Bourdieu's concept of *cultural capital* to the sphere of religion in his discussion of *spiritual capital*, claiming that one's "spiritual knowledge, competencies, and preferences" may be regarded as a form of cultural capital and a marker of status. In fact, research on denominational switching has long suggested that upwardly mobile individuals who belong to denominations that are populated by people of a lower status are likely to switch out of their denomination into a denomination more fitting of their recent financial ascent. Higher-status religions such as Episcopalians and Presbyterians are believed to provide social networks desirable to those who have left the lower ranks, networks that increase cultural capital and offer prestige to members. These trends have been empirically confirmed with several studies analyzing the religious switching of those who originate in a lower socioeconomic status than their present position (Alston 1971; Lauer 1975; Niebuhr [1929] 1954; Nelsen and Snizek 1976; Newport 1979; Sherkat and Wilson 1995; Stark and Glock 1968), finding

that those who now inhabit a higher social class than the one in which they were raised are more likely to switch into higher-status denominations.

The tendency for high status individuals to reject cultural forms, including religious expressions, that are seen as common is an important component of the complex relationship between culture and power, but it is only one side of the coin. On the other side, one can analyze the tendency for groups who occupy lower positions in society to embrace these cultural and religious expressions that are rejected by the elite.

### *Religions of the Disinherited?*

For decades, scholars have studied the relationship between social class and religious affiliation in terms of the differences between conservative and liberal denominations. In *The Social Sources of Denominationalism*, Niebuhr ([1929] 1954) claimed that sectarian (conservative) religious groups, such as Evangelicals, Fundamentalists, and Pentecostals appealed to lower classes while the more established, liberal religious groups appealed to those from society's higher classes. Much of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century featured a heavily eugenics-influenced explanation of the link between religion and class that explained certain religions as depraved and appealing to unevolved people (Brunner 1927; Huntington and Whitney 1928; McDougall 1921; Wilson 1911). Alternatively, deprivation theorists of the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century understood the lower classes to be drawn to religions that provide ecstatic and marginalized religious experiences as a sort of compensation for their lack of resources and power (Glock 1964; La Barre 1970; Wallace 1956; and see McCloud (2007) for a comprehensive review). Explaining the alignment of the lower classes with these religious groups has pervaded the literature on class and religion for almost a century.

Religions which are disproportionately populated by lower classes have been found to maintain certain religious beliefs that set them apart from religions of higher classes. For example, Davidson (1977) demonstrated that higher social status predicts lower levels of belief in the supernatural generally, and some have posited that this link is due to low levels of existential security among the poor (Norris and Inglehart 2004). Those whose lives are relatively secure and whose survival is not in question are less likely to turn to religion in their moments of need. Lower-status religions are said to focus on “other-worldly” concerns rather than concerns over one’s present earthly circumstances, possibly as a compensator for the strain experienced as a result of vast economic inequality and lack of opportunity (Bainbridge 1997; Stark and Bainbridge 1985). This focus on “other-worldly” concerns in the religion of the lower classes manifests itself in a number of ways, such as greater belief in religious evil like Satan and demons (Baker 2008), attribution of negative life experiences to supernatural evil (Spilka et al. 2003), and a belief that God’s divine control shapes all aspects of our lives (Schieman et al. 2006).

Although these studies demonstrate distinct differences in the religious beliefs and affiliations of those who inhabit different social classes, more recent research suggests that the status gap between Evangelicals and other religious traditions may be closing. Roof and McKinney (1987), in an analysis of the changing American religious landscape entitled *American Mainline Religion*, note that many of the demographic differences between denominations, including those of social class, seem to be weakening. Park and Reimer (2002) use GSS data from 1972 to 1998 to empirically analyze this change over time, concluding that although Evangelical Protestants still maintain lower education and

income levels than Mainline Protestants and Catholics, they are gaining ground, and their increases in education and income are occurring at a steeper rate than the gains by other predominantly white Christian traditions. Not only is upward mobility visible among many of these Evangelical denominations as a whole, but examining elite Evangelicals reveals signs that certain members of this religious tradition are becoming leaders in society's major institutions such as politics, academia, the arts, and the media (Lindsay 2007).

Although the historical alignment of Evangelicalism with the lower classes appears to be changing in many ways, the experience of being an Evangelical comes with its own sense of alienation and estrangement from mainstream culture. An important theoretical device for understanding this experience comes from Christian Smith's *American Evangelicalism: Embattled and Thriving* (1998). Smith's *subcultural identity theory* proposes that the strength of Evangelicalism comes from its consistent confrontation with modernity, positioning itself against dominant cultural institutions and motivating greater commitment from its members than those groups that accommodate to the larger culture.

Even though the social status of Evangelicals has increased in recent years, the income and education gaps that exist between Evangelical Protestants and other white Christians remain statistically significant (Park and Reimer 2002), and Evangelicals still feel as if they belong to an alienated segment of society that opposes and even disdains them (Smith 1998). According to Smith, this embattled feeling bonds members of a subculture together, providing a strong sense of solidarity in their opposition to a mainstream culture thought to be corrosive to their identity. Although Lindsay (2007)

finds evidence of an Evangelical elite who seek to maintain the purity of their faith in spheres of influence such as the media, politics, and entertainment, for the vast majority of American Evangelicals, Evangelical cultural identity is still linked to lower social status. In terms of both their objective class conditions and their subjective experiences of cultural isolation, Evangelicals and their subdivisions remain relegated to a lower status in America.

Although Smith (1998) and Lindsay (2007) both discuss important symbolic boundaries of Evangelical Protestants, they do not link these boundaries to lower social class. Likewise, there is no evidence that Evangelicals themselves link their alienation to their lower position on the socio-economic ladder. Class is never the stated driver of this alienation, but the material conditions of Evangelicals no doubt contribute to their perception that they are outsiders. When Evangelical Protestants invoke these symbolic boundaries, citing their estrangement from conventional culture, they are unknowingly also invoking class differences that are consistently apparent in studies of religion and social class.

### *Hypotheses*

Both of these preceding sections provide frameworks as to why we might expect to find a relationship between social class and religious preference. The first section, drawing on the work of Bourdieu and other sociologists of culture, outlines the contention that those who come from high class backgrounds are likely to manifest their class identity by rejecting religious identities that are associated with the common classes or by adopting religious affiliations that are constituted by those from higher classes. The second section outlines the association between the lower classes and conservative

religious groups, pointing out that those who embrace various expressions of Evangelical Protestantism remain more likely to have lower levels of education and income. These bodies of research lead to the following hypotheses:

H<sub>1</sub>: High social class will be associated with the rejection of religious identities that are associated with Evangelical Protestantism.

H<sub>2</sub>: High social class will be associated with the selection of religious identities that are less associated with Evangelical Protestantism

The other two hypotheses for this study will center on the debate between the *cultural omnivore thesis* as advanced by Peterson (1992, 1997) and Bryson (1996), among others, and the *cultural univore thesis* as advanced by Bourdieu (1984). The central issue concerns the extent to which high social class is associated with a broad selection of various religious identifications or a narrow selection. Two opposing hypotheses will be tested that tap into this theoretical distinction.

H<sub>3</sub>: Those from high social class backgrounds will be more likely than lower class individuals to adopt a wide variety of religious identity labels (*religious omnivore*).

H<sub>4</sub>: Those from high social class backgrounds will be more likely than lower class individuals to restrict their selection of religious identity labels to only a select few (*religious univore*).

### *Data and Methods*

The data for this study come from waves 1 and 2 of the Baylor Religion Survey (BRS), collected in 2005 and 2007, respectively. Administered and collected by the Gallup Organization, the BRS is one of the most comprehensive studies ever to gauge not only the religious beliefs and practices of the American public, but also various social and political views. Both waves of the BRS were collected using a mixed-mode method, beginning with telephone calls to a random sample of phone numbers in the United

States, and concluding with a written survey instrument sent to the respondent through the mail. The sample size for the 2005 wave of the BRS is 1,721, and the 2007 wave has a sample size of 1,648, creating a total sample size of 3,369. For further detail about the methods of the Baylor Religion Survey and how it compares to other national surveys, see Bader, Mencken and Froese (2007).

### *Dependent Variables*

One might fairly question the extent to which religion can be perceived as taste. After all, many understand religion as inculcated from one's family starting at birth, rather than as a stated preference that may change over time. However, research over the last few decades has recast religion as much more flexible and changeable than previously believed (Wuthnow 1988), revealing modern religion to be less ascriptive than historically has been the case (Roof and McKinney 1987). Denominationalism has receded, although the extent of this recession is debated. The vast majority of research that has established the link between religion and social class has operationalized religion as a denominational affiliation. However, religious identity labels, even more so than measures of affiliation, reflect identities that are chosen by the respondent, regardless of their denominational affiliation, and are more consistent with the arguments about culture and status put forth by Bourdieu (1984).

Therefore, the dependent variables in each of the following models will concern the selection of religious identity labels. Although this question appears on both waves of the BRS, it is asked in slightly different ways. In the 2005 wave of the Baylor Religion Survey, the question asks, "Do the following terms describe your religious identity?" Respondents are asked to check *yes* or *no* to a series of religious identity

labels. The 2007 wave of the BRS asks, “How well do the following terms describe your religious identity?” Respondents are given 5 response options: 1=not at all; 2=not very well; 3=undecided; 4=somewhat well; and 5=very well. In the combined dataset used in this analysis, the 2007 data are transformed into dichotomous variables so that those who answer “somewhat well” or “very well” are coded as a 1; those who answer “not very well,” “not at all,” and “undecided” are coded as a 0.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, the religious identity labels measure those who identify with the label, and those who do not.

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<sup>2</sup> All analyses were also conducted with the 2007 variables coded so that only those who choose “very well” are listed as a 1; and those who choose “somewhat well” are coded as a 0 along with those who answer “not very well” and “not at all.” There are 2 reasons to include those who select “somewhat well” along with those who select “very well.” For one, it makes much more conceptual sense to include those who respond “somewhat well” as affirmative rather than placing them with those who clearly believe this label does not describe them. This allows the creation of a category that embraces the religious identity and a category that does not. If “somewhat well” were included with “not very well” and “not at all,” that category would be conceptually muddy. Secondly, the frequency distributions of the 2005 wave more closely resemble the frequency distributions of the 2007 wave when these two groups are included together, indicating that this method is more consistent with the 2005 data. Please see appendix A for a comparison of these 2 methods of coding the religious identity variables. As an example, appendix A shows that in the 2005 BRS sample, 68.29% of the respondents identified with the label “Bible-believer.” In the 2007 sample, only 46.79% of the sample selected “very well.” However, when those who select “very well” are combined with those who select “somewhat well” (22.96%), the total percentage of 2007 respondents who are coded as a ‘1’ is 69.75%, almost identical to the percentage who identified with the label in 2005 (68.29%). This same pattern can be observed for the other labels as well. The analyses were also performed with those who answer “undecided” (2007 data) or do not answer the question left missing from the analysis. That method is distinct from the method chosen for this study in an important way: in that method, those coded as a 0 are those who reject the label, not merely those who fail to accept the label. These cases are left in the analysis for two reasons. First, the theoretical foundation of this study does not necessitate the creation of categories of those who accept and those who reject the label. Those who identify with the label and those who do not are all that is required. Second, the sample size is preserved if these cases remain in the analysis. If these cases were to be coded as missing, each label would have 25-35% of the cases missing. Not only is this number quite large, but a comparison of the missing and the non-missing samples reveals the missing sample to be statistically different; it is older, it has a lower average income and education, it has a higher

There are 11 religious identity labels that appear on both waves of the BRS. They are: Bible-believer, born-again, charismatic, evangelical, fundamentalist, mainline Christian, Pentecostal, religious right, seeker, theologically conservative, and theologically liberal. In order to explore the *cultural omnivore/breadth vs. cultural univore/exclusivity* argument (hypotheses 3 and 4), I have chosen not to determine breadth simply by examining the number of religious identity labels chosen. This would seem like a sensible manner in which to explore this issue, but a quick glance at the religious labels included in the dataset reveals that a large number of these labels are indicative of a more conservative brand of Christianity. Therefore, a large number of identities chosen would not be attributable to a breadth of religious preferences, but rather to a more conservative religious orientation. Rather than measure breadth of religious preference in terms of a raw number of identities selected, I will measure breadth based on whether the respondent selects religious identity labels from different types of religious identities.

In order to see whether these categories exist, I performed a factor analysis on these 11 variables (principle components). Table 4.1 reveals the factor loadings for the two factors that are produced. I use 0.4 as the standard for inclusion into a factor, and the factors that emerge represent conceptually clear categories. The first factor contains eight labels: Bible-believer, born-again, evangelical, fundamentalist, religious right,

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frequency of church attendance, and it has more conservative views of the Bible. For these reasons, those who answer “undecided” and those who do not answer are coded as 0, as they do not identify with the religious label.

Table 4.1  
*Factor Analysis of Religious Identity Labels (Factor Loading Scores Reported)*

Variable	Factor 1 Conservative	Factor 2 Liberal
Bible-believer	<b>0.622</b>	-0.124
Born-again	<b>0.643</b>	-0.088
Charismatic	<b>0.518</b>	0.428
Evangelical	<b>0.735</b>	-0.112
Fundamentalist	<b>0.650</b>	-0.119
Pentecostal	<b>0.449</b>	0.317
Religious Right	<b>0.566</b>	-0.130
Seeker	0.315	<b>0.613</b>
Theologically Conservative	<b>0.636</b>	-0.244
Theologically Liberal	-0.076	<b>0.720</b>
Eigenvalue	3.197	1.307

Pentecostal, charismatic<sup>3</sup>, and theologically conservative, most of which are religious identity labels that generally reflect some aspect of Evangelical Protestantism<sup>4</sup>. This group of labels will be referred to as the “conservative” labels. The second factor

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<sup>3</sup> Although the label *charismatic* has a factor loading score above 0.40 in both factors, this analysis includes it in factor 1 (conservative), since its factor loading score is higher within factor 1.

<sup>4</sup> Although Evangelical Protestants are not the only religious tradition that would seem to embrace the term “Bible-believer,” Evangelicals are known to have more conservative views of the Bible than other religious traditions, claim to place a higher value on it, and read from it more often in private. The term “born-again” expresses Evangelicals’ stress on the importance of conversion. Fundamentalists are often thought of as a subdivision within Evangelicalism that seeks shelter from modernity rather than engagement with it. The Religious Right is a religious and political movement which reached its height in the 1980’s and 1990’s, and was constituted mainly of Evangelical Christians. Pentecostals are commonly understood to be a segment within Evangelicalism, and although some Catholics identify as “charismatic,” most charismatics are Evangelicals. Finally, “theologically conservative” expresses theological views that are known to be typical of Evangelical Protestantism. For more information on the beliefs of and divisions within Evangelicalism, see Marsden (1991), Smidt (1988), Smith (1998), and Woodberry and Smith (1998).

contains 2 religious identity labels: seeker and theologically liberal. These two religious identity labels are reflective of a more liberal strain of Christianity, and will be called the “liberal” labels<sup>5</sup>.

### *Independent Variables*

Two variables measuring different aspects of social class will be employed. The first variable captures the respondents’ education levels. The BRS asks, “What is the highest level of education you have completed?” and gives 7 possible response options. The options in the original dataset are: 1=8<sup>th</sup> grade or less; 2=9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade (no high school diploma); 3=high school graduate (12); 4=some college; 5=trade / technical / vocational training; 6=college graduate; and 7=postgraduate work/degree. I have made a small change in my coding of the education variable. Because option 5 (trade/technical/vocational training) does not necessarily represent a terminal degree, it cannot be assumed to measure a *higher* level of education than option 4 (some college). Therefore, options 4 and 5 are combined into 1 category, creating an education item with 6 response options. A variable measuring income asks, “By your best estimate, what was your total household income last year, before taxes?” Respondents have 7 options, including: 1=\$10,000 or less; 2=\$10,001 - \$20,000; 3=\$20,001 - \$35,000; 4=\$35,001 - \$50,000; 5=\$50,001 - \$100,000; 6=\$100,001 - \$150,000; 7=\$150,001 or more<sup>6</sup>.

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<sup>5</sup> The label “Mainline Christian” falls into its own factor; no other religious labels have a high factor loading score along with it. Because it doesn’t fit within either of these two categories, it is left out of these analyses.

<sup>6</sup> For both of the social class variables, those who did not answer the questions were dropped from the analysis. 6.9% percent of respondents did not answer the income question, while 2.1% of respondents did not answer the education question. 2-tailed t-tests were performed to see whether the missing cases were significantly different from

The denominational affiliation of the respondent will also be included as an important explanatory variable in each model. Respondents are placed into religious traditions using the RELTRAD typology developed by Kellstedt et al. (1996) and Steensland et al. (2000) and refined by Dougherty et al. (2007). This typology has 7 religious tradition categories: Evangelical Protestant, Mainline Protestant, Black Protestant, Catholic, Jewish, unaffiliated, and “other” religions. However, we should not expect non-Christians to identify with most of these labels, as many of them seem to be specifically descriptive of Christians. As a result, all non-Christians will be dropped from the analysis. Those who fall into the “Jewish” category as well as the “unaffiliated” category will be dropped, along with non-Christians from the “other religion” category, such as Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists, and Unitarian Universalists. The “other religion” category remains comprised of such groups as Eastern Orthodox Christians, Mormons, and Jehovah’s Witnesses. Removing the non-Christians from the dataset removes 15.6% of the sample, a size reduction from 3369 to 2844.

The frequency with which one attends their church or other religious services is also included in the analyses. It is measured in a 9-point scale ranging from 1=never to 9=several times a week. The respondents’ views of the Bible are included as an important measure of conservative or liberal theological orientation. Respondents are asked about their view of the Bible by selecting from four categories: 1="The Bible is an ancient book of history and legends," 2="the Bible contains some human error," 3="The Bible is perfectly true, but it should not be taken literally, word-for-word. We must

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the cases that remain in the model. Those who did not answer the income question were more likely to be males, non-whites, older, and have less education. Those who did not answer the education question were more likely to be male and non-white.

interpret its meaning," and 4="The Bible means exactly what it says. It should be taken literally, word-for-word, on all subjects."

Variables measuring the respondents' political party affiliation are included as dummy variables: Republican, Democrat, and independent (the Republican category is a combination of those who identify as strong, moderate or leaning Republicans; the same is true of the Democrat group). Several standard socio-demographic controls also appear in the models. Gender is a dummy variable (male=1); age is measured in years; region of the country is a dummy variable (south=1); race is a series of dummy variables: white (non-Hispanic), black (non-Hispanic), Hispanic (any race), Asian, and other race. Finally, because this dataset is a combination of two cross-sectional datasets collected in different years, I also control for the survey wave.

### *Analytic Strategy*

After a review of the basic descriptive statistics of the relevant variables in the dataset, multivariate regressions will be performed to analyze the effect of social class on the selection of religious identity variables. First, binary logistic regressions will determine the relationship between the explanatory variables and one's likelihood of identifying with each of the 10 religious identity labels included in the combined dataset. These models will test hypothesis 1 and 2, the claim that high education and income will be negatively related to religious identity labels that are rarely associated with higher classes.

The second set of regressions will test hypotheses 3 and 4, the *cultural omnivore thesis* vs. the *cultural univore thesis*, to see whether high social class predicts identification with a broad or narrow array of religious identity labels. Respondents are

placed into one of four categories: those who identify with one or more labels from only the conservative list and none from the liberal list (termed “exclusively conservative”); those who identify with one or more labels from the liberal list and none from the conservative list (termed “exclusively liberal”); those who select one or more labels from each of the two types of religious identities (termed “both types”); and those who do not select any religious identity labels from either of the groups (termed “neither type”). In this case, *religious omnivores* would be more likely to embrace religious identities from both of the groups, while *religious univores* would be more likely to select from only the conservative or liberal groups.

The final set of regressions will also explore hypotheses 3 and 4, this time using multinomial logit regression models, a common regression for studies in which the dependent variable is categorical. The models test the likelihood that one will fall into one of these four categories over the other when faced with only two of the options. This is an ideal method for testing the likelihood that a high status person would be a religious omnivore or a religious univore.

### *Results*

Table 4.2 contains descriptive statistics for all variables that will appear in the subsequent regression models. The variables of most interest in this study are the measures of social class and the religious identity labels. Regarding our measures of social class, the mean education level for the sample is 3.97, just less than response 4, “some college / trade/technical/vocational training.” The mean income level is 4.19, slightly higher than response 4, “\$35,001 - \$50,000.”

The religious identity label most commonly selected by American Christians is “Bible-believer;” 65% of American Christians identify with this label. Born-again is the second most common label chosen, at 38%. About one-fourth of American Christians identify with the label “theologically conservative,” and 23% identify with the “evangelical” label. 13-15% of American Christians identifies as seekers or as theologically liberal, followed by “charismatic,” “religious right,” and “fundamentalist.” The label “Pentecostal” has the smallest identification at 9%.

Table 4.2 also contains the percentages for the religious label types. The most common type is “exclusively conservative.” Fifty-six percent of American Christians select at least one identity from the family of eight conservative identities and do not select any from the liberal labels. Conversely, 7% of American Christians identify with one of the liberal labels and do not identify with any of the conservative labels. 18% of American Christians identify with at least one religious label from each of the two types, and 20% of American Christians do not select any of the 10 religious labels that fall into these two groups<sup>7</sup>.

Tables 4.3 and 4.4 contain the results from a series of logistic regressions determining the odds of selecting the ten religious identity labels that appear on both

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<sup>7</sup> This does not necessarily mean that the respondent does not identify with any religious label whatsoever. There are a small number of labels that appear on one of the two BRS waves, but not on both waves, labels such as “moral majority,” “contemplative,” “religious left,” and “spiritual.” Some of the respondents in the “neither” category have chosen one of those labels. From the 2007 sample, 13.2% of those in the “neither” category selected the label “contemplative;” 6.2% identify as a “mainline Christian;” 3.1% identify as a “mystic;” 2.2% identify as “religious left;” 23.2% identify as “spiritual;” 16.9% identify as “traditional;” and 63.4% of those in the “neither” category in the 2007 data chose none of the labels. In the 2005 sample, none of those in the “neither” category chose either of the other two available labels, which are “mainline Christian” and “moral majority.”

Table 4.2  
*Descriptive Statistics for All Variables (weighted values)*

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	Range
White (non-Hispanic)	0.82	0.38	0 – 1
Black (non-Hispanic)	0.08	0.27	0 – 1
Hispanic (any race)	0.04	0.19	0 – 1
Asian	0.01	0.06	0 – 1
Other Race	0.05	0.23	0 – 1
Male	0.45	0.50	0 – 1
South	0.33	0.47	0 – 1
Age	49.33	16.79	18 – 96
Democrat	0.33	0.47	0 – 1
Independent	0.19	0.39	0 – 1
Republican	0.42	0.49	0 – 1
Church Attendance	5.30	2.77	1 – 9
Bible Views	2.83	1.00	1 – 4
Social Class			
Education	3.97	1.16	1 – 6
Income	4.19	1.59	1 – 7
Religious Traditions			
Evangelical Protestant	0.38	0.48	0 – 1
Black Protestant	0.06	0.23	0 – 1
Mainline Protestant	0.24	0.43	0 – 1
Catholic	0.25	0.43	0 – 1
Other Christian Religion	0.04	0.19	0 – 1
Religious Identity Labels			
Bible-believer	0.65	0.48	0 – 1
Born-again	0.38	0.49	0 – 1
Theologically Conservative	0.26	0.44	0 – 1
Evangelical	0.23	0.42	0 – 1
Seeker	0.15	0.36	0 – 1
Theologically Liberal	0.14	0.34	0 – 1
Charismatic	0.14	0.35	0 – 1
Religious Right	0.14	0.35	0 – 1
Fundamentalist	0.13	0.34	0 – 1
Pentecostal	0.09	0.28	0 – 1
Religious Label Types			
Exclusively Conservative	0.56	0.50	0 – 1
Exclusively Liberal	0.07	0.25	0 – 1
Neither Type	0.20	0.40	0 – 1
Both Types	0.18	0.38	0 – 1

waves of the Baylor Religion Survey. Before discussing the variables of greatest interest (those measuring social class), other consistent findings will be addressed. First of all, politics seems to matter greatly as a predictor of selecting a religious identity label. Democrats are significantly less likely than Republicans to select 5 of the 8 conservative labels in the table, and more likely to select only one label (theologically liberal). The comparison of independents to Republicans yields similar difference: independents are less likely than Republicans to select the labels Bible believer, born-again, fundamentalist, Religious Right, and theologically conservative. Independents are more likely than Republicans to select the label theologically liberal.

Demographic variables are largely non-significant as predictors of religious label selection. Gender is only significant in two of the models: men are more likely to identify as theologically conservative and as fundamentalists. Race matters very little. Southern residence is only significant in two of the models (positively associated with identifying as “born-again,” less likely to identify as Pentecostal), and age is a significant predictor in five of the models (negatively associated with Bible-believer, charismatic, seeker, and theologically liberal; it is positively associated with theologically conservative).

Measures of religious affiliation, practice, and belief are significant in many of the models. Regarding the religious tradition categories, Evangelical Protestants are the omitted reference category. There are no differences between Evangelicals and Black Protestants for any of the labels. Mainline Protestants are less likely than Evangelicals to identify as born-again, charismatic, evangelical, fundamentalist, Pentecostal, and theologically conservative, and they are more likely to identify as theologically liberal.

Table 4.3  
*Logistic Regressions for Likelihood of Selecting Conservative Religious Identity Labels  
(Odds Ratios Reported)<sup>a</sup>*

Variable	Model 1 Bible- Believer	Model 2 Born Again	Model 3 Charismatic	Model 4 Evangelical	Model 5 Fundamentalist	Model 6 Pentecostal	Model 7 Religious Right	Model 8 Theologically Conservative
Dataset 2007	4.051*	2.433*	2.992*	2.629*	2.755*	1.567*	2.812*	2.433*
Male	0.986	0.965	1.126	1.148	1.605*	1.341	1.235	1.678*
Black (Non-Hispanic)	1.106	0.579	2.703*	0.535	0.497	1.895	0.961	0.477
Hispanic (Any Race)	0.790	1.153	1.542	0.615	0.447	1.038	0.523	0.554*
Asian	5.033	0.587	1.682	1.162	2.268	4.111	5.175	1.589
Other Race	1.782*	1.395	1.888*	1.146	1.200	1.211	1.154	1.283
South	0.863	1.714*	0.985	0.955	0.938	0.703*	0.994	0.944
Age	0.990*	0.996	0.982*	0.998	1.001	1.000	0.994	1.008*
Political Democrat <sup>b</sup>	0.565*	0.819	0.743	0.620*	0.369*	0.967	0.151*	0.236*
Political Independent <sup>b</sup>	0.730*	0.720*	0.873	0.909	0.707*	0.998	0.410*	0.492*
Religious Traditions <sup>c</sup>								
Black Protestant	1.352	1.330	0.616	0.991	0.767	0.763	1.333	1.651
Mainline Protestant	1.112	0.293*	0.562*	0.565*	0.486*	0.305*	0.745	0.700*
Catholic	0.573*	0.077*	0.960	0.199*	0.424*	0.280*	0.996	0.967
Other Christian Religion	0.928	0.105*	0.610	0.211*	0.613	0.039*	1.100	0.889
Church Attendance	1.125*	1.209*	1.104*	1.298*	1.166*	1.142*	1.079*	1.179*
Bible Views	2.832*	2.469*	1.193*	1.913*	1.362*	1.690*	1.628*	1.468*
Social Class								
Education	0.937	0.988	1.070	1.222*	1.064	0.732*	1.040	1.240*
Income	1.035	0.962	0.853*	0.977	0.905*	0.848*	1.123*	1.016
$r^2$	0.283	0.385	0.088	0.242	0.119	0.108	0.140	0.188

\* p<0.05, 2-tailed t-test

<sup>a</sup> Sample size for all models is 2414

<sup>b</sup> Republicans are the omitted reference category

<sup>c</sup> Evangelical Protestants are the omitted reference category

Table 4.4  
*Logistic Regressions for Likelihood of Selecting Liberal Religious Identity Labels  
(Odds Ratios Reported)<sup>a</sup>*

Variable	Model 1 Seeker	Model 2 Theologically Liberal
Dataset 2007	4.236*	1.455*
Male	0.791	1.194
Black (Non-Hispanic)	2.135*	1.028
Hispanic (Any Race)	1.108	1.246
Asian	2.667	6.623
Other Race	1.894*	1.918*
South	0.817	0.779
Age	0.989*	0.988*
Political Democrat <sup>b</sup>	1.093	5.020*
Political Independent <sup>b</sup>	0.929	2.324*
Religious Traditions <sup>c</sup>		
Black Protestant	0.720	1.175
Mainline Protestant	0.959	1.399*
Catholic	0.644*	0.979
Other Christian	1.145	0.815
Religion		
Church Attendance	1.064*	1.069*
Bible Views	0.901	0.507*
Social Class		
Education	1.107	1.397*
Income	0.831*	1.019
$r^2$	0.086	0.145

\*  $p < 0.05$ , 2-tailed t-test

<sup>a</sup> Sample size for all models is 2414

<sup>b</sup> Republicans are the omitted reference category

<sup>c</sup> Evangelical Protestants are the omitted reference category

Catholics are less likely than Evangelicals to identify as Bible believers, born-again, evangelical, fundamentalist, Pentecostal, and seekers. Christians from the “other religion” category are less likely than Evangelicals to identify as born-again, evangelical, and Pentecostal. One’s views of the Bible is a strong predictor of religious label selection, positively associated with eight of the ten variables (conservative Bible views are

negatively associated with identifying as “theologically liberal” and unassociated with identifying as a “seeker”). Finally, frequency of church attendance is also a consistent predictor of label selection, positively associated with all ten of the religious identity labels.

Hypotheses 1 claims that high social class will predict the rejection of religious identities more common to Evangelicalism. This hypothesis is tested in table 4.3. Results indicate some support for the hypothesis. Of the eight religious identity labels that fall into the conservative family of labels, at least one measure of social class is negatively associated with three of them, even after controlling for socio-demographics and measures of religious belief, practice, and affiliation. Higher income levels are negatively related to the selection of the labels charismatic, fundamentalist, and Pentecostal. Higher education levels are also negatively associated with the selection of the label Pentecostal.

The other five labels in the conservative family of labels are not related to social class in the expected ways. Social class is unrelated to the labels “Bible-believer” and “born-again,” and it is positively related to the adoption of three of them. Education is positively related to identification as an “Evangelical” and as “theologically conservative.” High income is positively associated with the label “religious right.”

Even though only three of the conservative labels are associated with social class in the expected direction, these three are the ones that the hypotheses would most expect to be negatively associated with social class. In other words, the labels “fundamentalist,” “charismatic,” and “Pentecostal” have been associated with lower classes for decades

(Ammerman 1987; Balmer 1993; Cox 1995; Cross 1950; Marsden 1980; Poloma 1982), and would be most expected to conform to the hypothesis.

In contrast, it is easy to see how two of the other conservative labels are not related to social class in the expected ways. The label “religious right” refers to an explicit political movement rather than a purely religious preference. Also, the term “theologically conservative” certainly would not resonate with the lower classes, if for no other reason than the presence of the word “theological,” which is unlikely to be a part of the everyday parlance of the lower classes. After these considerations are made, it appears that hypothesis 1 has received partial support.

The positive association of education with the term “Evangelical,” which is counter to the hypothesized expectation, is harder to reconcile. The effect is in fact somewhat large: for every unit increase in one’s level of education, the odds of identifying as an Evangelical increase by 22%, even after controlling for denominational affiliation and religious belief and practice. It is hard to determine why this relationship appears, as it is counter not only to the expectation of this study, but also to the common beliefs about Evangelicalism in America. One possible explanation is the vast gains in income and education that Evangelicals have seen over the past few decades (Lindsay 2007; Park and Reimer 2002). As long as Evangelicals are continuing to reduce the gap in social class that divides them from other religious traditions, this positive relationship may persist.

Hypotheses 2 claims that social class will be positively associated with religious identity labels that are unassociated with the lower classes, and table 4.4 contains the results of these tests. Because the factor analysis reveals the labels “theologically liberal”

and “seeker” to be unrelated to the other more conservative labels, they are the labels to test the hypothesis. Social class is not related to the label “seeker” in the expected direction; in fact, income is negatively related to selection of the “seeker” label. Education is positively associated with the label “theologically liberal,” but based on the positive relationship between education and “theologically conservative,” it seems clear that this relationship is due to the presence of the word *theologically* rather than an embrace of a higher-status religious label. Hypothesis 2 receives little support.

In summary, tables 4.3 and 4.4 provide support for hypothesis 1, but very little support for hypothesis 2. Social class is negatively related to three of the eight labels associated with Evangelical Protestantism, and these three labels are the ones that are most strongly associated with Evangelicalism. Hypothesis 2 receives almost no support. Although education, as expected, is positively related to one of the liberal labels (theologically liberal), this relationship appears to be based on an understanding of the term rather than an embrace of religious labels less common to the lower classes.

Table 4.5 contains the results from a series of logistic regressions that determine the odds that a respondent will fall into one of the four religious identity types that were created from the results of the factor analysis: exclusively conservative, exclusively liberal, both types, and neither type. Models 1 and 2 provide a further exploration of hypotheses 1 and 2, the expectation that high social class will be negatively related to religious labels commonly associated with Evangelicalism and will be positively related to religious labels that are unassociated with Evangelicalism. Once again, hypothesis 1 receives some support, and hypothesis 2 now receives some support. Education is negatively related to the odds that a respondent will select from only the conservative

Table 4.5  
*Logistic Regressions for Likelihood of Selecting Religious Identity Types*  
*(Odds Ratios Reported)<sup>a</sup>*

	Model 1 Exclusively Conservative	Model 2 Exclusively Liberal	Model 3 Both Types	Model 4 Neither Type
Dataset 2007	0.813*	0.510*	3.775*	0.401*
Male	0.951	0.779	0.968	1.204
Black (Non-Hispanic)	1.072	1.042	1.390	0.456
Hispanic (Any Race)	0.987	0.931	1.075	1.065
Asian	0.512	0.001	4.332	0.470
Other Race	0.701	1.141	2.342*	0.592
South	1.104	0.758	0.788	1.117
Age	1.009*	1.004	0.985*	1.002
Political Democrat <sup>b</sup>	0.478*	5.682*	1.337*	1.176
Political Independent <sup>b</sup>	0.743*	2.097*	1.093	1.396*
Religious Traditions <sup>c</sup>				
Black Protestant	0.780	0.192	1.017	3.896*
Mainline Protestant	0.848	0.927	1.264	1.375
Catholic	0.727*	0.769	0.835	2.799*
Other Christian Religion	0.837	1.741	0.852	1.841*
Church Attendance	1.022	0.934	1.117*	0.862*
Bible Views	2.046*	0.337*	0.992	0.553*
Social Class				
Education	0.829*	1.479*	1.112*	1.016
Income	1.095*	1.119	0.860*	0.979
$r^2$	0.172	0.145	0.091	0.142

\*  $p < 0.05$ , 2-tailed t-test

<sup>a</sup> Sample size for all models is 2414

<sup>b</sup> Republicans are the omitted reference category

<sup>c</sup> Evangelical Protestants are the omitted reference category

labels, yet income has a positive effect. Education is positively related to the odds that a respondent will select from among the liberal religious labels only.

Model 3 of table 4.5 is the first model to explore hypotheses 3 and 4, the *religious omnivore* vs. *religious univore* hypotheses. A *religious omnivore* would be more likely to select one or more religious identity labels from each of the two different groups of

labels, while a *religious univore* will only select from only one of the groups. Model 3 indicates that social class doesn't function in a clear cut way: education is positively related to selecting from each of the groups, while income is negatively related to selecting from each of the groups. Those who have higher education levels are more likely to be religious omnivores, selecting at least one conservative religious identity and also at least one liberal religious identity. However, high incomes have the reverse effect, associated with a lower likelihood of adopting both types of labels.

Table 4.6 contains the results from multinomial logit regressions (unstandardized regression coefficients are reported). This regression technique is common for studies in which the dependent variable is nominal rather than ordinal. Each coefficient represents the effect of the independent variable on the odds that a respondent will be classified in one of the four religious identity types over another, if those two types were the only options available to the respondent. For example, the positive and significant coefficient for the variable "church attendance" in model 1 indicates that for each unit increase in the respondent's reported frequency of church attendance, the odds that a respondent will identify with a label from the conservative group only rather than one from the liberal group only increase by 11.4%. Similarly, the negative and significant coefficients for the political affiliation variables indicate that both Democrats and political independents are less likely than Republicans to select only a conservative label rather than a liberal label.

Model 1 tests hypotheses 1 and 2 (that high social class will be negatively associated with the selection of conservative labels and positively associated with the selection of liberal labels), while models 2-5 address hypotheses 3 and 4 (the *religious*

Table 4.6  
*Multinomial Logit Regressions for Likelihood of Selecting Religious Identity Type*  
*(Unstandardized Betas Reported)<sup>a</sup>*

Variable	Model 1 Just Conservative Over Just Liberal	Model 2 One Type Over Both	Model 3 Just Conservative Over Both	Model 4 Just Liberal Over Both	Model 5 Neither Over Both	Model 6 Neither Over Just Liberal	Model 7 Neither Over Just Conservative
Dataset 2007	0.811*	-1.876*	-1.138*	-1.948*	-1.968*	-0.020	-0.831*
Male	0.196	0.186	0.022	-0.174	0.153	0.327	0.130
Black (Non-Hispanic)	0.174	-0.981	-0.223	-0.396	-1.055	-0.659	-0.833
Hispanic (Any Race)	0.055	-0.012	-0.064	-0.119	-0.028	0.091	0.036
Asian	6.400	-1.753	-1.217	-7.618	-1.876	5.741	-0.659
Other Race	-0.126	-1.130*	-0.770*	-0.643	-1.150*	-0.506	-0.380
South	0.261	0.296	0.219	-0.042	0.285	0.327	0.066
Age	-0.001	0.014*	0.015*	0.016*	0.014*	-0.001	-0.001
Political Democrat <sup>b</sup>	-2.086*	-0.092	-0.553*	1.533*	0.129	-1.404*	0.682*
Political Independent <sup>b</sup>	-0.925*	0.228	-0.157	0.768*	0.308	-0.460	0.465*
Religious Traditions <sup>c</sup>							
Black Protestant	1.191	1.227*	-0.030	-1.221	1.223*	2.444*	1.253*
Mainline Protestant	-0.072	0.114	-0.217	-0.145	0.126	0.271	0.344*
Catholic	-0.139	1.039*	0.061	0.199	1.039*	0.839*	0.978*
Other Christian Religion	-0.750	0.695	0.097	0.847	0.750	-0.097	0.653*
Church Attendance	0.114*	-0.221*	-0.082*	-0.196*	-0.235*	-0.040	-0.154*
Bible Views	1.483*	-0.482*	0.335*	-1.147*	-0.573*	0.574*	-0.909*
Social Class							
Education	-0.491*	-0.070	-0.164*	0.327*	-0.008	-0.336*	0.156*
Income	-0.071	0.103*	0.151*	0.222*	0.114*	-0.108	-0.038

\*  $p < 0.05$ , 2-tailed t-test

<sup>a</sup> Sample size for all models is 2414

<sup>b</sup> Republicans are the omitted reference category

<sup>c</sup> Evangelical Protestants are the omitted reference category

*omnivore* vs. *religious univore* hypotheses). Once again, some support for hypotheses 1 and 2 appears in model 1. Although income is unrelated to the likelihood that one would choose only from the conservative labels rather than the liberal labels, the coefficient for education is significant and negative. When faced with choosing between a label from the conservative group and a label from the liberal group, those with higher social class as measured by education levels are more likely to choose from the liberal labels, indicating a rejection of conservative labels and a preference for liberal labels.

Model 2 is the first of the multinomial logit tests of hypotheses 3 and 4. It determines the effects of the independent variables on the odds that a respondent would identify with a label from just one of the two exclusive types (exclusively conservative and exclusively liberal, or a *religious univore*) rather than choosing from both types (*religious omnivore*). For model 2, the issue of whether this selection was from the conservative or liberal group is inconsequential. It is merely a straight test of the univore vs. omnivore theses. This test is similar to model 3 of table 4.5, the logistic regression predicting the odds that a respondent would select from both labels. The difference, however, is that the multinomial logit model removes the “neither type” category from the analysis. It determines the odds that a respondent would choose from only one type or from both types, if those were the only available options. The results are similar to those from model 3 of table 4.5. Although education is unrelated to the odds that one will choose from both types of labels, income is positively related to the odds that one will choose from only one of the types (*religious univore*).

Models 3-5 further explore hypotheses 3 and 4 by examining whether a preference or distaste for multiple identities remains when compared to the other three

religious label types (exclusively conservative, exclusively liberal, neither). Model 3 determines the odds of selecting a label from the conservative group rather than one from each of the two groups; education is associated with a preference for both types of religious labels rather than just the conservative labels, while income is related to a preference for the conservative labels only rather than both types. In model 4, conservative labels are replaced with the liberal labels. Education and income are both significant and positive; those with a higher education and income prefer a liberal label rather than one from both types. Finally, model 5 shows a similar result when faced with choosing between both types of religious labels or neither type: education is non-significant while income is still negatively related to the odds of choosing from both groups of labels.

These models indicate that across the board, higher income is related to a rejection of religious omnivorism. Those with higher incomes refrain from selecting from both types of labels, whether their other options include exclusively conservative labels, exclusively liberal labels, or no label at all. Those with higher incomes are religious univores: they uniformly reject selecting from both types of labels. Education, however, is positively related to religious omnivorism in one of the models (model 3), and negatively related to religious omnivorism in another model (model 4). Those with higher education levels prefer exclusively liberal labels to both types, and they prefer both types to exclusively conservative labels. This indicates that, unlike income, education seems unrelated to the univore-omnivore debate; educated American Christians are less likely to adopt conservative labels, it is this trend that drives the education effects seen in models 3 and 4.

This education effect is further demonstrated in models 6 and 7. Although income is non-significant in these models, education is clearly related to preference for liberal labels only. When faced with exclusively liberal labels or neither type of label, those with higher education levels prefer liberal labels; when faced with exclusively conservative labels or neither type of label, those with higher education levels prefer no label at all. Education does not simply steer one away from religious labels altogether; education directs American Christians away from conservative labels and toward liberal labels.

### *Summary and Conclusions*

Two bodies of theory are able to explain the linkage between social class and religious label identification: Bourdieu's (1894) conception of social class and cultural preferences which claims that those of higher statuses distance themselves from lower classes through their various cultural tastes; and literature on social status and "lower class" religions such as Pentecostalism, fundamentalism, and other branches of Evangelical Protestantism (McCloud 2007; Park and Reimer 2002). This study finds support for some of the claims that may accompany these bodies of literature. Specifically, measures of social class are negatively related to the odds that a respondent will identify with the religious labels most commonly associated with expressions of Evangelical Protestantism (such as charismatic, Pentecostal, and fundamentalist), even after controlling for measures of religious affiliation, practice, and belief. The expected positive association between social class and religious labels that are unassociated with Evangelicalism is less apparent, but still evident in some of the models. Higher education

predicts a higher likelihood of selecting from the liberal labels in both the binary logistic models and the multinomial logistic models.

This study also explores the divergent claims about cultural univores (Bourdieu 1984) and cultural omnivores (Bryson 1996, Peterson 1992, 1997). Understanding religious preferences as a type of cultural taste, the relationship between social class and the breadth of one's religious identification is explored. Results indicate that this relationship is somewhat complicated. While education is only modestly related to the omnivore-univore distinction, income is associated with narrower religious taste (religious univore) in most of the models.

The tendency for wealthier individuals to value exclusive religious label expressions is evident when given the option of any other type: exclusively conservative, exclusively liberal, or neither type of label. It could be that this relationship is due less to the desire among the wealthy to maintain narrower (and potentially more exclusive) religious identities, but rather due to the generally negative relationship that exists between income and many of the religious labels. In tables 4.3 and 4.4, the logistic regressions predicting the odds of selecting each of the labels individually, the coefficient for income is negative in six of the ten models (the coefficient is significant in only four of these models). The tendency for high income to be negatively associated with religious omnivorism may simply be due to their selection of fewer labels overall, making them less likely to select from each of the two religious identity groups.

A few weaknesses of the study should be mentioned. First of all, the different question wording of the religious identity labels on the two BRS waves could be problematic. Although the percentages of those who identify with the labels in 2005

mirror quite closely those of 2007 when the two affirmative categories are combined, an exact match in question wording is preferred.

Secondly, there is a paucity of religious labels that fall into the “liberal” family of labels<sup>1</sup>, possibly affecting the likelihood that one will fall into that category. Although there are eight labels in the “conservative” category of labels, there are only two labels that fall into the “liberal” group. This makes it more difficult to test the religious omnivore/univore thesis. The problem is not necessarily the lack of liberal labels on the BRS, but rather the lack of liberal labels that are a regular part of religious discourse in America. In fact, it is hard to conceive of many additional liberal labels popular enough to be chosen by many respondents that could have been included on the survey. While categories of religious labels that are roughly equal in size is preferable, these data do not allow for this possibility.

This study makes a few key contributions to the literature on religion and culture. For one, most studies of culture generally do not include religion as a major component deserving of much focus. Lamont, for example, is a major cultural sociologist who has contributed substantially to our understanding of middle class and upper middle class life (1994, 1999, 2002). However, religion plays only a small role in her analyses of culture, treated as one out of many divisions of social life, a division whose ramifications are less pertinent than those of gender, class, or race. This present study takes major theories in cultural sociology and brings them into the study of religion in ways that heretofore have remained absent from the most of the scientific study of religion.

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<sup>1</sup> Although the label “religious left” is on the 2007 wave of the BRS, it is not on the 2005 wave.

Secondly, this study is an important empirical application of Bourdieu's concept of taste and class to religious preferences. Although Bourdieu was clear that his conception of culture was broad enough to encapsulate a diverse array of forms, including religion, he doesn't explicitly discuss the relationship between status and religious preference. In addition, although the relationship between status and religious preference has been explored in detail in several other studies (Nelsen and Snizek 1976; Newport 1979; Sherkat and Wilson 1995), these studies all conceive of religious preference as a matter of denominational affiliation. Identification with a religious label is an understudied dimension of religious preference, and the relationship between these label preferences and social class has been virtually nonexistent in the literature.

Finally, this is the first study to examine the cultural omnivore/univore distinction and its link to social class in a religious context. Although the study of spiritual and religious dabblers is certainly not new (Bellah et al. 1985, Roof 1993), this present study is unique in its treatment of this spirituality as a type of cultural preference and linking it to social class.

This study raises interesting questions that deserve further study. For example, scholars of the cultural omnivore hypothesis claim that broad taste is more useful in today society than narrow taste, allowing one to appear competent in a variety of different contexts and situations. Might this also be true for a familiarity and identification with a variety of religious expressions? Are there ways in which this broad religious identity and familiarity might have a certain usefulness in some interactions, helping one to seem more "cultured," tolerant, and educated? One can imagine scenarios in which this religious knowledge might be useful, but the amount of these scenarios may be limited by

the fact that religion is relegated to the private domain of our lives in ways that many other cultural preferences are not. In other words, one's familiarity with many different artistic or musical genres is more likely to come in handy in their daily interactions than their religious beliefs and identifications, whose public appearances many find offensive.

Finally, this study identifies a link between social class and religious label identification, but it is difficult to tease out the precise mechanisms underlying this relationship. A negative statistical relationship between social class and identification as a fundamentalist, for example, could indicate a strong tendency for the lower-classes to identify with this label, and it could also indicate a tendency for the wealthy to reject it. In other words, do higher classes disproportionately reject these labels or do lower classes disproportionately embrace them? Although it is entirely possible that both of these mechanisms could underlie the relationship, it is also possible that only one of them is driving the relationship. Future studies should attempt to isolate the mechanisms at play in order to provide a fuller understanding of the relationship between social class and religious preferences.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### Congregations and Religious Identity

Religious labels, like all labels with which individuals identify, are expressions of oneself. We are comfortable with a variety of labels that describe such things as our political and social views, our religious orientations, and our cultural and artistic preferences. I may call myself a Republican, a fundamentalist, an environmentalist, a libertarian, a metal-head, or a Sooner. Each of these labels is intended to express something about myself: from my deepest personal convictions and values, to less important cultural tastes.

But what exactly is one saying when one claims that she is, for example, a Democrat? Is she expressing an assent to a coherent political ideology, forming opinions about the success or failure of political parties to deliver certain outcomes? Or is her identification as a Democrat an expression of the political socialization she received in early adulthood? Some research shows, for example, that political partisans are often unaware of the positions taken by their preferred political party on issues such as immigration, health care, and budget reform (Conover and Feldman 1981). In these cases, a person claiming to be a Democrat is most certainly not aligning with the Democratic Party simply because he or she views the party as more consistent with their personal political and social convictions. Rather, it is likely that the individual's identification as a Democrat is also based on the social contexts in which they are raised, educated, and employed (Green, Palmquist and Shickler 2004).

This example illustrates the central question of this chapter: do identity labels function as expressions of individual convictions and characteristics, or do they result from the social and environmental contexts that shape us? Admittedly, these two perspectives are not mutually exclusive. One's individual convictions and one's social context both contribute to their various identities in complementary ways. Despite the obvious overlap, however, this chapter will attempt to compare these two perspectives to one another by examining the expression of religious identity labels.

What does it mean for someone to select a religious identity label, adopting it as descriptive of their religious orientation? Are they merely identifying with the label as an expression of their own individual religious beliefs and practices, or do group dynamics play a major role in one's understanding of his or her religious identity? This chapter considers a simple assumption: one's selection of religious identity labels is an expression of membership with a religious or social movement, or with a group of people, rather than a statement exclusively about one's private religious beliefs. By claiming a religious label as a descriptor of myself, I am not merely assenting to a set of beliefs or a symbol of self-expression, I am identifying with a group of people and with a movement, and symbolically placing my allegiance with them.

Perhaps the most significant source of religious socialization, and hence, the most likely contributor to one's religious identity, is the church, temple, or synagogue to which one belongs. Congregations serve to enforce religious worldviews and particular religious orientations through the maintenance of "plausibility structures" (Berger 1967; Cornwall 1989; Regnerus, Smith, and Smith 2004), which Berger explains as "social base[s]" that a world requires for its continued existence (Berger 1967:45). These social

worlds bind like-minded believers together and provide a continued legitimacy for religious worldviews in the face of a modernity that is sometimes seen as hostile to these beliefs. Congregations provide an important social context in which religious worldviews are valued, transmitted, legitimized, and reproduced, and in which religious identities are formed and reinforced.

If the selection of religious labels is an expression of a kind of group membership or commitment, there must be congregational factors that contribute to the likelihood that one will select one label or another. In other words, certain attributes of the religious community or the individual's relationship to their religious community must affect the ways that an individual understands and expresses their own religious identity. This chapter will look at the individual and congregational factors that contribute to one's identification with four different religious labels: evangelical, fundamentalist, Pentecostal, and charismatic.

Because all four of these religious labels are associated strongly with Evangelical Protestantism and conservative religious beliefs and practices, the hypotheses tested in this chapter are predicated on a simple idea: those individuals who fit the Evangelical mold (personal Evangelical characteristics) and who attend churches that fit the Evangelical mold (congregational Evangelical factors) will be more likely to identify with religious movements and identities that are commonly associated with Evangelical Protestantism. Those congregations whose goals and beliefs align with those of Evangelical Protestantism should successfully inculcate religious identities consistent with Evangelicalism. At the conclusion of the hypothesis tests, the effectiveness of individual-level factors at predicting one's identification with a religious label will be

compared to the effectiveness of the congregation-level factors, and conclusions will be drawn about what we can interpret these religious identity labels to mean.

### *Hypotheses*

In order to decide which individual and congregational characteristics are reflective of Evangelical Protestantism, we must mention two divergent understandings of what constitutes a proper definition of Evangelicalism. What is evangelicalism, and what makes someone an Evangelical? Is it about a religious social context or is it about a set of individual-level beliefs and practices? Social scientists who study religion often consider both to be important indicators.

Those who understand Evangelicalism as a social context consider it to be a loose coalition of churches and denominations such as Southern Baptists, Pentecostals, and various fundamentalist, independent, and non-denominational congregations (Kellstedt & Green 1993, Steensland et al. 2000). Social scientists care about whether a person attends an Evangelical congregation, for example, because congregations are a type of organization, and it is a sociological axiom that individuals in organizations are affected by other members and participants of that organization. These congregations and denominations have distinctive habits, values, histories, and communication patterns that set them apart from other traditions or denominations, and researchers believe that this social context inculcates distinctive beliefs and identities into the individual.

Those who understand Evangelicalism primarily as a set of individual-level beliefs or behaviors, however, have a different focus. For them, Evangelicals are those who hold certain beliefs about the Bible, the organizational body called the local church, social morality, and the integration of faith and everyday life, regardless of the particular

church or denomination to which they belong. As Stark and Glock (1968: 16) put it, “theology, or religious belief, is at the heart of the faith.” These beliefs are thought to have direct effects on other types of behavior, both religious and non-religious.

These two perspectives represent two definitions of what it means to be an Evangelical: evangelicalism is both a religious social context and a set of individual beliefs and practices. Because they are both valid and useful understandings of Evangelicalism, they should both contribute to the likelihood that an individual identifies with various forms of Evangelicalism. The following hypotheses utilize the two perspectives; hypotheses 1-3 understand Evangelicalism as a set of individual-level attributes, while hypotheses 4-8 treat it as a social context. These hypotheses are not intended to predict causal relationships. As an exploratory study, this chapter will look for positive associations between religious label selection and various individual- and congregation-level characteristics that are known to be associated with Evangelical Protestantism. Conclusions will be drawn about what these positive associations tell us about religious identity after the statistical analyses have been discussed.

### *Personal Piety, Belief, and Religious Involvement*

Evangelicals have distinguished themselves from other American Christians in terms of both their beliefs and their practices. Although researchers cannot always agree on a uniform rubric of religious beliefs that distinguish Evangelicals from non-Evangelicals (see Hackett and Lindsay 2008 for a comparison of different perspectives), four beliefs emerge as reliable indicators of Evangelical orthodoxy (Green et al. 1996). Perhaps one of the most important of these is beliefs about how one should interpret the Bible. Although not all Evangelicals would describe themselves as strict Biblical

literalists, a conservative interpretation of scripture that views the Bible as highly authoritative and God-inspired is certainly an important value to Evangelicals of all types. Second, Evangelicals are exclusivist in their beliefs about the sources of religious salvation, believing that salvation comes from Jesus alone. Third, Evangelicals believe that a conversion to Christianity must occur through acceptance of the salvation that Jesus offers. Finally, Evangelicals value the spreading of the Christian faith through evangelism or missions (Marsden 1991, Smith 1998, Weber 1991).

Studies also show that Evangelical Protestants are more likely to engage in certain private devotional practices than those of other religious traditions. For example, Baker's (2008) study of the frequency and content of prayer demonstrates that after controlling for several sociodemographic and religious variables, no religious tradition prays more frequently than Evangelicals, and only Catholics pray the same amount. Brown (2009) confirms that those raised in "fundamentalist" denominations are more likely to pray than those raised in "liberal" denominations. Gruner (1985) shows that Evangelicals and sectarian Pentecostals are not only more likely than Catholics and Mainline Protestants to pray, they also read the Bible more often, a finding also supported by Village (2005). Classic studies by Ammerman (1987) and Smith (1998) also confirm the tendency for Evangelicals and fundamentalists to place a strong value on the importance of private devotional disciplines.

As discussed in chapter 3, Evangelicals are also more likely than other religious traditions to have relationships with fellow church members that are characterized by bonding social capital (Fiorina 1999; Paxton 1999, 2002; Portes 1998; Putnam 2000), relationships that are deeper and stronger than most and inspire greater group

commitment. The higher level of personal involvement with their congregations that Evangelicals demonstrate is evidenced by a greater frequency of volunteering for the activities of the church (Schwadel 2005, Smidt 1999, Wilson and Janoski 1995, Wuthnow 1999) and by Evangelicals maintaining friendship networks that are more densely populated with fellow church members (see table 3.1 of chapter 3) than those of most other religious traditions.

Smith's important study, *American Evangelicalism* (1998), frames the tendency for Evangelicals to engage in these behaviors and hold to these beliefs as practices as an indication of religious strength. American Evangelicalism is a strong Christian faith-tradition, Smith claims, because its constituents are more likely than those of other traditions to faithfully adhere to traditional beliefs, claim their faith to be highly salient, have a confidence and assurance regarding their faith, regularly participate in various church activities, demonstrate a strong commitment to the goals of the church, and remain committed to the church over a long period of time. Self-identified Evangelicals, Smith finds, are clearly more likely to embrace these expressions of religiosity than self-labeled mainline and liberal Protestants.

Similar to Smith, this study will explore the relationship between Evangelical self-labels and various expressions of religious belief and practice. We know that Evangelical Protestants, whether they are defined as "Evangelical" based on self-labeling, denominational affiliation, or adherence to certain religious beliefs, are more likely than other Americans to hold conservative religious views, commonly engage in a private devotional life, and be more active in their congregations. Because of these established correlations, there could be a link between these attributes and the likelihood that one

identifies with Evangelical labels. These characteristics of Evangelical religious belief and practice lead to the first three hypotheses regarding individual-level predictors of identification with Evangelical religious labels:

H<sub>1</sub>: High levels of personal religious devotion will be positively associated with the likelihood that one will choose these labels.

H<sub>2</sub>: High levels of Evangelical orthodox belief will be positively associated with the likelihood that one will choose these labels.

H<sub>3</sub>: High levels of involvement with one's congregation will be positively associated with the likelihood that one will choose these labels.

### *Religious Traditions*

Because more Americans are involved in religious denominations than any other type of voluntary association (Putnam 2000), denominational affiliation is long known to have major impacts on individuals' attitudes, beliefs, and identities, exerting a strong influence on both religious and non-religious social life. Through both formal messages received from the pulpit and informal social interactions with fellow congregants (Wald, Owen & Hill 1988; Welch et al. 1993), the type of religious organization to which one belongs has the potential to powerfully shape them and their views. Measures of denominational affiliation such as that of Steensland et al. (2000) have been shown to predict a wide array of views and behaviors such as views on theology and the Bible (Froese and Bader 2007, McFarland, Wright, and Weakliem 2010), political affiliation and voting habits (Guth, Kellstedt, Smidt, & Green 2006, Wilcox 2000), and attitudes about social and moral issues such as abortion, gender roles, and sexual morality (Cook, Jelen, & Wilcox 1992, Ellison & Bartkowski 2002).

The impact of denominational affiliation should not only be felt in one's attitudes and practices, it should also predict the religious labels that one uses to define and understand their religious identity. The religious labels analyzed in this study all come from different streams of the Evangelical Protestant tradition, leading to this hypothesis:

H<sub>4</sub>: Those in the Evangelical Protestant religious tradition will be more likely than those from other religious traditions to identify with these religious labels.

### *Membership Recruitment*

As stated above, a central hallmark of Evangelicalism is the desire to spread the Christian faith to non-believers and recruit members into the flock. Whether supporting efforts at international missions or engaging in local efforts to spread the Gospel to those in the community, Evangelicals, more so than other religious traditions, engage in activities with the specific goals of bringing non-believers to the faith and adding members to their congregations (Roozen, McKinney, and Carroll 1984, Warner 1988). Although congregations of non-Evangelical denominations also frequently participate in activities that attempt to reach out to the local and global communities, those efforts are less likely to be attempts to recruit members than the attempts of Evangelical congregations. Mainline Protestant congregations, for example, engage in a greater number of "social service" activities, activities that clothe and feed the poor or provide job or language training to those in need (Chaves and Tsotsis 2001), than Evangelical congregations. Although this trend is certainly not absolute (there are many non-Evangelical congregations that engage in membership recruitment efforts and many Evangelical congregations with social service ministries), Evangelical congregations are

more likely to focus their efforts and ministries at member recruitment and reaching non-believers with the salvation of Christianity.

H<sub>5</sub>: The presence of congregational activities typically associated with Evangelical Protestantism, such as outreach programs designed to increase membership, will be positively associated with the likelihood that one will choose these labels.

### *Strictness*

Another distinct characteristic of Evangelical Protestant congregations is the extent of the demand they place on their members. Many scholars believe that the relative strength and growth of Evangelical Protestant denominations over the past few decades as compared to other denominations is due to their ability to inspire greater group commitment and reduce “free-riders” by placing higher demands on their members (Iannaccone 1992, 1994, 1996). These studies confirm the tendency of Evangelical Protestants to place demands on their members by restricting activities such as smoking, drinking alcohol, gambling, pre-marital sexual activity, and homosexual activity. Members are therefore unable to benefit from the congregation without first investing in it themselves through sacrifices that place them in a position of greater tension with society, thereby strengthening their commitment to the congregation and to the faith in general.

As Iannaccone states, “costly demands offer a solution to this [free-rider] problem by creating a social barrier that screens out the less committed and by increasing the value of the group activities that stimulate participation” (Iannaccone, 1997). Therefore, it is expected that those congregations which place greater demands on their members

will also be more successful at inculcating a religious identity that is reflective of Evangelical Protestantism.

H<sub>6</sub>: Congregational strictness will be positively associated with the odds that one will select these labels.

### *Conservative Theology and Politics*

Evangelical Protestant congregations are also generally more conservative congregations than those of other religious traditions, both theologically and politically. Although it is their theological conservatism that defines them to a great extent, political conservatism has also become synonymous with an Evangelical Protestant orientation (Kellstedt, 1989; Kellstedt & Noll, 1990; Kohut, 2000; Regnerus & Smith, 1998; Wilcox, 2000). The theologically and politically conservative orientations of Evangelical congregations are expected to encourage individuals to identify with religious labels that are commonly associated with these conservative ideologies.

In addition, research has shown that Americans commonly associate Evangelical religious identity labels and movements with conservative and Republican political views. For example, Hout and Fischer (2002) conclude that a partial explanation for the recent growth in the proportion of Americans who report no religious preference is the rejection by political moderates and liberals of a conservative political agenda associated with the Religious Right. Similarly, Bolce and De Maio (1999) report that feelings of antipathy toward Christian fundamentalists are significant predictors of Democratic vote choice and of negative feelings toward Republicans. This politicization of Evangelical religious labels indicates that the labels are not seen as descriptive of only religious

orientations, but are rather understood as expressions of political ideologies. These assumptions lead to the final hypothesis.

H<sub>7</sub>: Theologically conservative congregations will be positively associated with the likelihood that they will choose these labels.

H<sub>8</sub>: Politically conservative congregations will be positively associated with the likelihood that they will choose these labels.

### *Data and Measures*

Like chapter 2, the analyses in this chapter will rely on data from the U.S. Congregational Life Survey (USCLS), the 2001 sample of over 2,000 congregations containing over 300,000 worshippers. Once again, the subsample used in this analysis is a random sample of 424 U.S. congregations culled from the 2000 General Social Survey containing 122,404 attenders present on the morning of April 29, 2001<sup>1</sup>.

### *Dependent Variable*

As a measure of one's identification with a religious identity label, respondents are asked, "Do you identify with any of the following approaches to faith?" and can choose *yes* or *no*. They are allowed to choose up to 2 of 10 religious identity labels. Four of the religious identity labels will be tested in this present study – evangelical,

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<sup>1</sup> The approximately 1500 other congregations in the entire sample are not included in the random sample of congregations; they are included in over-samples of other specific denominations such as Church of the Nazarene, Lutherans, Presbyterians, Southern Baptists, and Seventh-Day Adventists. As this study is concerned with the habits and beliefs of church-attending Americans of all denominations, these over-samples are not used for this analysis.

charismatic, fundamentalist, and Pentecostal<sup>2</sup>. In addition, a variable is created that captures respondents who do not select any of these four label choices.

The principle investigators of the USCLS administered a variety of survey questionnaires to the congregants, some of which contained different questions on the back page. This was done to ensure that all desired questions appeared on the survey while also maintaining a short questionnaire length. For this reason, the questions about identification with these religious labels were not asked of the entire sample of 122,404. Rather, these questions were asked of a smaller group of 45,396 respondents, or 37% of the sample, representing all 424 congregations. This 37% of the sample was randomly selected.

#### *Individual-Level Independent Variables.*

Two separate measures capture individual level private religious beliefs and practices. First, I employ the frequency with which one engages in private practices of religious devotion. The USCLS asks, “How often do you spend time in private devotional activities (such as prayer, meditation, reading the Bible alone)?” Respondents can choose one of six options ranging from “never” to “every day.” Higher scores indicate a higher frequency of private devotion.

Secondly, orthodox Evangelical belief is a dichotomous variable. Those who qualify as Evangelicals based on their beliefs must meet Evangelical standards regarding

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<sup>2</sup> Six other religious identity labels are in the dataset that are not modeled in this study. They are: Catholic, reformed, New Age, traditionalist, moderate, and liberal. These labels are not explored here, as this study is designed to test whether attributes of congregations that are consistent with Evangelicalism predict identification with religious labels that are associated with Evangelical Protestantism. These six labels do not necessarily have anything to do with Evangelicalism.

four different variables. First, they must have a conservative view of the Bible. The question asks, “Which statement comes closest to your view of the Bible?” Respondents can choose between six response options. Those who choose “The Bible is the word of God, to be taken literally word for word” or “The Bible is the word of God, to be interpreted in the light of its historical and cultural context” are considered to have a view of the Bible that is consistent with Evangelicalism.<sup>3</sup>

The second variable measures whether the respondent is a religious exclusivist. It asks the respondent to respond to a 5-point likert scale ranging from “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree” regarding the following statement: "all the different religions are equally good ways of helping a person find ultimate truth." Those who disagree or strongly disagree are considered religious exclusivists.

Thirdly, a variable measures the respondent’s eagerness to evangelize, or spread their faith to others. It asks, “Which of the following best describes your readiness to talk to others about your faith?” Respondents who choose the response, “I feel at ease talking about my faith and seek opportunities to do so,” are coded as a 1; all others are coded as a 0.<sup>4</sup>

The final question measuring orthodox Evangelical belief determines whether the respondent has experienced some type of conversion experience, as Evangelicals believe

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<sup>3</sup> The other 4 response options are “The Bible is the word of God, to be interpreted in the light of its historical context and the Church's teachings;” “The Bible is not the word of God, but contains God's word to us;” “The Bible is not the word of God but is a valuable book;” and “The Bible is an ancient book with little value today.”

<sup>4</sup> The four other responses that respondents can select from are: “I mostly feel at ease talking about my faith and do so if it comes up;” “I find it hard to talk about my faith in ordinary language;” “I do not talk about my faith; my life and actions are sufficient;” and “I do not have faith, so the question is not applicable.”

is necessary. The question asks, “Some people feel they came to faith gradually. For others, it began at a definite moment of commitment. Have you ever experienced such a moment of decisive faith commitment or conversion?” All respondents who claim to have experienced some type of conversion, however or whenever they experienced it, are included as following the Evangelical desire for conversion. This means that four of the five response options are considered to coincide with Evangelical beliefs. They are “Yes, a number of specific moments of commitment or re-commitment;” “Yes, at one specific moment more than 5 years ago;” “Yes, at one specific moment in the last 5 years;” and “No, I came to faith through a gradual process.” All four of these response options indicate some type of conversion experience. The only response option that does not qualify is: “No, I’ve had faith for as long as I can remember,” which 47% of the sample selected.

Therefore, Evangelical orthodox belief is a dichotomous variable consisting of those who measure up to each of these four cornerstones of Evangelical belief: conservative views of the Bible, religious exclusivism, eagerness to evangelize, and having experienced some type of religious conversion.

In addition to these variables measuring private beliefs and practices, the models will also include several measures of public religious participation in the life of the congregation. The first variable captures the frequency with which one attends church. Respondents can choose one of seven response options: 1=this is my first time; 2=hardly ever; 3=less than once a month; 4=once a month; 5=2-3 times a month; 6=weekly; 7=more than once each week.

The second variable is a dichotomous variable measuring whether the respondent has a role in the church beyond that of merely an attender. It is based on four separate questions that ask “Do you currently have any of the following roles here?” and allow the respondent to check *yes* or *no* to each of four different roles: member of the governing board, member of a congregational committee or task, choir member, and Sunday school, church school, or Sabbath school teacher. All those who claim to inhabit any of these roles are coded as a 1; all those who do not inhabit any of these roles are coded as a 0.

The third variable capturing public religious participation measures whether the respondent volunteers for the church, helping the various social service or evangelistic activities in which the church engages. Two questions appear on the questionnaire that each ask “do you regularly take part in any activities of this congregation that reach out to the wider community (e.g., visitation, evangelism, outreach, community service, social justice)?” Respondents can answer *yes* or *no* regarding two specific types of congregational activities: “in community service, social justice, or advocacy activities” and “in evangelism or outreach activities.” Those who answer *yes* to either of these questions are coded as a 1; those who do not volunteer for either of these types of activities are coded as a 0.

The final variable measuring public religious participation captures the density of the respondent’s friendship network within their congregation. It asks, “Do you have any close friends in this congregation?” Four response options are given: 1=“No, I have little contact with others from this congregation outside of activities here,” 2= “No, I have some friends in this congregation, but my closest friends are not involved here,” 3=“Yes, I have some close friends here as well as other close friends who are not part of this

congregation,” and 4=“Yes, most of my closest friends are part of this congregation.” It is included in the models as an ordinal variable, higher values indicating a denser friendship network within the congregation.

Standard socio-demographic control variables are also included in all of the models. Gender is a dummy variable (male=1), as is race (white=1). Age is measured in years. Education is measured in 8 levels: no formal education; primary school through 8<sup>th</sup> grade; some high school; high school diploma; trade school certificate; associates degree; bachelors degree; and graduate degree. Finally, total household income is measured in 6 levels: less than \$10K; \$10K - \$24,999; \$25K - \$49,999; \$50K – \$74,999; \$75K - \$99,999; and \$100K and more.

#### *Congregation-Level Independent Variables.*

The level-2 variables come from the congregational profile dataset, completed by a key informant about the activities and services of each congregation. As a measure of religious tradition, the typology developed by Kellstedt et al. (1996) and Steensland et al. (2000) is employed. Although the original typology contains seven categories, only five categories will be used in this study – Evangelical Protestant, Mainline Protestant, Black Protestant, Catholic, and “other religion.” There were only five congregations that could be classified as Jewish, and they are included in the “other religion” category<sup>5</sup> along with such groups as Mormons, Buddhists, Eastern Orthodox, and Unitarians.

The number of evangelistic/outreach activities offered by the congregation is an additive index of 11 different items. The question is, “In the last 12 months, has this

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<sup>5</sup>As most of these religious groups are non-Christian groups, we don’t expect many of those in the “other religion” category to be likely to select the labels in this dataset.

congregation done the following to reach out to nonmembers?” The congregational informants can answer *yes* or *no* to the following specific outreach programs: mailed or distributed newsletters, letters, or flyers; placed a paid ad in a newspaper or magazine; placed a paid ad in the phone book or yellow pages; established or maintained a web site for the congregation; encouraged people already in the congregation to invite a new person; tried to identify and contact people who recently moved into the area; sponsored or participated in an outreach service or other public event intended to bring people into your congregation; sent a letter or other material to people who visited your congregation; had someone from your congregation telephone people who visited your congregation; had someone from your congregation go to the home of people who visited your congregation; and had a special committee to work on recruiting new members.

Cronbach’s reliability coefficient for the index is 0.741.

The strictness of a congregation is an additive index that captures the amount of activities prohibited or otherwise legislated by the congregation. The respondent is asked, “Does your congregation or denomination have any special rules or prohibitions regarding the following?” and can check *yes* or *no* to a list of activities. The index combines 8 items: prohibitions against members smoking; drinking alcohol; dancing; dress, hairstyle, jewelry, or makeup; gambling; how much money people give to the congregation; unmarried adults living together; and homosexual behavior. Cronbach’s reliability coefficient is 0.815.

The political and theological ideologies of the congregation are two separate questions. The first asks, “Politically, would your congregation be considered...” and allows for three response options: liberal, middle, and conservative. The question about

theological ideology is the same, replacing the word *politically* with the word *theologically*. For both questions, higher scores indicate more conservative orientations.

Finally, three variables control for the size and class composition of the congregations. Congregational income and congregational education are the mean levels of all those who filled out the survey. The church size is included as well; the question asks, “So far this year (2001), what is your best estimate of average weekly attendance at worship services for this congregation? If you have more than one worship service, record the average attendance for all services combined.” Due to high skewness, the natural log of the variable is used in the models.

### *Analytic Strategy*

As summarized in chapter one, hierarchical linear modeling is the ideal statistical technique for datasets in which individuals are nested within larger groups, such as congregations (Hoffman, 1997), and will again be employed in this chapter. The software utilized for the analysis is *HLM 6.08*. For each set of regressions, certain individual-level independent variables are set as fixed, as their effect on the dependent variable is found to not vary across congregations.<sup>6</sup> Within the models, each of the non-dichotomous variables is centered at the grand mean of all congregations, while dichotomous variables are not centered. After a review of the descriptive statistics of the relevant variables, binary logistic regressions for each of the four religious identity labels

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<sup>6</sup> Each regression table notes the specific variables that are set as fixed for that regression model. The decision as to which variables are fixed and which variables are allowed to vary across congregations is based on the final estimation of fixed effects as generated in the random coefficients model.

will be conducted separately, as will a series of regressions predicting the selection of none of the four labels in question<sup>7</sup>.

### *Results*

Table 5.1 displays the descriptive statistics for each of the relevant variables in the analysis, including the dependent variables. One-fifth of the sample identifies as an Evangelical and less than 10% of the sample identifies with each of the other three labels. Almost 70% of the sample does not identify with any of these religious identity labels.<sup>8</sup>

Table 5.2 displays the variance components regarding the proportion of respondents who identify with each of the religious labels. These null models, or “one-way ANOVA” models, are necessary in order to confirm that multi-level modeling is required<sup>9</sup>. The high chi-square statistics for each of the religious labels (and as a result, the low p-values) indicate that there is enough variance in the proportion who select each of the variables across and within congregations to justify performing the analysis

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<sup>7</sup> Because respondents are able to choose two labels, the proportions of those who select these labels are not expected to add up to 1.

<sup>8</sup> The respondents who did not choose any of these four religious identity labels may have identified with other religious labels in the dataset. See footnote #2 for a list of the other possible identity labels.

<sup>9</sup> Though all of the subsequent regression models are binary logistic models, the null models as reported in table 2 were run as OLS models. This is done so that both variance components (between-congregations and within-congregations) may be provided. In a binary logistic null model, the variance between congregations is provided, but the variance within congregations is not. Both of these variance components are required to calculate the intraclass correlation. When the null model is run as a binary logistic model (not reported), the significance level remains 0.000 for each religious label, also indicating that multi-level analyses are warranted.

Table 5.1  
*Descriptive Statistics*

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	Range
<b>Level-1</b>			
<i>Socio-Demographics</i>			
Male	0.39	0.49	0 – 1
White	0.76	0.43	0 – 1
Age	51.91	16.98	18 – 100
Education	5.50	1.76	1 – 8
Income	3.59	1.49	1 – 6
<i>Private Beliefs and Practices</i>			
Evangelical Belief	0.11	0.32	0 – 1
Conservative Bible Views	0.50	0.50	0 – 1
Religious Exclusivist	0.31	0.46	0 – 1
Seek to Talk About Faith	0.17	0.37	0 – 1
Conversion Experience	0.50	0.50	0 – 1
Private Devotion	4.66	1.55	1 – 6
<i>Public Religious Participation</i>			
Church Attendance	5.70	1.21	1 – 7
Role in Church	0.42	0.49	0 – 1
Volunteering for Church	0.26	0.44	0 – 1
Friends in Church	2.64	0.91	1 – 4
<i>Religious Label Identification</i>			
Evangelical	0.20	0.40	0 – 1
Pentecostal	0.08	0.27	0 – 1
Charismatic	0.05	0.22	0 – 1
Fundamentalist	0.06	0.23	0 – 1
None of these	0.69	0.46	0 – 1
<b>Level-2</b>			
Evangelical Protestant	0.31	0.46	0 – 1
Mainline Protestant	0.37	0.48	0 – 1
Black Protestant	0.04	0.20	0 – 1
Catholic	0.22	0.42	0 – 1
Other	0.06	0.23	0 – 1
# Outreach Activities	6.28	2.76	0 – 11
Strictness	1.92	2.08	0 – 8
Conservative Politics	2.41	0.68	1 – 3
Conservative Theology	2.34	0.70	1 – 3
Congregation Education	5.40	0.81	1.50 – 7.44
Congregation Income	3.43	0.63	1.55 – 5.27
Church Size	607.47	873.33	10 – 5400
Church Size (ln)	5.66	1.22	2.30 – 8.59

Table 5.2  
*Variance Components of Influence Within Congregations*

Religious Label	Standard Deviation	Variance Component	df	Chi-Square	P-value
Charismatic					
Between Congregations	0.084	0.007	295	10845.66	0.000
Within Congregations	0.198	0.039			
Total		0.046			
Evangelical					
Between Congregations	0.139	0.019	295	5158.51	0.000
Within Congregations	0.373	0.139			
Total		0.158			
Fundamentalist					
Between Congregations	0.096	0.009	295	5320.78	0.000
Within Congregations	0.216	0.047			
Total		0.056			
Pentecostal					
Between Congregations	0.200	0.040	295	23300.37	0.000
Within Congregations	0.210	0.044			
Total		0.084			
None					
Between Congregations	0.236	0.056	295	10964.54	0.000
Within Congregations	0.410	0.168			
Total		0.224			

using a multi-level framework. In addition, these variance components allow the calculation of the intra-class correlations, which reveal the percentage of variance in the dependent variable that is due to differences across congregations. For the label *charismatic*, the intra-class correlation is  $(0.007/0.046)$  15.2%, indicating that 15.2% of the total variance in the proportion of respondents who identify as *charismatic* can be attributed to differences across congregations, and can only be accounted for by using a multi-level approach. Twelve percent of the variance in the proportion of those who

choose the label *evangelical* is attributed to differences across congregations, and the intra-class correlation for the label *fundamentalist* is 16.1%. The intra-class correlation for the label *Pentecostal* is 47.6%, and for the proportion of those who do not select any of these labels, it is 25%.

The next five tables contain the results of the binary logistic regressions predicting the odds of identifying with each of the four religious labels, in addition to the “no label selected” category. For each label, a model containing the individual-level independent variables will be estimated separately from the model containing the congregation-level independent variables, and a third model will contain all independent variables to determine which effects appear more robust.

Table 5.3 begins the analysis of each religious identity label separately by looking at the factors predicting the odds of identifying with the label *charismatic*. Model 1 contains the individual-level predictors. Men are less likely than women to identify as *charismatic*, and whites are less likely than non-whites to select the label. Total household income is negatively related to the selection of *charismatic* as well. Both measures of private religious belief and practice are positively related to the selection of *charismatic*, but none of the four measures of public religious participation are predictive of the selection of the *charismatic* label.

Model 2 of table 5.3 presents only the congregation-level predictors of the selection of the *charismatic* label. Evangelical Protestants are more likely to select the *charismatic* label than Mainline Protestants and those from “other religions,” but their likelihood of selecting the label is no different from that of Catholics or Black

Table 5.3  
*Logistic Regression of Selection of Charismatic Religious Label*  
*(odds ratios reported)<sup>a</sup>*

Variable	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
<b>Level-1</b>			
Intercept	0.028***	0.036***	0.029***
<i>Socio-Demographics</i>			
Male	0.770***		0.781***
White	0.735*		0.835
Age	0.996		0.997
Education	1.003		1.007
Income	0.865***		0.885***
<i>Private Beliefs and Practices</i>			
Evangelical Belief	2.748***		2.427***
Private Devotion	1.188***		1.180***
<i>Public Religious Participation</i>			
Church Attendance	1.075		1.046
Role in Church	0.981		1.044
Volunteering for Church	1.108		1.103
Friends in Church	0.990		0.970
<b>Level-2</b>			
Mainline Protestants <sup>b</sup>		0.529**	0.718
Black Protestant		0.859	0.738
Catholic		0.965	0.924
Other Religion		0.220**	0.409
# Outreach Activities		0.956	0.960
Strictness		1.112**	1.072
Conservative Politics		1.182	1.168
Conservative Theology		1.387	1.329
Avg. Congregation Education		1.109	1.223
Avg. Congregation Income		0.915	0.873
Church Size (ln)		1.125	1.251*
Variance component	0.756***	1.082***	0.765***
Log-likelihood	-37447	-51287	-42083

<sup>a</sup>The following level-1 variables are set as fixed, as their effect on the dependent variable is found to not vary across congregations: age; private devotion, volunteering, and friends in church

<sup>b</sup>Evangelical Protestants are the omitted reference category

Protestants. Of the remaining congregation-level independent variables, only strictness predicts the selection of the *charismatic* label; congregations with more behavioral prohibitions inculcate the *charismatic* label more than congregations without such prohibitions.

Model 3 of table 5.3 combines the individual- and congregation-level variables into the same regression model. Most of the individual-level variables remain significant, while most of the congregation-level variables become non-significant. Hypotheses 1 and 2, the expectation that levels of personal devotion and orthodox Evangelical belief will predict the selection of the label, receive substantial support for the *charismatic* label. None of the other six hypotheses receive support: public religious participation is unrelated to the odds of identifying as a charismatic, and the congregation-level variables pertaining to the hypotheses do not predict the label selection either.

Table 5.4 presents the regression tables predicting the selection of the *evangelical* religious identity label. As model 1 indicates, many of the individual-level variables are significant predictors of the selection of the *evangelical* label. Males are more likely to identify as *evangelicals* than females, and age is positively associated with selection of the label. Education is positively related to identifying as an Evangelical, while income is negatively related to its selection. Both measures of private religious beliefs and practices are significant predictors, and three of the four measures of public religious participation are also positively related to the selection of the *evangelical* label.

Model 2 of table 5.4 presents the coefficients for the congregation-level predictors. Evangelical Protestants are more likely to identify as an Evangelical than

Table 5.4  
*Logistic Regression of Selection of Evangelical Religious Label*  
*(odds ratios reported)<sup>a</sup>*

Variable	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
<b>Level-1</b>			
Intercept	0.135***	0.025***	0.144***
<i>Socio-Demographics</i>			
Male	1.202***		1.239***
White	0.910		0.912
Age	1.007***		1.007***
Education	1.036**		1.044**
Income	0.934***		0.960**
<i>Private Beliefs and Practices</i>			
Evangelical Belief	2.489***		2.289***
Private Devotion	1.147***		1.152***
<i>Public Religious Participation</i>			
Church Attendance	1.061**		1.057**
Role in Church	1.154**		1.163***
Volunteering for Church	1.267***		1.273***
Friends in Church	1.036		1.045
<b>Level-2</b>			
Mainline Protestants <sup>b</sup>		0.824	1.081
Black Protestant		0.562*	0.618
Catholic		0.094***	0.133***
Other Religion		0.062***	0.086***
# Outreach Activities		1.035	1.027
Strictness		0.962	0.958
Conservative Politics		1.211	1.204
Conservative Theology		1.226	1.193
Avg. Congregation Education		0.761*	0.786
Avg. Congregation Income		0.994	1.065
Church Size (ln)		1.173*	1.134
Variance component	1.060***	0.554***	0.697***
Log-likelihood	-39884	-53209	-45160

<sup>a</sup>The following level-1 variables are set as fixed, as their effect on the dependent variable is found to not vary across congregations: race; church attendance

<sup>b</sup>Evangelical Protestants are the omitted reference category

Black Protestants, Catholics, and those from “other religions;” they are, however, no more likely to select the label than Mainline Protestants. Congregations with lower average incomes are more likely to inculcate the *evangelical* label, as are larger congregations.

In model 3, all of the individual-level predictors remain significant. Specifically, hypotheses 1 and 2 receive full support, while hypothesis 3 receives strong support. Evangelical Protestant congregations are more likely than Catholics and those from “other religions” to be populated by those who identify as Evangelicals (hypothesis 4), but none of the other congregation-level hypotheses are supported. The individual-level variables are stronger predictors of the likelihood that a respondent will identify as an Evangelical than are the congregation-level predictors.

Table 5.5 examines the likelihood that the respondent will identify as a *fundamentalist*. According to model 1, those who are more likely to identify as *fundamentalists* include men, whites, older people, and those with higher education levels. Once again, both measures of private religious beliefs and practices are positively related to the odds of identifying as a *fundamentalist*. None of the measures of public religious participation are significant. Model 2 of table 5.5 shows that Evangelical Protestants are more likely than each of the other four religious traditions to identify as a *fundamentalist*. Congregations with more conservative theologies have more fundamentalists, as do congregations with higher average education levels.

Model 3 of table 5.5 combines the individual- and congregation-level independent variables. All of the individual-level variables that were significant in model 1 remain

Table 5.5  
*Logistic Regression of Selection of Fundamentalist Religious Label*  
*(odds ratios reported)<sup>a</sup>*

Variable	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
<b>Level-1</b>			
Intercept	0.011***	0.082***	0.028***
<i>Socio-Demographics</i>			
Male	1.277***		1.291***
White	1.923***		1.725***
Age	1.015***		1.017***
Education	1.065**		1.095***
Income	1.026		1.039
<i>Private Beliefs and Practices</i>			
Evangelical Belief	3.912***		3.100***
Private Devotion	1.058*		1.071**
<i>Public Religious Participation</i>			
Church Attendance	1.043		1.008
Role in Church	0.998		1.037
Volunteering for Church	0.990		1.020
Friends in Church	0.955		0.955
<b>Level-2</b>			
Mainline Protestants <sup>b</sup>		0.226***	0.290***
Black Protestant		0.249***	0.400*
Catholic		0.027***	0.042***
Other Religion		0.103***	0.154***
# Outreach Activities		1.002	0.987
Strictness		1.051	1.036
Conservative Politics		1.251	1.245
Conservative Theology		1.354*	1.211
Avg. Congregation Education		1.409*	1.297
Avg. Congregation Income		0.953	0.881
Church Size (ln)		0.932	0.938
Variance component	1.763***	0.788***	0.714**
Log-likelihood	-37617	-51809	-42729

<sup>a</sup>The following level-1 variables are set as fixed, as their effect on the dependent variable is found to not vary across congregations: private devotion; role in church; friends in church

<sup>b</sup>Evangelical Protestants are the omitted reference category

significant when level-2 variables are added. Hypotheses 1 and 2 receive full support again; private beliefs and practices are positively related to the odds that a respondent will identify as a *fundamentalist*. Also, hypothesis 3 fails to receive support for the *fundamentalist* label; measures of public religious participation do not predict the selection of the label. Hypothesis 4, the expectation that Evangelical Protestants will be more likely than other religious traditions to adopt the labels, is also confirmed. Hypotheses 5-8 do not receive support for the *fundamentalist* label.

Table 5.6 examines the label *Pentecostal*. Model 1 of table 5.6 shows that whites and people with high education levels are less likely to identify as *Pentecostals*. Both measures of private religious belief and practice are positively related to the odds of identifying as a *Pentecostal*, while frequency of church attendance is negatively related to the selection of the label. In model 2, the congregation-level variables appear. Evangelical Protestants are more likely to select the label than all other religious traditions except for Black Protestants, from whom they are no different. The strictness of one's congregation is also positively related to the odds of identifying as a *Pentecostal*, while the average education level for the congregation has a negative effect on the odds.

Model 3 of table 5.6 combines all variables into one model. Once again, the addition of the congregation-level variables does not remove the significance of any of the individual-level variables. Hypotheses 1 and 2 again receives strong support for the *Pentecostal* label: private religious beliefs and practices are significant predictors. Hypothesis 3 receives no support for this label; none of the measures of public religious participation are significant in the expected direction. Hypothesis 4 is confirmed by the significant coefficients for three of the four religious tradition variables; Evangelical

Table 5.6  
*Logistic Regression of Selection of Pentecostal Religious Label*  
*(odds ratios reported)<sup>a</sup>*

Variable	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
<b>Level-1</b>			
Intercept	0.055***	0.059	0.086***
<i>Socio-Demographics</i>			
Male	0.954		0.942
White	0.431***		0.502***
Age	0.999		1.000
Education	0.855***		0.893***
Income	0.964		0.980
<i>Private Beliefs and Practices</i>			
Evangelical Belief	1.778***		1.468***
Private Devotion	1.122***		1.134***
<i>Public Religious Participation</i>			
Church Attendance	0.869***		0.901**
Role in Church	1.029		1.016
Volunteering for Church	1.100		1.094
Friends in Church	0.952		0.958
<b>Level-2</b>			
Mainline Protestants <sup>b</sup>		0.359***	0.420***
Black Protestant		2.069	1.170
Catholic		0.043***	0.042***
Other Religion		0.090***	0.153***
# Outreach Activities		0.975	1.023
Strictness		1.188***	1.143**
Conservative Politics		0.939	0.875
Conservative Theology		1.292	1.350
Avg. Congregation Education		0.601*	0.720
Avg. Congregation Income		0.779	0.845
Church Size (ln)		1.051	0.975
Variance component	2.343***	1.906***	1.169***
Log-likelihood	-37574	-51109	-42543

<sup>a</sup>The following level-1 variables are set as fixed, as their effect on the dependent variable is found to not vary across congregations: sex; age; income; role in church; volunteering; friends in church

<sup>b</sup>Evangelical Protestants are the omitted reference category

Protestants are more likely to identify as *Pentecostals* than Catholics, Mainline Protestants, and those of “other religions.” Congregational strictness remains significant as well; congregations which prohibit a larger number of behaviors engender the *Pentecostal* label. None of the other three hypotheses receive support.

Finally, table 5.7 contains the results of the regressions predicting the odds that a respondent will not choose any of these four religious identity labels. Model 1 shows that women are more likely to reject all of these labels than men, as are younger people. Higher income levels are positively related to the odds of rejecting all four of these labels. All measures of individual-level religious beliefs and practices, both private and public, are negatively related to the odds of rejecting the labels. Those whose beliefs are not in line with orthodox Evangelical beliefs and those whose private devotional life is less frequent are more likely to reject the labels, as are those who are less publically involved in their congregations, as measured by each of the four variables.

Model 2 of table 5.7 examines the congregation-level predictors of rejecting all of the labels. Mainline Protestants, Catholics, and those of “other religions” are more likely than Evangelical Protestants to reject each of these four religious identity labels. Congregations which could be understood as “strict” are less likely to have congregants who reject the labels, as are congregations with conservative theological orientations.

Model 3 combines all variables. Once again, all individual-level variables remain significant with the addition of the congregation-level predictors, while some of the congregation-level predictors become non-significant. Hypotheses 1-3 are supported; all measures of private religious belief and practice, as well as public religious participation, are negatively related to the likelihood of rejecting the labels. In other words, those who

Table 5.7  
*Logistic Regression of Selection of No Religious Label*  
*(odds ratios reported)<sup>a</sup>*

Variable	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
<b>Level-1</b>			
Intercept	3.859***	1.398**	2.780***
<i>Socio-Demographics</i>			
Male	0.838***		0.833***
White	0.942		0.917
Age	0.993***		0.992***
Education	0.981		0.969**
Income	1.064***		1.040**
<i>Private Beliefs and Practices</i>			
Evangelical Belief	0.327***		0.344***
Private Devotion	0.861***		0.858***
<i>Public Religious Participation</i>			
Church Attendance	0.958*		0.952**
Role in Church	0.893**		0.885**
Volunteering for Church	0.760***		0.770***
Friends in Church	0.946**		0.953*
<b>Level-2</b>			
Mainline Protestants <sup>b</sup>		2.253***	1.695***
Black Protestant		1.667	1.403
Catholic		9.732***	6.856***
Other Religion		17.139***	9.866***
# Outreach Activities		0.974	0.970
Strictness		0.931*	0.962
Conservative Politics		0.887	0.924
Conservative Theology		0.786*	0.812
Avg. Congregation Education		1.232	1.219
Avg. Congregation Income		1.239	1.201
Church Size (ln)		0.876	0.903
Variance component	1.480***	0.719***	0.703***
Log-likelihood	-40428	-53583	-45600

<sup>a</sup>The following level-1 variables are set as fixed, as their effect on the dependent variable is found to not vary across congregations: race; friends in church

<sup>b</sup>Evangelical Protestants are the omitted reference category

are more religious as measured in these models are more likely to select at least one of these four religious identity labels. Hypothesis 4 also maintains its support: three of the four religious traditions are more likely than Evangelical Protestants to reject each of these four religious identity labels, even after controlling for all individual-level predictors. None of the other four hypotheses, however, are supported.

Table 5.8 summarizes the results of tables 5.3 - 5.7, clarifying which hypotheses were confirmed for which religious identity labels. Two stars indicate strong support, and one star indicates partial support. A blank cell indicates that the hypothesis received no support for that particular label. Hypotheses 1-4 each receive substantial support. Hypotheses 1 and 2 receive the strongest support by far: measures of private religious belief and practice predict the odds of selecting each of the four religious labels, and are negatively associated with the odds of rejecting them all. For hypothesis 3, measures of public congregational involvement predict the odds of identifying as an Evangelical and as a fundamentalist, as well as the odds of rejecting each of the four labels. Regarding hypothesis 4, religious tradition is also associated with the selection of three of the four labels. *Charismatic* is the only label for which denominational differences do not exist. Hypothesis 5 receives no support whatsoever. Congregations which engage in more evangelistic activities are not more likely to inculcate religious identities in their congregants which are consistent with an Evangelical orientation. Hypothesis 6 receives only minimal support; congregational strictness is positively associated with the odds of identifying as a *Pentecostal*, but not with any of the other labels. Finally, hypotheses 7 and 8 receive no support. Neither a congregation's theological orientation nor its political orientation has anything to do with the odds of identifying with these labels.

Table 5.8  
*Summary of Hypotheses*

Hypothesis	Charismatic	Evangelical	Fundamentalist	Pentecostal	None Chosen
Hypothesis 1 Private devotional practices	**	**	**	**	**
Hypothesis 2 Orthodox beliefs	**	**	**	**	**
Hypothesis 3 Public religious participation		*		*	**
Hypothesis 4 Congregational Religious tradition		*	**	*	*
Hypothesis 5 Congregational membership recruitment					
Hypothesis 6 Congregational Strictness				**	
Hypothesis 7 Congregational Conservative theology					
Hypothesis 7 Congregational Conservative politics					

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\*\* hypothesis fully supported  
 \* hypothesis partially supported  
 Blank cells indicate no support for hypothesis

### *Summary and Conclusions*

This chapter attempts to answer a central question: to what extent do congregations imbue their members with a religious identity that is expressed by the use of religious labels, and to what extent are these label selections manifestations of personal characteristics? The results indicate that individual-level factors such as beliefs, behaviors, and personal involvement with one's church are consistently predictive of the likelihood that one will identify with such labels as *charismatic*, *evangelical*, *fundamentalist*, and *Pentecostal*. Those whose personal beliefs align with Evangelical Protestantism are likely to choose the labels, as are those who often engage in private devotional activities such as prayer and Bible reading. Though a less consistent effect, three of the five models demonstrate that measures of deeper involvement with one's congregation are related to these labels choices as well.

However, the congregational factors modeled here are largely unrelated to the likelihood that an individual will identify with these religious identity labels. The major exception is, of course, the religious tradition of the congregation. Evangelical Protestant congregations are consistently made up of more individuals who identify with these labels than Mainline Protestants, Catholics, and those from "other religions." The other four congregational hypotheses receive little or no support. Neither a congregation's amount of outreach activities nor its theological and political orientations are related to the likelihood of identifying with these labels, and the strictness of the congregation is only related to the selection of the *Pentecostal* label.

The support received by the individual-level hypotheses coupled with the lack of support received by the congregational-level hypotheses indicates that these label

preferences seem less to be manifestations of a congregational religious context; they are primarily manifestations of personal beliefs and behaviors. Those who identify with these conservative religious labels seem to be doing so less as a result of congregational characteristics, and more as an expression of personal religiosity. For example, the results indicate that a person in a Southern Baptist congregation is more likely to identify as an Evangelical or as a fundamentalist than a person in an Episcopal congregation, but other characteristics of the congregation do not seem to influence the identity. The Southern Baptist is not more likely to identify with one of these labels because her church is more conservative, or because it is more involved in outreach and evangelism, or because it prohibits certain behaviors; she is more likely to identify with these labels if she has conservative religious beliefs, prays and reads her Bible often, and gets more deeply involved in church activities.

What might explain these results? The lack of significant congregational influences on religious label selection could be linked to a de-coupling of individual and collective sources of religious authority. The “Sheilism” described by Bellah et al. (1985) has become the preferred label describing the effects that America’s increasing individualism has had on religious authority. Rather than identifying with a denominational family or a congregation as an authoritative voice, Sheila’s faith is highly privatized (Regnerus and Smith 1998), claiming to follow her own “little voice” (Bellah et al. 1985:221) which guides her decisions, morals, and beliefs about how best to live. Bellah et al. believe that this trend is an evolving force in American religion, and other research has supported this view even among regular church attendees (Wilcox 2002). If

this is true, it may explain the tendency for congregational attributes to exert less influence on the likelihood that Americans identify with various religious labels.

In evaluating the effects of social context on religious identity selection, we must take notice of the specific social context considered in this analysis: congregations. The lack of significant congregation-level variables does not provide evidence that social contexts matter less in shaping religious identities; it merely indicates that congregations have a lesser direct effect on religious identity selection than individual-level factors. Other types of social contexts must also be considered, as the sources of social religious contexts may be extra-congregational. Families, educational institutions, and places of employment are ever-present social contexts that have enormous effects on the development and expression of religious identities. Individuals may also belong to para-church organizations that powerfully shape their identities, or they may consume various forms of religious media that have no connection to their congregational life but nonetheless function as powerful social contexts in which their religious identities are formed and expressed. These extra-congregational social contexts must be considered before one makes conclusions about the extent to which social contexts matter.

Of course, the individual world and the social world are not truly separate spheres. Religious identity is likely a manifestation of both individual-level attributes and social context, and the two have a dynamic and dialectic relationship with one another. Even though only one of the five congregational hypotheses received support, future research should explore the possibility that an indirect relationship exists. Structural equation modeling, for example, could allow for a test of the possibility that various congregational factors have an indirect effect on religious identity by shaping

those individual-level beliefs and behaviors that now seem to be more predictive of identity selection. These present results indicate that when taken together, the individual-level predictors are more powerful than the congregational-level predictors; they cannot, however, show that the congregational variables have no effect at all. We must also be thoughtful and careful regarding claims of causality: we cannot know, for example, whether Evangelical Protestant congregations are successfully inculcating these identities, or whether they are attracting individuals who already ascribe to these orientations.

Finally, these results have ramifications for how we think about these religious labels, and more importantly, they reveal something about how survey respondents may think of them. Scholars who rely on survey research are always giving careful thought to issues of validity: are these questions accurately measuring what I think they're measuring? Identity labels, and religious identity labels in particular, are subject to measurement error simply by virtue of the fact that respondents may not define these terms in the same manner that they are defined by the researcher. A researcher may understand an Evangelical to be a person who belongs to a specific type of church or someone who has certain conservative religious beliefs, while the respondent may link Evangelicalism to conservative and activist political, social, and moral views. As such, their acceptance or rejection of the *Evangelical* label may be misleading from the researcher's point of view.

While this present analysis does not provide any direct insight into how a respondent may define the various terms, a window into the forces that shape their selection is quite useful. It seems that respondents who select these labels do not think of

them as manifestations of their social worlds, at least not at the congregational level. They may think of them as groups that not only transcend congregational life, but as groups that are disconnected from congregational life altogether. One's identification as a *charismatic*, for example, may not be an expression of identification with his or her particular congregation, but rather as an expression of identification with a broader religious movement that transcends not only congregational life, but also denominational life. If researchers are to continue relying on respondents' self-reported religious identity as an important measure of anything, we must wrestle with the question of how they came to terms with that identity, and which forces are dominant in shaping it. A better understanding of the forces that shape religious identity leads to a better understanding of the meanings that respondents intend when they select the labels, and hopefully, a fuller appreciation for the complicated and dynamic nature of religious identity.

## CHAPTER SIX

### Conclusions

The preceding analyses have examined the concept of religious identity using two different nationally representative datasets. Religious identities were employed in statistical regression models in an effort to explore the usefulness of measuring religious identity as a set of self-selected religious labels vs. the usefulness of measuring religious identity as a type of denominational affiliation. Religious identity labels were modeled as both independent variables (chapters 2 and 3) and dependent variables (chapters 4 and 5), and I explored the association of religious identity with both religious variables (chapters 2 and 5) and non-religious variables (chapters 3 and 4).

Each chapter contains its own conclusions and research implications, but a few points can be drawn from the manuscript as a whole. For one, it should be noted that measures of self-labeled religious identities and their predictors remain significant in some of the models after controlling for socio-demographic variables and denominational affiliation, but not all. Measures of self-labeled religious identity are capturing something unique, something that is not being measured in other religious items. When researchers control for religious tradition in their statistical models, they are of course controlling for something quite important and powerful; however, they would be mistaken to believe that they are fully controlling for religious identity with these RELTRAD measures. Religious identity is a concept far too nuanced to be captured fully by measures of denominational affiliation.

Most significantly, this manuscript underscores the importance of religious identity. In chapter one, I pointed out the absence of religious identity in the literature on general identity and claimed that this absence limits our understanding of identity. There are several reasons why religious identity should be more fully incorporated into theories of identity. For one, religion is a ubiquitous American cultural institution, having at least some influence on the vast majority of Americans today. Such an ever-present cultural force must be reckoned with as researchers try to understand the ways that people come to understand themselves. Similarly, the majority of Americans claim that religion is a salient force in their everyday lives. Researchers must always remain sensitive to the voices of respondents as they make claims about identity salience, rather than merely imputing onto them the purported salience of identities related to other forces such as race, class, gender, occupation, and age.

Religious identity should also be a larger part of the literature on general identity due in part to the fact that religious identity is a different kind of identity than the types that are most commonly discussed. For one, unlike most other types of identity, religious identity is both ascribed and achieved, as is addressed in chapter 4. It is a type of cultural preference, as is also discussed in chapter 4, but it is unlike other cultural preferences such as art, music, and dress. Although religion can be seen as a stratifying force in American society, a focus on religious identity is not as consumed with stratification as are focuses on race, class, and gender.

The claims that religious identity should receive more study are bolstered by the findings of this dissertation. Religious identity, for example, is found to be a significant predictor of political tolerance (chapter 3), even after controlling for the two religious

variables that have been found to be consistent predictors of political tolerance, church attendance and denominational affiliation. Clearly, these self-selected labels capture an important element of one's religiosity that other more common religious variables fail to measure. Although religious contexts are found to matter as shapers of religious identity (chapter 5), these contexts do not seem to matter in the ways that one might intuit.

These studies also raise important questions about the meanings of religious identity labels. Researchers may have a difficult time discerning what respondents mean when they select a particular religious label as descriptive of themselves; this is an important limitation of survey data. Not all self-described *charismatics*, for example, attend congregations that engage in ecstatic worship practices or personally engage in these emotive worship experiences. Nonetheless, researchers who employ religious labels as markers of various religious groups and movements may make assumptions about the homogeneity of those who identify with such labels. This homogeneity must be questioned and explored, rather than merely assumed.

The sources of religious identity also deserve a much fuller exploration than is possible in this manuscript. Chapters 4 and 5 take on this task, exploring the ways that social class, personal religiosity, and congregational factors may or may not contribute to the formation of a religious identity and its expression as a self-selected religious label. However, there is much more that can be done in this vein. Additional multi-level analyses can explore not only congregational influences, but also geographic factors that play a role. The role of other stratifying statuses such as race or gender should not be minimized either, due to the finding in chapter 4 that social class plays such a large role. Qualitative studies could be a rich source of information in which respondents tell their

own stories about how they have come to understand and express their religious views. There is much depth to the concept of religious identity, and much work to be done if we hope not only to understand it more fully, but employ it more powerfully in statistical models.

While measures of self-selected religious identity labels remained significant independent variables in some of the models, their power was often dwarfed in comparison to measures of denominational affiliation. This begs the question, what is the utility of these religious identity labels? I contend that even though they are less powerful as independent variables, they still have interesting import as dependent variables. They have been shown to be manifestations of social class and personal religiosity, and they function as one of the only ways that researchers can gain information about how Americans view their own religious identities using survey methodology. By learning that someone identifies as a fundamentalist, for example, I am learning something about the way that person sees themselves, and the ways they describe their own religiosity. Few other survey questions are able to capture that side of religious identity.

Finally, these analyses touch on a problem with much of the research on religious identity labels as it currently exists: the lack of religious identity labels with which non-Evangelical Protestants may identify. As mentioned before, the number of religious labels on national surveys that describe the various expressions of Evangelical Protestantism far outnumber the number of labels that describe Mainline and liberal Protestant expressions of religious faith. I believe this is due in part to the smaller role that Mainline Protestantism has played on a national scale over the past 30 years. The

religious left, for example, is a religious movement with which many people identify. However, because the religious left has had a smaller impact on national politics and social movements than its better-known counterpart, the religious right, it remains a movement and label with which Americans are less familiar. As such, there are surely many Americans whose religious and political beliefs align with those of the religious left, but who would never select such a label for themselves. This is a great handicap for the study of religious identity if one wants to rely on religious labels as their prime operationalization of religious identity. As the state of religious survey research currently stands, religious labels position researchers to learn interesting things about various branches of Evangelicalism, but less so about Mainline Protestant, Catholic, and non-Christian identity. This difficulty must be overcome in order for identity research in the scientific study of religion to accurately capture the religious landscape in America.

## APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Appendix A.1

*Cumulative Logit Regressions of Political Tolerance for Specific Out-Groups on Selected Demographic/Religious Variables (odds ratios reported)*

Variable	Racists	Racists	Atheists	Atheists
<b>Religious Traditions<sup>a</sup></b>				
Evangelical Protestants	-	-	-	-
Mainline Protestants	1.018	-0.013	2.321***	1.427*
Black Protestants	0.924	-0.071	0.521**	0.402**
Catholics	1.153	0.020	2.012***	1.115
Jewish	0.413*	-0.045	6.721***	2.475*
Other Religion	0.623*	-0.071*	5.287***	1.939*
No Religion	1.550**	0.047	8.808***	1.911*
<b>Control Variables</b>				
White		-0.071		1.145
Male		0.043		0.906
Married		0.005		0.985
Children in Home		-0.026		0.956
Income		-0.005		1.112*
Education		0.052		1.309***
South		0.037		0.789
Age		0.008		0.972***
Independent <sup>b</sup>		-0.031		0.585***
Republican <sup>b</sup>		0.078*		0.534***
<b>Religious Variables</b>				
Church attendance		0.043		0.989
Biblical literalism		-0.015		0.557***
Religious Exclusivism		-0.028		0.992
Friends in Congregation		-0.053		0.900
r <sup>2</sup>	0.014	0.029	0.142	0.325
N	1653	1250	1655	1263

<sup>a</sup> Evangelical Protestants are the omitted reference category

<sup>b</sup> Democrats are the omitted reference category

\* p<0.05; \*\* p<0.01; \*\*\* p<0.001; 2-tailed t-tests

Appendix A.2  
*Cumulative Logit Regressions of Political Tolerance for Specific Out-Groups on  
Selected Demographic/Religious Variables  
(odds ratios reported)*

Variable	Homosexuals	Homosexuals	Muslims	Muslims
<b>Religious Traditions<sup>a</sup></b>				
Evangelical Protestants	-	-	-	-
Mainline Protestants	3.284***	2.268***	2.456***	1.625**
Black Protestants	1.239	0.559	1.077	0.841
Catholics	3.336***	2.318***	2.134***	1.402*
Jewish	9.499***	3.826**	5.643***	2.040
Other Religion	6.638***	2.831***	7.557***	4.301***
No Religion	14.589***	4.782***	7.257***	3.010***
<b>Control Variables</b>				
White		0.608*		0.970
Male		0.603***		1.060
Married		0.736*		0.943
Children in Home		0.930		0.995
Income		1.168***		1.078
Education		1.250***		1.350***
South		0.843		0.799
Age		0.982***		0.977***
Independent <sup>b</sup>		0.730*		0.566***
Republican <sup>b</sup>		0.533***		0.508***
<b>Religious Variables</b>				
Church attendance		0.980		1.040
Biblical literalism		0.661***		0.663***
Religious Exclusivism		0.731*		0.770
Friends in Congregation		0.858**		0.894
r <sup>2</sup>	0.186	0.345	0.115	0.262
N	1657	1264	1646	1257

<sup>a</sup> Evangelical Protestants are the omitted reference category

<sup>b</sup> Democrats are the omitted reference category

\* p<0.05; \*\* p<0.01; \*\*\* p<0.001; 2-tailed t-tests

APPENDIX B

Appendix B.1  
*Comparison of Frequencies of Religious Identity Labels, BRS waves 1 and 2  
 (Percentages Reported)*

Variable	BRS 2007		BRS 2005		
<b>Bible-believer</b>					
Not at all	15.55	}	25.83	No	31.71
Not very well	10.28				
No opinion	4.41				
Somewhat well	22.96	}	69.75	Yes	68.29
Very well	46.79				
<b>Born-again</b>					
Not at all	45.62	}	55.21	No	55.66
Not very well	9.59				
No opinion	4.20				
Somewhat well	9.88	}	40.59	Yes	44.34
Very well	30.71				
<b>Charismatic</b>					
Not at all	48.48	}	64.87	No	85.70
Not very well	16.39				
No opinion	14.79				
Somewhat well	14.49	}	20.34	Yes	14.30
Very well	5.85				
<b>Evangelical</b>					
Not at all	47.73	}	62.15	No	72.70
Not very well	14.42				
No opinion	10.76				
Somewhat well	13.02	}	27.09	Yes	27.30
Very well	14.07				
<b>Fundamentalist</b>					
Not at all	54.01	}	68.46	No	84.86
Not very well	14.45				
No opinion	13.92				
Somewhat well	10.10	}	17.62	Yes	15.14
Very well	7.52				

Appendix B.2  
*Comparison of Frequencies of Religious Identity Labels, BRS waves 1 and 2  
(Percentages Reported)*

Variable	BRS 2007		BRS 2005		
<b>Pentecostal</b>					
Not at all	69.02	>	78.06	No	88.97
Not very well	9.04				
No opinion	11.87	>	10.07	Yes	11.03
Somewhat well	4.78				
Very well	5.29				
<b>Religious Right</b>					
Not at all	55.61	>	64.57	No	83.66
Not very well	8.96				
No opinion	16.82	>	18.61	Yes	16.34
Somewhat well	9.49				
Very well	9.12				
<b>Seeker</b>					
Not at all	48.03	>	59.91	No	83.42
Not very well	11.88				
No opinion	15.07	>	25.01	Yes	16.58
Somewhat well	13.49				
Very well	11.52				
<b>Theologically Conservative</b>					
Not at all	41.88	>	53.72	No	67.60
Not very well	11.84				
No opinion	15.89	>	30.39	Yes	32.40
Somewhat well	16.06				
Very well	14.33				
<b>Theologically Liberal</b>					
Not at all	51.78	>	66.02	No	70.7
Not very well	14.24				
No opinion	16.71	>	17.27	Yes	29.30
Somewhat well	11.50				
Very well	5.77				

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